

Perhaps the best  
car available for  
reasonably inex-  
pensive club  
racing.

**TVR**

PHOTOS: BOB D'OLIVO & TOBY PALMIERI

**M**ANUFACTURED IN ENGLAND, the TVR is a limited-production coupe with multi-tube frame, glass fiber body, proprietary drive train components, and a smattering of production-derived suspension parts. Sound like a hodge-podge? It's anything but. For power it uses the MGB 1800 engine, with a few good options, and shows enough potential for SCCA to stick it in Class C Production with the Morgan Super Sports and Porsche Carrera. After track-testing a competition-prepared unit owned and occasionally driven by Fritz Warren of Sports Car Center, Santa Ana, California, we can testify that SCCA didn't over-estimate it.

Backbone of the 1400-pound machine is a strong tubular frame that narrows in the cockpit area to become a bridge-like structure, forming a boxy center tunnel. The Fibreglas body and inner panelling is bonded directly to it, contributing to overall rigidity and strength. Also included in the body is some sub-framing to insure that it doesn't crack, that doors hang properly, etc., but by-and-large there's little excess to add to the weight. Performance is the primary factor on which the design is predicated, though not at the expense of longevity or reliability.

Hung to the frame is a full-independent suspension system. In front an unequal-arm setup is used with coil/shocks, low-mounted swaybar, rack-and-pinion steering, and outboard disc brakes. The rear is somewhat similar to the latest Jaguar i.r.s. in the way two shocks — one coil-equipped — form struts connecting to the lower arm. There is also an upper arm, however, and the half-shafts are slip-splined. Brakes here are outboard, but drum-type. The production unit comes with either knock-off wire wheels or with bolt-ons. Our test car had the latter, with American Racing's alloy replacement; the lightest combination.

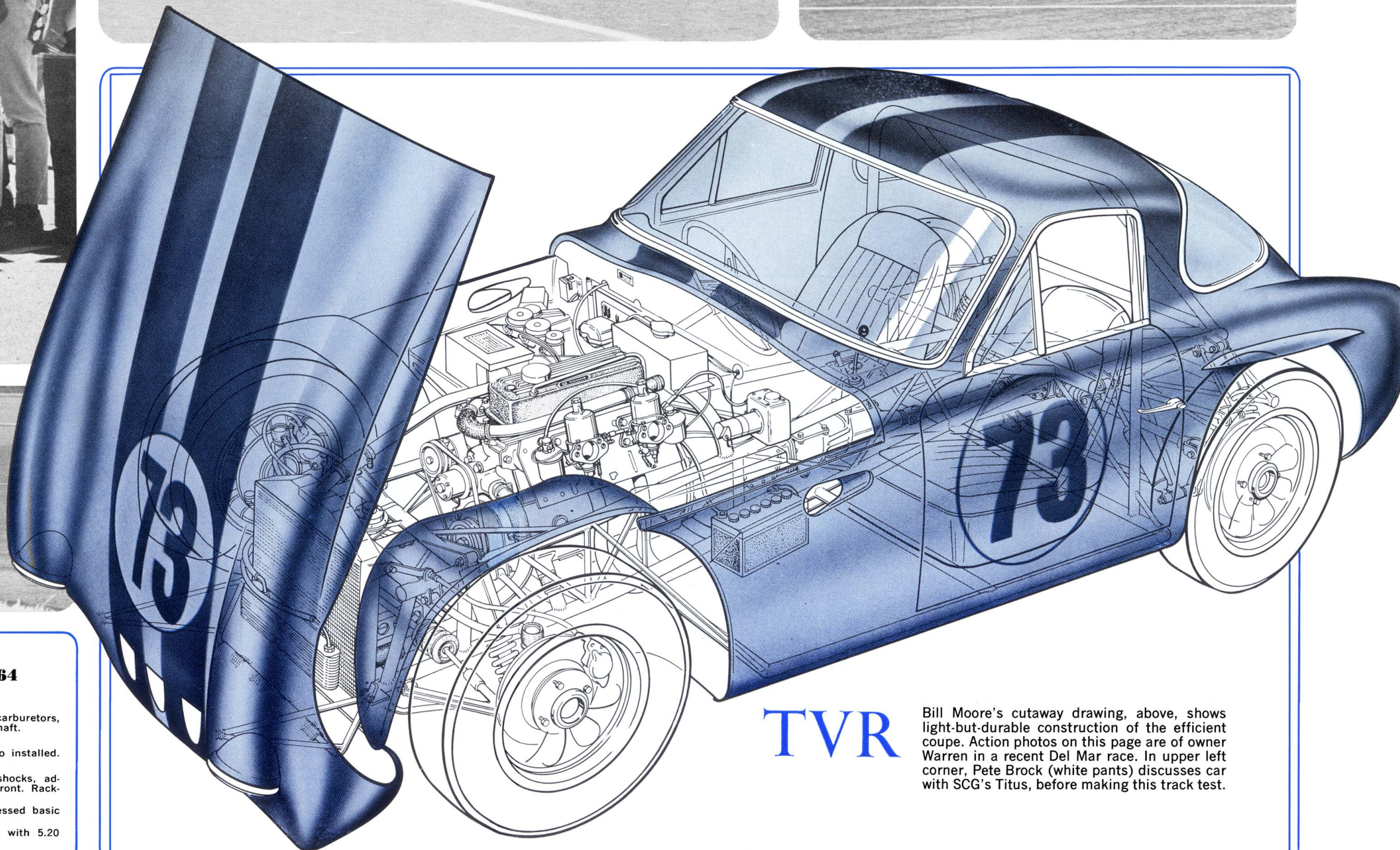
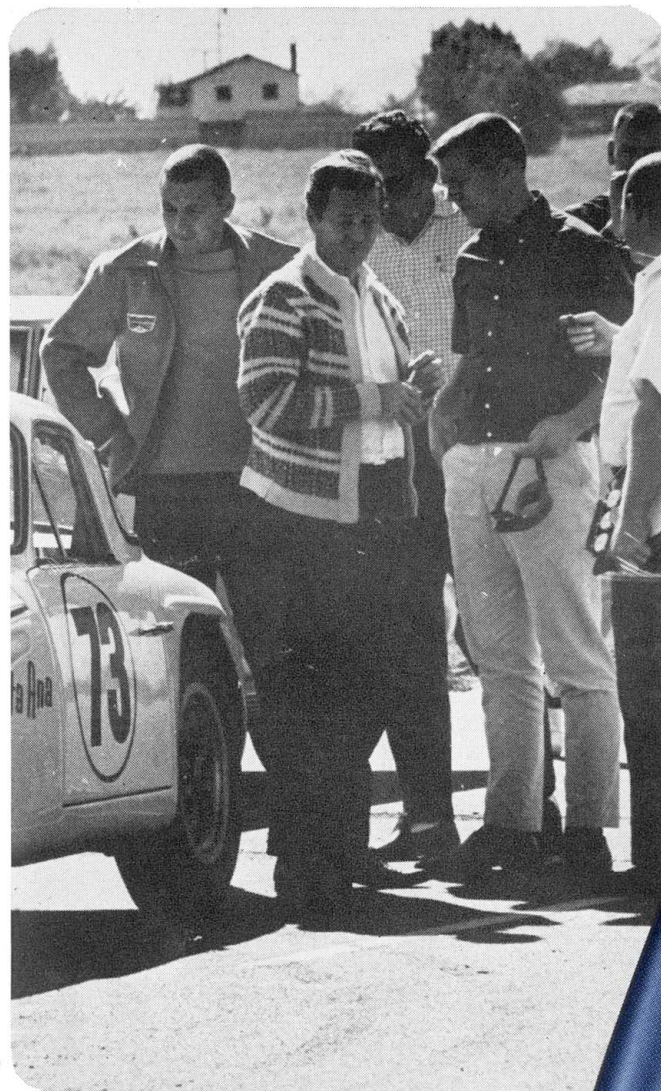
The MGB engine has been prodified by Jim Hicks, of Warren's service department, and, without going too wild, it produces 85 horsepower at the rear wheels. It revs easily and willingly to 7000 rpm, appears to be a strong, reliable unit that could do this all day long. Some 0.080-inch has been cut from the cylinder head and, in combination with 0.040-inch oversized JE pistons, this brings the compression ratio close to 12-to-1. Twin-cam con rods are used, making the upper end full-floating. The camshaft is Hollywood Sport Cars', and the optional 1¾-inch SU's are installed. The entire assembly was closely balanced and an MGA competition clutch used. To hold oil temperature down, a Serck oil cooler — also optional equipment — is installed just forward of the radiator.

A close-ratio MG gearbox is mounted in conventional position behind the engine, and a short driveshaft carries the power back to a sprung Salisbury differential. A limited-slip is installed in the latter on the Warren car.

Hicks trotted the TVR out to Riverside for our track-test and Pete Brock, who pilots it in SCCA Divisional races, was already on hand doing some school teaching. Between the two of us, the sturdy little car really got a workout. There were some carburetion problems that made the engine sour between 5200 and 6000 rpm (which will probably be solved when the float-bowl dump tubes are cut) that didn't allow us to get good performance figures, but it easily turned the quarter-mile in 17 seconds with a 4.5 final-drive ratio installed. Running right, it would reduce this by at least 1½ seconds; pretty swift for that size engine.

Entering the right-hand-drive car is a bit tight. The door is high, but narrow. Once you're inside, there's plenty of fore-and-aft room, but it's tight laterally for

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**TRACK & ROAD TEST 3/64**

TVR SPECIFICATIONS

**ENGINE:** Prodiged MGB 1800 with 1 3/4-in. SU carburetors, fabricated exhaust headers, JE pistons HSC camshaft.  
**TRANSMISSION:** MGB 4-speed, close-ratio.  
**DIFFERENTIAL:** Salisbury, limited-slip, 4.5-to-1 ratio installed.  
**BRAKES:** Disc front, drum rear.  
**SUSPENSION:** Unequal-arm front and rear, coil/shocks, additional shocks in rear, low-mounted swaybar in front. Rack-&-pinion steering.  
**FRAME:** Tubular semi-spaceframe, bonded into stressed basic body shell.  
**WHEELS & TIRES:** American Racing alloy wheels with 5.20 x 13 Goodyear T6's.

**TVR**

Bill Moore's cutaway drawing, above, shows light-but-durable construction of the efficient coupe. Action photos on this page are of owner Warren in a recent Del Mar race. In upper left corner, Pete Brock (white pants) discusses car with SCG's Titus, before making this track test.

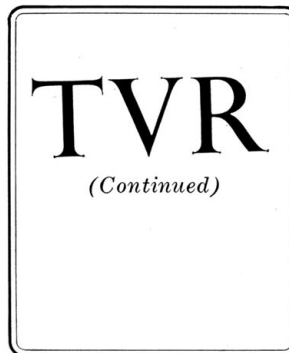
a beefy person, though it fit us like a glove. The bucket seats are quite comfortable, the steering wheel mounted just a hair on the high side but otherwise fine, light in pressure and quick enough in ratio to be very responsive. The floor-mounted pedals are rather close together but worked extremely well. Throughout the test we never had to fumble around once for heel-and-toe or other footwork; an extremely rare occurrence. The gearshift lever, mounted atop the center tunnel, is short, firm and positive. It was a few inches too high for our liking, however, and we occasionally had trouble with a busy back-shift into second.

Instrumentation is complete, with large tachometer and speedometer located directly in front of the driver. Other important gauges are strung out to the left and not easy to read at a glance, even though they're legible and accurate. The right-hand drive may have had something to do with this — a matter of driver orientation. Otherwise, this setup is keen, especially when you're running a clockwise circuit.

Interior finish is stark; mostly a little glued-on leathette and some flocking. With straight exhaust, you're instantly aware of how little sound-deadening there is when you fire up the engine. The car moves off the line well, but we found the clutch a little on the weak side. It moves up through the gears briskly and the chassis transmits a solid feel without too harsh a ride. The stability is impressive under all circumstances. With competition linings installed, the brakes were something else — almost impossible to lock. The car stops well, but pedal-pressure is almost frighteningly high (you wonder, for an instant, if it really is going to stop). There was absolutely no indication of fade or any other brake problem, so we'd be tempted to experiment with softer lining were the car our own.

Goodyear T6's (in our opinion not the ultimate for this car) were installed, but side-bite was well above average for a prepared production car and it smoked around corners in almost any attitude desired. This is the real forte of the machine. It's dead neutral. You can make it under or oversteer, or line through like a Junior with complete ease. We can't think of any possible corner combination where any other type of production car would have an advantage over it. This means you can race it where and against whatever you want; the TVR is going to be a machine to reckon with when it comes to a corner. For example, we were playing with Riverside's Turn 8 using a gimmick of Brock's school (he's chief instructor for "Carroll Shelby's School of Hi-Performance Driving"); timing at markers 100 yards before and 100 yards after the tricky, four-stage turn with its several camber changes. On the trip Pete tried an odd line, came in some 10 miles an hour too fast, got completely sideways, tossed it back the other way, saved it, and then went on through the next two stages. It turned out to be the fastest time he logged! Aside from go-karts, we can think of little else that will allow these violent maneuvers without a considerable loss of time (and probably some bodywork).

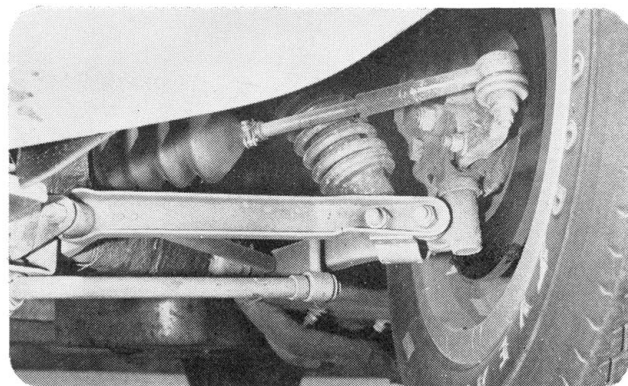
To sum up the TVR as a production race car: it's a damn fine route to go. In Class C it has its work cut out for it — having to tangle with the likes of Lew Spencer's Super Sport Morgan — but we think it can hack it. Aside from that it shows every sign of withstanding the rigors of much abuse and should prove easy and inexpensive to maintain. In unprepared form, the TVR lists for \$3695 and seems to leave a bit to be desired as a normal-transportation sports car. But, if you like performance and roadability, and cars that stay together when these factors are used, we highly recommend it. — *Jerry Titus.*



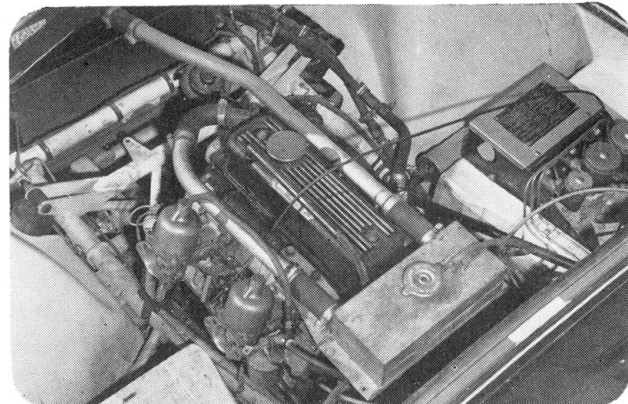
Alloy wheels are an option under the SCCA rules.



Cockpit is sparsely finished but designed — with the exception of high-mounted shift lever — for racing comfort.



Lower arm and spindle of front suspension is production-derived, as is rack-&-pinion steering mechanism.



Engine compartment appears crowded, but majority of components are easily reached for normal servicing.