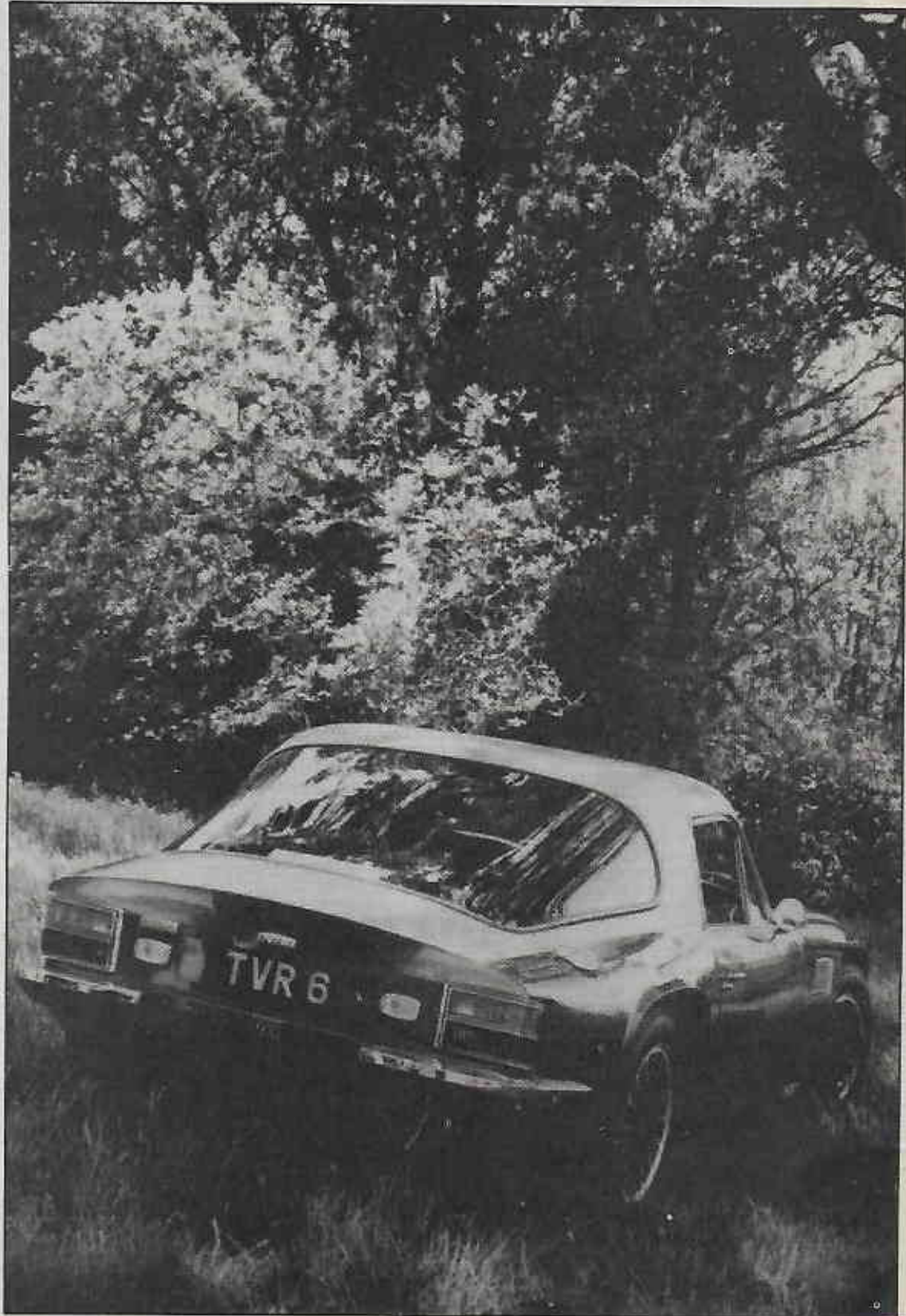


# TVR

*A roadster for the Seventies*







**Although earlier TVRs were very good cars, by any standards, this one is streets, even motorways, ahead.**

Text Peter Filby  
Photos Andrew Morland

Even if most of you think it "old cloth cap", or old hat as it is more commonly said, I must admit that until recently, I failed to understand the reason why the TVR company used those initials. Apparently way back in 1958 when specialist car companies were possibly a little steadier than they are now (with exceptions of course) a young fellow by the name of Wilkinson decided finally to plunge in and attempt to construct a machine somewhat sporty in character that could remain pointed in the right direction at all times. As his christian name was Trevor he chose to shorten it by making it TVR.

And a turbulent career the company has had so far. Current boss Martin Lilley took over in late 1964 and battled on through an uncertain period while the company gained recognition and standing. The various TVR models have suffered in the past from the odd persistent fault, appeared slightly stumpy to some and more seriously, suffered from poor component supplies but have nevertheless been more desirable alternatives to the more mundane sports cars. With the recent introduction of the "M" series car it seems that development of the original concept has been fulfilled so we trundled down to Lockhart Sportscars,

near Horsham, to have a look and a drive of the much improved car.

The demonstration car was actually built by the wife of the friendly farmer and sports car enthusiast Simon Dalglish in about 14 hours. Somewhat longer than the time taken to build her precious Vixen but a much easier job.

Let's begin with the car's basics, we note that all M-series TVRs use a new chassis which has been beefed-up with extra square tubing rather than the old style round tubing. This chassis is modified to accept the various engines using an adaptable tube steel box section in which can be located the alternative differentials.

Despite its obvious limitations the TVR shape always appealed but after seeing the new body the old one now seems to leave something to be desired—but then I suppose that's what progress is all about. The unit is now wider by 2½in, lengthened and smoothed at both nose and tail and adorned with flares on the rear arches.

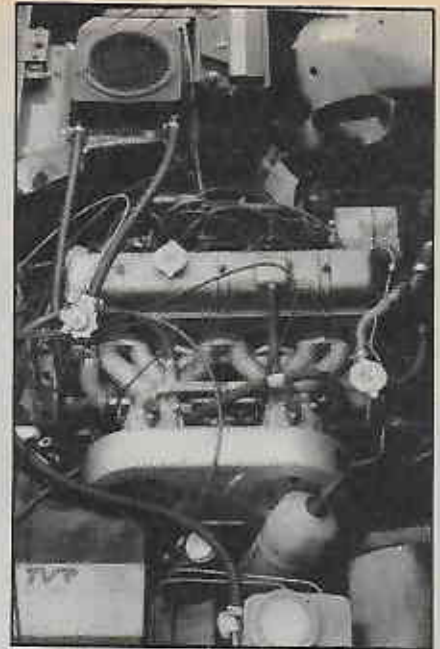
Modernized, squared-off bumpers give the much sharper nose a purposeful aggression and are now bolted to steel tubes behind the glassfibre which are in turn bolted to the chassis. So now there is reasoning behind the bumpers rather than the glassfibre! Access to the TVR's Triumph 2.5-litre engine, manual version only, is simple after releasing the new and much stronger bonnet locks.

It must be obvious, even to the dimmest of us, what functions bonnet ducts perform but I just can't figure out





Above: Pleasantly styled fascia/instrument panel with chunky steering wheel  
 Above right: The 2½ litres of Triumph engine providing 106bhp



a smooth lead-in to the car's interior so what better than a left bonnet duct! This one supplies air to a vastly improved heating, de-misting, fresh air system for which there are outlets in abundance. No less than three are provided on the fascia and another one in each footwell.

After the first batch of 12 of these cars had been completed the floorpan was lowered to give increased headroom, though affable giant Mr Dalglish would surely have problems in any TVR! One thing that always amazes us is how high-backed seats often have their headrests better positioned for drunken passengers to lean forward on than for drivers' heads to rest on but TVR's new Terry Hunter seats are superb.

Neither could one ever complain about the lack of elbow room in these cars. A slightly raised central tunnel has resulted in a stubbier gearstick and a more comfortable resting position for the left arm.

The dash couldn't possibly have been omitted from all these improvements so matt black dials are incorporated (we'll give you one guess which ones) along with rocker switches set into a neat panel in the centre console labelled on a restrained, tasteful, brushed alloy strip. Cigar lighter and hazard warning switch are included but the obtrusively large

choke seemed only to call out for a good pull.

Now all these improvements had been under development for 9 months before release. It had become obvious to Martin Lilley that a wind of change was needed because deliveries of some necessary components were becoming most frustrating and along with minor complaints from customers such as TVR's well-known steering kickback, pointed the way to a re-think on design utilizing much better availability of alternative components at the same time.

During this changeover period a car was crash-tested and actually bounced 15-feet back off the barrier. Due to its impact-resistant design the steering column moved forward by only ½in and as the front suspension was undamaged the car remained moveable.

The 2500M we drove looked superb in its maroon-and-silver paint, its new glassfibre body achieving a certain flow that earlier cars could not possibly be credited with. The distinctive TVR wheels remain as before to further distinguish it from the masses.

With slightly revised wishbones, the car's suspension has been raised a mite to improve ground clearance and give the sort of cushioned, solid ride that one might expect; we were made aware of most bumps in the road. The whole impression is one of solidity and rigidity

but it was most disappointing to find the complete absence of squeaks and groans from within!

Simon Dalglish's knees (his wife does allow him to drive occasionally, if he doesn't go over 45mph) dictated that a 10in rather than the standard 13in wheel be fitted but the steering was still reasonably light and direct. The TVR's interior gives an impression of incredible spaciousness, the recent modifications further improving matters by re-siting the spare wheel under the bonnet—a shame we couldn't have had an opening rear window at the same time, even at some expense.

Of power, it was there in plenty. The figures of 2½-litres and 106bhp give a smooth acceleration through the quick precise gearchange to a maximum of 118mph (130mph if fitted with the optional overdrive). The magic 0-60mph figure was in the 8-9 seconds bracket.

Our persistent photographer insisted that we circled a roundabout as rapidly as possible for a few pictures and since we maintained anything between 50mph and 70mph, while becoming steadily dizzier, it seems reasonable to say that the roadholding was fine. As was the braking by courtesy of discs at the front and drums at the rear.

A sharp vast improvement is somewhat disconcerting as it makes what was previously accepted as adequate or good, look rather poor and unsatisfactory. Although earlier TVRs were very good cars by any standards, this new one is streets, even motorways, ahead. Now that Simon is able to leave his farming in the able hands of that well-known member of the aristocracy, Richard Duveen, he has recently surpassed himself by selling more cars in one month than ever before.

Last year the summer was so late in coming that we suspect that a TVR was used in order to get all the corn cut in a last desperate week before it withered in the rain. TVR's harvest of sales of the M-series should be assured whatever the vagaries of the weather.