

TASMIN AGAIN...

Tale of two convertibles

Like so many specialist car companies over the last three years of sharp recession, the famous TVR company in Blackpool has had its share of troubles and falling sales. In fact, it was only at the start of this year that the company underwent unexpected reorganisation with the result that Martin Lilley, man responsible for comprehensively changing TVR's fortunes since 1965, retreated into the back seat to allow ex-Jaguar engineer, Stuart Halstead, to take over the day-to-day running of the business.

Whether this reshuffle has had the desired effect on TVR's efficiency and profitability I don't know, but what I do know is that the cars coming out of the large Blackpool factory these days are fine machines which deserve all the success they can get. Many readers will no doubt have seen the full road test feature on the Ford 2.8-litre powered Tasmin coupe in the last issue and read how my appreciation of the car grew with each and every day of the test period. Frankly, it is sometimes very difficult to return a car to its makers when it has been so much pleasure to use! Well, I needn't have got too upset about matters because within a week or two of my sad loss Stuart Halstead's secretary, Carole Newton, was on the 'phone offering me another generous test period with a Tasmin Convertible, this time powered by the 'small' Ford 2-litre engine. Not a lot of persuasion was needed...

My full impressions of the topless Tasmin will appear in the next AC but, although I've only had the car a few days at present, I already know that I'm in love again! Here is a TVR with all the superb engineering, quality and style of the

bigger engined coupe but with a much lighter, and slightly softer, overall feel. By that I mean basically that it is slightly easier to become acquainted with, has less of the brutal feel of its sister model, and would make the ideal sports car for a woman who wants to move beyond the Spitfire, TR7, Fiat X1/9 league.

Immediate impressions of the car are of its superb styling (removing the roof made a significant improvement), its willingness to pull up to very respectable performance, its snug cockpit (even for a convertible) and its marvellously simple roof arrangement, the best convertible system I've ever used. With the fabulous weather we're enjoying at the time of writing, there could hardly be a more ideal car to have sitting outside waiting to please. How on earth am I going to give this one back? Full tale of the heart-breaking split in the next issue...

Other Tasmin news is that race enthusiasts should be seeing a lot of Colin Blower's Convertible racer on the tracks this year. Turned out in the colours of sponsors B.F. Goodrich and HJ Indestructible Socks (does that mean they never go smelly?), the car will be contesting this year's Donington Production GT Car Championship, the same series which Colin contested last year, scoring four memorable outright victories in his older TVR 3000M convertible. Faster and better sorted than the 3000M, the Tasmin will also be campaigned in the CAV Sports Car Championship and one-off events like the Willhire 24-hour race at Snetterton. Tyres used for each event will be standard B.F. Goodrich T/A High Tech Radial Performance road tyres.

Peter Filby

