



CORTINA GT AND ESTATE WAGON WAGON ROAD TEST

by Jim Wright, *Technical Editor*

FORD'S PERFORMANCE image isn't doing too badly on the other side of the Atlantic — thanks in large part to the impressive little Cortina GT. The factory team and privately owned cars have all done very well in the sedan races that are so popular in Britain. They've also made a name for themselves on the European rally circuit.

By way of introduction to America, the official factory team entered the tortuous 12-hour endurance run at Marlboro, Maryland, late last summer. They finished 1-2 overall and 1-2-4 in class.

In addition to the Cortina GT, we tested the Cortina Estate Wagon so we could get a more complete picture of the total line. Neither test car had very many extra-cost options, but several standard items would've been extra on other cars. These included the all-synchromesh, four-speed transmission, full-flow oil filter, electric windshield wipers, all-vinyl seats and trim, padded dash, door arm rests, and full-width package tray. The GT's equipment included a few more standard extras like a tachometer, center console with stor-

age compartment, and carpeting. The Estate Wagon also had the optional (no extra cost) 4.1-to-1 rear axle in place of the standard 3.9 to 1.

Both cars turned out to be extremely popular with MOTOR TREND's test crew, as the slightly better than 2000 total odometer miles showed.

Of the two the GT, surprisingly, had the best overall miles-per-gallon average. For 1410 miles, our average was 20.6 mpg. This included a high of 23.3 mpg on an extended highway trip, with an around-town low of 18.5. The wagon recorded an overall average of 20.3 mpg during 620 miles of all kinds of driving. Our on-the-road high average was 24.7 mpg, while the around-town low was 18.1. On a cost-per-mile basis, the wagon came out ahead, because it got by on regular fuel while the GT needed premium. Depending on driving habits, both should deliver 18 to 21 mpg in city traffic and in the 23-26-mpg range on the road.

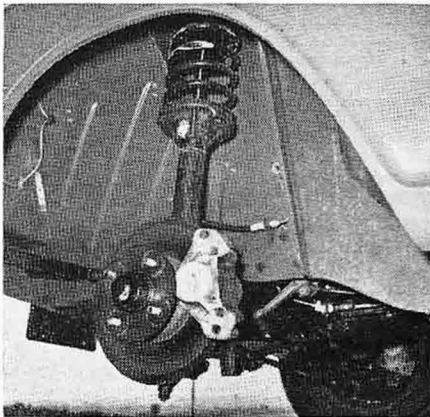
Both Fords are willing performers, but the GT proved the more able of the two. It hit a top speed of slightly over an honest 90 mph, while the wagon was straining to clock 80. The GT was

also livelier throughout its speed range, and we didn't have any trouble staying with or out of the way of fast-moving freeway traffic. On the other hand, it took a bit more skill to stay out of trouble with the slower wagon. It was just fine for around-town traffic, but it's definitely out of its element on the open road.

The transmissions in both cars are identical except for the shift mechanisms. In the wagon it's direct, while the GT's center console makes remote linkage necessary. The direct-acting shift lever allowed quick, smooth, positive

(TOP OPPOSITE) Good balance on all surfaces and completely predictable handling characteristics add to GT's personality. The all-welded chassis/body is very strong. **(RIGHT)** Off-road punishment brought out a few rattles in the rear seat and rear floorpan areas, but suspension and drive train proved able to withstand rough treatment.





shifts. Unfortunately, the remote linkage of the GT worked just the opposite. We had to take great care to keep from going from first to reverse, from third to second (on upshifts), and from fourth to first (instead of third) on downshifts. The factory should *really* do something about this, because it's out of character with the rest of the car.

The overall ratios are well spaced and allow the driver to take full advantage of the engine's torque and horsepower curves. The balk-ring synchromesh is unbeatable and, while the driver might cram it into the wrong gear (on the GT), it won't grind — not unless it happens to go into reverse. The transmission's fairly quiet, with just a slight hint of gear whine at high cruising speeds.

Both the drum brakes on the wagon and the disc/drum combination on the GT worked very well throughout our performance tests. They were capable of hauling both cars down from their top speeds repeatedly without fading noticeably. We noted a slight amount of sponginess in the wagon's brake pedal, which meant the brakes were hot but otherwise okay.

During our 60-mph panic stops, the wagon's rear wheels tended to judder as we approached the point of lock-up. Fortunately, the brakes gave plenty of warning before they'd lock, so we never exceeded this point. A less experienced driver might have trouble here, so it's a hint worth noting. If you let the rear wheels lock and they start to judder, you'll have little or no control over the car.

The GT, on the other hand, performed perfectly during our panic stops, and we could make them hands off, although we don't recommend this on the street. The wagon has a between-the-seats-mounted handbrake that you usually associate with a performance car, while the GT has an under-the-dash T-handle you normally find on family sedans. Anyway, both worked equally well.

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- 1) Both Cortinas offer good driver vision, the wagon especially. Wagon's floor area is 21½ square feet with rear seat down or 12½ with the seat up as shown here.
 - 2) GT model comes with disc brakes as standard equipment. Discs are 9½-inch diameter, calipers by Girling. McPherson strut suspensions are used on both Cortinas.
 - 3) Drum brakes on wagons have plenty of stopping power, don't fade easily. Wagon does need stiffer rear-spring halves to eliminate judder during maximum braking.
 - 4) The access door has counter-balanced hinges, is one piece. Getting spare tire out is easy job. Only drawback, lack of friction material, lets things slide on cargo floor.

The basic engine in both cars is recognized as one of the more advanced in-line Fours in the world today. It uses a considerably oversquare design (the bore is quite large in relation to the stroke). The five-main-bearing crankshaft is extremely stiff, which adds greatly to overall reliability.

Probably the best thing that can be said about this engine is that it's the engine that professional Formula Junior builders have chosen to work with. Lotus even has a twin-cam head for this engine, which along with other modifications produces an amazing 140 hp from 95 cubic inches. Lotus also installs this engine in the Cortina GT on special order, and reliable reports say the combination will do 0-60 mph in seven seconds.

Both engines were smooth throughout their rpm range. They have a 6000-rpm red line, but brief excursions to 7000 are possible, and the engines do this quite willingly. Because of their short stroke, low-end torque is on the weak side, so top-gear performance below 25-30 mph is sluggish, and third gear should really be used.

Except for spring rates, suspension layout is identical on both Cortinas. They use conventional, semi-elliptic springs at the rear, along with a rigid axle. The GT is equipped with telescopic shocks at the rear, while the wagon uses the older lever units.

Front suspension is of the McPherson strut type. This has a single lower arm (forged) in conjunction with a leading arm stabilizer strut for positive lateral location. No upper arm, as such, is used. The spindle's part of a large tubular upright strut that's also the shock absorber. A high-mounted coil spring encircles the strut.

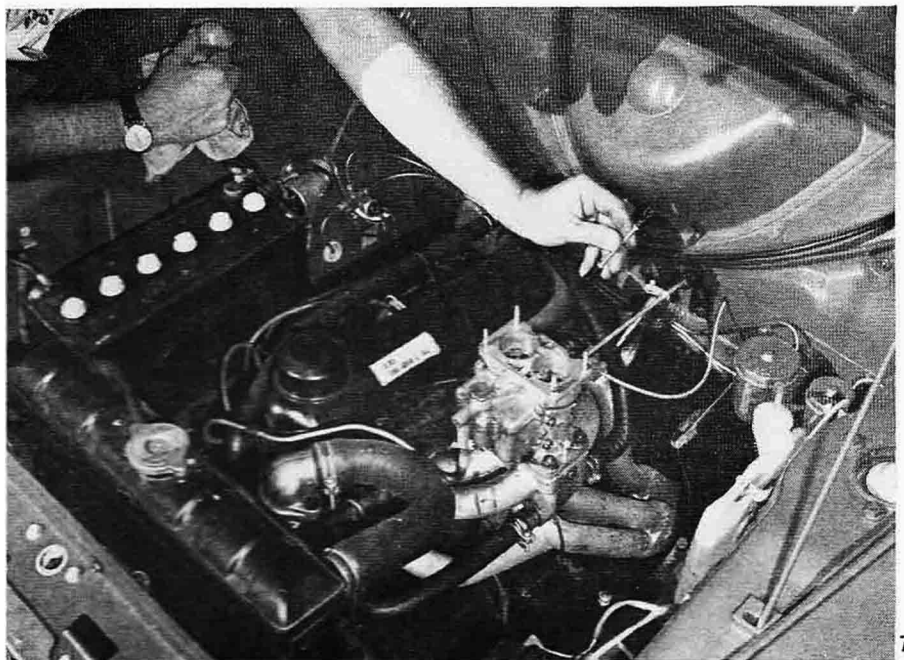
Ride's very agreeable for a short-wheelbase car. There's very little of the pitching or harshness usually found in a car of this size. Both models showed basic understeer on slow corners, but nothing excessive. Body lean was slight even under extreme cornering loads



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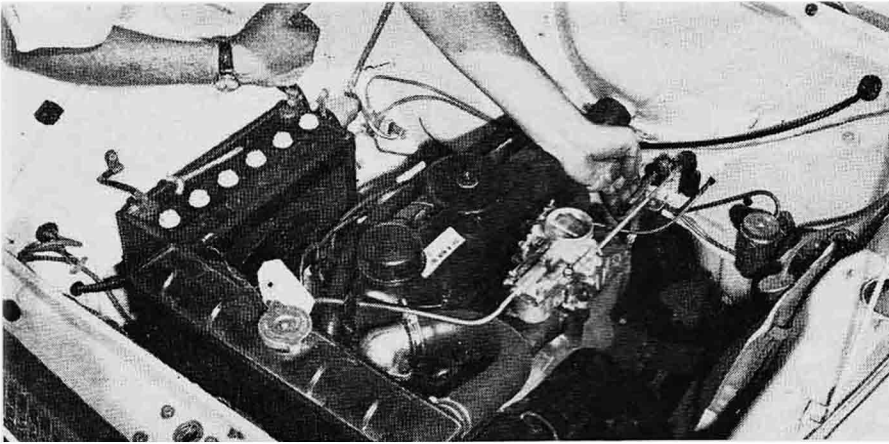


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5) Instruments and hooded panel are borrowed from especially built Lotus-Cortina. Steering wheel is comfortable but out of keeping with GT's character. Shift linkage also lacks proper degree of precision.
 6) GT braking leaves no room for argument: It's fast and fade-free. Panic stops produced readings of .85 g on decelerometer before lock-up occurred. This works out to 27 ft./sec./sec.; good as you'll find.
 7) Tiny engine's big muscle is result of 9-to-1 compression, Cosworth-developed cam, dual-choke Weber carburetor, and tube-type tuned exhaust headers. Weak point is short throttle linkage that tech editor is holding here. It kept coming adrift.



(both use an anti-roll bar at the front). Because of its higher speeds, the GT can be a real ball to drive on winding mountain roads. Both cars were very predictable in their handling behavior.

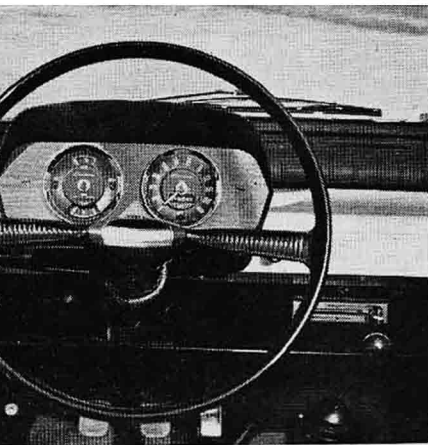
Quality of coachwork in both test cars showed a high degree of control. As a factory man pointed out, no lead is used anywhere in the body. The panels either fit as they should or they're discarded. The same degree of quality was evident in the interiors. The GT was, of course, the showier of the two — all-black upholstery and carpeting as compared to the two-tone material and rubber floor mats used in the Estate Wagon.

The individual front seats are well padded and provide good support. Strangely enough, the seat backs in the wagon had more contour to them than those of the GT and were therefore more comfortable. Neither model offered enough seat adjustment to suit us, although leg room was adequate. Rear passenger area should be adequate for three adults on short hauls.

Both cars offer attractive instrument clusters. The GT has gauges for oil pressure, fuel level, and engine temperature, while the wagon has only fuel level and temperature gauges, with warning lights for oil and generator.

Most of the controls and levers are within easy reach of the driver, except for the cigarette lighter, which is too far to the right. A steering post quadrant houses the horn button, headlight switch, and turn indicator lever.

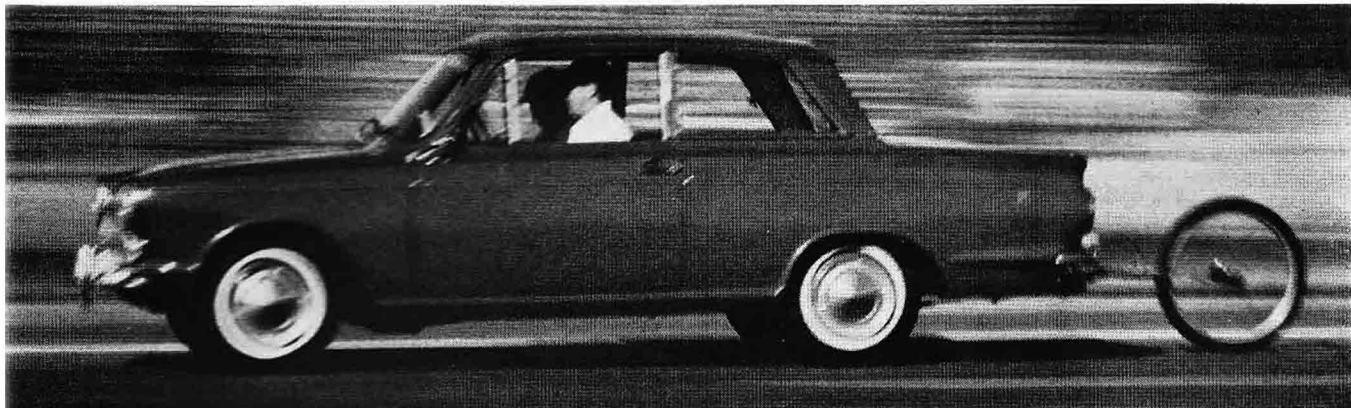
We were impressed with both test cars and feel that the Estate Wagon would be a suitable choice for a second car, while the GT would be a natural for anyone who's had a sports car but now needs more room for a growing family — someone who doesn't want to give up lively performance and good handling. /MT



PHOTOS BY BOB D'OLIVO



1) Standard wagon engine displaces 1200cc; test car had optional 1498cc unit. This one also suffered from linkage problems.
 2) Wagon's direct-acting shift lever was more positive than remote unit in GT car. Full-width package tray and padded dash are standard equipment on both Cortinas.
 3) A closer look at the offending throttle linkage reveals plastic ball socket ends that are simply press-fit. Under full load, they flex and fall off, leaving the driver with no power. This happened several times.
 4) GT's acceleration was impressive all the way up to top speed, will surprise owners of larger cars. Gasoline economy proved to be excellent considering snap.
 5) Variety of shapes and sizes fit into Cortina GT's large, 20.9-cubic-foot trunk.
 6) Body roll was minimal, even at point where the inside rear wheel began to lift.



CONSUL CORTINA GT

2-door, 5-passenger sedan

OPTIONS ON CAR TESTED: Heater, cigarette lighter, heavy-duty battery, 5.60 x 13 4-ply whitewalls

BASIC PRICE: \$2315.20 p.o.e.

PRICE AS TESTED: \$2395.50 (plus tax and license)

ODOMETER READING AT START OF TEST: 525 miles

RECOMMENDED ENGINE RED LINE: 6000 rpm

PERFORMANCE

ACCELERATION (2 aboard)

| | |
|----------|-----------|
| 0-30 mph | 3.6 secs. |
| 0-45 mph | 7.5 |
| 0-60 mph | 13.5 |

Standing start ¼-mile 18.5 secs. and 73 mph

Speeds in gears @ 6000 rpm

| | | | |
|-----|--------|-----|--------------------------------------|
| 1st | 31 mph | 3rd | 76 |
| 2nd | 45 | 4th | 91 mph (actual top speed) @ 5200 rpm |

Speedometer Error on Test Car

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Car's speedometer reading | 32 | 48 | 53 | 64 | 75 | 86 |
| Weston electric speedometer | 30 | 45 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 |

Observed miles per hour per 1000 rpm in top gear17.5 mph

Stopping Distances — from 30 mph, 26 ft.; from 60 mph, 141 ft.

SPECIFICATIONS FROM MANUFACTURER

Engine

Ohv, in-line 4
Bore: 3.1878 ins. (81mm)
Stroke: 2.864 ins. (72.8mm)
Displacement: 91.43 cu. ins. (1498cc)
Compression ratio: 9.0:1
Horsepower: 78 @ 5200 rpm
Torque: 91 lbs.-ft. @ 3600 rpm
Horsepower per cubic inch: 0.85
Carburetion: 1 2-bbl. (Webe)
Ignition: 12-volt coil

Gearbox

4-speed manual, all synchro; floor shift, remote linkage

Driveshaft

1-piece, open tube

Differential

Hypoid, semi-floating
Standard ratio: 3.9:1

Suspension

Front: Independent, strut-type, with high-mounted coil springs, double-acting shocks, anti-roll bar
Rear: Rigid axle, with longitudinal, asymmetrical semi-elliptic leaf springs, direct-acting tubular shocks

Steering

Recirculating ball
Turning diameter: 34.0 ft.
Turns lock to lock: 3.5

Wheels and Tires

4-lug, steel disc wheels
5.60 x 13 4-ply tubeless whitewall tires

Brakes

Hydraulic; disc front, drum rear
Front: 9½-in. dia. cast-iron discs
Rear: 9-in. dia. x 1¼ in. wide cast-iron drums
Effective lining area: 75.5 sq. ins.
Swept area: 281.6 sq. ins.

Body and Frame

Unit construction
Wheelbase: 98.0 ins.
Track: front, 50.0 ins.; rear, 49.5 ins.
Overall length: 170.0 ins.
Overall width: 62.0 ins.
Curb weight: 1895 lbs.

CONSUL CORTINA ESTATE WAGON

4-door, 6-passenger station wagon

OPTIONS ON CAR TESTED: Heater, cigarette lighter, whitewalls

BASIC PRICE: \$2073.20 p.o.e.

PRICE AS TESTED: \$2240.95 (plus tax and license)

ODOMETER READING AT START OF TEST: 420 miles

RECOMMENDED ENGINE RED LINE: 6000 rpm

PERFORMANCE

ACCELERATION: (2 aboard)

| | |
|----------|-----------|
| 0-30 mph | 4.8 secs. |
| 0-45 mph | 10.4 |
| 0-60 mph | 19.7 |

Standing start ¼-mile 21.0 secs. and 63 mph

Speeds in gears @ 6000 rpm

| | | | |
|-----|--------|-----|--------------------------------------|
| 1st | 26 mph | 3rd | 67 |
| 2nd | 41 | 4th | 80 mph (actual top speed) @ 4800 rpm |

Speedometer Error on Test Car

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Car's speedometer reading | 30 | 47 | 52 | 63 | 73 | 83 |
| Weston electric speedometer | 30 | 45 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 |

Observed miles per hour per 1000 rpm in top gear16.5 mph

Stopping Distances — from 30 mph, 27 ft.; from 60 mph, 160.5 ft.

SPECIFICATIONS FROM MANUFACTURER

Engine

Ohv, in-line 4
Bore: 3.1878 ins. (81mm)
Stroke: 2.864 ins. (72.8mm)
Displacement: 91.43 cu. ins. (1498cc)
Compression ratio: 8.3:1
Horsepower: 64 @ 4600 rpm
Torque: 85.5 lbs.-ft. @ 2300 rpm
Horsepower per cubic inch: 0.70
Carburetion: 1 single-barrel
Ignition: 12-volt coil

Gearbox

4-speed manual, all synchro; floor shift, direct linkage

Driveshaft

1-piece, open tube

Differential

Hypoid, semi-floating
Standard ratio: 3.9:1

Suspension

Front: Independent, strut-type, with high-mounted coil springs, double-acting shocks, anti-roll bar
Rear: Rigid axle, with longitudinal, asymmetrical, semi-elliptic leaf springs, double-acting lever-type shocks

Steering

Recirculating ball
Turning diameter: 34.0 ft.
Turns lock to lock: 3.5

Wheels and Tires

4-lug, steel disc wheels
6.00 x 13 6-ply tubeless whitewall tires

Brakes

Hydraulic; cast-iron drums
Front: 9-in. dia. x 1¼ ins. wide
Rear: 8-in. dia. x 1½ ins. wide
Swept area: 174.0 sq. ins.

Body and Frame

Unit construction
Wheelbase: 98.0 ins.
Track: front and rear: 49.5 ins.
Overall length: 169.5 ins.
Overall width: 63.0 ins.
Curb weight: 2000 lbs.

