

# TR Derivations

*Several small specialist concerns have used Triumph TR components, and since owners of these cars will find their classic restoration and maintenance needs subject to the same constraints, we summarise the most prominent of them below:*

**Marcos Mantis:** Very few of the oddly-styled Mantis models were built in 1970 and 1971, but it is worth remembering that the cars used almost unmodified TR6 2498cc fuel injection engines, linked to a TR6 gearbox and overdrive unit, though the rear axle was a Ford Capri component and front suspension was from a smaller Triumph, the Vitesse.

**Morgan Plus 4:** The original Plus 4 of 1950 used a 2088cc Standard Vanguard engine, with a separate Moss gearbox, and it was not until 1954 that the 90 bhp 1991cc. TR2 engine became available. For the next 14 years, until 1968, the Plus 4 was always part of Morgan's range, using an engine from the current TR model. Morgan lagged only months behind Triumph in their use of a particular tune, so it is reasonably easy to see that the 100 bhp engine did not become standard until 1957, or that a 2138cc TR4 engine was not standardised until 1957, or that a 2138cc TR4 engine was not standardised until 1962. In all except very minor respects, the Plus 4 engines were exactly as used by Triumph, and can be serviced and

rebuilt with that in mind. At no time, however, was a Triumph transmission used.

The Plus 4 Plus, which was a Plus 4 in a modern glass-fibre coupé style, also used TR engines.

**Peerless and Warwick:** These two cars, though having different names, were of the same

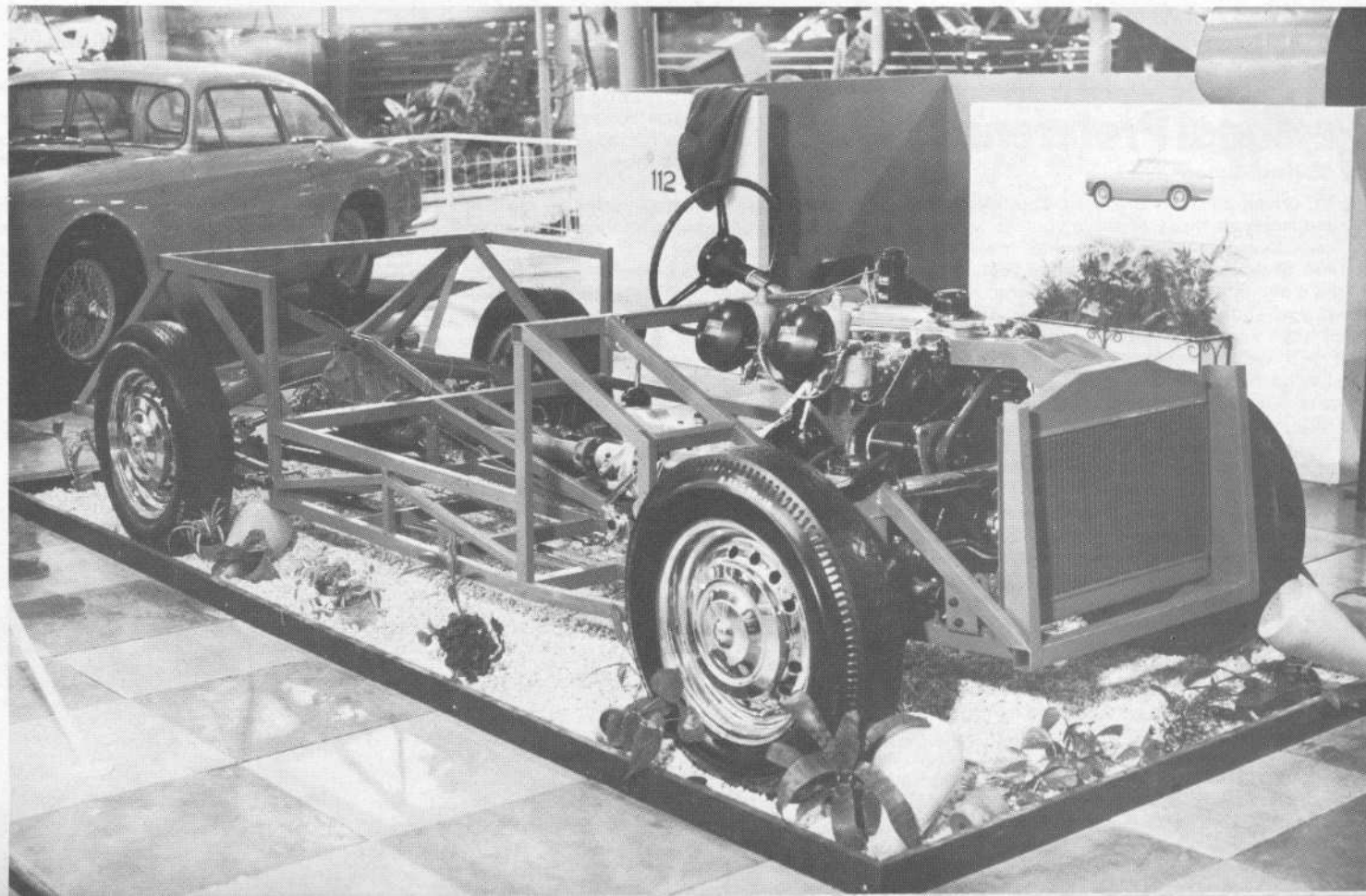
design, the Peerless being built at Slough between 1957 and 1960, and the Warwick at nearby Colnbrook from 1960 to 1962. Although they were four seaters with glass-fibre bodies and multi-tube frames, they used TR3A engines, transmissions and axle centres. Sensibly enough, these components were absolutely unmodified (except that the rear axle, of course was part of a Peerless-developed De Dion system), and it is in recognition of this that the cars are recognised by the TR Register.

**Swallow Doretti:** This car achieved fame more because it was involved in a big factory-gate accident which so nearly killed Standard's managing director, Sir John Black, than by any of its subsequent deeds in the showrooms or on the race track. Dorettis were designed and developed by Swallow at Walsall Airport, around special tubular frames and light-alloy and steel two-seater bodies. Engines, trans-

28



*Above, the venerable Morgan was Triumph TR-powered. Below, the interesting late fifties Peerless cars used TR3A engines and transmissions in a multi-tube frame, clothed in a glass-fibre body.*



## Triumph derivations

missions, axle, front and rear suspension were all pure TR2, though there was significantly less space in the cockpit, and road tests showed the car to be rather slower than a TR2, even though many thought it to be more attractively styled.

It was also too expensive, which might explain why sales dropped right away after the initial burst, and the last Doretti of all was made in 1955.

**Trident:** These rare and rather strange cars began life as a styling proposal for a new TVR, but were eventually taken back to Suffolk by a TVR dealer, and were given a separate identity. The first Tridents were based on the chassis of an Austin-Healey 3000, but from about 1968/1969 a complete TR6 chassis and suspensions were used instead. The illusion of a rebodied Triumph became even more marked in 1971, when the Trident Tycoon was announced, because it had a TR6 engine matched to Borg Warner automatic transmission. These cars were never in more than hand-built production condition, and the last seems to have been built in 1973. ●



Above, Trident used TR6 chassis and engine. Right, Marcos used TR6 engine for coupe in 1971 and also in Mantis models.



Above, the rare and attractive Swallow Doretti that bit back at the hand who fed it.



## Personal Preference

by Graham Robson

I'VE driven all types of classic Triumph TR, and enjoyed most of them, but in some respects some appeal more to me than others. My experiences might be of value:

If it's ultimate economy you're after in a TR, then you should look for a healthy TR2 of 1953-1955 vintage. These cars were the lightest, and had a combination of power tuning and carburation which gave quite outstanding results. A good TR2 should be capable of up to 35 mpg — the high gearing helps.

The strongest of the older TRs are those built from the autumn of 1956, when the more robust Phase III Vanguard type of rear axle was standardised. Recognising one is easy — the change came with the adoption of front disc brakes, and a Girling system; earlier TRs had Lockheed drums all round.

Don't buy a TR without overdrive if you can help it, though conversion of a basic car to an "overdrive" model isn't at all difficult. I don't think many enthusiasts would argue with my contention that a good TR should have overdrive, wire wheels, and a detachable hardtop. I don't see the point of the "occasional" rear seat, but many cars have them.

Among the later (Michelotti and Karmann styled) cars, if you want a four-cylinder car then

the TR4A has much the best roadholding and is ever so slightly quicker, along with slightly better equipment. I like the two-piece hard top very much, but I could never see the point of having a "Surrey" top; if you want the roof off, you take it off, otherwise bolt the steel panel back into place.

The fastest TRs of all were TR5s, but TR6s built until the end of 1972 were almost as rapid. After that, there was an element of "de-tuning"

and performance suffered. I have my doubts about the Lucas fuel injection, which could be unreliable, and is expensive to restore. But after 1967 — unless you were living in North America, and unless you were happy with much less performance — you didn't have much choice. My choice among them would be a TR6 built in 1970-1972 model years, as the 1969 TR6s didn't have those smart sculptured road wheels. ●

