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**V8
MINI
TRUCK**

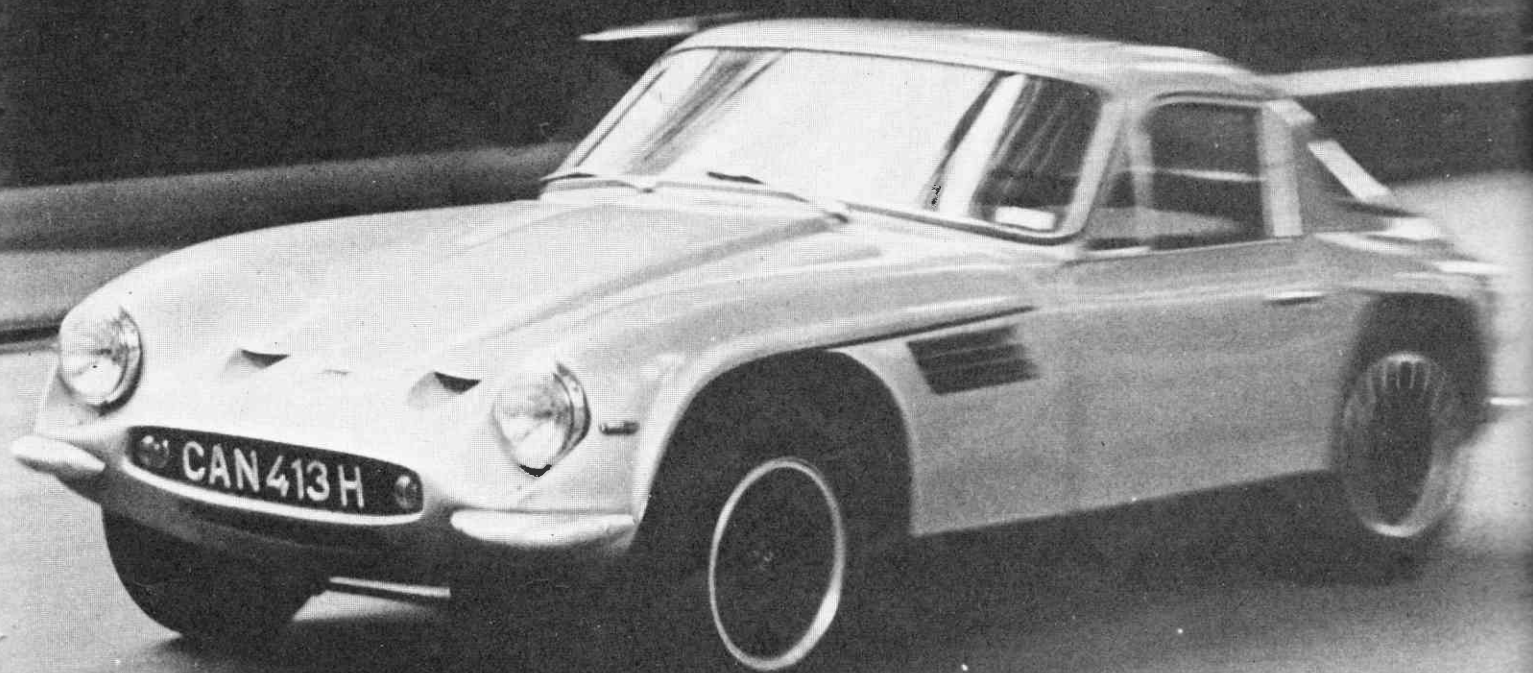
● **TVR TUSCAN TEST**

**IN FULL
COLOUR
FOUR
CUSTOM
ANGLIAS**

T.V.R. TUSCAN

Latest in a line of real

sports cars—with V6 power



▶ Power, roadholding and styling—they are the essentials of a good sports car. And the TVR Tuscan has got the lot!

The latest from the Blackpool firm—who have been in the 'assemble it yourself' car trade longer than most—uses the Ford 3-litre V6 engine in a body similar to the smaller engined Vixen we tested (and raved about, if you recall) 12 months ago.

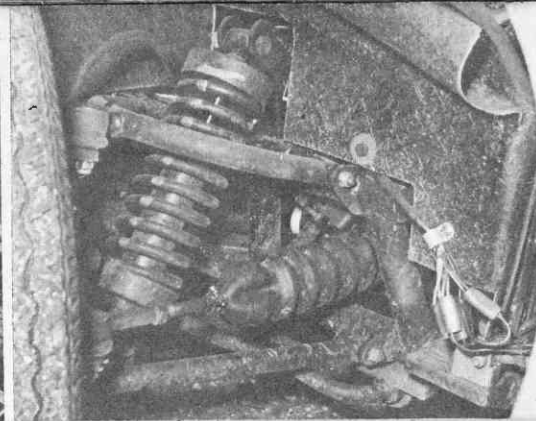
Over £400 is a lot of money, and that's

just what you save by buying a component Tuscan at £1,492. Basically you just drop in the engine and bolt on the suspension—a job so easy that we're not going to bother to quote the fully built-up price. No one would be that daft, we hope!

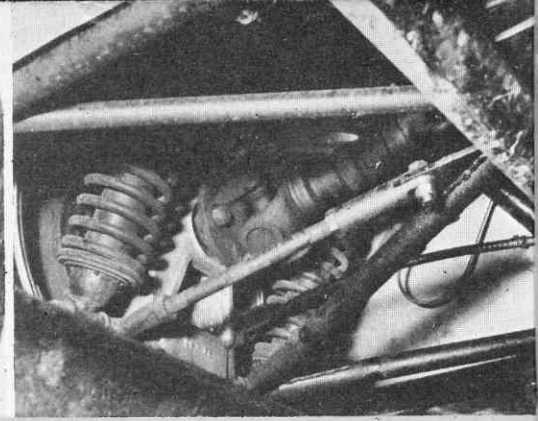
The Tuscan, as tested, continues into next year without any major alterations. Bigger jets will go into the carb to make that top whack of 125 mph a little more attainable. Turn over for full details.



Forward hinging bonnet reveals all—but could tip further to give more headroom. Note the very accessible battery and small Weber air cleaner



Front suspension uses tubular wishbones and combined coil spring/shocker units. Steering has good lock—due to use of Triumph rack



Rear end features more wishbones and dual shocker spring arrangement. Uprights are cast and the drive shafts have two Hardy-Spicer joints

TVR TUSCAN



“TUSCAN—

ACCELERATION THROUGH GEARS

0-40 mph.....	4.2 secs
0-50 mph.....	5.4 secs
0-60 mph.....	8.0 secs
0-70 mph.....	10.9 secs
0-80 mph.....	14.3 secs
0-100mph.....	23.8 secs
30-60 mph.....	5.7 secs
50-80 mph.....	8.5 secs
STANDING ¼ MILE.....	15.8 secs

TRUE MAXIMUM SPEED
125 mph
(see text)

(all figures without overdrive)

SPEEDOMETER ERROR
Spd. rdg. 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
True speed 30 40 49 58 67 76 85 94

FUEL CONSUMPTION
Test overall..... 20.7 mpg

PRICE...£1,495 in component form

MANUFACTURER—TVR
Engineering Ltd, Bipsham Rd, Blackpool.

ENGINE

Ford V6: Bore 93.66 mm. Stroke 72.41 mm. 2,994 cc. Twin-choke 40DFA Weber, four-bearing crank. Power: 147 bhp at 4,750 rpm. Torque: 192 lbs ft. at 3,000 rpm.

TRANSMISSION

Ford all-synchro four-speed box with ratios: 1st—3.163; 2nd—2.214; 3rd—1.412; 4th—1.000. Final drive—3.310, giving approx 22.7 mph per 1,000 rpm in top gear. Clutch: single dry plate (diaphragm). Overdrive fitted all four gears on test car.

SUSPENSION

Front—Independent with wishbones, coil springs, telescopic shock absorbers and anti-roll bar. Rear—Independent with wishbones, coil springs and double telescopic shock absorbers either side.

GENERAL DETAILS

Brakes—Girling servo-assisted system. 10.8 in. dia discs at front, drums at rear.
Steering: Rack and pinion with jointed collapsible column. 3.5 turns of steering wheel lock to lock.
Wheels: 5½J section×15 in. dia. TVR aluminium wheels, fitted HR 165 Avon radials.
Weight: 18 cwt. Fuel tank: 15 galls. Length: 12 ft 1 in.

Once upon a time the TVR Tuscan came complete with 4.7 litre Ford V8 engine and a claimed top speed that happened at just about the point your nerve ran out. Now the model that bears the same name is not quite as quick, but with a lower price and more refinement is a much more practical proposition for the British market.

The Blackpool company, like Marcos, Reliant and several others, have opted for the V6 Ford Executive engine which pushes out a healthy 144 bhp at the relatively low engine speed of 4,750 rpm. It's a compact unit that fits easily in the engine compartment, is not temperamental because it is in a 'cooking' state of tune, and — most important — has spare parts available almost anywhere.

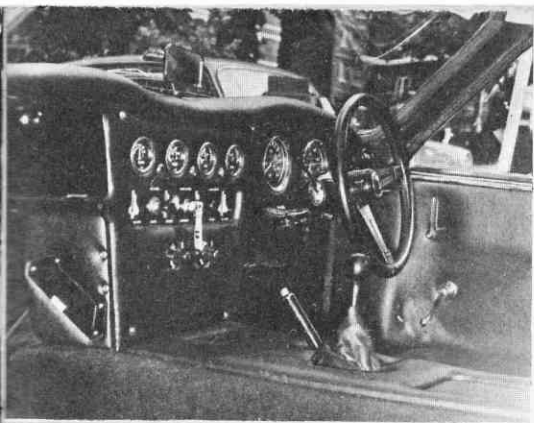
Announced at last year's Motor Show the V6 Tuscan retains the shape ('dramatic' as our Sports Editor will have it) of TVR's over the past ten years with detail design changes, notably to the tail and the bonnet line. The chassis is the longer wheelbase one originally designed for the V8 and now standard on the smaller engined Vixen we tested last year.

That chassis is tubular with great strength. The fibreglass body is bolted on to ensure easy crash repair.

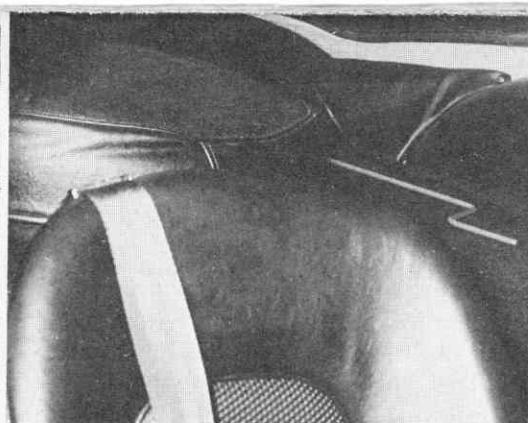
Mated to the Ford engine—which is set well back in the frame—is the normal top-of-the-range FoMoCo gearbox. It's not exactly 'close ratio', but with the power available

COMPARE

CAR	PRICE	MPG overall	STANDING ¼-MILE	0-70 MPH	30-60 OVERTAKING	TRUE TOP SPEED	BHP	POWER RATIO WEIGHT
TVR TUSCAN	£1,495	20.7	15.8 secs	10.9 secs	5.7 secs	125 mph	144	163.3 bhp/ton
ELVA 3000	NA	20	15.4 secs	10.0 secs	4.5 secs	125 mph	160 (aprx)	177.6 bhp/ton
RELIANT SCIMITAR	£1,611	20	17.5 secs	13.3 secs	6.9 secs	120 mph	144	140.2 bhp/ton
MORGAN PLUS 8	£1,508	20.6	14.6 secs	8.7 secs	4.6 secs	125 mph	184	202 bhp/ton
MG 'C' (AUTO)	£1,487	19.4	16.7 secs	9.7 secs	6.4 secs	118 mph	145	121 bhp/ton
JAGUAR 'E'	£2,163	17.5	15.7 secs	9.5 secs	4.7 secs	150 mph	265	222 bhp/ton



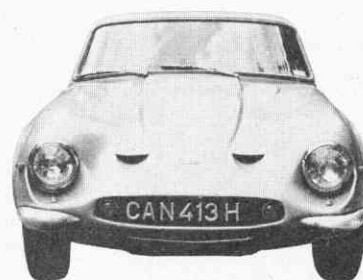
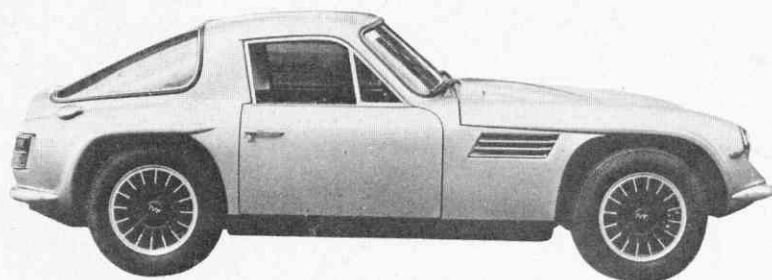
Black padded fascia and use of thick carpet give the luxury touch. Door handles were difficult to operate and window winders sometimes stuck



Behind the seats is a carpeted platform that houses the spare and your luggage. There should be some sort of ledge to prevent things sliding



Driving position is good with all the controls in seatbelted reach. Wiper and washer switches were too close to steering wheel. Seats small, good



WHAT EVERY MODERN SPORTS CAR SHOULD BE''

and the lightness of the car this doesn't seem to matter.

Suspension follows traditional TVR practice—independent all round with coil springs and fabricated upper and lower wishbones front and rear. On each rear wheel there are two telescopic shock absorbers. The drive shafts are double jointed.

Brakes are Girling with front discs of very large proportions and drum rears. There is a servo.

COMFORT

There's no trouble getting in the Tuscan—just as long as the tall mind their heads—and the rather narrow bucket seat adjusts for drivers of any height. The small leather rimmed wheel is in just the right place for a slightly bent arms driving position.

This is a car that's meant for the serious driver. But it also has luxurious padded leathercloth and thick carpeting to satisfy the more comfort seeking members of the sporting set. There's no real luggage space, only the carpeted expanse under the large rear window which is taken up 50 per cent by the spare wheel.

All round vision is good considering one sits low in the seat. There's a slight blind spot over the right shoulder (wing mirrors needed) and it's not too easy to judge the l/h front wing when negotiating street corners.

The V6 starts first turn of the key with the automatic choke cutting in if conditions demand. Until you depress the throttle it's quite an un-

assuming sound—then the twin exhausts (manifolds are special to this car) let out a lovely burble. Over about 4,000 rpm the noise gets loud—very loud—but it's the sort of sound that is attractive, not offensive.

Gearchange is good, with the proviso that the bulk of the box and the position of the engine way back in the frame means the lever is a little too far back to 'fall to hand', as some mags will have it. A quick change can mean an elbow clonking the seat-back or any luggage which may have slipped forward from the rear platform.

More of a nuisance than the gear lever position is the hand brake. This is too close to the gearshift, and we found ourselves always letting the brake off before selecting any gear to prevent getting tied up in knots.

PERFORMANCE

To say acceleration is good is an understatement. The Tuscan has power enough to lead many a traffic lights Grand Prix (as our figures show) and it's all usable power. Because the red line is at 5,500 rpm you never seem to be really working the engine hard and long distances are covered in effortless style at high average speeds. In traffic, second and third gears give real acceleration that gets you out of awkward situations with remarkable ease and on crowded roads there's always plenty of reserve to clear gaggles of slow moving vehicles.

Our test car—which incidentally came from Barnet Motor Company, Victoria Lane, Barnet, Herts, who are London distributors for TVR—had an overdrive wired to operate on all four gears. Over 100 mph in O/D third is more academic than anything to most people, but over 60 in O/D second proved very useful!

Top speed? We got a figure approaching 120 mph from a tight engine and we see no reason why the manufacturers claim of 125 mph should be disputed.

At high or low speeds the TVR steering is remarkably accurate. Despite the use of wide (5½ in. alloy) wheels the effort required is not great, even at parking speeds, and there's just the right amount of 'feel' through the wheel to drive properly. On some surfaces there's quite a bit of column vibration but it never gets disconcerting.

HANDLING

Handling is pretty neutral. If you're going really fast and using all the throttle available there is oversteer—but it's more a case of the power taking over, and the rear wheels moving out. This is counteracted in the usual manner with a bit of opposite lock.

All this of course happens only on the test track (and we're sticking to that story!) while on the road the Tuscan just simply goes around the corners at whatever speed you fancy. Body roll is almost non-existent and it all feels so safe.

Credit for the excellent handling,

of course, goes to the manufacturers, but we feel their choice of tyres must come in for praise. The Avon radials gripped so well that on a soaking wet Snetterton we actually had them screaming as the treads cut through the water!

If the tyres are good and the handling excellent it goes without saying the brakes are up to scratch. Pedal pressures are not high and the car stops in a straight line with very little nose dive. We couldn't find any fade during our test.

The TVR Tuscan impressed. OK, it's got faults but they're all minor ones. Like the gear lever position; the sticking window winders; and the door handles calculated to tear your finger nails. Only two big moans—a little more luggage space is needed (we hear that problem's being tackled) and a Ford type fresh air ventilation system please.

The Tuscan is obviously going to be compared with the other 3-litre Ford engined sports cars available. It doesn't have the room of the Reliant Scimitar (a car that justly deserves the Grand Touring tag) but it has superior performance. The Elva we tested a few months ago is quicker than the TVR—but the styling and sophistication is absent. Marcos?—we haven't managed to get one of those yet!

As it stands (and without any of the improvements suggested) the Tuscan is still what a modern sports car *should* be—and all too often is not. Long live the small manufacturer who thinks what his customers really want!