

Pre-war looks and charm, T Series fun come with a Y Type



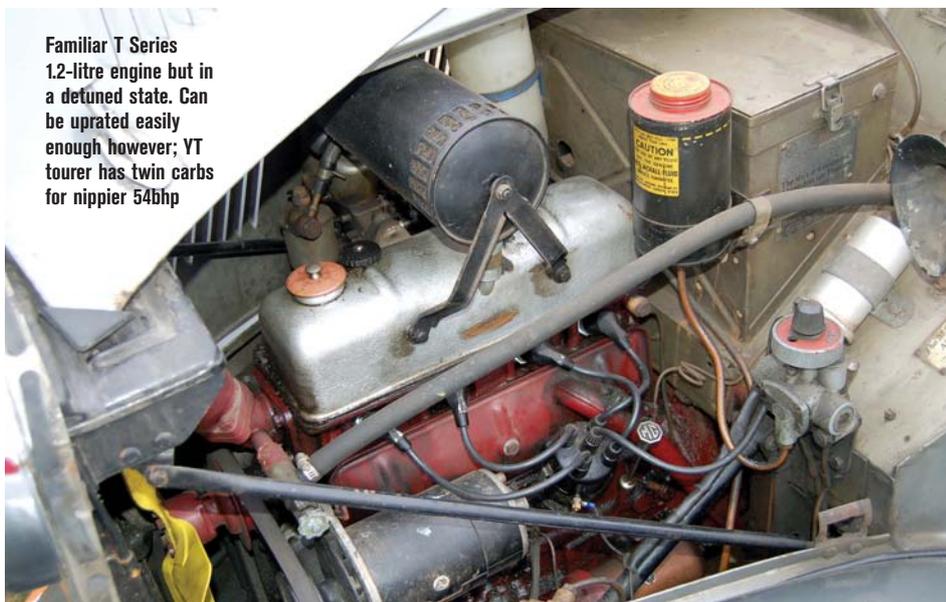
Chromework special to the Y Type so check thoroughly

# FAMILY

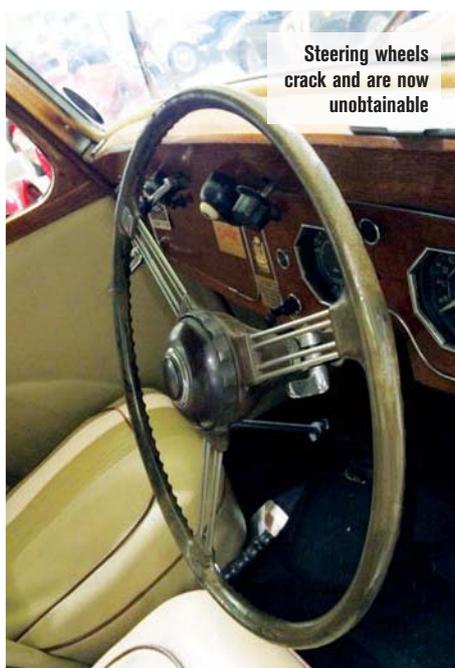
Quaint pre-war designed MG saloon that shares a lot of DNA with the T Series and is almost as much fun although spare parts supply isn't so comprehensive. Good value and appreciating quite notably

# TIME

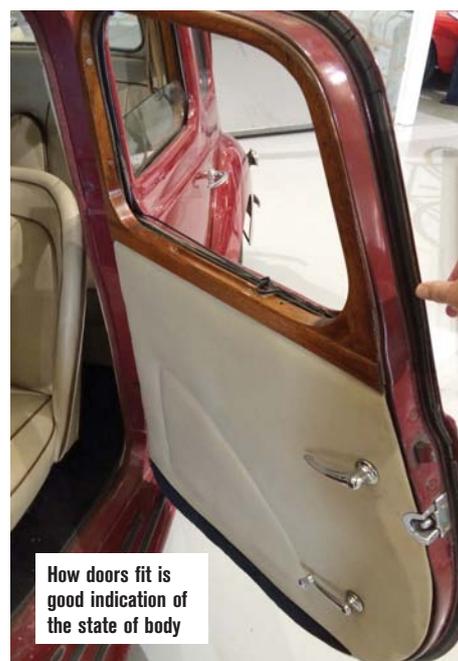
WORDS BY ALAN ANDERSON IMAGES BY MAGICCARPICS.CO.UK



Familiar T Series 1.2-litre engine but in a detuned state. Can be uprated easily enough however; YT tourer has twin carbs for nippier 54bhp



Steering wheels crack and are now unobtainable



How doors fit is good indication of the state of body

**WHAT TO LOOK FOR**

**BODY AND CHASSIS**

- The chassis is broadly TD and as stoutly made and penny to a pound engine oil leaks have provided a nice protective coating! That said, look for past repairs in all the usual areas, especially at the rear where the lube rarely spread to as it is underslung on the Y Type.
- MG TD chassis or repair sections can be used if required – the main area that may require attention are the rear suspension pick up areas and the spare wheel well.
- Check the floor for rot, and pay attention at the running boards and sills, A post rusting and cosmetic tin worm at the door bottoms and boot lid. How the suicide doors fit tell you the state of the A and B posts.

In production around the same time as the T Series, that iconic sports car may have been driven by war-time fighter pilots, but the Y Type seemed to be the choice of their superior officers. In essence the Y Type is an MG TD, albeit in a saloon body meaning the family can come along for a ride as well. They share the same raffish MG character and are rarer yet their prices handsomely undercut those of a T Series and are almost as easy to own. All great reasons why you enjoy a family T time...

**HISTORY**

**1937** Y Type saloon, designed sharing certain body panels with the Morris 8 on a stout chassis later adapted for the MG TD using the T Series running gear. The now familiar 1250cc XPAG engine was also used, albeit in a detuned 46bhp state.  
**1947** Set for launch in 1941, the war severely delayed the car's introduction and was priced at a not inconsiderable £671.

**1948** Four-seater tourer badged YT launched using twin carb TC engine. Almost 900 were made but all bar three were exported, discontinued in 1950.

**1952** Facelift where car gained the YB designation, identified by altered rear wings, covering smaller 15inch wheels. Mechanically, the car gained a front anti-roll bar, harder suspension (Panhard Rod is now deleted) and better brakes.

Only 1301 YB versions were made before the car was replaced by the larger more modern looking Magnette ZA, as opposed to 6144 YA models.

**DRIVING AND PRESS COMMENTS**

Unless you yearn for real sports car thrills, you may find the Y Type far more pleasing, thanks to an ultra stylish interior decked in wood and leather with just about enough room for four in comfort – plus, they came with a steel sunroof.

**WHAT TO LOOK FOR**

**GENERAL**

- Availability of body and trim panels new is non existent so you'll have to source repair sections or opt for used components and bear in mind that few Morris 8 bits fit. NTG Motor Services of Suffolk is your first port of call.
- Condition and provenance counts more than specific model while many of the improvements found on the YB can be fitted (apart from the bodywork).
- YB bumpers aren't the same as the YA and YT and both are rare finds. The answer is to use a TD rear bumper and special mounting irons; only real anoraks will know...
- The electrics are dead simple and pose no real problems although given the car's age, and likelihood of bodging over the decades, have a new loom fitted to start all over again is a wise move.
- Jackall integral hydraulic lifting system was clever in its day but is it still working and trustworthy? Spare parts are rare finds but they are around.

## THE FACTS

■ Best model:	YT
■ Worst model	Anything ratty and rusty
■ Budget buy	YA
■ OK for unleaded?	Needs an additive
■ Will it fit your garage?	L 4090 x 1490mm
■ Spares situation	Pretty good
■ Club support	Usual MG standards
■ Appreciating asset?	Yes, especially YTs

## GOOD BUY OR GOOD-BYE?

Yes as a T Series for all the family to enjoy

**“Look at the Y Type as an MG TD saloon that friends can also enjoy on a drive out into the country”**



## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

### RUNNING GEAR

- Usual MG foibles prevail here, namely the trunnions and king pins wearing out. You need to raise each front wheel and wiggle them about to check their condition but not dear to replace.
- The good news is that the design figured virtually on later MGs, like the TF and MGA, so spare parts either new or used, can easily be sourced.
- Look for weeping and clapped out lever arm dampers and if replacing, bear in mind that many cheap recon's last no time at all. Check for spring pan rot and cracking, especially on the YB by the anti roll bar.
- Rack and pinion steering is fitted so it should feel nice and precise but as there's no replacement existing units, and other types from later MGs can't be substituted, they have to be rebuilt once worn.

In its detuned 46bhp state the MG is decidedly leisurely and about as peppy as a 1098cc Morris Minor although it's easy to bring the unit up to TD tune if desired.

Like the T Series, they are fussy on quicker roads unless the gearing is raised and some fit Ford five-speed gearboxes as a result. Handling is much like the sports car brother and can be similarly uprated, although you may find some cars still running on period cross-ply tyres. Radials can be fitted to the YB only and may need slightly deflating for it to fit in the spare wheel well and not so foul the boot lid!

Pre-war MGs had some lovely touches including self-actuated jacks and a front opening windscreen. The steering column is telescopically adjustable which goes some way to providing a degree of driver comfort for such an oldie, a point noted in road tests as was a pre-war appearance “to which many keener motorists still cling” remarked *Autocar* back in 1949.

## VALUES AND MARKETPLACE

The rarer YB is the better bet if you can find one, but you can uprate a YA to suit if you want. YTs are extremely rare and their values are dependent on how much you want one plus it may well be a left-hand drive US expat although a fair number were also exported to Commonwealth countries so will be right-hand drivers.

That said, condition is the most important factor with any Y Type and a capital YA makes a better bet than an average YB. You may well find some cars modded with T Series running gear, higher gearing and so on and they certainly make the saloon more suited to modern roads.

Compared to the T Series, the Y Type remains a bargain. Even the best is unlikely to exceed £15,000 although you may have to double that for a YT drophead, when one comes along, that is. Average-to-good saloons cost £8-10,000 and projects around £2500 irrespective of model.

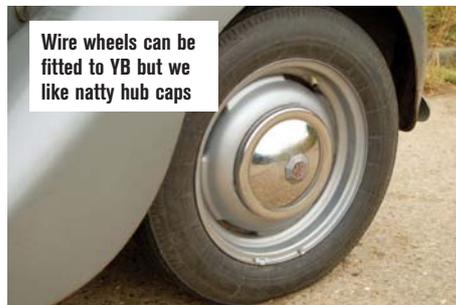
**WHAT TO LOOK FOR**

**TRANSMISSION**

■ Nothing scientific here, just listen for undue noise and weak synchromesh – Riley 1.5/Wolseley 1500 boxes can be substituted (speak to an expert first) otherwise it's a £1000 overhaul. Rear axles known to sing but last for ages in this state but is the original ratio fitted as many owners swapped it for a higher geared alternative. Other units that may be able to fit include the Magnette, Wolseley 4/44 or a T Series.



Body rot is what you'd expect and 'identical' Morris parts don't fit



Wire wheels can be fitted to YB but we like natty hub caps



Faster YT for that T Series wind-in-the hair feeling for all the family. Rare and much more expensive



With all this wood and leather, restos can be as expensive as a Jaguar Mk2

Aside from body parts, spares are relatively easy to obtain, especially the oily bits which are common to the TD, and renowned T Series experts such as NTG Motor Services of Ipswich, Andy King, Barry Walker and Barrie Carter can help.

**IMPROVEMENTS**

Think T Series is the rule. First thing is to bring the engine up to T Series tune before removing 3/32" from the head face to increase the compression ratio to 8.6:1 – but don't forget you'll need washers under the head nuts to compensate. A better 9.3:1 can be achieved by grinding 1/8" off with port profiling and polishing.

Period superchargers such as a Shorrock will give useful extra oomph whilst staying true to the ethos of a 1930s-1950s; Steve Baker MG sells a full Eaton M45 kit including ancillaries for £3300. This promises a 45 per cent power increase. George Edney of XPAG

**WHAT TO LOOK FOR**

**TRIM**

■ Bringing a typical aged interior up to concours standards can be involved and as expensive as a Jag Mk2 so don't dismiss the usual worn leather trim and jaded woodwork lightly. However, restoration kits are at least available as are fitted carpets if you want to have a go yourself.

■ Is the steel sunroof seized? Blocked drainage tubes are usually the culprit – but it could well have water-stained the headlining. Check for water leaks and rot damage at the front scuttle, perhaps due to a poorly fitting front screen which can be opened.

■ Have a look at the steering wheel if it's original and not a T Series which may have been fitted. The reason is that they were prone to cracking. There's not much that you can do here other than have it professionally restored – a useful bargaining point perhaps?



Period illustration showed MG with a pre-war style that lasted up to when the ZA Magnette replaced the range

Rear shot: radial tyres can foul boot lid compartment



## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

### ENGINE

■ XPAG units much dearer to overhaul than a B-Series and may require specialist machining and repairing. Reckon on £4000 for a quality overhaul – best to have it done by a renowned MG expert – to standard tune. Oil leaks are a nightmare and seems to ooze out of everywhere but at least it's a good anti-rust agent. Oil pressure, should be 40-50psi around town and watch for smoke exiting the oil breather pipe.

Engineering can rebore the unit to 1350cc and up to 1.5-litres with a 96mm stroke crank – but it could be as costly as the car.

Ford's Type 9 gearbox is a fairly common upgrade. Expect to pay up to £900 plus you have to supply the gearbox.

Wider wheels aren't really an option; it's best to make the most of what you have by buying quality tyres. T Series wire wheels can be fitted fairly easily to the YB but speak to an expert about the other models. The drum brakes, from a YB, equipped with quality linings, will suffice for many owners although a servo may be useful.

## VERDICT

Penny to a pound that you've never ever considered this MG before. You are not alone as they remain invariably overlooked in favour of a T Series, the later MGA or the nicer ZA/ZB Magnette.

However, the more you look at a Y Type, then the more you realise that they have just as much to offer, not least charming pre-war style and character, twinned with MGA level driving qualities and at prices you couldn't buy a good T Series for. That's something no other car of that era provides we feel. So Y not consider this MG?

## THREE OF A KIND



### MG MAGNETTE ZA/ZB

This is the car that replaced the Y Type and for many will be the better car – unless you yearn for pre-war looks. The B-Series engine provides brisker performance and can be uprated easier. ZB Varitone featured wider rear window among other enhancements. Similar in price to a Y Type, the Magnette makes a cheaper almost-as-good alternative to a Jaguar Mk1 or Mk2 in our minds.



### RILEY 1.5 WOLSELEY 1500

Continuing with the Morris connection, the Wolseley 1500 and the sportier Riley 1.5 are larger, more upmarket Morris Minors that have an MG feel about them, not least their traditional wood and leather interior plus they use the same 1500cc B-Series engine as found in the Magnette. A nice little saloon that did well on the racing tracks, they represent good value but body and trim parts are scarce.



### HILLMAN MINX

More upmarket than a Ford or Vauxhall, the Hillman Minx is another 'left field' candidate worth considering if you hanker for a post-war saloon with a pre-war feel. Not quick or as characterful as an MG, the Phase III-VIIIA range ran from 1948 to 1957. Even top models won't – or shouldn't – break £3000 but spares, especially body and trim parts, will be a problem. Upmarket Sunbeams and Singer alternatives also.