



AN MG FOR ALL SEASONS





The name MG almost universally brings to mind a two-seat sports car, a logical conclusion considering tens of thousands of two-seat MG sports cars were assembled in Abingdon from 1929 until 1980. These nimble sports cars are certainly what built MG's worldwide reputation as the creator of what became the classic sports car.

Lesser known is the fact that more than a few small sporting sedans and some very elegant four-seat and four-door saloons also were built by MG and assembled at Abingdon.

Among those was the MG Y-Type, which was launched in 1947. It would be referred to as the YA after the

introduction of its successor, the YB, years later.

While not as sporting as the MG 1100 or 1300, or as elegant as the prewar SA, VA or WA, the compact Y-Type saloon incorporated features of both its ancestors and its successors.

"...is proudly offered to discriminating motorists, built to the high MG standard... it Maintains the Breed."

Referred to as the "one and a quarter liter saloon," because of its 1250cc engine, the Y-Type, to quote the original factory announcement..."is proudly offered to discriminating motorists, built to the high MG standard... it Maintains the Breed."

The Y-Type featured here was imported to the United States and is said to have been sold new in Santa Barbara, CA. It was later purchased by well-known

British car entrepreneur Al Moss of Moss Motors in the 1970s.

Moss restored and modified the Y-Type to his liking, using it as a daily driver for many years. The most interesting modifications included TF front brakes, rear axle and brakes, and chrome 15-inch wire wheels. At one point, it was fitted with 16-inch disc wheels.

The XPAG 1250 cc engine that came with the car was replaced by a 1500 cc XPAG engine, and a Shorrock supercharger was added. The car was said to be a capable 70 mph cruiser.

A number of years later, brothers Ed and Martin Cooke, the owners of Abingdon Spares in Deep River, CT, acquired the Y-Type.

They replaced the supercharger with the twin-carb setup from a TD. "The blower had been installed with no provision for



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an air cleaner, and the single carburetor choke linkage bound on the steering column,” Ed Cooke explained.

The twin-carb setup provides comfortable cruising power for relaxed touring. They also switched the chrome wire wheels for more subdued black painted wheels.

“Despite these substantial mechanical modifications,” Cooke said, “the compact saloon still retains all of its period charm. Being a larger, heavier car than the TC and TD, the Y has a quieter, more solid feeling ride.”

“The independent front suspension and rack and pinion steering provide confidence-inspiring handling and road holding, and the Y-Type is quite capable of keeping up with modern traffic.”

The all-steel construction of the Y-Type separated it from contemporaries, while MG retained the elegant interior touches of its big prewar saloons, with beautiful wood dash and door trim.

Leather seating surfaces on well-padded bucket seats in front and armchair-like rear seating, complete with folding arm rest,

all upholstered in traditional subtly refined British taste.

Finely detailed door and window handles, interior knobs, door pockets and rear seat grab handles added to the upmarket interior feel. A full complement of gauges arrayed in classic MG octagonal bezels relayed important information to the driver seated behind a telescoping steering wheel.

Additional touches included a crank-out windshield, sliding sunroof and semaphores or trafficators on both B pillars. The rear window employs a rather rare device, the anti-dazzle shade,



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which can be pulled up by a cord above the driver's door to block the headlights of cars following behind.

One unique system retained from the prewar SA, VA and WA is the Jackall system, a self-contained hydraulic jacking system that can lift the front end, the back end, or the entire car off the ground for tire changing, and minor service.

"Driving along, the view over the long narrow bonnet, with the large, chromed headlamps nestled between separate fenders, evokes a time when driving really was more properly called "motoring," Cooke said.

Looking more deeply into the development of the Y-Type, you discover the involvement of two well-known British innovators.

"The chassis with its independent front suspension and rack and pinion steering

was designed by Alex Issigonis, who would go on to even greater fame with the development of the Mini," Cooke said.

This independent front suspension would be used, with some slight modifications over time, in all MG rear-wheel drive cars.

"The body styling, although based on the Morris 8, was brought up to a traditional MG look by Gerald Palmer, designer of the Jowett Jupiter and the mid-1950s MG Magnette."

Palmer added a more flowing rear fender and boot, as well as incorporating a classic narrow upright MG grille.

"The Y-Type is unique in the fact that it may well be the only British car in which both Issigonis and Palmer added their collective talents to a single design," Ed

Cooke said.

Launched in 1947, the Y-type was well received by the motoring press. Reviews of the car made clear that this was a not a sports car in the traditional MG mold, but rather a civilized touring saloon, capability of brisk acceleration and relaxed high speed.

"Unfortunately, it did not sell well -- a sad finale for a truly fascinating automobile..."

In 1948, a left-hand drive model of the Y was produced -- the first MG ever produced in LHD. The Y-Type saloon was never heavily promoted in the US. Instead, MG developed the YT, an open four-seat tourer, for the American market.

Unfortunately, it did not sell well -- a sad finale for a truly fascinating automobile. ○

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