

Jensen C-V8 6,276 c.c.

Autocar Road Test

NUMBER 2023

MANUFACTURER:

Jensen Motors Ltd., West Bromwich,
Staffordshire

PRICES

Basic	£2,888	0s	0d
Purchase Tax	£603	4s	7d
Total (in G.B.)	£3,491	4s	7d

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

Mean maximum speed ...	129 m.p.h.
Standing start ¼-mile ...	14.6 sec
0-60 m.p.h.	6.7 sec
30-70 m.p.h. in intermediate	6.5 sec

FUEL CONSUMPTION

Overall fuel consumption ...	13.2 m.p.g.
Miles per tankful	211

AT A GLANCE: Exceptional performance; 120 m.p.h. from rest in under half a minute; very smooth engine and transmission, but creeps when idling; moderately heavy but responsive controls; firm, comfortable suspension; unusually complete specification.

BIG though its 5.9-litre engine may have seemed, and fast as it was when tested barely two years ago, the previous Jensen C-V8 is left somewhat in the shade by the latest model. It remains one of the world's fastest cars—scarcely any other four-seater can equal it on straight-line acceleration—yet none of the refinement, precision of control and docility of the less powerful model has been lost.

Changes in the superb Chrysler vee-8 engine are few. The bore diameter is increased by 3mm to 108mm, and the compression ratio has been stepped up from 9 to 10 to 1. The increase of capacity from 5,916 to 6,276 c.c. is only 6 per cent, but as the car's weight is unchanged all the extra 30 lb. ft. torque (bringing this to 425lb. ft.) is available (for added acceleration. As compared with the



Basic transmission for the Jensen is the Chrysler Torqueflite automatic gearbox, but a four-speed all synchro-mesh gearbox with central change is available for £100 extra



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MAKE: Jensen

TYPE: C-V8 6,276 c.c.

Speed range, gear ratios and time in seconds

m.p.h.	Automatic			Manual		
	Top (3-07)	Inter (9-77- 4-44)	Low (16-5- 7-5)	Top (3-07)	Third (4-26)	Second (5-86)
10-30	—	—	2-1	7-2	5-0	4-0
20-40	—	3-3	1-9	5-9	4-5	3-2
30-50	4-5	2-5	2-4	6-3	4-9	2-9
40-60	5-1	3-6	—	6-7	4-2	3-5
50-70	5-8	4-0	—	6-8	4-0	3-6
60-80	6-5	4-4	—	7-5	4-8	—
70-90	6-9	—	—	7-7	5-0	—
80-100	7-1	—	—	7-9	—	—
90-110	9-0	—	—	9-1	—	—
100-120	12-2	—	—	13-7	—	—

TEST CONDITIONS

Weather ... Dry with 20-40 m.p.h. wind
 Temperature ... 0 deg. C. (32 deg. F.) for automatic car
 (0-10 m.p.h. wind, 9 deg. C., 48 deg. F. for manual car).
 Barometer, 29.1 (30.0) in. Hg. Dry concrete and asphalt
 surfaces for both

WEIGHT

Kerb weight (with oil, water and half-full fuel tank)
 29.7 cwt (3,321lb-1,512kg)
 Front-rear distribution, per cent ... F. 52.3; R. 47.7
 Laden as tested ... 32.7cwt (3,668lb-1,663kg)

TURNING CIRCLE

Between kerbs ... L. 38ft 1in.; R. 36ft 9in.
 Between walls ... L. 39ft 8in.; R. 38ft 4in.
 Turns of steering wheel lock to lock ... 3.5

PERFORMANCE DATA

Top gear m.p.h. per 1,000 r.p.m. ... 26
 Mean piston speed at max. power ... 2,590ft/min
 Engine revs. at mean max. speed ... 5,100 r.p.m.
 B.h.p. (gross) per ton laden ... 202

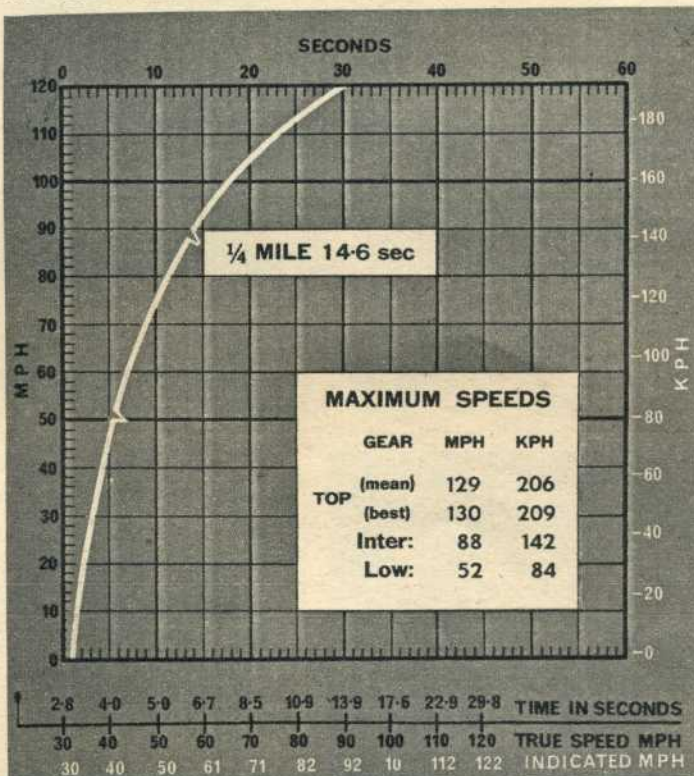
FUEL CONSUMPTION

At Steady Speeds in Top:
 30 m.p.h. ... 23.2 m.p.g.
 40 " ... 21.3 "
 50 " ... 20.4 "
 60 " ... 18.4 "
 70 " ... 16.8 "
 80 " ... 15.5 "
 90 " ... 14.2 "
 100 " ... 12.5 "

Overall m.p.g. ... 13.2 (21.4 litres/100km)
 Test distance ... 1,163 miles
 Estimated (DIN) m.p.g. ... 15.3 (18.5 litres/100km)
 Normal range m.p.g. ... 12-16 (23.5-17.7 litres/100km)
 Grade ... Super Premium (99.5-101RM)

OIL CONSUMPTION

SAE 30 ... 8,000 m.p.g.



BRAKES

(from 30 m.p.h.
 in neutral)

Pedal load

25lb
 50lb
 75lb
 100lb
 125lb
 150lb

Retardation

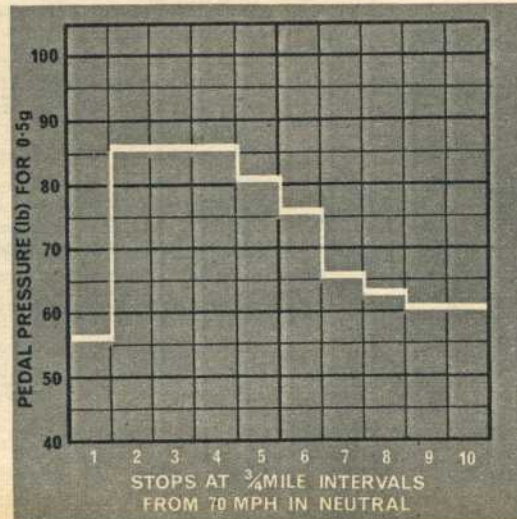
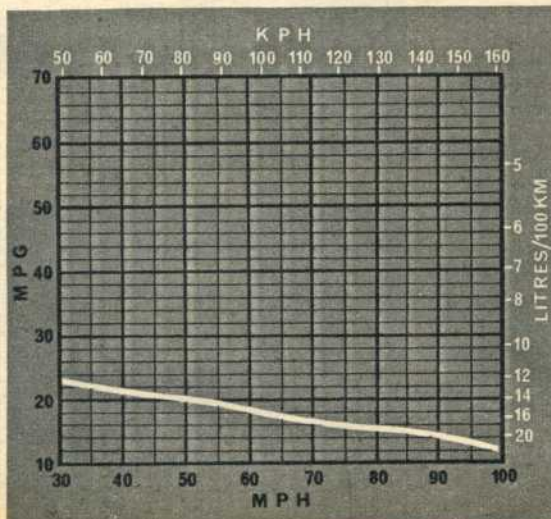
0.17g
 0.34g
 0.53g
 0.65g
 0.75g
 0.85g

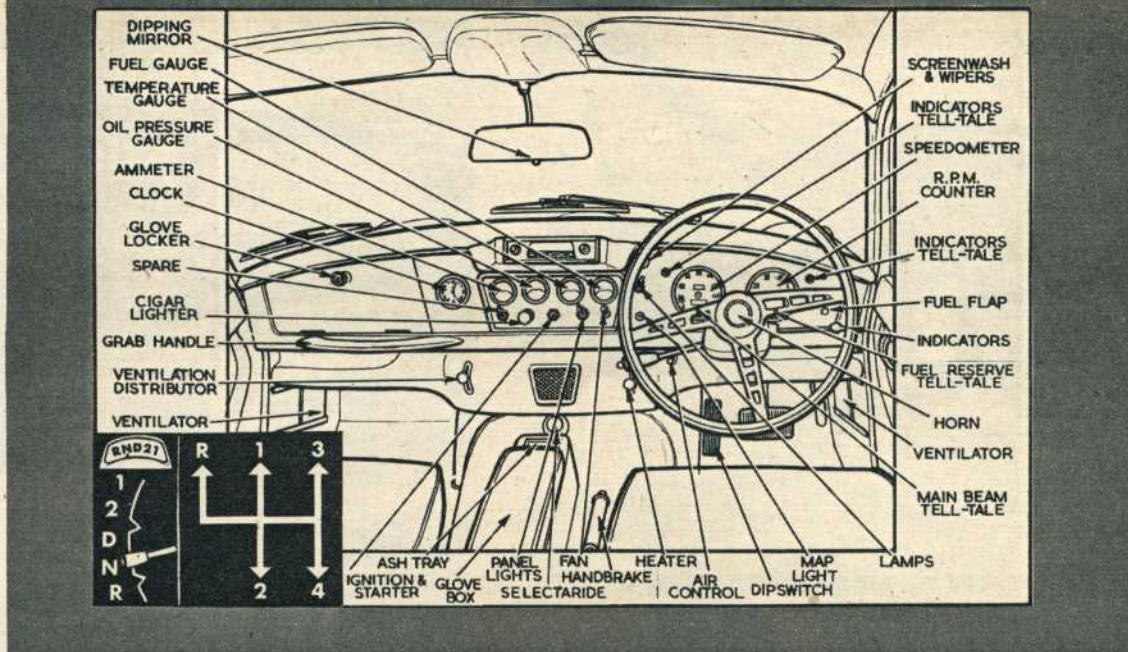
Equiv. distance

177ft
 89ft
 57ft
 46ft
 40ft
 35.4ft

Hand brake
 0.28g

CLUTCH Pedal load and brake—40lb and 7in.





earlier car's impressive surge to 100 m.p.h. in just 22.4sec, the new one reaches 110 m.p.h. in the same time. Indeed, it can accelerate from a standstill to two-miles-a-minute within 30sec. The standing-start quarter-mile in 14.6sec is the quickest we have yet timed for any four-seater, and the speed at the end of the quarter was over 90 m.p.h.

Throttle Response

Just as impressive as the sheer performance is the sensitive response to the throttle, and in stop-go city driving the car trickles along on the Carter carburettor's primary chokes with supreme tractability. The power unit is as smooth as one would wish and is quiet all through its range, to its maximum of just over 5,000 r.p.m.

Starting, both hot and cold, is a little temperamental, often calling for a second try with the rather noisy starter—a point commented on in the previous test. Once running, however, the engine is ready to give full power almost straight away.

Transmission

Chrysler Torqueflite automatic transmission is standard and suits the Jensen very well. Some whine is heard in low, but the intermediate and top gears are virtually silent and changes, especially under full power, are exceptionally smooth. Very often with automatic transmission, one has to think for it and use the selector to override the automatic control. With the Jensen's Torqueflite it really is sufficient just to leave Drive selected. Much of the time the driver will be unaware which ratio is in use, and the changes up or down are so unobtrusive as to pass unnoticed by passengers. Quite a lot of the overall smoothness of the transmission is owed to the even torque and good low-speed pulling of the big engine in top.

Below 32 m.p.h. firm pressure on

the accelerator brings an immediate change down to low, and to intermediate up to 67m.p.h. The selector lever provides first and second gear holds. A button in the lever end is pressed in to change from D to 2, but it can then be moved without hindrance between 1 and 2. Using the "holds," intermediate can be taken up to 88 m.p.h.—the 5,100 r.p.m. limit—and low to 52 m.p.h. A gear change produces a marked jolt only if one accelerates hard and then abruptly releases the throttle, as when a decision to overtake is frustrated in mid acceleration.

Some of our drivers commented on two characteristics which seemed at first to be transmission faults. The first was a tendency for the car to jerk when the selector was moved to Drive after starting from cold. This was reduced by waiting for a few seconds before moving off, to allow the initial fast idling speed to settle down. The second was the firm pressure on the brake pedal—as much as 50lb effort—needed to prevent the car from creeping forward at traffic halts unless the selector were moved to neutral. Adjustment of the slow running would have reduced this creep; a weakness in the brake servo of the test car was suspected as the cause of the heavy pedal load.

Brakes

Although there has been no change in the size or operation of the Dunlop all-disc system, the brakes could not match the efficiency of those of the earlier car. They still coped with the speed potential well enough to give confidence when driving fast, but needed much higher pedal loads than before. The handbrake also proved inefficient, and as there is no parking lock in the transmission, a chock under the wheels would be required for parking on slopes of 1 in 4 or steeper. The handbrake lever is also badly sited. It is so near the driving seat that it can be grasped only with a

hand cupped over the end of the lever, otherwise one's fingers catch on the seat trim as the lever is pulled up.

Manual Gearbox

Evidently there are still drivers so strongly against automatic transmission that they are prepared to pay more for the alternative clutch and 4-speed gearbox; this is now listed by Jensen at £100 extra including tax. After the main test was completed, another car with this gearbox was put through its paces, and representative figures are included in the data. After adjustment the clutch proved able to take the very high torque when the pedal was released abruptly at about 3,000 r.p.m., and up to 44 m.p.h.—the limit for bottom gear—this car was slightly quicker than the automatic model. The central change, however, objects to being hurried, and although it has a positive and reasonably rapid movement for normal use, yet, try as one might, it proved impossible to make the car keep pace with the automatic one through the gears. Each change seemed to lose a full second, so that the manual model was three seconds slower to 120 m.p.h.; but it did have the edge on the automatic for maximum speed. The gear ratios are well-spaced, and 97 m.p.h. can be reached in third, yet the engine is so sweet that it will even pick up speed from 10 m.p.h. (under 400 r.p.m.) in top gear.

Peak power of the new engine is attained at 4,600 instead of 4,800 r.p.m., and both cars were found to be too far down the "wrong" side of the power curve at maximum speed for there to be any risk of exceeding the recommended rev. limit. The manual car reached a mean top speed of 136 m.p.h.—7 m.p.h. higher than the automatic. Much better brakes on the second car, incidentally, confirmed that those on the automatic were below par.

A limited-slip differential allows full throttle take-offs from rest with-



Armstrong Selectaride adjustment for the rear suspension dampers is standard, with its four-position control mounted centrally below the fascia. Motorola radio is also included. The rear seats are well shaped and there is really generous leg room. The Jensen is thus a true four-seater, not just an occasional four



Jensen C-V8 . . .

out any axle tramp or excess wheel-spin. Armstrong Selectaride telescopic dampers are now standard at the rear, with a four-position control below the fascia; on the harder settings they stiffen up the ride for greater stability at speed. The difference is marked, and the extra firmness soon reminds the driver to switch back to Soft after slowing down. The suspension is a shade too hard, even on the soft setting, at town speeds on indifferent surfaces, but the Jensen settles down to give a very level and well-damped ride at speed on the open road, waves and subsidences on M1 being swallowed up extremely well. High-speed tyre pressures, of course, accentuate the harshness when moving slowly, and it is worth reducing the pressures to their normal 24 p.s.i. all round unless sustained speeds in excess of 110 m.p.h. are contemplated; for town use 22 p.s.i. is permissible.

Steering

At low speeds considerable strong-arm work is needed for the high-gear rack-and-pinion steering, and quite a lot of shock comes back through the steering if a front wheel hits a manhole cover or pothole.

These faults are easily forgiven for the precise control at speed, even in cross-winds. The car is also extremely well-balanced for cornering, with almost neutral handling characteristics biased towards the slight understeer which most drivers prefer. When hurried through corners almost to the limit, the Jensen remains predictable and easily manageable. With so much power to hand, of course, it is easy to "tweak" the tail round on damp surfaces, and at low speeds this occasionally happens unexpectedly if the transmission makes a sudden change down to low.

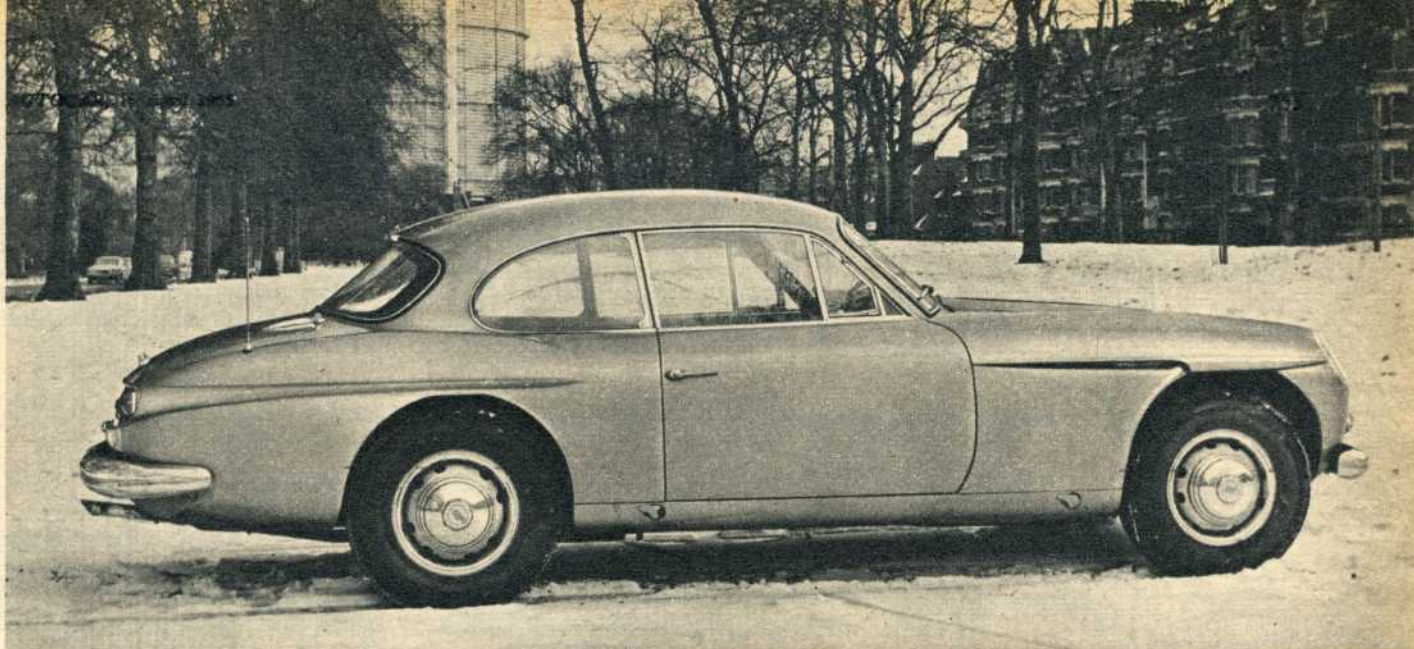
Visibility

A high, domed scuttle restricts forward vision somewhat by current standards. The steering wheel is telescopically adjustable, and no drivers found the top of the rim in their range of vision through the screen. The wipers clear well-sited, overlapping arcs biased to the driver's side, and the blades do not lift at high speed. For some drivers, these arcs are rather high up the screen. A single control governs the two speeds of the wipers as well as the electric washers, which respond at once to a touch on the switch. The

driving position is comfortable, with well-spaced pedals (on the manual car), while the standard automatic model has a brake pedal wide enough for left or right foot use—or both. An "organ pedal" on the dipswitch serves as a footrest. The twin headlamp system is splendid for fast driving although the green tell-tales of the winking indicators are bright to the point of dazzle by night.

Equipment

Few cars—even many dearer than the Jensen—come as fully equipped. As well as items one might reasonably expect, such as a dipping interior mirror, cigarette lighter, and a vanity mirror on the back of the passenger's sun vizor, the specification includes a Motorola radio complete with Jensen insignia and twin speakers at the rear, a woodrim steering-wheel, and single diagonal front seat belts by Britax. The seats themselves are sumptuous, give fair lateral support, and have reclining backrests. The fascia compartment can be locked, and is supplemented by a cubby-hole under the side-hinged lid of the centre armrest. Always safety conscious, Jensen provide ample protective padding on the lips of the fascia and facing the knees,



but the padded sun vizors have hard spines. Stronger door keeps are needed, the clock would be easier to read if it were less remote from the driver (say, above the steering column), and the diminutive ashtray in the centre armrest is strictly for left-handed smoker-drivers.

Fuel

It is quite intriguing—as well as convenient—to have a facia-controlled remote release for the fuel filler, and should it fail there is an additional release catch inside the luggage locker. The 16-gallon petrol tank gives a range of about 180-200 miles, as consumption throughout the test was consistently around 13 m.p.g. for both cars; 16 m.p.g. is about the best one may expect when cruising gently. An amber light flickering from the rev counter warns when the supply is down to three gallons. With the new engine's higher compression ratio, super premium fuel is essential. We tried a small sample of premium, but the engine registered its disapproval with frequent pinking. Pump attend-

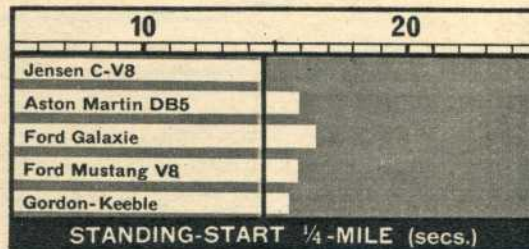
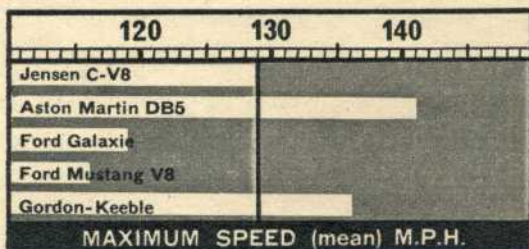
ants need to be warned of blowback from the filler if they continue to feed petrol in fast when the tank is nearly full. The service schedule lists a number of grease points to be attended to every 1,000 miles.

Ventilation arrangements are quite good; the powerful heater is adjustable over fine limits, but there is no provision for blowing cool air at face-level while the lower part of the car is being warmed. Moreover, air blows (heated or otherwise) on to the front of the occupants' knees from outlets under the facia instead of towards their feet. What looks like a third radio speaker grille is actually a central heater outlet aiming to the rear.

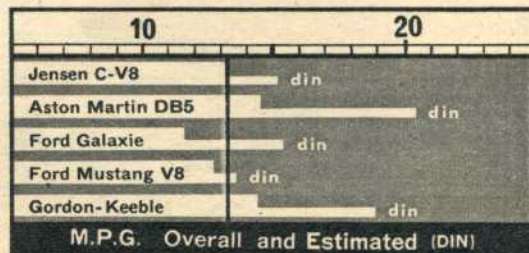
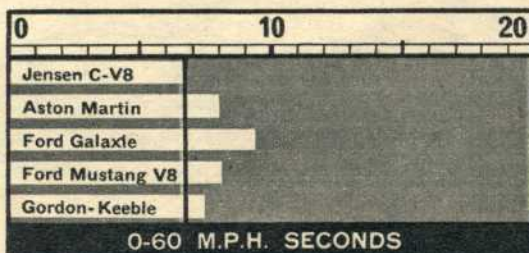
High-Speed Refinement

A strong fresh air draught to the footwells is released by sliding back a trap-door either side, and the heater feed, which travels along the centre of the rear seat to the back window, effectively demists the glass even when falling snow is cooling the outer surface. One rarely needs to open the front quarter-vents—fortunately,

A flap unlocked by the ignition key now conceals the bonnet release. The petrol flap is released via a switch on the facia. The boot is deep and provides ample space for four people's luggage



HOW THE JENSEN C-V8 COMPARES :



since they generate loud wind shriek at speed; in contrast, the lack of obtrusive wind noise is exceptional when they are closed. The Jensen holds 110 m.p.h. with complete ease and in deceptively restful silence; even at 120 m.p.h. voices have to be raised only a little for easy conversation. This speed can be maintained

without going beyond the first pressure (primary carburettor throttles only) on the accelerator.

Rather heavy controls make the Jensen very much a "man's car". Unusual tractability and mechanical refinement give it a Jekyll and Hyde character, so that one can appreciate it as much when in an idle mood (or

hemmed in' and frustrated by lesser vehicles), as when out to take everything it can give. But most of one's motoring lies between these extremes, and for this the Jensen's relaxed, easy stride, its comfort and stability mean high average speeds over long journeys in return for little hard work or fatigue.

SPECIFICATION : JENSEN C-V8 FRONT ENGINE REAR-WHEEL DRIVE

ENGINE

Cylinders	... 8 in 90 deg. vee
Cooling system	... Water; pump, thermostat and twin electric fans
Bore	... 108mm (4.25in.)
Stroke	... 86mm (3.38in.)
Displacement	... 6,276 c.c. (383 cu. in.)
Valve gear	... Overhead, pushrods, hydraulic tappets
Compression ratio	... 10-to-1
Carburettor	... Carter four-barrel progressive
Fuel pump	... Mechanical
Oil filter	... External, full flow, renewable element
Max. power	... 330 b.h.p. (gross) at 4,600 r.p.m.
Max. torque	... 425 lb. ft. (gross) at 2,800 r.p.m.

TRANSMISSION (manual or automatic)

Clutch	... Single dry plate, 10.5in. dia.
Gearbox	... Four-speed all-synchromesh
Gear ratios	... Top 1-0, Third 1-39, Second 1-91, First 3-09, Reverse 3-0
	... Top (Auto) 1-0, Inter. 3-18-1-45, Low 5-38-2-44, Reverse 4-84-2-19
Final drive	... Hypoid bevel, 3-07 to 1, with Power-Lok limited slip differential

CHASSIS AND BODY

Construction	... Separate frame of welded tubes
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and sheet metal, glass fibre and aluminium body panels

SUSPENSION

Front	... Independent, wishbones and coil springs. Armstrong lever arm dampers. Anti-roll bar
Rear	... Live axle on half-elliptic springs, with rubber button separators. Armstrong telescopic dampers with Selectoride control
Steering	... Rack and pinion. Wheel dia. 17 in.

BRAKES

Make and type	... Dunlop discs. Servo: Lockheed
Dimensions	... 11.5in. F and R
Swept area	... F 249 sq. in.; R 249 sq. in. Total 498 sq. in. (304 sq. in.) per ton laden

WHEELS

Type	... Pressed steel, 5 scuds, 4.5in. wide rims
Tyres	... Dunlop RS5 tubed, size 6-70-15in.

EQUIPMENT

Battery	... 12-volt 74-amp. hr.
Alternator	... 12-volt 36-amp.
Headlamps	... Four Lucas sealed units, total 195-watt main beams, 90-watt dipped
Reversing lamp	... Standard

Electric fuses	... 2
Screen wipers	... 2-speed self-parking
Screen washer	... Standard, electric
Interior heater	... Standard, fresh-air, with 2-speed blower and rear window bleed
Safety belts	... Standard (Britax) at front
Interior trim	... Leather seats, p.v.c. headlining
Floor covering	... Wool carpet
Starting handle	... No provision
Jack	... Bevelift telescopic
Jacking points	... 2 each side, in body sills
Other bodies	... None

MAINTENANCE

Fuel tank	... 16 Imp. gallons (no reserve) (73 litres)
Cooling system	... 24 pints (including heater) (14 litres)
Engine sump	... 8.5 pints (5 litres) SAE 30, 10W-30 or 20W-40. Change oil every 4,000 miles. Change filter element every 4,000 miles
Automatic transmission	... 15.5 pints automatic transmission fluid. Change oil every 32,000 miles
Final drive	... 3 pints Shell S1747A. Change oil every 12,000 miles
Grease	... 6 points every 1,000 miles, plus 2 points every 4,000 miles
Tyre pressures	... F and R 24 p.s.i. (normal driving), F and R 30 p.s.i. (fast driving)

