

Much of the test took place amidst the snow-capped peaks of the French Alps where a car's virtues and weaknesses become more quickly apparent.

JENSEN C-V8

VERY seldom are we able to subject any car to a road test of such length and severity as that we gave the Jensen C-V8 and very rarely does it prove to be such a pleasure. Over 4,500 miles, most of them abroad, were crowded into three weeks' motoring during which time the car was greased twice, five pints of oil were put into the sump and the radiator was replenished at intervals. No other maintenance was needed.

Time was nearly always short. The first 24 hours from leaving Hampshire on the outward journey, including a night crossing on the Dover-Dunkirk ferry, saw 730 miles on the clock. Motoring cautiously through Sunday summer traffic 120 miles of the Autostrada del Sole were covered at an average speed well over 100 m.p.h. and many hours were spent in driving up and down little-used mountain roads in the Alps.

The impression that emerged was of a car superbly suited to Grand Touring in the true sense. A very smooth silent 6-litre Chrysler engine and automatic transmission give it a performance so effortless as to be entirely deceptive. It comes as a shock when analysing the figures to find that its maximum speed of 136 m.p.h., acceleration from rest to 100 m.p.h. in 20.9 sec. and standing quarter mile time of 15.9 sec. make it one of the fastest cars we have ever road tested and certainly the fastest full four seater.

Externally the Jensen looks a large and heavy car; inside it feels structurally very stiff and solidly made but the weighbridge only registers 30 cwt. so that the separate chassis made from steel tubes and boxed pressings must be very efficient and the beautifully finished glass-fibre body much lighter than it looks. Certainly it is a most comfortable car with extremely well-designed front seats and although rear seat leg room is not adequate for tall passengers, the ride is as smooth in the back as it is in the front and the hot weather ventilation a model for other cars to copy as quickly as possible.

Driving qualities are equally attractive; it is stable at speed, corners well and has rack and pinion steering which has both the virtues and the failings of its kind—it is precise and positive but it transmits a good deal of reaction on bad roads. The scuttle is rather too high to give a good view of the road immediately ahead.

Abroad the Jensen attracted a great deal of attention and admiration; it is a handsome and impressive machine from many points of view although most people feel that the frontal appearance could be improved. Generally speaking high performance cars built in small numbers are very expensive but at £3,400 the C-V8 seems remarkably inexpensive in relation to the quantities, the quality and the equipment it offers.

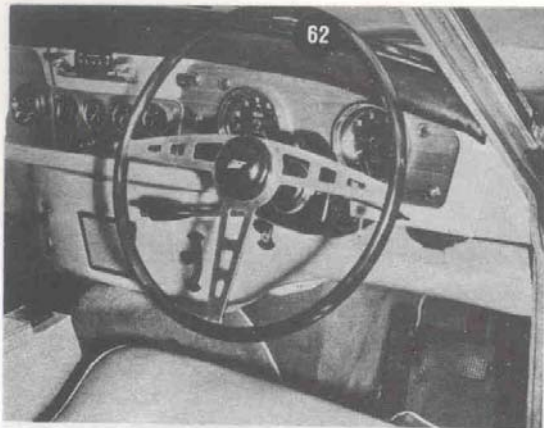
Performance and economy

THE figures on the data page speak for themselves; they put the Jensen in the same top performance bracket as the Aston Martin DB4 and the Facel Vega, and make most sports cars look positively slow. No skill is needed to obtain them, and the 305 b.h.p. 5.9-litre V8 Chrysler engine always maintains the highest standards of smoothness and refinement throughout its speed range. Hydraulic tappets contribute to this deceptive effortlessness and so do the thermostatically-controlled twin electric fans which eliminate the usual high-speed cooling roar and which seem to be adequate whether cruising across the torrid plains of Italy at 120 m.p.h. or climbing Alpine passes in the lower gears. Sometimes if the car was stopped at very high altitude (and low atmospheric pressure) steam would be blown off through the radiator relief valve, but this made little difference to the water level as long as one refrained from removing the radiator cap—the cooling system is pressurized to 14 lb./sq. in.

With the automatic choke, cold starting was almost immediate

In Brief

Price (as tested) £2,807 plus purchase tax	
£585 7s. 1d. equals £3,392 7s. 1d.	
Capacity	5,916 c.c.
Unladen kerb weight	30 cwt.
Acceleration:	
20-40 m.p.h. in top gear	4.3 sec.
0-50 m.p.h. through gears	5.8 sec.
Maximum speed	136.3 m.p.h.
Overall fuel consumption	16.3 m.p.g.
Touring fuel consumption	16.0 m.p.g.
Gearing: 25.6 m.p.h. in top gear at 1,000 r.p.m.	



(Above) Instruments and controls are arranged and labelled in a manner which is both neat and practical. The grille above the transmission hump is not a speaker but an air vent, and the left-hand pedal is a foot-rest-cum-dip-switch.

(Above right) Seat-backs have an adjustment for rake and give good side support. Their comfort is greatly enhanced by the substantial slope of the seat cushion.

(Right) The rear "armchairs" are very far from being mere occasional seats; diagonal front seat safety belts are fastened to chromium-plated grab rails up which they can slide to a natural height.



JENSEN C-V8

and the warming-up process unnoticeable except for the initial high idling speed which gave rather a jolt and a strong tendency to creep if a gear was engaged. Hot starting was facilitated by a wide throttle opening. Although 100 octane fuel was recommended, we could detect no trace of pinking at all on British or French premium grades. For a 6-litre car with automatic transmission driven hard, an overall fuel consumption of 16.3 m.p.g. is creditable—we can think of cars of half the capacity which would have used more fuel at lower average speeds. During periods of more gentle motoring using 80 m.p.h. as a cruising speed, this improved to about 18 m.p.g., and at times of stress it dropped to nearer 14. A 16-gallon tank with a warning light to indicate when only three gallons remain gives a range of 200-250 miles, and since the oil consumption of our test car was in the region of 7,000 m.p.g., frequent oil level checks were unnecessary. Motorists who normally run up big mileages in short periods of time will find that the only troublesome servicing feature is the need to grease the steering joints every 1,000 miles.

Transmission

THE Chrysler "Torqueflite" transmission provides an epicyclic gearbox in series with a hydraulic torque converter which is operative in all three gears. Most of the changes are so smooth as to be barely perceptible, and with a power-to-weight ratio of 200 h.p./ton and a torque converter, the Jensen can and does do almost the whole of its motoring in top gear. The lower gears are seldom engaged unless the final pressure on the accelerator pedal is used to operate the kick-down switch, when change-up speeds rise to 48 m.p.h. and 80 m.p.h. (about 4,500 r.p.m.). By using the first and second gear "hold" positions on the gear selector, considerably higher speeds are available at the 5,100 r.p.m. limit, but our acceleration figures were recorded without using the holds at all.

The kick-down arrangement invites one criticism: below 43 m.p.h. its use engages first gear, and the resulting full-throttle surge of acceleration is not only disconcerting but in spite of the Power-Lok differential it can be potentially dangerous on loose or slippery surfaces. When the need for extra acceleration is expected it is preferable to engage a lower gear in advance with the selector, but although the lever has a delightfully positive action, its use is discouraged by the necessity to press a locking knob in the end before each such move. First gear is audible but otherwise the whole transmission is extremely quiet.

A fully trimmed boat is very much larger than it appears in this photograph. The lid is extremely light and is fitted with a supporting stay; a nut under the carpet allows the underfloor spare wheel to be lowered in its carrier.

Handling and braking

WITH its nearly even weight distribution and fairly high-geared rack-and-pinion steering, the Jensen handles in a precise, responsive, almost sprightly way that suggests a much smaller car. There are certain penalties to pay for this, of course; the steering is heavy at low speeds, although when travelling faster it is light enough for the driver to sit well back and steer with nearly straight arms, and there is always some reaction at the wheel which increases on really bad roads until it kicks back quite strongly. Some drivers will revel in this slightly vintage quality; others will wish that a first-class power steering option were available.

Because the car is so controllable and because it corners with little roll or tyre squeal, it invites quite forceful driving. With the recommended tyre pressures for speeds up to 110 m.p.h. (24 lb. all round) there is a trace of oversteer on sharp bends which is accentuated by heavy throttle use but this can be practically eliminated by raising the rear tyres another 5 lb. After some experiment we raised the pressures still further to 30 lb. front and 35 lb. rear. This made the steering lighter and permitted full use of maximum speed. The deterioration in ride was not serious and the pavé in French villages could still be taken at speed with very little rattle or shake—a considerable tribute to the stiffness of the steel chassis and plastic body. The ordinary back axle, located by leaf springs and a panhard rod, is one of the best-behaved of its kind, and the directional stability of the car is excellent as, of course, it needs to be, if its high cruising speed potentialities are to be exploited.

The Dunlop disc brakes are also fully up to the performance. Hard braking from speeds in the region of 120 m.p.h. produced no signs of fade, and neither did an endless succession of hairpins in hurried Alpine descents; these brakes, of course, are





fully self-adjusting, and so is the handbrake which held the Jensen on a 1 in 3 gradient. The only criticism we could make was of a tendency to "adjust off" on corners, which increased the pedal travel next time they were used; this may have been due to insufficient pre-tensioning of the opposed taper roller front hub bearings on our test car.

Comfort and control

FOR a car which feels so firm and well damped, the ride is remarkably comfortable throughout the enormous speed range on roads of widely varying type. It would appear that this has been achieved by a fortunate matching of front/rear spring rates and damper settings, since there is a noticeable absence of pitching which makes the rear seat ride as good as that in the front.

It is strictly a four-seater saloon, the low rear seat being divided by a combined arm and shoulder rest to form two separate armchairs which allow ample headroom but not enough knee-room for tall passengers. If the driver likes to sit well away from the wheel there is barely room behind him for a person of



In conditions of extreme heat the Jensen was found to be so well ventilated that long mileages were possible without acute discomfort.

The large rather oriental headlamps sockets are functional rather than ornamental; they serve as singularly efficient intakes for passenger and gearbox cooling air.

average height, but on the passenger's side the situation is much better.

The thickly-upholstered front seats which remained comfortable after journeys of 500-600 miles in the day, we would rate amongst the best we have tried. A practical touch, typical of the car, is a loose central panel in each squab behind which it is easy to stuff foam rubber, spare scarves or even old socks, to adjust the spinal support to suit individual taste. The back-rests are adjustable for rake, the accelerator pedal for height and the steering column is telescopic, so it would be a most unusual person who failed to find an almost ideal driving position.

A short driver, however, might have some difficulty in seeing over the very large (18 in.) wheel and the high scuttle which, even for an average man, blanks off any view of the near-side front of the car and makes accurate width judgment more dependent on experience. The rear view is adequate through a dipping mirror, the four headlights give outstanding night illumination, and the two-speed windscreen wipers are excellent in heavy rain and at high speeds but become noisy and hesitant in very light rain when their heavy blade pressure cuts the lubricating film.

The extremely powerful heater is fitted with a temperature-regulating valve and two-speed fan. Whilst well-heated cars are fast becoming the rule rather than the exception, well-ventilated saloons for hot-weather motoring are almost non-existent, and we have yet to meet one better than the Jensen. An air intake grille in the scuttle and extractor vents in the roof peak above the rear window allow some flow of air with hardly any wind noise at speeds up to 100 m.p.h. This can be increased by opening the hinged rear quarter windows, and finally a veritable high-speed jet of air can be directed at the feet by opening sliding panels in the sides of the scuttles which communicate through ducts with exceptionally efficient intakes surrounding the headlamps. Part of this flow is also directed over the gearbox casing and helps to insulate the floor tunnel from engine and transmission heat.

Fittings and furniture

THE inside of the Jensen is not only furnished in extremely good traditional taste in high quality materials but it abounds in practical features. The fascia is fully instrumented, the instruments are clearly calibrated and easy to read, and a two-position switch enables them to be illuminated either dimly or brightly at night. In front of the passenger are an electric clock and a glove box with a locking lid.

Standard equipment includes a Motorola transistor radio with a concealed aerial in the plastic roof and twin rear speakers, a headlamp flasher, a petrol filler cap unlocked by a solenoid from a fascia switch, a fire extinguisher, bonnet and boot lights, a reversing light, an illuminated cigarette lighter, and even a first-aid pack. Between the front seats there is a detachable box with a padded lid which also acts as an armrest, and both the rear armrests also incorporate storage boxes. The front seats are fitted with diagonal safety belts which have a particularly easy adjustment for length. It is difficult to see any reason why an owner should have to buy any extras at all.

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Coachwork and Equipment

Starting handle	None	Windscreens washers	Lucas electric (standard)	Parcel shelves	One below rear window
Battery mounting	On bulkhead under bonnet	Sun visors	2	Ashtays	One front, one rear
Jack	Bevel lift telescopic	Instruments: Speedometer (with total mileage and decimal trip recorders), rev. counter, oil pressure and fuel gauges, thermometer, clock and ammeter.		Cigar lighters	One on fascia
Jacking points	Two each side under sills	Warning lights	Fuel contents, main beam, flashers	Interior lights: Rooflight, map light, under-bonnet and boot lights.	
Standard tool kit: 3 screwdrivers, 3 open-ended spanners, adjustable spanner, pliers, tyre pressure gauge, plug spanner, wheel brace, adaptor socket for spare wheel carrier.		Locks:		Interior heater	Standard—
Exterior lights: 4 headlamps, 2 sidelamps, 2 stop/tail lamps, number plate and reversing lamp.		With ignition key	Bonnet and doors	Car radio	Smiths 4½ kw. with two speed blower
Number of electrical fuses	4 (plus 1 for radio)	With other keys	Boot and glove locker	Upholstery material	Motorola 818 T (standard)
Direction indicators	Self-cancelling flashers	Glove lockers: One on passenger's side with locking lid. One between front seats, one each side of rear seat.		Floor covering	Leather
Windscreens wipers	Lucas two-speed self-parking			Exterior colours standardised	Wool carpet
				Alternative body styles	7
					Special colours at extra cost
					None

Maintenance

Sump	8½ pints, S.A.E. 30 or 10W/30	Contact breaker gap014 to .019 in.	Camber angle	1°
Gearbox	15½ pints, transmission fluid type A, suffix A	Spark plug type	Champion 39Y or Autolite A32	Castor angle	2° (static laden)
Rear axle	3 pints, special SCL oil	Spark plug gap035 in.	Steering swivel pin inclination	6½°
Steering gear lubricant	Rack—grease, Rack dampers—Shell Tellus 15	Valve timing: Inlet opens 13° b.t.d.c. and closes 59° a.b.d.c. Exhaust opens 59° b.b.d.c. and closes 13° a.t.d.c.		Tyre pressures:	
Cooling system capacity	24 pints (3 drain taps)	Tappet clearances	Hydraulic self-adjusting	Front and rear, 24 lb. normal, 30 lb. for high speeds.	
Chassis lubrication: by grease gun every 1,000 miles to 6 points and every 4,000 miles to 2 points.		Front wheel toe-in	1/16 in.	Brake fluid	Dunlop, S.A.E. 70-R3
Ignition timing	10° before t.d.c.			Battery type and capacity	Lucas 12-volt, 74 amp-hr.

THE Motor

MAKE: Jensen TYPE: C-V8
MAKERS: Jensen Motors Ltd., West Bromwich, Staffs.

ROAD TEST • No. 29/63

TEST DATA:

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CONDITIONS: Weather: Dry, warm, negligible wind. (Temperature 52°-60° F., Barometer 29.5-29.6 in Hg.) Surface: Dry tarmac/road. Fuel: Premium grade pump petrol (98 octane by Research Method).

MAXIMUM SPEEDS

Flying Kilometre
Mean of four opposite runs ... 136.3 m.p.h.
Best one-way kilometre time equals ... 136.7 m.p.h.

"Maximile" Speed: (Timed quarter mile after one mile accelerating from rest).
Mean of four opposite runs ... 128.6 m.p.h.
Best one-way time equals ... 130.5 m.p.h.

Speed in gears (at 5,100 r.p.m.)
Max. speed in 2nd gear ... 90 m.p.h.
Max. speed in 1st gear ... 53 m.p.h.

ACCELERATION TIMES

From standstill
0-30 m.p.h. ... 3.3 sec.
0-40 m.p.h. ... 4.5 sec.
0-50 m.p.h. ... 5.8 sec.
0-60 m.p.h. ... 7.7 sec.
0-70 m.p.h. ... 9.8 sec.
0-80 m.p.h. ... 12.5 sec.
0-90 m.p.h. ... 16.2 sec.
0-100 m.p.h. ... 20.9 sec.
0-110 m.p.h. ... 25.9 sec.
0-120 m.p.h. ... 33.2 sec.
Standing quarter mile ... 15.9 sec.

On upper ratios

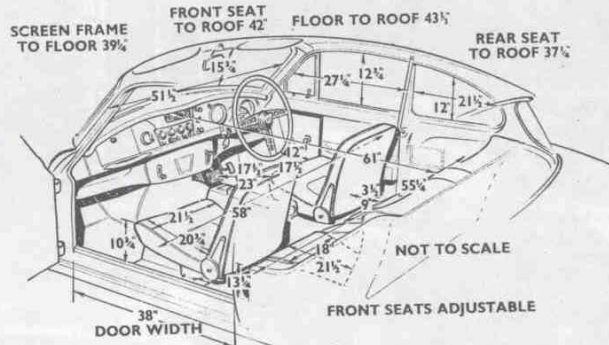
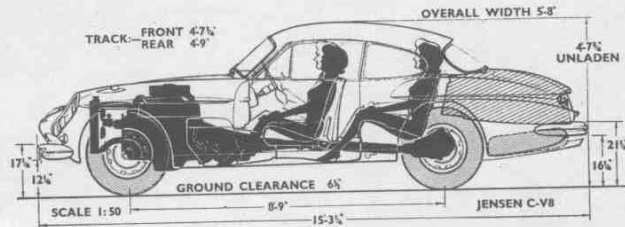
Top gear	range	"Kick down"
10-30 m.p.h.	2.3 sec.	
20-40 m.p.h.	4.3 sec.	2.4 sec.
30-50 m.p.h.	4.8 sec.	2.5 sec.
40-60 m.p.h.	5.5 sec.	3.2 sec.
50-70 m.p.h.	6.4 sec.	4.0 sec.
60-80 m.p.h.	7.8 sec.	4.8 sec.
70-90 m.p.h.	8.0 sec.	6.4 sec.
80-100 m.p.h.	8.4 sec.	8.4 sec.
90-110 m.p.h.	9.7 sec.	9.7 sec.
100-120 m.p.h.	12.3 sec.	12.3 sec.

FUEL CONSUMPTION

Overall Fuel Consumption for 4,427 miles, 272.1 gallons, equals 16.3 m.p.g. (17.3 litres/100 km.)

Touring Fuel Consumption (m.p.g. at steady speed midway between 30 m.p.h. and maximum, less 5% allowance for acceleration) 16.0 m.p.g.
Fuel tank capacity (maker's figure) 16 gallons (including 3 gallons in reserve).

Top gear	at constant	on level
25 m.p.g.	at constant 30 m.p.h.	on level
24½ m.p.g.	at constant 40 m.p.h.	on level
24 m.p.g.	at constant 50 m.p.h.	on level
21½ m.p.g.	at constant 60 m.p.h.	on level
20 m.p.g.	at constant 70 m.p.h.	on level
17½ m.p.g.	at constant 80 m.p.h.	on level
15½ m.p.g.	at constant 90 m.p.h.	on level
14½ m.p.g.	at constant 100 m.p.h.	on level
13 m.p.g.	at constant 110 m.p.h.	on level
11 m.p.g.	at constant 120 m.p.h.	on level



BRAKES
Deceleration and equivalent stopping distance from 30 m.p.h.
0.32 g with 35 lb. pedal pressure ... (94 ft.)
0.70 g with 50 lb. pedal pressure ... (43 ft.)
1.0 g with 75 lb. pedal pressure ... (30 ft.)

STEERING
Turning circle between kerbs:
Left ... 36 ft.
Right ... 35½ ft.
Turns of steering wheel from lock to lock 3½

INSTRUMENTS
Speedometer at 30 m.p.h. ... accurate
Speedometer at 60 m.p.h. ... 3% fast
Speedometer at 90 m.p.h. ... 5% fast
Speedometer at 120 m.p.h. ... 7% fast
Distance recorder ... accurate

WEIGHT
Kerb weight (unladen, but with oil, coolant and fuel for approximately 50 miles) ... 30 cwt.
Front/rear distribution of kerb weight ... 52/48
Weight laden as tested ... 33½ cwt.

Specification

Engine
Cylinders ... V8
Bore ... 105 mm.
Stroke ... 86 mm.
Cubic capacity ... 5,916 c.c.
Piston area ... 107 sq. in.
Valves ... Overhead (pushrods)
Compression ratio ... 9/1
Carburettor ... Carter-AFB-4 barrel
Fuel pump ... Carter diaphragm type
Ignition timing control ... Centrifugal and vacuum
Oil filter ... Chrysler full-flow
Maximum power (gross) ... 305 b.h.p. at 4,800 r.p.m.
Maximum torque (gross) ... 395 lb. ft. at 3,000 r.p.m.
Piston speed at maximum b.h.p. ... 2,710 ft./min.

Transmission
Chrysler "Torqueflite" 3-speed automatic with hydraulic torque converter
Top gear ... 3-07
2nd gear ... 4-44
1st gear ... 7-50
Reverse ... 6-74
Propeller shaft ... Chrysler open
Final Drive ... Hypoid bevel with "Powr Lok" differential
Top gear m.p.h. at 1,000 r.p.m. ... 25.6
Top gear m.p.h. at 1,000 ft./min. piston speed 45.4

Chassis
Brakes ... Dunlop disc all round with vacuum servo assistance
Brake dimensions ... 11¼ in. discs
Friction areas ... 33 sq. in. of friction lining area working on 498 sq. in. swept area of discs
Suspension:
Front: Independent by coil springs and transverse wishbones with anti-roll bar
Rear: Live axle suspended on semi-elliptic dual rate leaf springs with panhard rod
Shock absorbers:
Front: ... Armstrong lever type
Rear: ... Armstrong telescopic
Steering gear ... Engineering Productions rack and pinion
Tyres: 6-70-15 Dunlop Road Speed with tubes