

BELIEVE IT-AN MGB BUICK!

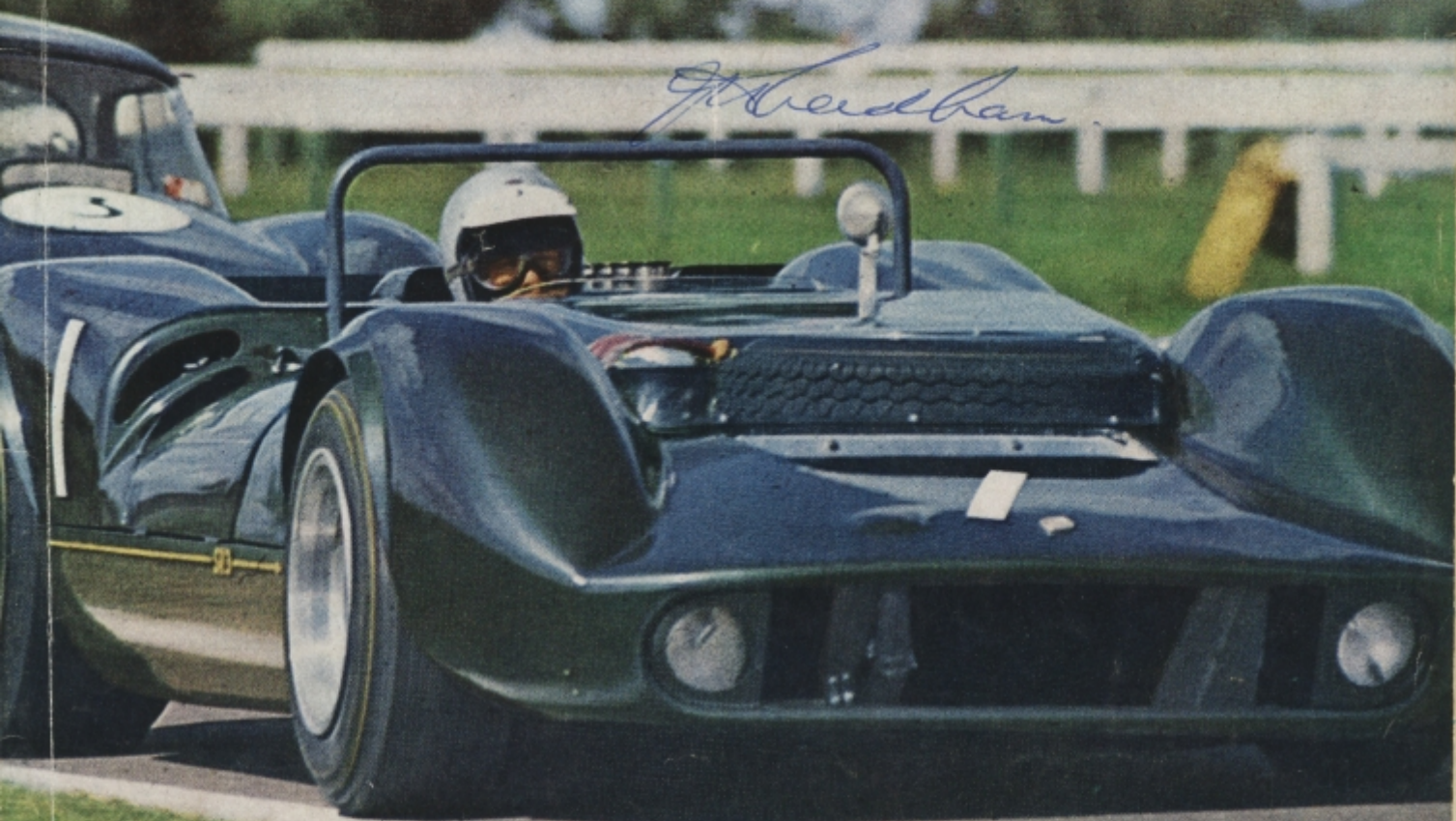
SPORTS CAR WORLD

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1967

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^ Match at the Can-Am!

We track test New Formula Fords and Holden 186S
Full Road Test Fabulous Alfa Spider

SPORTS CAR WORLD

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CORRESPONDENTS — VICTORIA: Paul Higgins. QUEENSLAND: Terry Vine. S.A.: Barry Catford. TASMANIA: John Rudd. W.A.: Tony Rees. UNITED KINGDOM: Gordon Wilkins, Doug Blain, Eoin Young, Dennis May. GERMANY: Sloniger. NORTH AMERICA: Al Bochroch, Dick Poe, Hans Tanner. SOUTH AMERICA: Ronald Hansen, Frederico Kirbus. SOUTH AFRICA: Norman Reich. JAPAN: Jack Yamaguchi. NEW ZEALAND: Grant Howard. CARTOONS: Fred Fowler. ADVERTISING: Representative: BOB GAFF, 142 Clarence St., Sydney 2000. Telephone 29-3761; Melbourne, RAY W. MARTIN, 36 Flinders Lane, 3000. Phone 63-2294 and 63-7221; Adelaide, HARRY HASTWELL, c/- ARTHUR L. SEARCY, 132-136 Gray St., 5000. Phone 51-5911; Brisbane, BEDE WILLIAMS and ASSOCIATES, 5th Floor, 160 Edward St., 4000. Phone 2-6660; Perth, 6000. D. SCHLIPALIUS, Daryl Agencies, 150 Adelaide Terrace; London, H. A. MACKENZIE, 4a Bloomsbury Square, London, WC1, Hol. 3779; Japan, MERINO INTERNATIONAL, INC., No. 20, 4-Chome, Minamihon-Machi, Higashi-ku, Osaka. Phone Osaka (251)-9736. Toronto, ALLIN ASSOCIATES, 915 Carlton Tower, 2 Carlton Street, Toronto 2, Canada. 634-2269. Printed by Kenneth Press Pty Ltd, Derby and Wetherill Streets, North Lidcombe, 2141, N.S.W., for Periodical Publications Pty. Ltd., 142 Clarence Street, Sydney 2000. DISTRIBUTORS: GORDON & GOTCH (A/SIA) LTD., MELBOURNE; PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS PTY. LTD., SYDNEY.

EDITOR IN CHIEF: Bill Tuckey
EDITOR: Rob Luck

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motoring life more livable. Little lights are everywhere, in all compartments. The automatic cigarette lighter with bell warning is handy. The heater is comforting. Dash vents are good for hood-up motoring. Town and country horns are easy on your ears, and the comprehensive gauges are good for wary drivers.

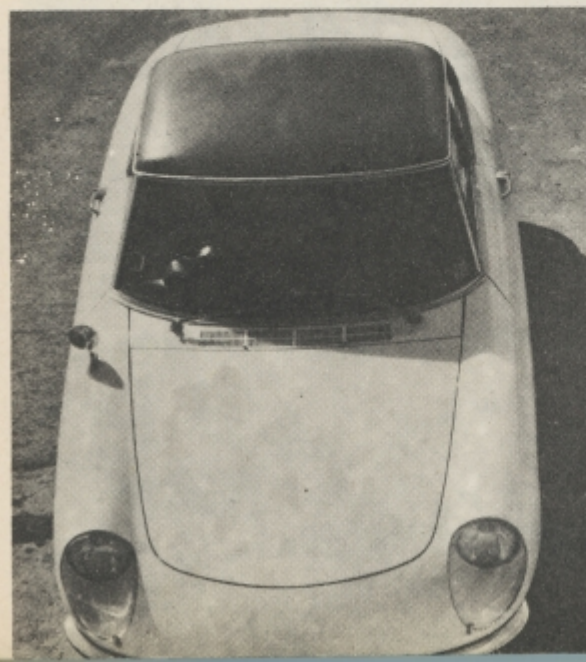
There is endless good thought in the car. It is equipped with a tonneau cover, the boot is opened by a lockable catch inside the passenger's door edge, the tool kit is comprehensive, and the jack action is sensible. The hood folds away easily but erects into a firm, unflapping cover that is weatherproof. The optional hard cover is stylish and well-fitting, if somewhat bare for the want of proper inside lining.

The only disappointing feature of the whole car was the susceptible protruding nose and tail panels between the wrap-around bumperettes. Both English and American testers complained of the same thing and it was almost heart-breaking when our car was biffed slightly in the nose by a careless parker when left unattended for only a few minutes.

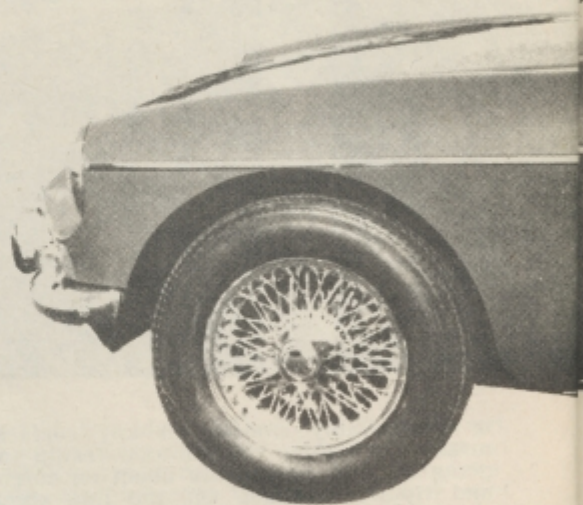
Otherwise the body-styling is very pleasing and clearly complements the car's high speed capabilities. The close-fitting hood doesn't shriek or whistle at high speed and there aren't any disturbing eddies or drafts if you lower a window — all pointing up the car's good aerodynamics. The low frontal area also helps the top speed, and with dynamometer tuning the car would feasibly get within 10 mph of its theoretical 130 mph-plus speed. The slightly drooping nose with low leading edge height also ensures a good air pressure on the front end, making for high speed stability under all conditions. Though the vinyl top is quite handsome and fits the car's lines as well as any hardtop can, we still like it best as a to-down sports car. Only then do you get the full benefit of the deep-sculptured flanks, flared headlights and slightly bovine tail.

If there is one place the Alfa Spider excels it is on the open road — and Alec Mildren has been wise to pursue his aggressive performance image for his cars. The Spider was always happiest at better than half pace, and often a little unhappy at town speeds because the gearbox has to be worked just that little bit harder than you'd think necessary for smooth running. It won't worry the average driver, and we've seen quite a few happy-faced mums and dads pottering contentedly around the suburbs. But for our money after one long-legged run on the open road — the Alfa doesn't seem nearly at home anywhere else. That's the sort of car it is. #

If you need any convincing the Alfa has compact, tidy lines try it from this view. It is a strict two-seater, with ample storage space behind the seats.



For go-manship, not show-manship,
would you believe an ...

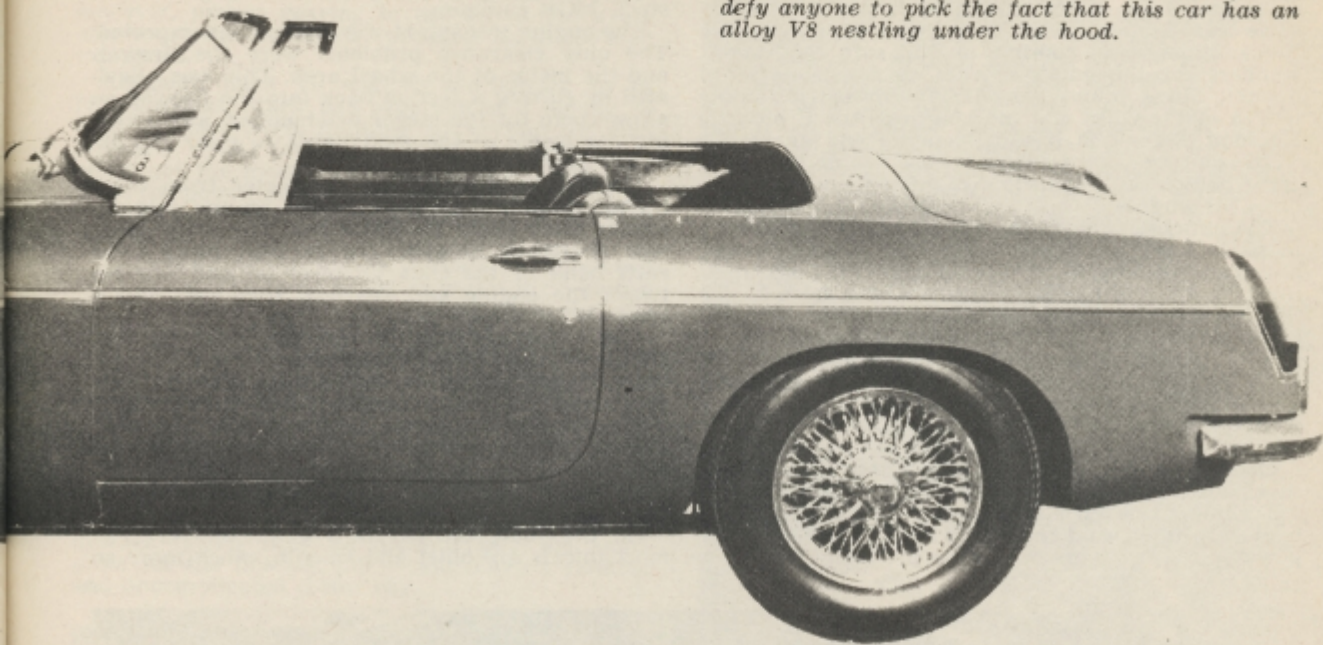


MGB BUICK?

Disguise exercise: hide one 218 cube alloy Buick V8 (don't sneer, the Repco mills started out from here) under the bonnet of an MGB with no body mods and a single exhaust outlet. Change the final drive. Now climb in and hose off everybody. Understeer on corners? You must be joking, sir: this mill is more than 50 lb. lighter than the original!

Story and pictures by Al Lauder

The finished job defies detection completely. Apart from the most enthusiastic MGB fan, we'd defy anyone to pick the fact that this car has an alloy V8 nestling under the hood.



IMAGINE yourself whistling along the highway in something like a Falcon GT. You're sitting pretty close to the speed limit, restraining the beast under your right foot, drinking in the luxurious feeling of having power on tap whenever you need it. Of course, you bought the car for the status symbol of the whole thing. The big look with big power.

You flick a glance in the rear vision mirror and note a dark green MGB in the distance. Although quite unconsciously, your top lip begins to curl, your eyelids droop a fraction — and you settle into your seat a little more. Ho hum, it feels sweet to know the Bee is going to follow your tail lights for the next umpteen miles.

Suddenly, there's a raspy horn note behind you. Another glance in the mirror. Dammit, doesn't that cloth-capped nit recognise the color of the car? Can't he read the GT insignia on the tail? And still he acts like a pompous b . . . and wants to get by.

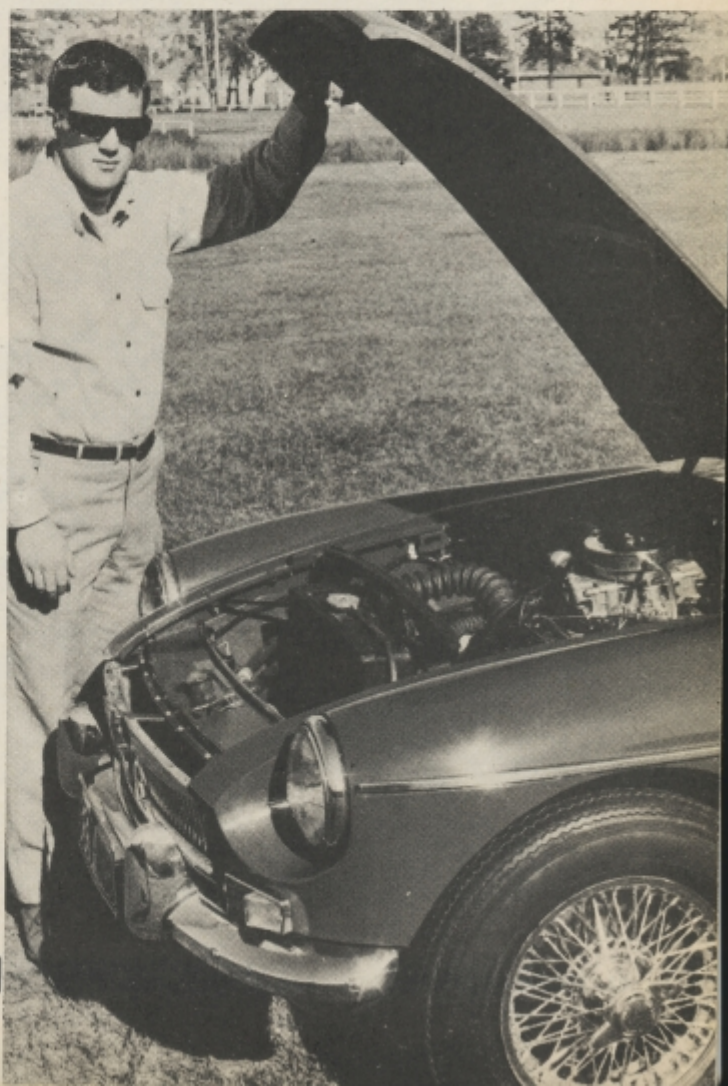
The low-slung car whips past like you were standing still, a green blur slipping by the window with a most unusual exhaust note. Your brow wrinkles. The lip curl turns into a sneer. Your right foot heads a little further for the floor. No impression. The green "thing" becomes smaller before your eyes. And smaller, and . . . gone!

Unreal. You search your mind for something you may have noticed as it passed you. Nope. Same height. Sure, it had fat wheels, but so do a lot of MGs you've seen lately. No bubble in the hood, no straps holding the bonnet shut like boy-racers do. So, what's all the noise about?

That's it. The noise. That burbling sound. He must have been going 15mph faster, yet he burbled along. Nothing like the normal Bee sound at all. Something smells, Sherlock!

The sports car in question is owned by Mark Keeley of Balgowlah Heights, Sydney. Being an importer of fine, high-powered American machinery, Mark naturally caught the V8 bug in a big way. He had this MGB sitting around home doing hack service to the shops each day and down to the club on Saturdays. Next thing he knew, he had a spare 1962, 3524 cc alloy Oldsmobile engine

Mark Keeley, high performance American car importer, proudly lifts the bonnet of his latest toy. The car is most tractable in traffic and an enthusiast's delight on the open road.



coupled to an automatic gearbox, which had set him back \$800. This incidentally is the same 218 cu in. alloy Buick on which the first Repco V8 mills were leased. As his wife liked the B anyway, and the summer was coming on (a soft top does wonders for the wife's morale on Sunday afternoons), Mark found himself idly measuring the length of the Olds, and the length of the B block. He soon discovered if the B engine and gearbox were removed, there'd be a pretty sizable hole up front, which *just happened* to be big enough for the Olds engine.

The clincher came when a friend *just happened* to be looking for a little-used 1967 MGB engine and transmission. So, \$540 later, Mark was looking into the hole where the B engine had been.

With the easy part over, the B was without power and the Olds was almost rattling its tapets to be got off the garage floor and into that vacant space. Mark measured again to make sure he hadn't dreamed the whole thing, that the Olds would actually fit into a compartment that was looking smaller every time he turned around, and decided he might as well try the lightweight V8 as sit around waiting for miracles to happen.

Technical reference showed the Olds (complete) to weigh 320 lb as against 358 lb for the original power plant, so there was little problem concern-

ing weight. However, the V8 required more cooling, overcome by grafting extra core-width to the stock MGB radiator.

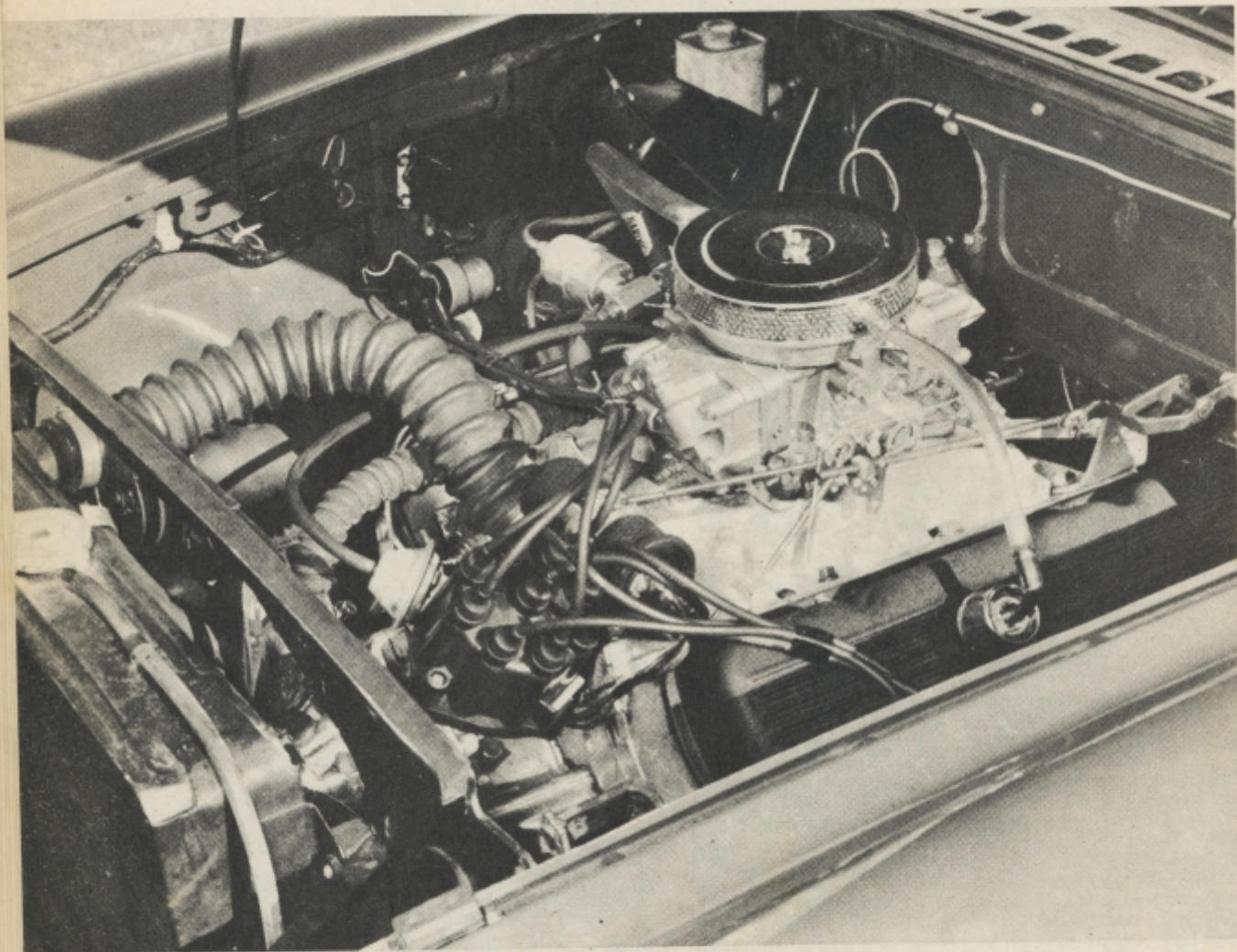
The engine transplant was easier than expected. The only clearance problems were the firewall and the inside of the wheel arch. This was alleviated by cutting a section back into the firewall to allow room for the larger bell-housing, and notching the inside of the mudguards to clear the exhaust headers.

The engine mounts were fabricated from sheet metal, while the gearbox rested on the original mount after slight modifications. The drive shaft was shortened to suit. The exhaust pipes from each bank of the Olds V8 meet on one side between the engine and gearbox, then run into a stock MGB muffler and tail pipe.

The front oil cooler, originally used for the engine oil, now does sterling service for the three-speed Hydramatic gearbox, as the engine oil runs at normal temperature without this extra cooling.

The floor shift for the automatic gearbox is in almost the same place as the former lever was, although the floor was reshaped to suit. As the mats had been chopped up during alterations, new carpeting was fashioned for the whole interior.

On the road, the car is a genuine flyer. The mechanicals are quiet and smooth, much more so



The alloy Olds engine looks like it was made for the MGB engine compartment. Its height is similar to that of the original engine, and modifications to panels were minor.

The inside panels of the mudguards were notched to clear the exhaust headers on each side of the car. This panel work, along with slight modifications to the firewall, were the only alterations in the body.

than the original MGB unit. Normal MGB rear end gearing gives a top speed of around 90 mph; however, proper gearing to use all of the available torque of the Olds V8 produces a flat 120 mph top speed.

Although most V8 engines are known to be fuel guzzlers, Mark has experienced a steady 20 mpg without even thinking of trying for fuel economy. The four-barrel Holley carburettor, while not the most economical in the world, provides the potent unit with ample food while giving reasonable economy in return for such an increase in power.

To look at the car, there's virtually no difference from stock. The front wheel arch is a little higher than normal, but that's all. The wire wheels have proved strong enough to handle the extra power, while the disc brakes haven't faltered once.

The engine sits no higher (to the top of the carburettor) than the MGB unit did, so there was no need for air scoops or hood bubbles normally found on conversions of this type.

So, the next time you're wanting extra power and torque from your car, think about a transplant before you go buying a heap of bolt-on goodies. You'll near as dammit pay the same price for the finished job — and have a reliable and uncomplicated motor car. #



You'd even have to look twice to catch this floor shift for the three speed automatic. New carpets were made after the original mats refused to conform to the new floor shape.

During the initial stages of installing the Olds. Photo shows the adequate clearance between the fan and radiator. Hose outlets were altered when the radiator was widened for extra cooling.

Later, in running order, the extensions to radiator can be seen. Front oil cooler, formerly for the engine oil, now serves the three speed Hydramatic gearbox. Engine oil runs normal temp.

