

# THE SWALLOW DORETTI

Handsome 2-litre Newcomer to the Over 100 m.p.h. Category

THE old-established Swallow Coach-building Co. has for many years been associated with sports cars. It has recently been taken over by a parent organization which is well known in the aircraft industry, and the manufacture of a new 2-litre speed model has begun. Though this machine has pronounced sporting characteristics, it is luxuriously appointed and of extremely attractive appearance. A large proportion of the cars produced are destined for export to America, but the Doretti is also available in this country.

It has been decided to equip the new car with the same engine, gearbox and back axle as are employed in the Triumph TR2. In view of the recent competition successes of that marque, and especially the 100 per cent. reliability at Le Mans and the T.T., one feels that no better choice could have been made. As the Doretti has an entirely different chassis, it should not be dismissed as merely a glamorized Triumph. It is a new make of sports car in its own right, and will be welcomed by those of us who want a tough, high-performance machine but who place a high value on beauty of line.

### Tubular Frame

The basis of the Doretti is a tubular chassis frame, of which the two main tubes are strengthened by steel pressings, which are welded to their centre sections.

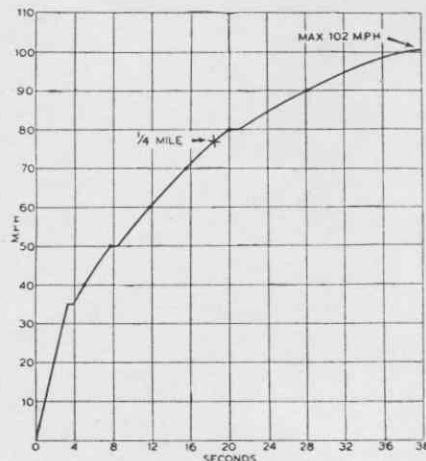
The car has a longer wheelbase than the Triumph, and the engine is some 7 ins. further back in the frame. It is also crab-tracked, being wider in front than behind, but the frame construction, allied with a light alloy body, ensures that the Doretti is, if anything, fractionally the lighter of the two vehicles.

The front suspension is by unequal length wishbones and helical springs, with telescopic dampers. There is a

Bishop Cam steering box and three-piece track rod; the steering box and the slave arm are changed over to convert to left-hand steering. Behind, the axle is secured to underslung semi-elliptic springs, which are shackled at their forward ends and are located by slide blocks behind. In addition, tubular radius arms above the springs steady the axle and absorb the torque reaction.

A very pretty two-seater body has been fitted to this chassis. The exceptionally long bonnet blends well with the curving side valances, and that "slab-sided" look has been cleverly avoided by the artistic shaping of the panels. If anybody still hankers after a "vintage" appearance, this should be a good car to convert into the new look. The hood disappears into the luggage space behind the seats, and is exceptionally easy to raise and furl. Particularly neat frameless sidescreens add greatly to the general smartness, and make the usual fabric-edged variety appear clumsy and old-fashioned.

I collected the Doretti from the Swallow works at Walsall, and at once felt at home in it. All the controls were well placed, though the seat, at its farthest adjustment, was barely far enough back for me—I am just 6 ft. tall. The driving position was very good, and it was pleasant to rest one's left knee against the high and well-padded shaft tunnel. It was not surprising,



ACCELERATION GRAPH OF THE SWALLOW DORETTI

therefore, that I soon felt at home, and the miles began to disappear in a rather surprising manner.

### Performance Figures

Subsequently, I used the machine in London, and for a number of fast long-distance journeys. The Brands Hatch circuit was lapped, and the usual stop-watch session took place to determine the performance figures. The maximum quoted is, of course, the mean of runs in both directions, which is the only speed figure that counts. I do not normally quote "one way" velocities because they mean very little, but it is perhaps of interest that in the "downwind" direction I clocked exactly the same speed in direct top and overdrive. This was 106.25 m.p.h., but against the wind the car was faster on the direct drive. It is thus apparent that if a lower axle ratio were fitted, the already good performance figures would be improved, for at present the overdrive, though giving delightfully effortless cruising, is really a thought over-gear. Incidentally, the speedometer was some 10 per cent. optimistic throughout the range, and read 116-118 m.p.h. during the fastest timed runs.

It will be noted from the graph and data panel that some very good acceleration figures were achieved. These were greatly assisted by the quick, easy gear-change and the well-behaved clutch. There is effective synchromesh on the three upper ratios, and the plain bottom gear is quite simple to engage. It would be difficult to imagine a more pleasant little central gear lever, but the over-drive control is rather too close to the other switches.

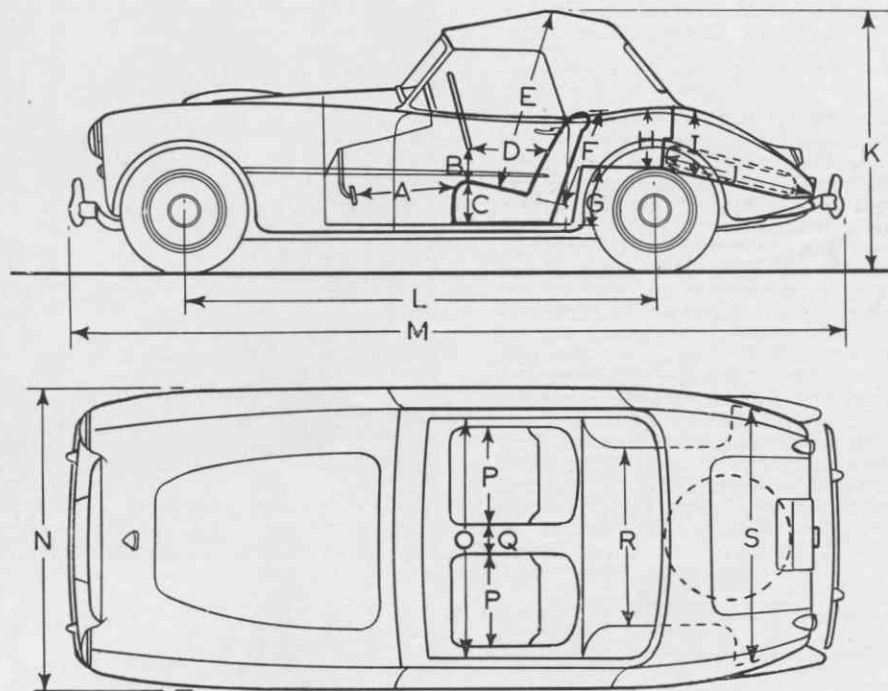
The brakes are powerful, and do not fade. Wire wheels may be ordered as an extra, and certainly add to the appearance if one has time to keep them clean; however, their superior cooling does not seem to be necessary, as "my" car had the normal pierced discs. One is delighted, in these degenerate times, to find a genuine fly-off-type hand-brake lever that can easily lock the rear wheels.

### Good Silencing

The Swallow Doretti is a sports car, and one does not expect the silence of a town carriage. Nevertheless, the exhaust is quieter than that of the average speed model, due to two silencers being fitted in tandem. The engine has the fairly "hard" sound of the typical high-efficiency unit, but is by no means noisy, and the gears are all but inaudible.

Light and pleasantly responsive, the steering is high geared and quick in action. The car corners fast without roll, and one naturally drives hard on difficult roads without any sense of strain. Extremely fierce cornering produces rear end breakaway, but it is a smooth and quite gradual process, with no tendency to spin. This is predominantly a safe car, with no tricks to upset the less skilful driver.

High praise must go to the hood, which is remarkably free from flapping or wind noise at speeds over 100 m.p.h. The sidescreens are neat and functional, and there are movable sections which can be tipped to provide ventilation. These stay where they are put, and do not rattle. A few drops of water leaked



SWALLOW DORETTI DIMENSIONS

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| <b>A</b> Seat to accelerator pedal, 21 ins.                    | <b>J</b> Length of luggage boot, 31 ins.     |
| <b>B</b> Seat to steering wheel, 6 ins.                        | <b>K</b> Height of car, 4 ft. 3 ins.         |
| <b>C</b> Depth of seat, 8 ins.                                 | <b>L</b> Wheelbase, 7 ft. 11 ins.            |
| <b>D</b> Wheel to seat back, 13 ins.                           | <b>M</b> Overall length, 13 ft. 0 ins.       |
| <b>E</b> Seat to roof, 38 ins.                                 | <b>N</b> Overall width, 4 ft. 6½ ins.        |
| <b>F</b> Depth of seat back, 20 ins.                           | <b>O</b> Width at elbows, 48½ ins.           |
| <b>G</b> Height from floor to top of hood compartment, 12 ins. | <b>P</b> Width of seat, 19 ins.              |
| <b>H</b> Depth of hood compartment, 13 ins.                    | <b>Q</b> Width between seats, 6 ins.         |
| <b>I</b> Depth of luggage boot, 11 ins.                        | <b>R</b> Width between wheel arches, 36 ins. |
|  | <b>S</b> Width of luggage boot, 47 ins.      |

into the car during a virtual cloudburst, but the weather protection is above normal sports car standards and does not spoil the look of the car. The large plastic rear window gives a good field of backward vision and, in conjunction with the well-placed mirror, provides a useful view of lurking police cars. I appreciated the powerful and effective heater.

There is quite a lot of luggage capacity in the space behind the seats. The actual luggage boot in the tail, however, is largely occupied by the spare wheel. The space provided is adequate for a week-end, but two people on a holiday would certainly be short of room for their impedimenta. There are useful recesses in the doors to carry small parcels and maps. The door handles are also in these compartments, where they are easily accessible but cannot chafe one's knee or tear milady's dress.

I greatly enjoyed testing the Swallow Doretti, and I covered quite a large mileage with it. This is certainly a most practical car, combining the virtues of the 100 m.p.h. flyer with the traffic manners and weather protection of the more staid type of conveyance. The fuel economy is notably good, too, and the typical owner should average 30-35 m.p.g. Finally, the appearance is a powerful magnet, and the car created interest and enthusiasm wherever I went.

### SPECIFICATION AND PERFORMANCE DATA

**Car Tested:** Swallow Doretti Sports 2-seater, price £777 (£1,101 17s. 6d. with P.T.). Overdrive £40 (£56 13s. 4d. with P.T.).

**Engine:** Four cylinders 83 mm. x 92 mm. (1,991 c.c.). Pushrod operated overhead valves, 90 b.h.p. at 4,800 r.p.m. 8.5 to 1 compression ratio, twin SU carburettors, Lucas coil and distributor.

**Transmission:** Borg and Beck 9 in. single dry plate clutch with hydraulic operation. Four-speed gearbox with short central remote control lever, plus electrically operated overdrive. Ratios, 3.03 (overdrive), 3.7, 4.9, 7.4, and 12.5 to 1. Short, open Hardy Spicer propeller shaft. Salisbury hypoid rear axle.

**Chassis:** Tubular frame, reinforced at centre section and underslung at rear. Independent front suspension by wishbones and helical springs with telescopic dampers. Cam and lever steering, 3-piece track rod. Semi-elliptic rear springs with piston-type dampers. Pierced disc wheels, fitted 5.50 x 15 in. tyres. Lockheed hydraulic brakes, front 10 ins. x 2½ ins., 2 L.S., rear 9 ins. x 1½ ins. Total lining area 148 sq. ins.

**Equipment:** 12-volt lighting and starting. Speedometer, rev. counter, ammeter, water temperature, oil pressure and fuel gauges. Flashing direction indicators. Built-in heating and demisting.

**Dimensions, etc.:** Wheelbase, 7 ft. 11 ins. Track, front 4 ft., rear 3 ft. 9½ ins. Ground clearance, 6 ins. Turning circle, 34 ft. Weight 18½ cwt.

**Performance:** Maximum speed 102 m.p.h. Speeds in gears, overdrive 100 m.p.h., direct top 102 m.p.h., 3rd 80 m.p.h., 2nd 50 m.p.h., 1st 30 m.p.h. Standing quarter-mile 18.1 secs. Acceleration: 0-30 m.p.h., 3.4 secs.; 0-40 m.p.h., 5.1 secs.; 0-50 m.p.h., 7.8 secs.; 0-60 m.p.h., 11.6 secs.; 0-70 m.p.h., 15.4 secs.; 0-80 m.p.h., 20 secs.; 0-90 m.p.h., 28.4 secs.

**Fuel Consumption:** Driven hard, 28 m.p.g.