

OUR CAR-OF-THE-YEAR AWARD

JANUARY, 1969

Registered at G.P.O.,
Sydney, for transmission
by post as a periodical.

40c

wheels

AUSTRALIA'S TOP MOTORING MAGAZINE

383
TEST: ISUZU'S
NEW FLORIAN

5000 MILES
IN 5 DAYS:
AUSTIN 1800^{MK 2}

FULL TEST: NEW HUNTER GT



However you look at it it's a neat way to get around. The Hunter GT and friend.

Exploring in Hunter Territory

The GO-GO GT

Hillmans of a very different herd . . . we drive the new range, including the still-unreleased GT.

JOURNALISTS are a fairly blase lot. Motoring journalists, the prima donnas of the trade, are something far worse. And trying out a new car brings it out. Listening to them giving a vehicle a vitriolic disembowelling, a nervous passenger might believe the car was on the verge of disintegration at any second. At the very least, it would make him blush.

That's what we always thought. Then Chrysler's chief engineer in Sydney, Brian Butler, invited us to

fly down to Melbourne and help ferry back one of the super-secret, hush-hush new Hunter GTs.

And a traumatic experience at the township of Tarcutta that we're never likely to forget. There, in front of at least five witnesses, three of Australia's best-known motoring writers, all men of sound mind and body, stopped the convoy, got out, stood muttering for a moment then walked into the local post office to send the manufacturers of the GT a telegram.

The telegram, to Ned Clymer Chrysler's press chief in Adelaide, read: CONGRATULATIONS STOP A SUPERB MOTOR CAR STOP.

And that just about sums it up. Perhaps not superb because we don't really believe anyone has ever — or will ever, probably — build a "superb" car. But under the

circumstances their enthusiasm was understandable. This year's Chrysler's Hillman Hunter Royal-Safari-GT take-your-pick offering is tops. Especially the GT, which is a little car with a big heart (the transplanted heart from Britain's latest Sunbeam Rapier in fact) that looks all set to bite a big chunk out of the Cortina GT's market. It's almost the personification of the well-worn advertising line, "space-with-pace". The new Hunter has lots of both.

Of course, it has its faults. No car would be "human" without them. Like the ashtray that you've probably ashed your cigarette over by the time you've got into it. And the less-than-knife-through-butter gearshift. And the way the wipers STILL don't clean that controversial blind spot top/right on the

driver's side.

But for the price of around \$2500 — \$95 less than its No 1 opponent the Cortina GT — you get yourself a piece of some of the best automotive merchandise on the scene. The car is in several forms. Basic model is the Hunter; luxury version is the Hunter Royal; station wagon is the Safari and the "go" version is the GT. During the trip from Melbourne to Sydney we drove them all. The Safari impressed with its speed and handling and load-carrying ability (we had a full load of spare parts for all cars, though the only one needed was the replacement for a stone-shattered windshield).

The automatic Hunter impressed with its imperceptible gearchange. We thought this was understandable as, being a Chrysler, it would share the magnificent Torqueflight of its big brothers. We got quite a shock to discover it was a Borg-Warner. For some reason, our Hunter automatic was down on power compared with the manual.

Looks are a department in which the Royal and GT score heavily. Both come standard with black vinyl roofs. The GT also has headrests as standard and a matt-black panel across the lower boot. The result is a very neat motor car indeed. Interior trim is good too, even in the bottom-of-the-line standard Hunter with bench seats. Imitation woodgrain is used extensively and it is as good if not better than any of the competition. Novel feature of the interior too is a flip-up vanity mirror inside the glove-box lid.

Probably the thing that impresses you most when you first step into the new Hunter GT is the seating. The rally-type buckets are the most comfortable, best-supported seats we've tried in a long while.

On the road it impresses with its pep. For an 18 cwt car, it has

a surprising amount of torque. Stepping from the Royal to the GT is another experience again. You think the Royal is peppy till you try the GT with its mill straight out of a Sunbeam Rapier. This engine pushes the weighty Sunbeam around at a respectable rate of knots. In the Hunter GT, it positively flies. As is to be expected, mpg suffers rather badly. Our test car averaged only 21.8 mpg. But then that was under really hard driving. Under normal conditions, the figure would be considerably better. Driving from Melbourne to Sydney the Royals averaged around 28 mpg. This was at running-in speed, as few of the cars had more than 100 miles on the clock.

Handling is tops. The new cars are eminently controllable in all situations other than, of course, completely off the air. Strong understeer is a feature.

Braking varied. The GT, with its beefed-up discs up front, would stop on a coin. One of the Royals we ran figures on, however, showed an alarmingly spongy pedal with real all-out panic stops requiring an incredible amount of effort.

Gears were good. As mentioned earlier, the automatic shift was superb. The all-synco, four-on-the-floor manuals were smooth, though all test vehicles, with one exception, seemed to suffer unduly from what we hope was new-car notchiness.

Driving position is excellent in all respects. The column seems to have been re-aligned so the driver now sits more squarely on to it. Steering is light but precise and the turning circle good.

Finish, both inside and out, is of the highest standard — a testimony to Chrysler's rigorous quality control. Instruments are all where they are needed, even if the figures on them are too small and hard to read.

The new square-eye lights seem

to be an improvement over the Mk I and provide an astonishing amount of coverage in the "high" position. "Low" beam isn't quite so impressive. The cut-off on "low" is very straight with little left-hand lift which makes the road past the cut-off very black indeed.

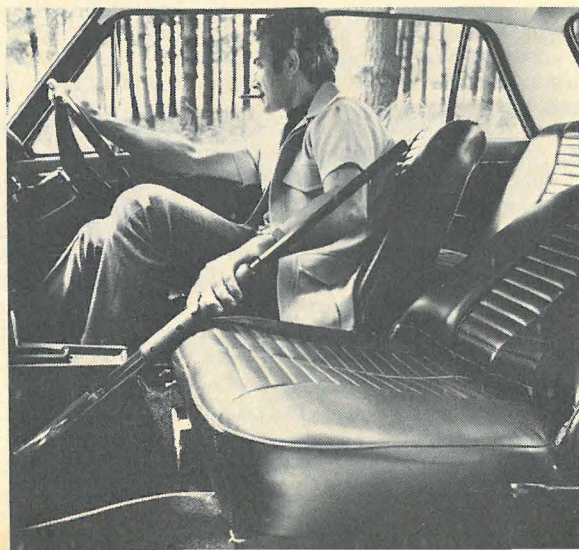
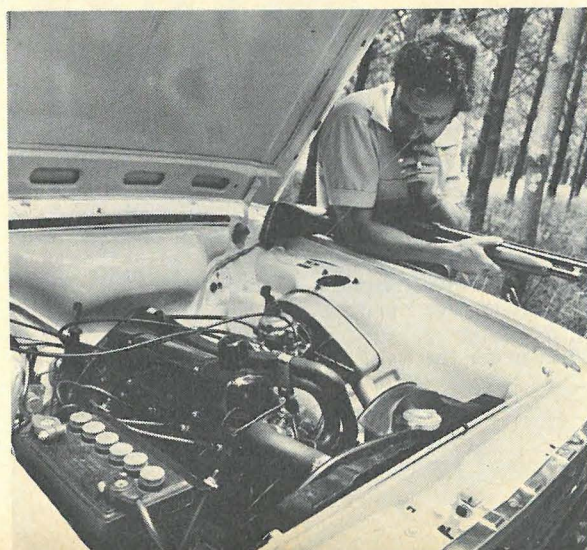
About the only thing we really didn't like about the new Hunter was its accelerator. It verges on the dangerous. All four of our test drivers experienced at least one "moment of truth". Two accelerator pedal joints broke on test cars. One driver caught the welt of his shoe under the pedal, flicked it off — and found he had no accelerator. The fourth driver tried to heel-and-toe in the GT and found the accelerator floating away with his heel as he tried desperately to keep his toe on the brake. All in all, a most disconcerting experience.

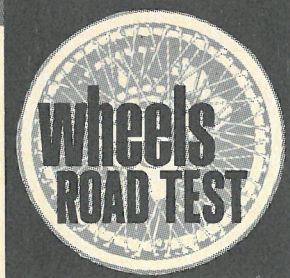
This came as a double surprise because of the way the manufacturers have literally bent over backwards to incorporate as many safety features as possible. Padding abounds in all the likely and unlikely places one might want to bang one's head. Wheels have double-sided safety rims for added security. Excellent seat belts come standard as do anti-burst door locks. Windscreen is safety-zoned and fitted with capable, quick-acting washers. Surprising then that the door handles look quite lethal. Vision is better than average and ventilation adequately handled by twin fascia-mounted air vents that can beam a stream of cool air to almost any spot in the car. Extractor vents are set in the rear roof panels and make sure the cabin air is changed completely every few seconds.

In shorth then the Hunter is a long-legged, thirsty little "looker" with the pace to run down most of the prey in its price range — and still double as an admirable round-the-town workhorse. #

Engine is eminently accessible. Mill is the same as that in the Sunbeam Rapier.

Seats are one of the GT's most appealing features. Front buckets are almost up to rally standard.





TECHNICAL DETAILS

HOW THEY COMPARE

PRICE	HUNTER GT \$2500 (approx) PERFORMANCE	CORTINA GT \$2595
	(secs)	(secs)
0-30	4.2	4.6
0-40	5.2	6.0
0-50	6.9	8.6
0-60	10.9	12.3
0-70	13	15.2
0-80	17	22.8
0-90	27.5	—
STANDING QUARTER-MILE:		
Cortina GT		18.9 secs
Hunter GT		19.0 secs
ENGINE CAPACITY:		
Cortina GT		1499 cc
Hunter GT		1725 cc

MAKE	Hillman	OPTIONS	none
MODEL	Hunter Royal	COLOR	white
BODY TYPE	4-door sedan	MILEAGE, START	750
PRICE	\$2385	FINISH	1127
		WEIGHT	18 cwt

FUEL CONSUMPTION:

Cruising	24-28 mpg
Overall	23.4 mpg

TEST CONDITIONS:

Weather: fine, hot. Surface: hot-mix bitumen. Load: two persons. Fuel: premium.

PERFORMANCE

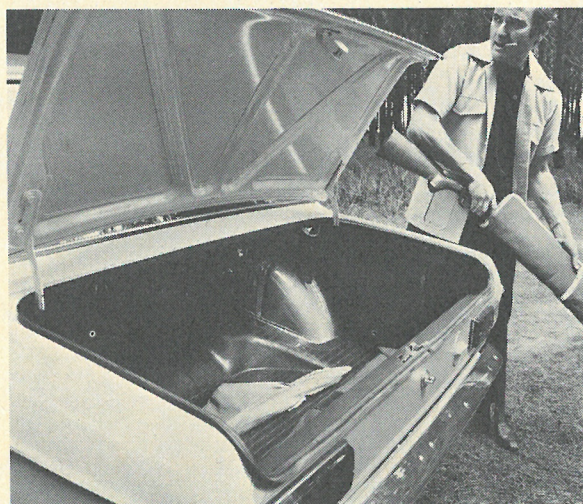
Piston speed at max bhp	2654 ft/min
Top gear mph per 1000 rpm	17.4
Engine rpm at max speed	4834
Engine rpm at cruising speed	3700
Lbs (laden) per gross bhp (power to weight)	28.8

MAXIMUM SPEEDS:

Maximum speed:				
Fastest run		87.4 mph		
Average of all runs		84.0 mph		
Speedometer indication fastest run		89 mph		
In gears:	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
	30 mph	50 mph	67 mph	84 mph

ACCELERATION THROUGH GEARS:

0-30 mph	4.0 sec	
0-40 mph	7.3 sec	
0-50 mph	11.4 sec	
0-60 mph	16.3 sec	
0-70 mph	22.1 sec	
0-80 mph	35.0 sec	
	3rd gear	4th gear
20-40 mph	6.8 sec	10.2 sec
30-50 mph	6.1 sec	11.8 sec
40-60 mph	8.2 sec	12.0 sec
50-70 mph	9.2 sec	14.8 sec



Boot is reasonably spacious. Holds 18 cubic feet of luggage.

STANDING QUARTER MILE:

Fastest run	20.3 sec
Average of all runs	20.4 sec

SPEEDOMETER ERROR:

Indicated mph: 30	40	50	60	70
Actual mph: 30.5	40.5	50.0	59.5	69.0

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE:

Cylinders	four in line
Bore and stroke	81.5 mm by 82.5 mm
Cubic capacity	1725 cc
Compression ratio	8.4 to 1
Valves	pushrod overhead
Carburettor	Zenith CA sidedraught
Fuel pump	mechanical
Power at rpm	73 bhp at 4900 rpm
Torque at rpm	99.5 lb/ft 2700 rpm

TRANSMISSION:

Type	four speed, all syncro
Clutch	7½ in. hydraulic
Gear lever location	central
Overall ratio: 1st 13.043; 2nd 8.328; 3rd 5.415; 4th 3.89; final drive 3.89 to 1.	

CHASSIS AND RUNNING GEAR:

Construction	unitary
Suspension, front	Macpherson strut, coils
Suspension, rear	leaf springs
Shock absorbers	telescopic
Steering type	recirculating ball
Turns l to l	3.3
Turning circle	33.5 ft
Steering wheel diameter	15 in.
Brakes, type	disc/drum
Dimensions	9.6 in. dia fr/9.0 in. dia drum rr

DIMENSIONS:

Wheelbase	8 ft 2½ in.
Track, front	4 ft 4 in.
Track, rear	4 ft 4 in.
Length	14 ft
Height	4 ft 8 in.
Width	5 ft 3½ in.
Fuel tank capacity	10 gal
Tyres, size	6.00-13
Pressures	24-24
Make on test car	Goodyear G8
Ground clearance, registered	6.8 in.