USED ON TEST CARS

No. 272

1965 JENSEN C-V8

PRICES

Car for sale at Oxford at	£1,975
Typical trade advertised price for same age and model in average condition	£2,000
Total cost of car when new including tax	£3,491
Depreciation over 2¾ years	£1,516
Annual depreciation as proportion of cost new	16 per cent

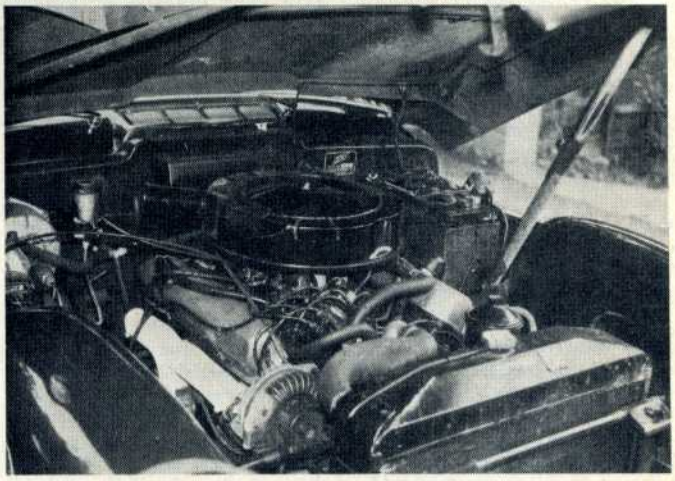
DATA

Date first registered	13 January 1965
Number of owners	2
Tax expires	30 November 1967
M.o.T.	Not yet due
Fuel consumption	13-16 m.p.g.
Oil consumption	300 m.p. pint
Mileometer reading	16,643

Left: Matching the beautiful condition of the maroon paintwork is chromium finish unspoilt by scratches or rust; a rubber insert on the rear bumper, however, has perished and cracked

Below, left: The interior is also very clean, but this view reveals a weakness of the C-V8—its high scuttle line and very cramped visibility. The steering column adjustment had been screwed up so tightly that we were unable to reset the wheel

Below: Apart from a few mud splashes, the impressive Chrysler engine is still fairly clean and has no oil leaks



ACCELERATION times measured in seconds so vary from car to car that the figures do not always stick in the memory, and it is not until direct comparisons are made with other cars that they begin to mean anything. With the 6¼-litre Jensen C-V8, however, there was one easily memorized statistic in the Road Teat which we carried out in April 1965—the ability to accelerate from rest to a speed of two miles a minute in less than half a minute. The exact details: 0 to 120 m.p.h. in 29.8 sec, making this one of the world's best-performing four-seaters.

It has been most interesting now to reassess that performance in a perfectly ordinary secondhand example, on sale at less than £2,000, and find its phenomenal getaway still up to the same high standard, and that 120 m.p.h. is reached even fractionally quicker than the original Road Test time. The practical value of such acceleration and ample power on the road is in the superb ease of overtaking and really effortless cruising at three-figure speeds. The Chrysler V8 engine is obviously in peak form, though it is noticeable that the oil consumption is a good bit heavier than with the original test car.

Chrysler Torqueflite automatic transmission was standard unless anyone was prepared to pay £100 extra for a clutch and manual 4-speed gearbox. The transmission is still exceptionally smooth and quiet, and functions so unobtrusively that the driver is unaware most of the time what gear is in use. There is a momentary delay before the kickdown takes effect, and it is usually better and smoother to use the column-mounted selector for a change down to second. Obviously, with such torque available, the performance is usually adequate without any need for a change-down. Pronounced, rather surging creep is typical of the model, and as it requires heavy brake pedal loads to restrain it, the selector should normally be slipped into neutral at lengthy traffic holdups. There is no Park position, nor any way of locking the transmission to reinforce the rather weak handbrake.

Starting is instantaneous with the automatic choke when cold, and the mixture control is so good

PERFORMANCE CHECK

(Figures in brackets are those of the original Road Test, published 16 April, 1965)

0 to **30** m.p.h.	**2.8** sec (2.8)	In top gear:	
0 to **40** m.p.h.	**4.2** sec (4.0)	**20** to **40** m.p.h.	**4.3** sec (–)
0 to **50** m.p.h.	**5.6** sec (5.0)	**30** to **50** m.p.h.	**4.5** sec (4.5)
0 to **60** m.p.h.	**7.5** sec (6.7)	**40** to **60** m.p.h.	**5.3** sec (5.1)
0 to **70** m.p.h.	**9.7** sec (8.5)	**50** to **70** m.p.h.	**6.0** sec (5.8)
0 to **80** m.p.h.	**12.2** sec (10.9)	**60** to **80** m.p.h.	**6.8** sec (6.5)
0 to **90** m.p.h.	**15.2** sec (13.9)	**70** to **90** m.p.h.	**6.8** sec (6.9)
0 to **100** m.p.h.	**18.7** sec (17.6)	**80** to **100** m.p.h.	**7.2** sec (7.1)
0 to **110** m.p.h.	**24.2** sec (22.9)	**90** to **110** m.p.h.	**9.0** sec (9.0)
0 to **120** m.p.h.	**28.2** sec (29.8)	**100** to **120** m.p.h.	**9.5** sec (12.2)

Standing ¼ mile **15.0** sec (14.6). Standing Km **28.2** sec (–)

TYRES

Size: 6.70—15in. Dunlop RS5 on all wheels. Approx. cost per replacement cover £12. Depth of original tread 8.5 mm; remaining tread depth, 6 mm at front, 5 mm at rear; spare due for replacement.

TOOLS

Jack and wheelbrace only with car. No handbook or hand tools.

CAR FOR SALE AT:

Luxicars (Cowley) Ltd., Iffley Road Garage, Oxford. Telephone: Oxford (00X2) 40101.

CONDITION SUMMARY

BODYWORK

Although the maroon paintwork is in beautiful condition, careful examination reveals the surprising fact that it has at some time been extensively repainted. The job has been well done, and any accident damage there may have been has been made good without trace. An advantage of glass fibre bodywork is the total lack of rust; one or two tiny blemishes in the finish have been neatly touched in. The interior is very clean, and the black leather upholstery, carpets and pvc roof lining are all in first class condition. Some scratches on the rear quarter windows give away a point not previously noticed—that they are of Perspex. Underbody examination explained the rather rorty exhaust noise; both exhaust systems are extensively rusted, and the tail pipe on the left side has completely corroded away, leaving the rear section of the pipe adrift. Otherwise, there is little rust on the chassis.

EQUIPMENT

Lavish initial equipment included the fine Motorola radio, which gives very good tone and clarity of reception, single diagonal safety belts, and a heater with piped bleed to the rear window. The clock is not working, the driver's door courtesy light switch is out of action, and the speedometer needle swings badly suggesting that a new cable drive may be needed. Otherwise all fittings are working correctly.

ACCESSORIES

With such lavish standard equipment, the owners have not had to add any accessories, but one modification—misguided, we feel—has been carried out. A switch has been fitted, replacing the thermostatic control for the electrically-driven cooling fans. As a result, the driver has to remember to switch them on in traffic and, equally important, to switch off before parking the car.

ABOUT THE C-V8

Though the Jensen, C-V8 with its vee-8 Chrysler engine, was announced as recently as October 1962, since 1954 there have been glass fibre bodied Jensens looking similar to the later cars. The very first Jensen 541 was announced at Earls Court in 1953, with a 3,993 c.c. Austin 6-cyl. engine of unspecified power. Then, as now, its wheelbase was 8ft 9in., and the general body styling was identifiable with that of the car we tested. In those, the track (front and rear) was only 4ft 3in. and the body only 5ft 3in. wide. The car had drum brakes and a conventional Austin gearbox.

Three years later Dunlop disc brakes were offered on the most expensive version, and these became standard at the end of 1957 with the release of the 541R. This also had the more powerful Austin Princess version of the 3,993 c.c. engine and rack and pinion steering. Three years later again, in October 1960, the Jensen 541S replaced the 541R. Generally its chassis, body and suspensions were all four inches wider and under the restyling, which also included a higher roof, was a Rolls-Royce Hydra-Matic transmission.

In October 1962, the Jensen C-V8 was announced. Though much of the body was new, it retained glass fibre construction, and some of the structure and most of the chassis were carried over from the 541S. At the time, the Chrysler engine capacity was 5,916 c.c. (104.6 × 86 mm), and the Chrysler Torqueflite automatic transmission was standard. A Chrysler 3-speed gearbox (with Laycock overdrive) was optional. Among the really distinctive styling changes was the front end which included four headlamps, set aslant "Chinese-style". A year later a few styling changes and Armstrong Selectaride dampers were added, but in April 1964 the Mark 2 C-V8 appeared with a bigger, 6,276 c.c., Chrysler engine (108 × 86 mm). Maximum (gross) power was up from 300 b.h.p. to 330 b.h.p.

One final version was released in July 1965, namely the Mark 3 C-V8. Mechanically there were few changes, but a split circuit braking system was adopted, and the styling was further cleaned up, notably with a deeper windscreen. Face-level ventilators were added.

Though the Jensen FF (C-V8 with slightly longer wheelbase and the revolutionary Ferguson four-wheel drive system) was shown at Earls Court in 1965, it never went into production in that form. The C-V8 went out of production in 1966, to be replaced by the Italian-styled Interceptor, which does not have the glass fibre body to which Jensen remained faithful for so long.

Mechanically, however, much of the latest 1967 Interceptor is identical with the C-V8, and there should be no trouble in obtaining spare parts. Body spares for the C-V8 are, of course, readily available, but the glass fibre body is not one likely to suffer from corrosion or old age.

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that the engine seems ready to give full power immediately in the morning and the driver does not notice at what stage the cold running enrichment cuts out. Starting when hot is rather slower, usually requiring two or three revs on the rather noisy starter motor.

It has confirmed earlier criticisms of the servo-assisted disc brakes on the Jensen C-V8 to find them much the same on this used example. Stopping efficiency is just about adequate, but never with the bite one would like in such a fast car, and they call for very heavy pedal loads. We had to bring up 185lb on the pedal to achieve only a 0.85g stop with the Road Test car, and on this one the brakes are not much better.

In this respect the Jensen has not deteriorated and is just typical of the model, but where we do feel it has fallen off a little is in the suspension and steering. Armstrong Selectaride control is standard for the rear dampers, but the front dampers have weakened appreciably, and there is now quite marked float over undulations. Vibration from out-of-balance wheels at about 65 m.p.h. is also felt, but in spite of these drawbacks it is still a very comfortable ride on anything like a reasonable surface. The rack-and-pinion steering is characteristically heavy, but gives accurate control for precise handling at high speed. Where it has deteriorated is in a marked increase in the extent of wheel shock transmitted back through the steering.

Neither of these points are troublesome on reasonable main roads, on which the Jensen is such a joy to drive, striding across huge distances with a minimum of time and effort. If we can believe the mileometer reading—and there seems no reason to suspect it, in relation to the car's all-round condition—the two owners will between them have spent only about £350 on fuel for the 16,000-odd miles which the car has covered. But the appalling thought is that for every £1 spent on petrol, getting on for £5 will have been totted up to the price-eroding bogey of depreciation, which has now made the price very reasonable and tempting in relation to the mild deterioration.