

## Road Research Report:

## MASERATI 3500 G.T.

► The Maserati 3500 G.T. costs a lot of money. Of the cars in this five-figure price range, one claims simply to be The Best Car in the World and another to be The Standard of the World. In that particular field those two have little competition except each other and seem easy to judge since the requirements are so simple: the luxury sedan must be extraordinarily quiet and comfortable, reasonably fast and nearly perfect in detail finish. Racing cars (which cost as much and sometimes more) have equally rigorous standards; the question of which one is best is fought out on the race tracks with rarely a clear-cut decision.

With the 3500 G.T., the Maserati firm is in that nearly impossible position of building a car that is something of both, yet neither. Imagine, if you will, a "perfect" racing car widened to carry two and clothed in near-limousine elegance and luxury — and to sell at the same price as either.

Other firms, to make matters trying for them and delightful for buyers and onlookers alike, provide as much competition here as the pure-blooded sister cars get on the track. There's Aston, Mercedes and, built nearby, Ferrari, each with considerable history of experience in this contentious field. After all, when a car costs *this* much, it must come mighty close to being the very best car in its field regardless of price.

And yet, in this field of grand touring car (of the not-for-serious racing variety), one man's best is another's poison in the strongest manner. That's equally true in building cars that are meant for racing, but making minor adjustments to the scuderia's number one car is far, far simpler than shifting the contours of the leather-covered foam-rubber-filled reclining seats. Build to order? Even the customer can't afford to stand still while the workmen measure and hammer and saw and modify.

Yes, the \$10,000-and-up sports car market is a pernickety one. The buyers demand perfection — and can't afford it.

### ENGINE DESIGN HISTORY

Ever since they took over ownership and operation

Cylinder head in background is that of A6G/2000A 2-liter Maserati, from which the 3500 G.T. engine is descended. Head in foreground is that of the interim 350S sports-racing engine, which used seven cam bearings and the screw-on tappets later replaced by Jaguar-type inverted buckets.

of the Maserati plant in 1937, Adolfo Orsi and his son Omer were anxious to build a touring car. No doubt they had ideas about making the business pay. After the war they tried several designs but none was impressive. In 1953 Ing. Colombo, working in consultation with Maserati engineer Bellentani, came up with a very fine two-liter sports-racing car, the A6GCS, which provided the inspiration for a six-cylinder touring car design. The first examples of this A6G/2000 were built in 1954, and shown at Geneva and Paris.

This new touring engine kept the 76.5 x 72 mm dimensions, the seven main bearings and the overhead valve inclinations (36° intake, 41° exhaust) of its sports predecessor. Instead of gears to drive the twin overhead cams, though, it had a simple chain system driven by a half-speed gear from the nose of the crankshaft. Instead of the traditional Maserati finger cam followers, it used the Alfa Romeo method: a mushroom tappet screwed directly onto the valve stem and kept from rotating by valve spring pressure. This system was probably brought over to Maserati by Colombo, who worked with the original proponent of the idea — Jano — at Alfa.

At first the A6G/2000 had single ignition and a single twin-throat carb, but this didn't give brilliant performance. The sports car's dual ignition and triple twin-throat Webers were restored and the finalized A6G/2000A was introduced at Geneva in March of 1955. This proved to be an enjoyable car but not widely salable or as good an all-rounder as the 3-liter Europa Ferrari that was making a big impression at that time. The success they'd had in racing the 250F Grand Prix car and designing the 300S sports car inspired the Orsis to put Bellentani to work on a new 3½-liter touring engine that could also be used in racing, and — in parallel — on a 4½-liter full-racing V8. If the 3½-liter could do the job (outracing Ferrari and outselling him too) they'd be all set, but they wanted the V8 as a backstop.

### CREATING THE 3.5

From the start the 3½-liter, or 350S as it was then known, had a remarkably long stroke with dimensions of 86 x 100 mm. It's likely they wanted to keep the engine as short as possible. Bellentani may also have been put off by the poor results he got with some very

oversquare engines he tried while working toward the 300S.

In every respect the 350S engine was derived much more from the two-liter touring engine than from the racing 250F and 300S sixes. Again it had seven main bearings, 3 inches in diameter. Con rod journals measured  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches. It had the same two-stage gear/chain drive to the cams, and the same Alfa-type screwed-tappet valve gear. This gave it a remarkable kinship to the Alfa Romeo *Disco Volante* engine of 1953, which had the same displacement (88 x 98 mm), the same drive and the same valve gear. Valves on the 350S were symmetrically inclined at 37° to the vertical.

Simplifications were effected. Passages for cold water entry and oil drainage were cast in place instead of made separate, as on the two-liter. From the back of the cast-in cold water gallery a pipe was fitted to carry coolant direct to the head, to ports just above the exhaust valve guides and seats, as on the 250F and 300S. First distributors, later magnetos were driven off the back ends of the camshaft, just as on the two-liter.

Originally there were racing features too. The water pump and generator were gear driven. The clutch was racing-type multiple disc. A dry sump lubrication system was used, with the scavenge and pressure pumps mounted externally in front of the crankcase and joined to the engine's veins and arteries by much exposed pipe-work. Breathing through 45 mm Weber carbs, this engine was developed to give 276 bhp at 5700 rpm, as of July 10, 1956. Its peak torque was 263 pound-feet at 4500, with an amazingly flat curve that held 260 pound-feet between 3800 and 5200 rpm. That peak torque corresponds to a peak bmep of 187 psi. The look-alike *Disco Volante* Alfa engine developed a similar 270 bhp at a higher 6500 rpm, on an 8.2-to-one compression ratio instead of the Maser's 9 to one.

#### BAPTISM IN COMPETITION

The 350S engine first competed at Dakar in March of 1956, when Behra turned some very fast practice laps but used a 300S in the race. Then it was probably fitted in a 300S chassis, but by April and the Mille Miglia a completely new chassis had been built, actually to suit the still-gestating 4½-liter V8. Two cars were planned but Taruffi turned his down and Moss's was completed just in time for the Mille Miglia, in which it understeered right off the road.

The second 350S was later completed and sold to Piotti. It was apparently fitted with a 300S gearbox instead of the massive 450S unit, though its chassis dimensions were those of the 450S. This car raced but retired at Bari in July, appeared for practice only in Sweden in August, 1956, then managed to place fifth in the Buenos Aires sports car race in January, 1957 with Piotti and Bonomi driving. Thereafter it raced no more, but may have served as a test bed for components for the touring edition.

During 1956 parallel development went ahead on a milder version of the 350S, now under the direction of Ing. Alfieri. At first this consisted of fitting a roomy

wet sump, leaving off the scavenging oil pump and attaching a large air cleaner. Later it involved a top-to-bottom redesign before the 3500 G.T. prototype was first shown at Geneva on March 20, 1957. In his rework Alfieri stressed "engineering expressly for street use in the United States. Emphasis was placed on developing substantial torque at low rpm and on a light clutch and smooth-functioning gearbox." Clearly Maserati knew where such cars could be sold.

#### VALVE GEAR REWORKED

Toward the end of its racing development, the 350S had been fitted with special external oil galleries to spray lubricant across the cams and tappets, indicating that the original screw-type tappet wasn't satisfactory from a wear standpoint. Perhaps this was why Alfieri replaced it with the heavier Jaguar-style piston-type tappet the 3500 G.T. now uses. While the 350S needed seven camshaft support bearings, the new 3500 G.T. arrangement called for only four.

The direct water feed to the cylinder head vanished, though the ports above the valves remained. The two separate distributors were removed from the backs of the cams and combined in a single dual-coil unit driven by skew gearing from the front of the crankshaft. Conventional belt drive to the water pump and generator was adopted, but the racing-style external oil pump remained. The main oil gallery was newly integral-cast, and the size of the wet sump was reduced by about one third from the prototypes. A more ordinary clutch was substituted for the racing-type assembly, and given hydraulic actuation.

At the Geneva announcement the 3500 G.T. power was given as 226 bhp at 5500 rpm, but they were still working on the cam contours to get that low-end torque. By Turin Show time late in 1957 this was done, with 40°-60° intake timing and 65°-30° exhaust timing. Announced power was now 230.

With the engine in this trim and tune, the body was standardized and production begun. These Masers became almost common in Italy by late 1958, and SCI tested the first one in the States in the November, 1958 issue. Through 1959 Alfieri learned about his design, learned about the art of building a good touring engine — something Maserati had never done before. During the '59-'60 winter he carried out another thorough revision, targeted on lower cost, greater smoothness and enhanced reliability. Power was no problem.

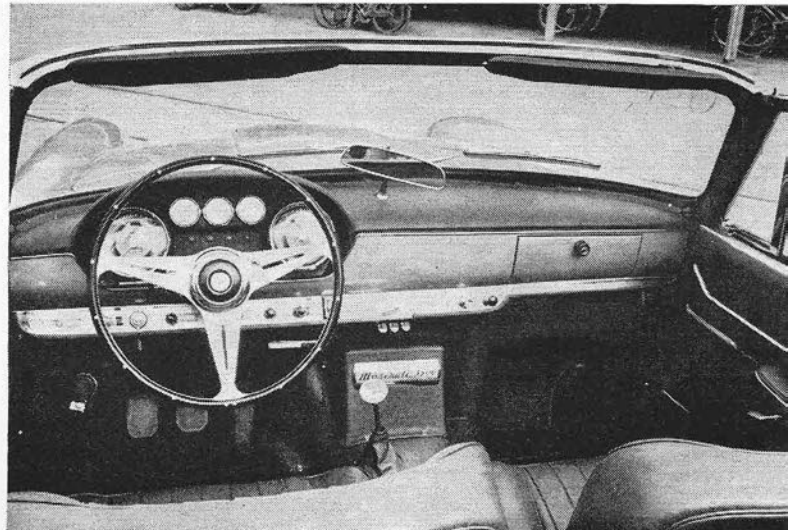
#### FURTHER TAMED FOR TOURING

A new cylinder head casting was drawn up, eliminating the vestigial water inlet ports and doing away with the traditional Maserati fairing around the intake valve guide. The latest Weber 42 DCOE6 carburetors replaced the earlier 42 DCE units, both having a 42 mm bore. An 8.5 to one compression ratio was standardized and the pistons were given a thicker crown and lower skirts that are cut away to clear the crank counterweights.

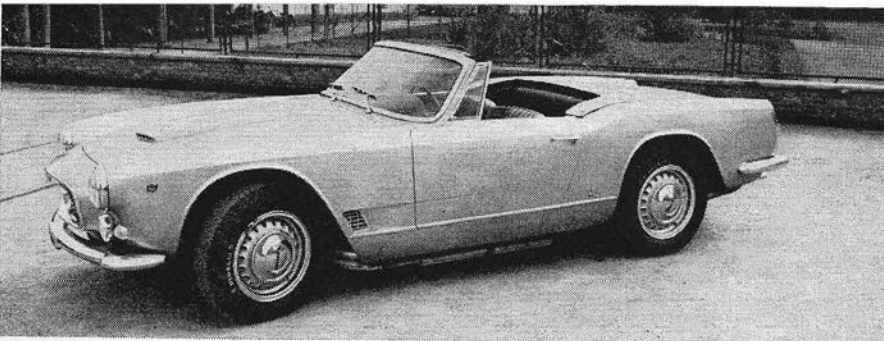
As the cross-section drawing shows, the cylinder liners are dry over most (*Continued on page 86; data overleaf*)



Access to rear seats is enhanced by a front seat that slides forward as its back hinges forward. The centrally-placed ashtray is convenient.



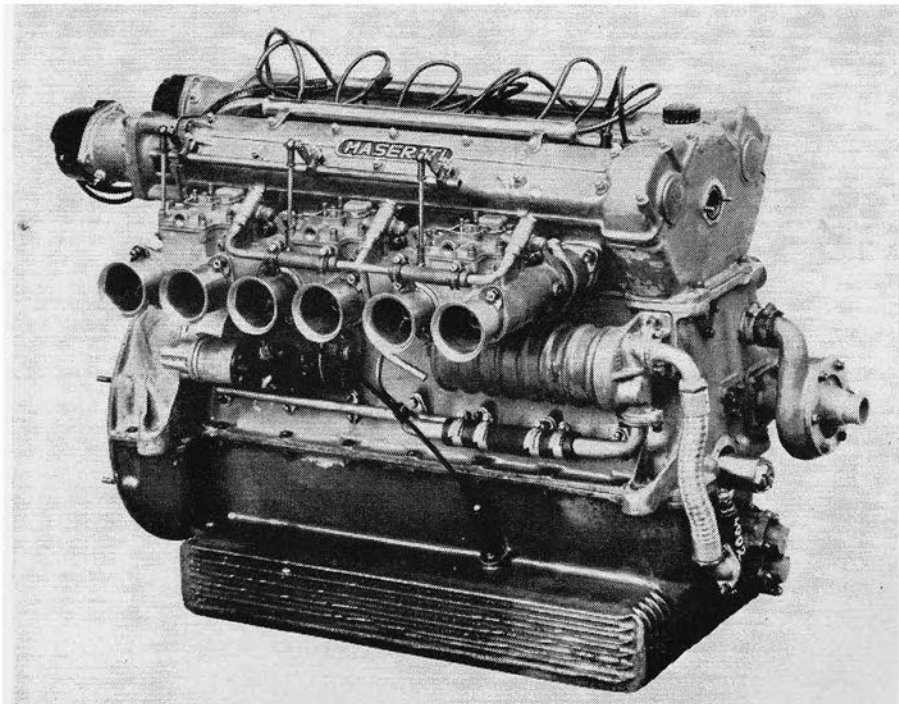
Vignale's dash layout for the roadster differs greatly from Touring's coupe panel, though it uses the same British-made Jaeger instruments.



Racy Maserati roadster is built on shorter chassis by Vignale. Like the coupe, it can have wire wheels fitted instead of discs, and a trim detachable hardtop is also in the 3500 G.T. catalogue.



Knob on ZF box has typical German look. The ashtray lid carries a tiny Maserati emblem.



Original 350S engine differed vastly from production 3500 G.T. unit. This shows wet-sump version, which still has racing-type external oil lines and gallery, and dual distributors on backs of cams.



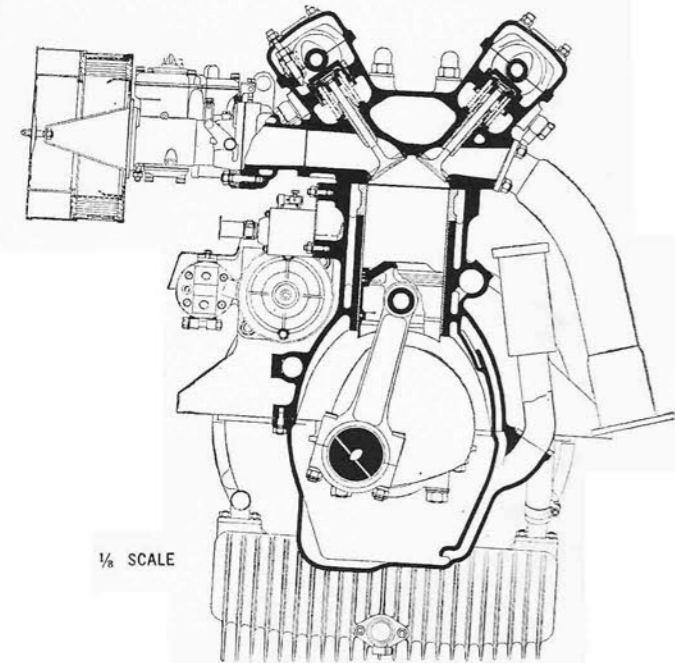
You don't have to use the key to open the gas cap lid, but it does beat broken fingernails.

# Road Research Report: MASERATI 3500 G.T.

Importers: Rallye Motors Inc.  
46 Sea Cliff Ave.  
Glen Cove, L. I., N. Y.

Maserati Representatives of Calif.  
11941 Wilshire Blvd.  
Los Angeles 25, California

Number of U. S. dealers: 4  
Planned annual production: 600-750  
Dollar value of spare parts in U.S.: \$25,000



1/8 SCALE

## PRICES:

Basic Price	\$11,400
Wire wheels	510
Price as tested	11,910
Other model:	
Convertible	12,300

## OPERATING SCHEDULE:

Fuel recommended	Premium
Mileage	11-20 mpg
Range on 21-gallon tank	230-420 miles
Oils recommended	Summer: SAE 50, Winter: SAE 40
Crankcase capacity	9 1/2 quarts
Change at intervals of	2400 miles
Number of grease fittings	17
Lubrication interval	2400 miles
Most frequent maintenance, interval recommended:	Change oil filter cartridge, clean and reset points and plugs—2400 miles

## ENGINE: (Tilted 4°, aluminum alloy crankcase and head)

Displacement	213 cu in, 3485 cc
Dimensions	Six cyl, 3.39 in bore, 3.94 in stroke
Valve gear:	Chain-driven double overhead camshafts, inclined valves at 75° included angle
Compression ratio	8.5 to one
Power (SAE)	260 bhp @ 5500 rpm
Torque	260 lb-ft @ 4000 rpm
Usable range of engine speeds	1000-5800 rpm
Corrected piston speed @ 5500 rpm	3530 fpm

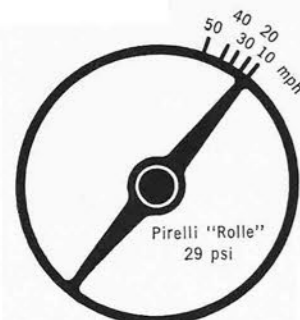
## CHASSIS:

Wheelbase	102.3 in (Convertible: 98.4 in)
Tread	F 54.7, R 53.6 in
Length	188.1 in (Convertible: 175.5 in)
Ground clearance	5.9 in
Suspension:	F, ind., coil, wishbones, anti roll bar; R, rigid axle, leaf springs, 2 upper outboard trailing arms, one R.H. lower one, anti-roll bar
Turns, lock to lock	4.2
Turning circle diameter between curbs	40 ft
Tire and rim size	6.50 x 16, 16 x 5.00
Pressures recommended	24 psi touring, 27 psi high speeds
Brakes; type, swept area	F 12 in disc, R 12 in drum; 524 sq in
Curb weight (full tank)	3160 lbs
Percentage on driving wheels	51%

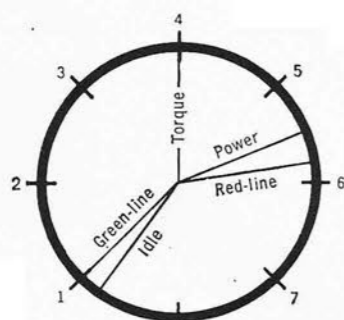
## DRIVE TRAIN: (Z-F gearbox, Salisbury axle)

Gear	Syncho?	Ratio	Step	Overall	Mph per 1000 rpm
Rev	No	3.18	—	11.24	—7.5
1st	Yes	3.00	63%	10.62	8.0
2nd	Yes	1.84	42%	6.51	13.1
3rd	Yes	1.30	30%	4.60	18.6
4th	Yes	1.00	—	3.54	24.2

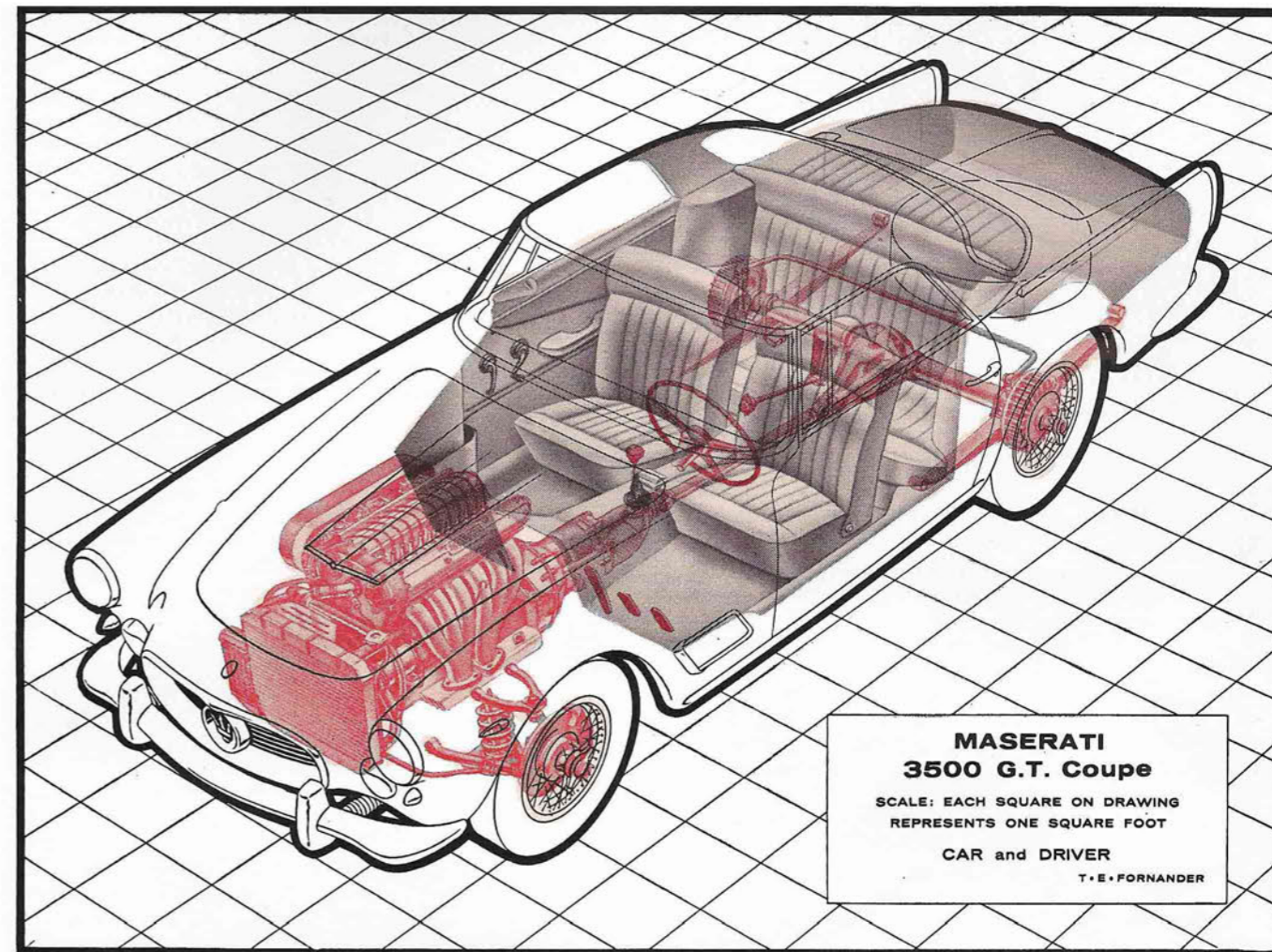
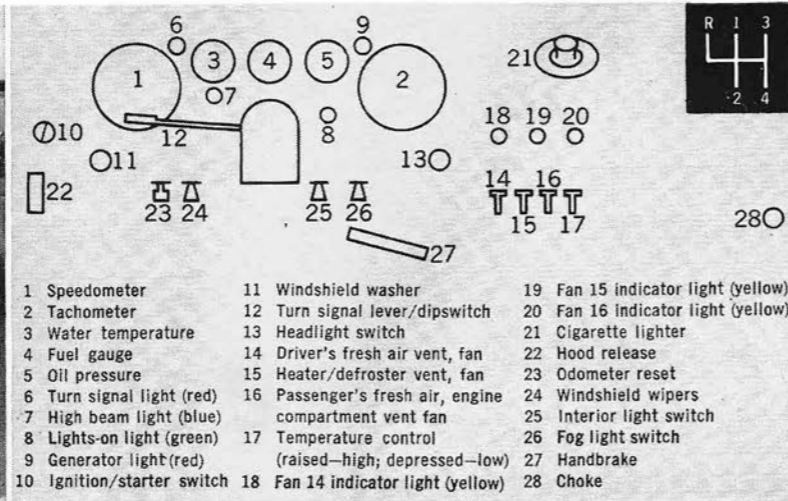
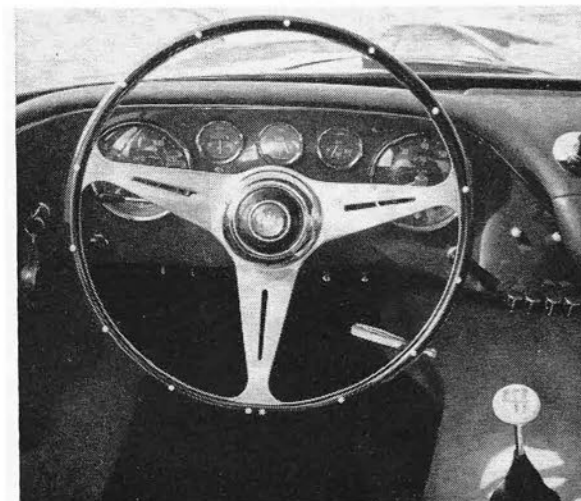
Final Drive Ratios: 3.54 to one std., 3.31, 3.77, 4.09 optional.



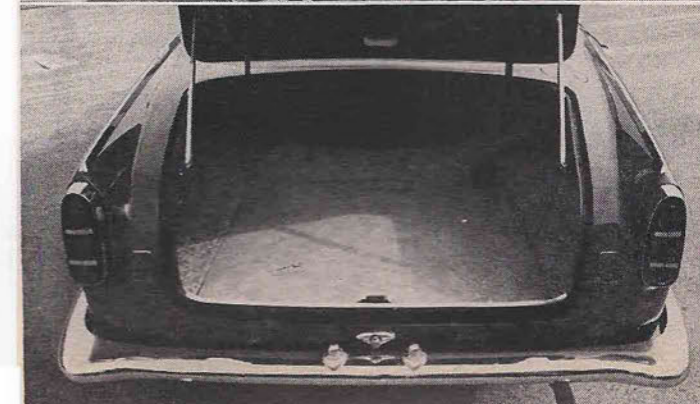
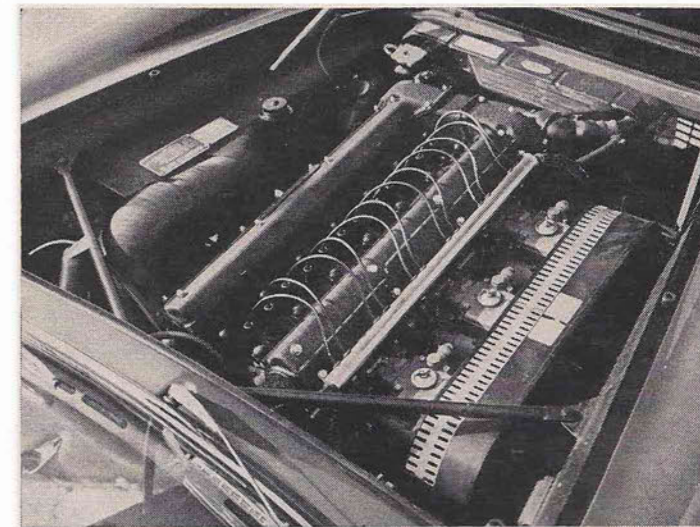
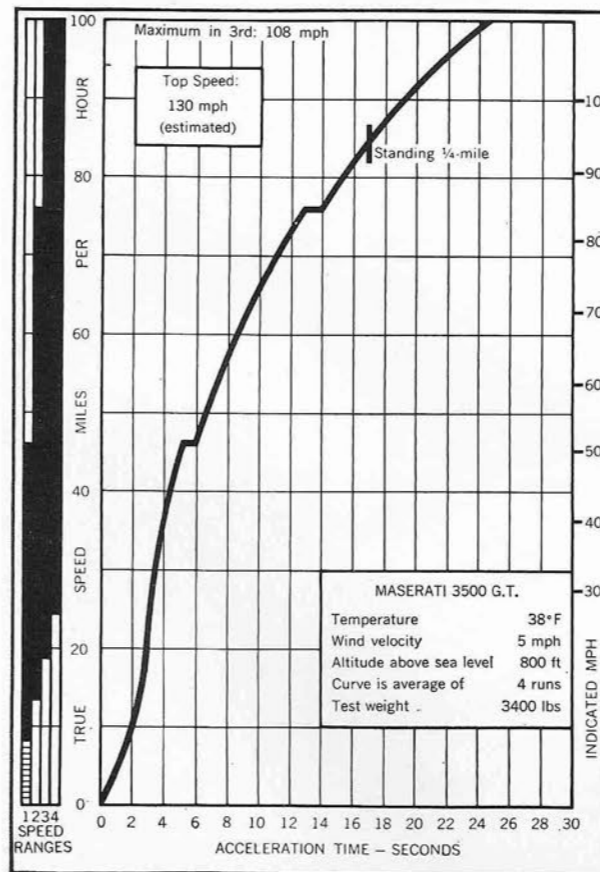
Steering Behavior  
Wheel position to maintain 400-foot circle at speeds indicated.

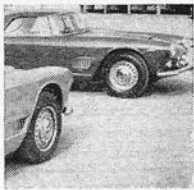


Engine Flexibility  
RPM in thousands



**MASERATI  
3500 G.T. Coupe**  
SCALE: EACH SQUARE ON DRAWING  
REPRESENTS ONE SQUARE FOOT  
CAR and DRIVER  
T. E. FORNANDER





## ROAD RESEARCH REPORT: MASERATI- 3500 GT

Continued  
from page 72

of their length and wet only over a small upper portion. On the two-liter engine these fit extremely tightly, with 0.004 inch interference. On the 3500 G.T. this was reduced to 0.0015 inch, and on the latest engine a very small O-ring rests in a groove in the sleeve half an inch from the bottom.

The top flange of the block was made thicker, next to the head joint, and a Silentbloc mounted at the rear was newly cast as part of the block. For the first time the crankshaft was fitted with a vibration damper, at the front end. To make room for this, the external racing-type oil pump had to be relocated. This job was simplified by adopting an Eaton Gerotor oil pump, smaller in overall dimensions than the gear-type pump it replaced.

Earlier the oil filter had been horizontal under the carbs, nearly impossible to service. It was moved to the back of the engine and placed vertically so it's easy to remove from the underside of the car. At the same time its inlet pipe—from the oil pump—was moved inside the engine, and its outlet made integral with the main oil gallery.

Oil may have tended to run warm before, on Italy's new superhighways, for the sump was given much deeper finning and a new oil circulating pump was fitted. This is a simple little fan-type pump, belt-driven at slightly faster than engine speed. It circulates oil from the sump through a cooler at the right of the water radiator, and sends it back to the sump again. In the manner of a centrifugal blower it pumps a lot more oil at higher revs than it does at low speeds.

Chain tension had always been applied by spring-loading the left-hand idler sprocket, but now that sprocket merely spins on an eccentrically-mounted shaft which can be rotated to achieve a certain amount of chain tension, then locked in place.

### ENGINE BEHAVIOR TODAY

For all its development, the straight six as it came to our hands was powerful but truculent. Two hundred sixty horsepower (or 230 by CUNA standards) is mighty fine from 213 cubic inches. Specifically, it's 1.22 horses per cubic inch, 10% more than the fuel-injected Corvette's 1.11, a giant step ahead. But at the other end of the range, things aren't quite as smooth.

There are three big double-barreled Webers feeding the 3500. Not only are these carbs just about tops in getting maximum bhp at the top end, they are also famed for perking properly at medium and low revs as well. But in this case they weren't quite perfect. When you punch the pedal to the floor at or below 3000 rpm, the response is firm but lacking in smoothness. Above 3000 it both smooths out and strengthens, running right up to the factory-recommended limit of 5800 rpm.

It may have been that our test car was not perfectly carbureted. Not only was the engine rougher at low speeds than expected but we experienced unusual difficulty in

exactly maintaining the various indicated speeds during the speedometer calibrations.

When just cruising along, the exhaust is silent and there is the merest trace of the traditional sewing-machine clatter of overhead camshaft engines. At no time is there evidence of any air hiss, the three Webers having their noses well buried in a giant air silencer and filter.

Exhaust noise is a different matter. Certainly no pretender to Bentley's fame and claim as The Silent Sports Car, the Maserati must at least be credited with sounding like a very dignified hot-rod. Though the accelerator pedal isn't the organ-type, it controls the noise output very accurately. Using a light right foot, the straight-six just murmurs along, even at highway speeds. But it's best to quote the Owner's Manual on this score, keeping in mind that even in Italy they have muffler laws. After making the point that the muffler system has passed the prescribed tests and is approved, they add:

"Nevertheless, every car, even though it bears the type approval stamp, is liable to exceed the limits set down by the regulation. This is because the engine at high revolutions while accelerating swiftly can exceed the legal limit. This is unavoidable if the car is to perform in accordance with the speed characteristics of this vehicle.

"We do not guarantee that this silencer will conform with the regulations laid down by the ministry, and do not guarantee that it will remain below the prescribed noise limit under all conditions of use."

### FOUR SPEEDS, ALL SYNCHRO

The transmission is built by Z-F, and is the very same one used in the BMW 507. As we've said apropos the latter installation, the ratios, while not ideal for racing, are most satisfactory for a powerful, fast grand touring car. The relatively short first gear makes stop-and-go driving in the city as easy as in a boulevard-Corvette while the more closely spaced upper gears set you up for those great surges of passing power for highway maneuverability (or just plain showing off). Matching the three-five's arm's-out steering arrangement, the shift lever is ideally spotted where your right hand drops right onto it. The lever's a bit longer than on, say, most British sports cars and it's capped with a clean white plastic knob that fits the hand comfortably. There is just a trace of free play as you move it and then you sense a very mechanical feel (mechanical but well lubricated) as the precision-built synchromesh components start engaging with a gentle whir. Further movement engages the selected gear with little if any change in pressure and a definite sense of completion when the gear is "home."

To discourage you from resting your hand on the knob when you're actually staying in one gear, the lever transmits a slight hiss, perhaps from the shifting forks, when you move it to the limit of its free play in any of the gears.

With an engine well back in the frame (it hardly touches the front "axle" line), the gearbox is understandably well back in the cockpit. While it does separate the driver and passenger quite effectively from the knees down, ample width is left at the toeboards to wiggle your toes and find various positions to rest your feet. In fact

the driver could well do with a revival of the "dead pedal" that was on the earlier cars for bracing himself in hard right turns.

### CLUTCH AND FIFTH SPEED

The hydraulically operated clutch has long travel and very low forces. It is very smooth and easy, so much so that the importers were quick to assert that women could easily drive the Maserati in dense traffic without a care or a problem. While such a test is not part of our normal procedure, we judge this no exaggeration.

A car that looks as sporty as this is expected to be the fastest thing on wheels, especially at this price. But to be comfortable it's heavy and to handle well the engine is only modestly big. We hear from Europe that an available option is a five-speed gearbox with an overdrive fifth of 0.855 to one. Assuming its cost is within reason, we would heartily recommend it in conjunction with the 4.09 rear axle ratio. This would give noticeably better acceleration and the same quiet, economical low-engine-speed cruising. The car doesn't need five gears; it's got plenty of flexibility and poke for getting around in comfort and haste, but in this price stratum you can't afford to have the grocery boy beat you, can you?

### ROOM FOR FOUR

A perennial problem for every designer of Grand Touring cars is whether or not to squeeze in a pair of jump seats. It's a situation where he's damned if he does and damned if he doesn't. If they're left out completely a good portion of his potential market just evaporates into thin air. If he jams them in, there's either too little legroom or too much wheelbase. Or both.

Once the designer's settled on having a back seat, he's only begun. How big should it be? How easy to get in and out of? Or see out of? The decisions in this case were evidently guided by the concept that to sell healthily, the Maserati 3500 G.T. should look as much like a racing G.T. as possible while still providing such homely virtues as could be fitted in.

Externally, the cabin structure is very brief in proportion to the body length it is very like a strictly two-seater, although a large one.

On the inside this puts the driver right up against the windshield while the occupants of the jump seat find (the hard way) that the rear window's metal trim strip is directly overhead. On the credit side, the rear seats are generously curved rather than thin, flat slabs more suited to carrying groceries than friends. To ease entry and exit, the front seats slide forward four or five inches as you tip their backs forward. That is, you push the whole seat forward rather than only the top part of the backrest. Under very hard, nearly panic braking, the occupant himself may slide forward. There should be some latch perhaps to prevent this.

### COMFORT AND CONTROLS

The front seats are beautifully upholstered (black leather), handsomely curved individual seats. As well as having an extraordinarily large range of fore and aft adjustment, there is a small adjustment possible in the angle of the backrest which you get at while out of the car.

The left and right seats are not quite

identical. The passenger's has a modestly extended lip almost tangent to the transmission tunnel which presumably is to cater to those occasions when you get three people crowding in front.

As mentioned, the windshield is far back relative to the front seat; necessarily, so is the doorway and the doorpost. This makes getting in back easier, especially since the doorway is so wide. To improve the situation getting in the front seats, the cushions are three or four inches shorter than usual. This gives room to slip your feet past them without scuffing the leather, but everyone who drove missed having support under his thighs.

Making up for the seating position's shortcomings was the ease of using all the controls. The pendant pedals are well positioned and heel-and-toe downshifts can be made by braking with the ball of your foot, swinging your heel over to jab the large accelerator pedal. Though the latter is pendant too, your foot can be comfortably braced against the side of the gearbox for maintaining a steady speed.

#### GADGETS GALORE

One of the joys of \$10,000 motor cars is that their manufacturers get delightfully extravagant with instruments and controls. There are 28 items listed in the dashboard diagram. Seven of them are warning lights, most of them are self-explanatory (once you've read the key) but the dipswitch/turn indicator needs elaboration.

As well as being a conventionally oriented turn signal lever, the former can be pulled or pushed to control the headlights. First you must pull the headlight knob out. It has two positions. The first gives parking or low beam, the second gives high or low beam and in either case the rather bright green warning light comes on. If the turn signal lever is flicked away from you, you get low beams. If it's more or less towards you, you get parking lights or high beams (according to how far out you've pulled the knob). If you're on high beam, you dip to low beam by flicking the lever away from you, later pulling it back when the oncoming cars have passed. There is also a spring-resisted position closer to you for this lever which will dip the lights until you let go, but it is more useful as a means of flashing your lights (low-beam) in warning when cruising at dusk on parking lights. To confuse the issue further, when you turn the fog-light switch on, you are in effect only substituting them for the low-beams. They are subject to all the same controls just described.

Once you get used to the complex system, it is easy to use but we would prefer a simpler system of operation at the cost of a more complex wiring diagram. This system and comment are equally applicable to all fast Italian cars; over there it is presumably the standard and they wouldn't want to change it.

The horn button, a little one in the middle of the wheel, sets off a surprisingly non-strident pair of trumpets which are amply loud for such a fast car without being raucous. This is admirable, as such an ostentatious car can be heartily disliked by fellow road-users in America if it is driven or sounded in a "me-first" manner.

(Continued on page 92)

## Stewart-Warner Electric Tachometers

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(Continued from page 91)

The 3500 GT is not for boy-racers; it is a fast, elegant coupe for particular people to use for distinctive driving.

### LUGGAGE ROOM

The large, light, lockable trunk lid is opened by pressing a button below it just above the bumper. If you keep your keys in a cluster, the only difficulty is in getting at the central keyhole. Inside is a wide, upholstered trunk with a very flat floor indeed. The largest part of it lifts up to expose the spare and the leather-wrapped tool kit which is so extensive that it ought to be kept under lock and key.

Behind a removable panel is hidden the 12-volt, 64 amp-hour battery. It couldn't be further from engine heat and earns a big credit in keeping the center of gravity near the center of the wheelbase.

Between a 21-gallon fuel tank and a spare 6.50 x 16 tire, the volume remaining for luggage stowage is much reduced from expectations, even with the fairly high level of the rear deck. Since rare indeed would be the owner who would tour long distances with four aboard, the deep-dished auxiliary seats can be used to carry additional luggage as well as all those odds and ends you like to have right at hand. A useful improvement would be the baggage strap tie-downs fitted to all Porsche coupes to ensure that it all stays put.

### VIGNALE CONVERTIBLE

While we were putting the Touring-bodied coupe through its accelerative paces at Lime Rock, Connecticut, we were joined by Mike Garber who owns the Maserati Birdcage shown on the April cover. He arrived in his brand-new Vignale-bodied 3500 G.T. convertible which we also drove.

As the specs indicate, it has a four-inch shorter wheelbase. Though we had no opportunity to weigh it, we doubt it's appreciably lighter than the coupe. Even so, we found that in pressing it through Lime Rock's mile and a half of fast bends and esses, its shorter wheelbase gave it a definite edge over the coupe in nimbleness and, therefore, to our way of thinking, in desirability. The gain in responsiveness was not gained at any expense of stability so it seems all profit to us.

The trunk is noticeably shallower than the coupe's and the rear seat is sketchier. On the other hand, Vignale has thoughtfully provided electric windows with the switch for the passenger's side cleverly placed on the dash where either occupant can use it. The squeeze-up door handles are just under the large, well padded arm rests, leaving the door panel clear. The dashboard is completely different. There's no grab bar and while the instruments are grouped under a shroud, the controls are strung along a trimmed strip at the bottom of the dash. The glove compartment is much larger and can be locked.

The top, of course, goes up or down with that impeccable ease we have come to associate only with Italian and German convertibles. Coupes may be more practical, but convertibles are more fun any day—well, almost any day. Besides, it costs only eight percent more. What other brand can make that claim?

### STEERING, BY HAND AND BY FOOT

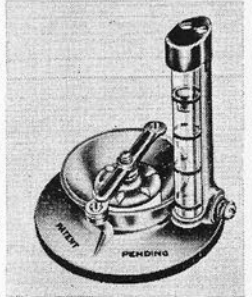
As the Steering Behavior graph shows, this car has near-neutral steering character.

(Continued on page 94)

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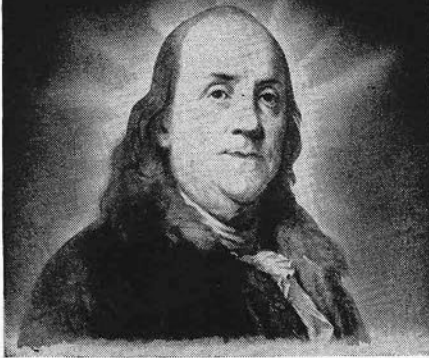
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(Continued from page 92)

istics, needing very much the same twist of the wheel at any cornering speed. Wheel forces remain steady at all speeds, even dead slow. The latter gives the initial impression that the coupe has heavy steering but this is only a static reflection of the heaviness of the car. At the higher speeds, it is very light steering for a car of this weight.

With sturdy anti-roll bars at front and rear the car stays very level even when you are pressing right to the limit. There is lots of power to play with and as you try taking particular bends at faster and faster speeds you find that the most comfortable technique is to turn the wheel more sharply than before as you approach the turn, which "rotates" the car, then feed some gas and pay off on the throttle enough to hold the car's attitude. Many cars which are called sports cars cannot be drifted but the Maserati 3500 G.T. with its years and years of racing car breeding, most certainly can. When the roadway and conditions encourage and permit such motoring, then all seems right in the world, especially the till-then strangely faraway position of the nearly-vertical steering wheel.

**WIRE OR DISC?**

The only option at all which is factory offered and factory installed without a special order is a set of Borrani wire wheels with knock-off hubcaps. The tab is a tidy \$510, which doesn't sound like much when you're in the \$11,000 bracket but certainly makes us pause. As well as cost, you have these factors: they're lovely to look at but difficult to clean—and the Maserati is the sort of sports car that just has to be kept in pristine condition. One solution is to corral at least two of those ever-present goggle-eyed small boys that seem to lurk in every neighborhood, supply them with worn-out toothbrushes and the other cleaning paraphernalia and put them to work. Federal wage minimums do not apply especially if, being yours, they are the reason you bought the Maserati and its small back seat.

As to beauty, our staff concurred that the standard steel disc wheels are the prettiest we've seen. As well as being easy to clean (or at least easier), disc wheels don't lose spokes and don't have to be "trued-up" after a few seasons. On the debit side, they are in this case mounted by four bolts rather than five and there are always going to be those infuriating types who want to know "How come it hasn't got wire wheels if you paid so much for it?"

**DISC OR DRUM?**

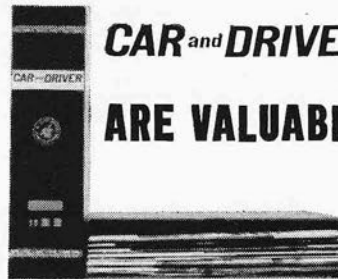
In wheels the question may be moot, whether to disc or not, but in the braking department there just isn't any question. The switch to 12-inch Girling discs at the front fulfills a shortcoming of the earliest 3500 G.T.s, as detailed in our November, 1958 road test. As is usual with largish cars, the heavy pedal pressure required for discs is ameliorated by an engine-vacuum-operated servo, successfully too, as the pressure isn't reduced to a ridiculous level. The brake pedal remains firm, a sensible compromise between the too-soft, for-ladies-only softness of conventional power braking and the racing-car-like stiffness of some of the less tractable high-performance sports cars.

(Continued on page 96)

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(Continued from page 94)

The three-inch-wide drums of the same 12-inch diameter at the rear are unobtrusively effective; they never locked up under hard braking, even from 100 mph or so and also provide a strong parking brake. That same 100 mph braking never provoked a glimmer of fade during our fast lappery of the Lime Rock Park circuit. A trace of odor finally emerged, but the pedal was always smooth and positive.

**SERVICING**

The problem of providing nationwide service is an old bugaboo of the imported car business. It has kept the sales of such expensive cars as this too rare. In designing the 3500 G.T. with the U.S. market very much in mind, the Maserati's creators found, in solving another problem, a somewhat useful answer to this situation. We refer to the decision to use an English Salisbury rear axle and Alford and Alder front suspensions, both of which are similar if not identical to the Jaguar 3.4's. Almost all sports car manufacturers, even those with strong reputations for integration, actually buy a good number of components on the outside. The clever thing here, whether intentional or not, is that Maserati selected components that are already quite widely used in the U.S.

As to the Maserati parts themselves, they are mainly stocked in Glen Cove and Los Angeles and what other importer will give you the home phone number of his Parts Manager? (It's 516 ED 4-1216 and his name is Dan Ghelfi.) Actually, this was done for the benefit of people who race Maseratis, but it's a nice number to tuck in the glove compartment.

Routine maintenance looks to be quite simple and the especially enthusiastic owner could easily do much of the necessary work himself with the aid of the explicit manual. The latter includes about a dozen engineering drawings of such items as the engine, gearbox, rear axle, etc.

**LIVING HIGH**

No doubt about it, our favorite color for fast Italian cars is Italian racing red. What a pity our budget doesn't let us include a paint sample of this fierce bright color with each copy. Some might think a little modesty would be in order with such a flamboyant car but our attitude is if you're going to go, go all the way.

Helping to "carry" this color is the sculptured simplicity of Touring's steel body. It has no garish lines to snatch at your eyes, only this eye-stopping paint—and a plethora of visually exciting details: the 72-spoke wire wheels; the trident on the grille, borne so often and successfully by the firm's racing cars; the wood-rimmed steering wheel; Carrozzeria Touring's "Superleggera" script proudly mounted on both sides of the hood; the repeated use of the red, blue and silver Maserati trademark, especially in miniature, lapel-pin-size on the ashtrays and dashboard; the precise functional way the aluminum-trimmed window sill is relieved to clear the pivoting wind-wing and the way the round padded grab bar is integrated into the dashboard.

No car of this sort will be perfect for everybody, but every one of them is exciting to examine and, if it's perfection for you, what pleasure to anticipate and especially to own!

—C/D



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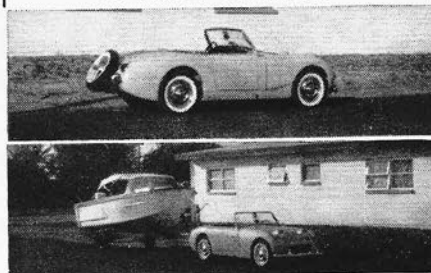
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