

CLASSIC CAR WEEKLY **CHASING CARS**
We test the cars you can buy

1950 MG YA

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Intro

If the MG YA looks as though it belongs to a different era from the Fifties, that's very probably because it does. Destined for launch at the 1939 Earls Court Motor Show it was unavoidably delayed by a six-year interruption from the Germans. When it finally broke cover again the YA would have cost the war weary public £525.0.0d plus another £146.11.8d in purchase taxes, so with rationing, bomb damage and popular 'entertainers' like George Formby to contend with already, buying one was an extravagance beyond the reach of many. But, by the time this one rolled out of Abingdon in 1950 the world was getting back to normal, the population was beginning to have a bit more disposable income and the Y's walnut and leather interior was finished to a very high standard, even if the backs of the passenger seats were made from Rexine - a kind of mock-leather - to save money and keep up the pretence. And, with its original bill of sale from University Motors Ltd and accompanying history file, it's obvious this example has been well cared for to arrive at this point in time in this kind of condition.

Bodywork

The dark blue paintwork it now sports really suits the flowing lines of the YA but according to the maker's specifications it was originally finished in a maroon/beige combination. And you can still see some of that maroon beneath the cracks and chips in its topcoat. Can you say a car looks period-perfect when you know it has been repainted? Either way, it has bags of character and a wonderfully warm feel to it. In fact, the imperfections somehow add to its overall appeal and it would be a massive shame to paint it again and erase all that patina. All of the chrome and trim is still firmly attached and with so many period features to admire, like the separate headlights, massive spot lamps, steel sliding sunroof and starter handle bracket, they really don't make them like this anymore.

Interior

Ergonomics had yet to be invented when the YA's interior was laid out on the drawing board. Some of the controls feel a bit cramped and nothing falls to hand easily, but then none of that really matters when you sit inside this car. Wood, leather and that unmistakable old car smell create a heady cocktail and allow a wave of nostalgia to wash over you. The fabulous dash looks like your nan's old wireless, there's a thin cord that raises a blind in the rear window and the timer for the indicator in the steering wheel



SPECIFICATION

Engine	1250cc 4cyl OHV
Power	46bhp@4800rpm
Torque	58lb/ft@2400rpm
Top speed	not quoted
0-60mph	not quoted
Fuel consumption	not quoted
Gearbox	4-speed manual
MoT	12 months

belongs to a gentler age. It's all in good condition too, with a smart woollen headlining, clean, damage free upholstery and carpets with no more than their fair share of wear and tear.

Engine

Pick a side of the car, crank open the split bonnet and bask in the YA's simplicity. Built in the days before onboard computers, electronic management and flux capacitors, it's a simple unit any DIY mechanic can work on. Not that he'd need to if our test drive is anything to go by. This MG started instantly, ran like a top and gave no cause for concern whatsoever.



On the road

Climb through the suicide front door and fold yourself into the sculpted leather armchairs that double as seats. They need to be comfy as it takes a bit of effort to position yourself behind the low, close wheel and you'll need to compose yourself once you're in. No wonder so many old(er) citizens need hip replacements, they must have all driven YAs in their youth! Actually, it's not really all that bad and once you're in, you're in. You also feel like you're perched up high as you stare over that long bonnet and maybe it's just us, but all we really needed was a Gladstone bag rattling around on the floor to feel like James Herriot on a house call. With its sunroof open, and opulent wood and leather interior it's a pleasant cabin to while away long journeys. The gearchange is overlong and a tad ponderous, the brakes are pretty wooden and it's slow to accelerate, but that said, it burbles along nicely, you get a real sense of achievement when you drive it correctly and we loved it all the same.

Verdict

Not the sort of machine to use on a daily basis, this MG still feels solid and dependably enough to jump in and enjoy whenever the mood takes you. For someone looking for something with plenty of character to cosset and maintain in the manner to which it has become accustomed, it's certainly worth investigating. JP

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+ Character

- Bodywork not perfect