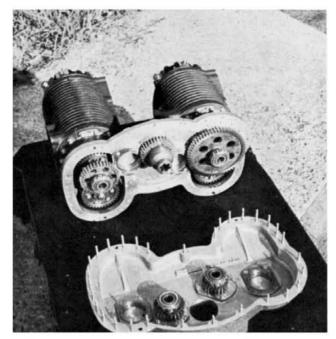


Judson vane-type blower installed on MG. This positive displacement pump falls somewhere between the Roots and the centrifugal in low rpm efficiency.

are rough, of course).

Besides these, there are currently several companies in this country and Britain that manufacture small Roots blowers for low-powered overseas models that are widely used throughout the world. Pepco, Inc. of Akron, Ohio, supplies a small Roots pump for the MG and Volkswagen. Wade Engineering of Horley, England, makes standard kits for the British Fords, Morris Minor, MG, Triumph, Standards, and a kit for the late flathead Ford-Merc V-8 can be had on Special order. North Downs Engineering of Caterham, England, is another company that builds a good Roots blower for some small European cars (Marshall-Nordec trade name).

Actually, probably a large percentage of our readers are primarily interested in big-inch engines - and these small blowers don't offer a thing in the way of conversion possibilities. They can't be turned at a high enough speed to pump a useful boost on engines of more than around 150 cu. in. If properly set up they're quite effective in raising the acceleration of small road cars - and if you're happy with a 0-60 mph time in the 12-22 second range (along with the other benefits of an economy-type car), then I can



Wade two-stage supercharger for a 2-litre "B" type E.R.A. racing car. Usually Wade Engineering makes kits to fit British Fords, Morris Minor, and MG's.

been popular in America for passenger cars. We've used it extensively for commercial diesel engines, but noise, cost and bulk problems have kept it pretty much off the Detroit stuff.

Back in the late '40s, an Italian company (Italmeccania) tried to promote a Roots blower kit for several popular U. S. stock cars (Ford, Chev. Stude, etc.), and a number were distributed. Quite a large proportion of those early I. T. units had defective gear trains, and the kickbacks ruined the venture. Shortly after, another Italian outfit (S.CO.T.) bought the I.T. facilities and attempted a comeback with the design, adding several new kits. The S.CO.T. version was a fair performer, but sales were small and this outfit quit in 1953. Quite a number of these I.T. and S.CO.T. blowers are still knocking around the country.

Meanwhile several small California specialty companies take an order today (though prices for the low-volume work

Supercharging II

POSITIVE DISPLACEMENT BLOWERS

A Shorrock blower fit-

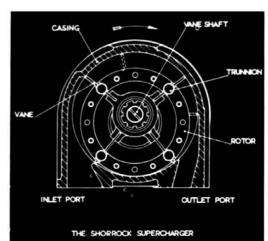
ted to an A40 engine.

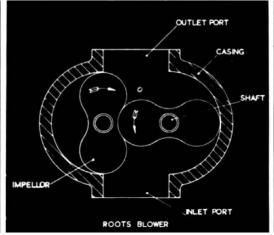
made to pack a wallop

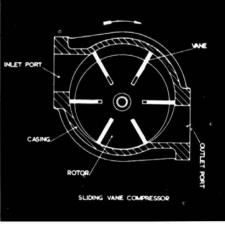
with this helper aboard.

Even the two-port

Austin mill can be







HE Roots-type positive-displacement blower has never

advertised semi-standard kits utilizing GMC truck blowers that could be adapted to certain U.S. stock engines. These included SpeedoMotive, Jack McAfee Motors, and Horns Equipment Co. Far as I know, any of these outfits will still Wade Roots type blower for Diesel use. Angular inlet and outlet ducts reduce noise from sudden bursts of air between rotor lobes. Principle is same as helical gears.

recommend small-inch Roots supercharging. For big, 300-cu. in., engines our field of blower choices is limited.

A Roots blower is what we call a "positive-displacement" pump - that is, it theoretically pumps a certain number of cubic inches of air each revolution. We have two interlocking rotors (with either two or three "lobes") revolving in an oval casing, with small clearances of .003 to .007 of an inch between the rotors and between rotor and casing wall. A gear train maintains the inter-rotor clearance. Air is scooped in at the inlet opening on one side of the casing, carried around by the rotors, and discharged into the outlet duct on the opposite side (see drawings). Obviously there is no internal compression here. A Roots blower builds up a manifold boost pressure by merely pumping more air than the pistons displace each revolution of the crank (at normal pressure). We select blower sizes by just comparing the blower displacement with piston displacement and gearing the blower to deliver the desired excess air.

Now this type of compression - engineers call it "isometric," or constant volume - is relatively inefficient; much more so than the "adiabatic," or variable compression process in the vane and centrifugal superchargers. This means that our Roots is going to absorb more horsepower in pumping a given weight of air at a given pressure, and it will heat up the air more during the compression process. For instance, suppose we want to compress 25 pounds of air per minute at an initial temperature of 75°F, to a gauge pressure of six pounds. An average-size Roots blower would require about 21 hp to drive it and would raise the temperature of the air to 170°F. . . . while a typical automotive centrifugal would absorb only 15 hp and deliver 145° air temperature. This may not seem like a big difference on paper, but I can assure you you've got two entirely different animals on your hands when you try to adapt them on a road or race engine.

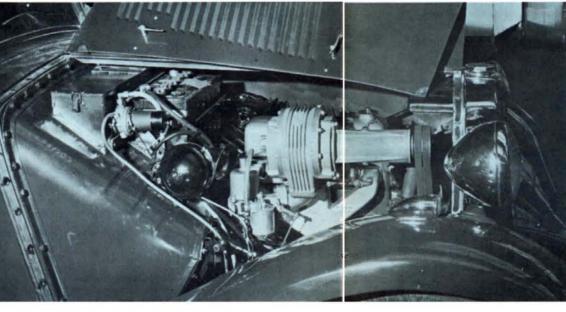
When we try to get into really high boosts (over 10 or 12 pounds) with a Roots, especially with a large-displacement engine, the power requirement quickly gets out of hand, complicating the drive gear problem and subtracting that much power from the rear wheels. A power requirement of over 90 hp is entirely possible with a good-size Roots blower pumping 12 pounds on a big engine. And the 200°F, air temperature rise generated by this 12 pounds compression doesn't simplify combustion problems. Our fuel octane requirement at medium rpm is very high above about six pounds boost with a Roots.

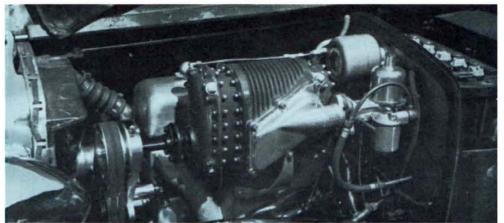
Even the oft-quoted clinching "advantage" of the Roots blower — the good boost pressure at low speeds — has probably been overrated. Theoretically we should get a constant pressure at all speeds. In practice, though, due to the clearance between rotors and casing, we get a substantial leakage of air from the high-pressure side back to the inlet. This leakage is pretty much independent of blower speed, but depends mostly on the clearances and discharge pressure. Result is that full-throttle boost pressure drops off quite rapidly as rpm is reduced, since the leakage is a larger and larger proportion of the air pumped. (Some curves show the relationship.) The boost curve of the best Roots blower is still considerably inferior to that of the variable-speed McCulloch.

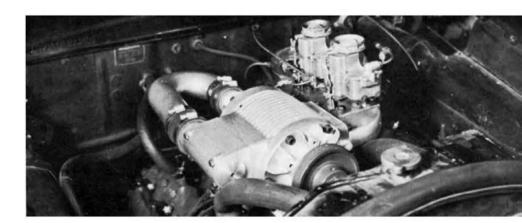
Admittedly, however, the drive and regulation of the latter are still far from rugged enough for full-bore competition, though they will stand up on the road. When the chips are down the Roots layout still scores over the straight



RIGHT: Single stage Wade Roots-type installation gives Triumph 1800 much needed energy. BELOW: Shorrock supercharger (vane type) fitted to T-series MG.







One of the latest Judson blowers, anchored to a flathead '50 Ford, is fed by two Hollys. This neat setup can be adapted to a later overhead valve engine, but should not be used on plants much exceeding 250 cubic inches.

centrifugal in bottom-end boost and diminished "shock" drive loadings, while it's also free from the internal lubrication problems of the vane-type blower. Its bearings and gearing can be made to live, and it's relatively easy to do your own experimenting with clearances and drive ratios.

The fact that a large number of various sizes and models of Roots blowers units are available around the country as junk or used equipment, at very reasonable prices, is bound to attract a continuing stream of supercharging enthusiasts. Here are a few hints for those who want to adapt non-standard Roots installations.

The selection of a drive speed ratio with a Roots blower is a simple matter of arithmetic, involving only three factors — engine piston displacement, desired boost pressure, and the theoretical displacement of the blower (per revolution). I've wracked my brain to think of a way to save you this little bit of pencil-and-paper calculation by presenting the data on a single graph; but the graph could only show drive ratios for one boost pressure and you'd have to correct for other boosts by arithmetic anyway . . . so let's just work from a single formula.

First, though, we must express our boost pressure in terms of a "pressure ratio," relative to atmospheric. (That is, atmospheric pressure — average 14.5 pounds/sq. in. — would be a pressure ratio of 1.0, and a gauge boost of 14.5 pounds would be a pressure ratio of 2.0.) So let's work with these standard pressure ratios:

For bread-and-butter road engine.. 6 lbs.; 1.41 pressure ratio Maximum on pump gas..................10 lbs.; 1.69 pressure ratio Competition engine on alcohol......14 lbs.; 1.97 pressure ratio

Then we need to know the displacement of our blower. In 99 cases out of 100 you'll be using one of eight models of Roots blowers, as they are by far the most widely available in this country, at least in the sizes we're interested in. (Most of these blowers are currently being used in truck or industrial diesel engines, and, incidentally, the models listed under the Borg-Warner name here are now being manufactured by Miehle-Dexter of Racine, Wisconsin. Here's a run-down on available blower models and approximate displacements per revolution.

MODEL REV. CU. IN.

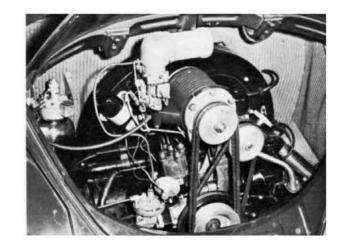
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GENERAL MOTORS CORP.

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4-71 250
6-71 310

BORG-WARNER
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(Continued on page 62)



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Supercharging II

(Continued from page 45)

Okay. Now here's the formula that gives us our drive speed ratio (for four-cycle engines only):

 $\ddot{R} = P \times D$

 $1.6 \times V$

where R is the speed ratio; P is the pressure ratio; D is the engine piston displacement in cubic inches; and V is the blower displacement in cu. in./ rev. Let's take an example. Suppose you have an engine of 331 cu. in. and want a boost of six pounds (1.41 pressure ratio) using a GMC 4-71 blower (250 cu. in./rev.). Our ratio would be $1.41 \times 331/1.6 \times 250 = 1.17$. In other words, the blower would have to run at 1.17 times crankshaft speed to give six pounds at peak rpm on this engine. And that's about all there is to it.

Maximum safe rpm limits on various Roots blowers are not well established. The manufacturers "red-line" them at anywhere from 4000 to 10,000 rpm, depending mostly on rotor diameter. The critical situation here is due to a literal stretching of the rotors under centrifugal force; as speed is increased the lobes will "grow" until the clearances are soaked up and there is direct metal-to-metal rubbing contact. This can wreck the blower in a few seconds. Very small Roots blowers (under 100 cu. in./rev.) are generally safe up to 10,000 rpm in standard trim. Medium sizes from 150 to 250 cu. in. are generally okay to 8000. Large blowers of over 300 cu. in. should be red-lined at 6000 rpm. However, by shaving, .008-.010 of an inch of stock off the outside edges of the rotor lobes you can safely extend these rpm limits at least 50 percent (though with a considerable loss in boost pressure at low and medium speeds). A good rule of thumb for absolute limits for competition engines is to limit rotor tip speed to 350 ft./sec. This would represent about 13,000 rpm for six inch diameter rotors. (The formula for calculating it is: Safe rpm = 80,000/rotor diameter.)

Like the Roots, the vane-type supercharger is a positive-displacement pump, and it has not been widely used in this country for internal-combustion engines (of course, there are many industrial uses for blowers except on engines). At the present time, only the Judson Research & Manufacturing Co.

of Conshohocken, Pa., is producing a vane-type blower for cars in this country. They have kits for the MG and Volkswagen, and they still stock their original kit for the flathead Ford-Merc, introduced in 1953.

Vane-type superchargers have been popular for small engines in Britain for at least 25 years. Gardner used a Shorrock vane blower pumping 30 pounds boost to get 200 mph out of his 66-cu. in. MG Special. Shorrock Superchargers, Ltd. are still very much in business in Coventry, supplying standard bolt-on kits for a number of smaller British cars - MG, Austin. Morris, Triumph, etc. They even claim to have a blower size that can furnish a usable boost on engines up to 270 cu. in. displacement. London houses Carburettors Ltd., who make the Arnott low-pressure vane pump in sev-

A good vane-type blower will fall somewhere between the Roots and centrifugal in overall efficiency. Essentially, we have an eccentric (off center) drum inside a cylindrical casing (see drawings). Four or more blades extend through slots in the drum and sweep the inside of the casing, scooping air from the inlet to outlet duct. The general principle of "positive displacement" is similar to that of a Roots blower, but with one important difference: Due to the eccentric location of the inner dru, the volume of the air channel from inlet to outlet is squeezed down as the vanes rotate. This gives a certain degree of internal adiabatic compression, which is a much more efficient process than the isometric Roots compression. Result: Less horsepower required to compress a given weight of air per minute to a given pressure, and less air temperature build-up.

The key to the success of any modern vane-type blower is the method of controlling the motion of the vanes relative to the drum and outside casing. In the early days, they just gave centrifugal force a free hand and let the vanes drag against the casing. Some real going racing engines were built under this setup, but it just wasn't practical for the road. Noise was excessive, there was a lot of friction, wear, the driver had to mix oil in his gas to lubricate the blower, and any appreciable dirt in the air would clobber the blower in a hurry.

Most modern vane blowers feature some form of controlled vane motion. Judson and Shorrock approach the problem from different angles. Judson constructs his vanes of a synthetic, nonmetallic material and allows appreciable rubbing contact. But the vanes are restrained at an angular setting S_{pecial}^{ummer}



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(Continued on page 66)



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relative to the inner drum, so that centrifugal force components tend to balance where the vanes pivot in slots in the drum. Rubbing pressure where the vanes sweep the outer casing is very low; at points where the pressure is higher the rubbing speed is low, so friction is not excessive. Drip-feed oiling is used. The Shorrock design (see drawings) has the radial vanes propelled around by the eccentric drum, but they are carried in a frame rotating on ball trunnion bearings. Their location does not depend on centrifugal force. There is light rubbing where the vanes pass through the slots in the dru, but there is theoretically no contact with the casing.

The general performance characteristics of a vane-type blower are quite similar to those of a Roots. We don't have quite as much back-leakage past the vanes, but there is definitely a radical drop in pressure output at low rpm. Power requirements for a given pumping rate and pressure will run about 15 percent less than a Roots. One definite advantage-we can pump higher pressures with a vane blower than a Roots, due to the internal compression. A Roots is not practical much above 15 pounds boost (due to excessive hp requirement and heat build-up), but a vane can push at least 25 pounds with fair efficiency.

The problem of calculating drive speed ratios here is the same as with the Roots, and we use the same formula presented in Part II (that is, $R = \dot{P} \times D/1.6 \times V$). Our usable boost or pressure ratios will be a bit different, though. Around six pounds (1.41 pressure ratio) is still good for our "bread-and-butter" road engine, but we should be able to get away with 12 pounds. (1.83 ratio) for racing on pump gas . . . and pressures up to 20-25 pounds. (2.4-2.7 pressure ratios) are practical with alky.

There's just one little bug: Vanetype blowers are considerably more critical as to safe rpm limits than the Roots pump. This is because decent static and dynamic balance is next to impossible to attain on four vanes; so vibration forces are almost always rough - and they go up as the square of rpm. Shorrock red-lines their small blower at 6500 rpm, and that for only short bursts; the larger models must not exceed 5000 at any time. Apparently the Judson layout, using light synthetic vanes and a balanced mounting, is more comfortable at high speeds. He doesn't quote any rigid rpm limits for his blowers-and claims to have tested his small Model 26 unit for 2000 hours at 8000 rpm.

Anyway, if you're interested in ex-

perimenting with this type of supercharger, here are the displacements of the more popular units available:

JUDSON	Cu. In.
"26"	51
"178"	186
SHORROCK	
S-75	46
S-142	86
S-250	151

Just a quick example: Suppose you have a Judson 178 blower model (186 cu. in./rev.) and you want to adapt it for 12 pounds boost (1.83 pressure ratio) on a 210-cu. in. Jaguar competition engine. Your drive ratio, from the earlier formula, would be

 $R = 1.83 \times 210 = 1.29:1$

1.6×186

This would mean, when you're winding the crank to its maximum 5800 rpm, the blower would be turning $5800 \times 1.29 = 7500$ rpm. Charlie Judson says it's okay . . . so maybe

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