



Jensen C-V8 5,916 c.c.

IT is gratifying to be able to report that the new Jensen C-V8 is right first time in all the major factors necessary with a really fast sporting saloon. Its road behaviour reaches a very high standard indeed, its structure gives every impression of great strength and rigidity, and all in all, it seems to have reached maturity without having passed through costly adolescence. There is no doubt that it represents a definite advance over the six-cylinder 341S.

While the aesthetics of body design are largely a matter of personal taste and not really a part of a road test, in this case it seems only fair to the Jensen chassis engineers to suggest that the C-V8 is less distinguished in appearance than in behaviour. In our view the basic good form of the glass-blue body is spoiled by too many fancy bumps and bulges, and it will be a pity if this should discourage would-be owners who would appreciate the car's dynamic qualities.

In common with other specialist makes in this country, France and Italy, the Jensen is powered by an American v-8 of large cylinder capacity. In this case it is the Chrysler Golden Commando, a 5.9-litre unit in ordinary bearing trim with a comparatively modest compression ratio of 9.0 to 1, hydraulic tappets (for quiet running) and a maximum recommended crankshaft speed of 5,100 r.p.m. However, the gross output is 85 b.h.p. (at 4,800 r.p.m.), the car is comparatively light at just over 3,000 with its 60-gallon petrol tank half full, and if low wind noise is

speed is any guide, the body shape must be aerodynamically efficient.

In cold figures the Jensen's performance is impressive enough. It can flash past the quarter-mile post from a standing start in 16 seconds dead—at which point it has reached about 47 m.p.h.—and 100 m.p.h. comes up in just under 13sec. Having an automatic transmission, it calls for no special skill or concentration on the part of the driver to achieve such results, although in fact we did use the intermediate gear hold to save a fraction of a second for speeds involving 80 m.p.h. and over. The ultimate maximum speed of over 130 m.p.h. speaks for itself. Yet for a car of this type the way the power is delivered is more impressive than split-second timing, and the marginic Chrysler power-glass takes all demands in its easy stride. True, it begins to sound a bit busy if pressed to maximum revs in low by using the manual override—but busy is a

Price	£ 6 8
Saloon	1,207 2 6
Purchase Tax	382 7 1
Total (in G.B.)	1,589 7 1

Autocar road test • No. 1922

Make • JENSEN Type • C-V8

Manufacturer: Jensen Motors Ltd., West Bromwich

Test Conditions

Weather Dry, cloudy, with 0.3 in. of wind
 Temperature 18 deg. C. (64 deg. F.) Barometer
 29.2 in. Hg.

Dry tarred and concrete surfaces.

Weights

Kerb weight (with oil, water and half-full fuel tank)
 3140 lbs. (1,424 kg.)

Front-rear distribution, per cent: F, 50.2; R, 49.8
 Load as tested 3440 lbs. (1,560 kg.)

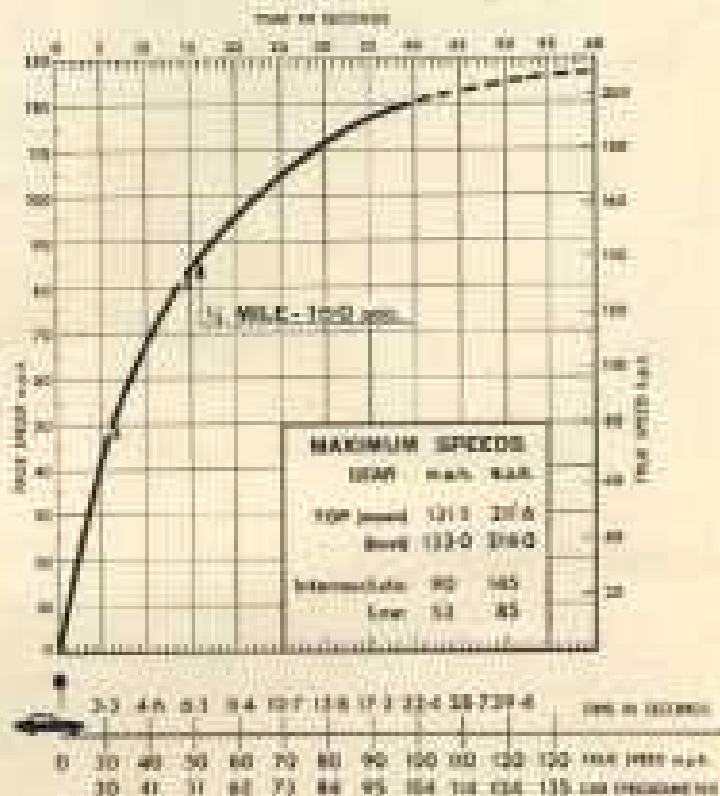
Turning Circles

Between kerbs L, 38 1/2 ft.; R, 38 1/2 ft.
 Between walls L, 28 1/2 ft.; R, 28 1/2 ft.
 Turns of steering wheel lock to lock 3 1/2

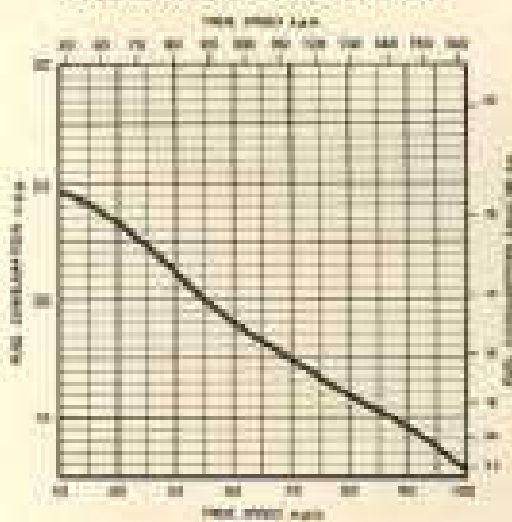
Performance Data

Top gear m.p.h. per 1,000 r.p.m. 34
 Mean piston speed at max. power ... 2,794 ft./min.
 Engine revs. at mean max. speed 1,000 r.p.m.
 B.h.p. per ton laden (gross) 177

MAXIMUM SPEEDS AND ACCELERATION (mean) TIMES



FUEL AND OIL CONSUMPTION



FUEL Super premium grade
 (28.1 miles/l.)
 Test Distance 1,940 miles
 Overall Consumption 14.8 m.p.g.
 (27.4 miles/l.)
 Normal Range 13-15 m.p.g.
 (24-28 miles/l.)
 OIL: SAE 30 Consumption 5,000 m.p.g.

Speed range and time in seconds

m.p.h.	Top	Inter.	Low
0-30	—	—	3.6
30-40	—	4.2	3.7
30-50	4.1	4.6	3.0
40-60	7.0	4.7	—
50-70	7.2	4.4	—
60-80	7.4	5.1	—
70-80	7.9	4.4	—
80-100	8.2	—	—
90-110	11.4	—	—
100-120	20.1	—	—

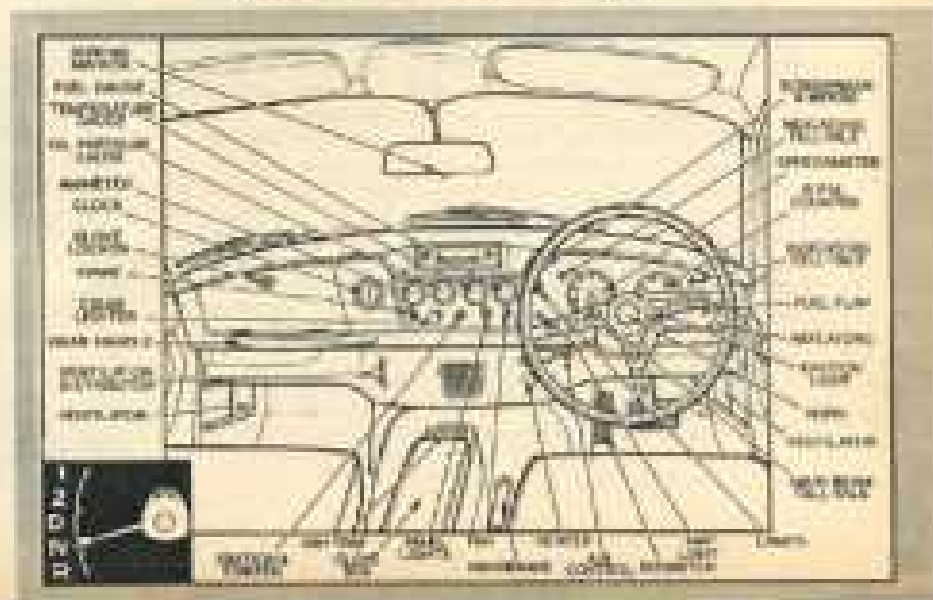
BRAKES

	pedal load	retardation	stop distance
(from 30 m.p.h. in control)	250	0.71g	80%
	500	0.73g	40%
	750	1.00g	20-25%
Handbrake		0.40g	70%

HILL CLIMBING AT STEADY SPEEDS



GEAR	Top	Inter.
PULL (lb per ton)	120	50
Speed range (m.p.h.)	4-45	50-70





Left: Although 18 1/2 in. in diameter, the wood-rimmed steering wheel does not seem to intrude too much. Slightly five pebbles onto the face out. Above: Another heavy in the back seats; there are small holders each side under the armrests.

Jensen C-V8 . . .

relative term, and nothing is gained by that practice anyhow. A limited-slip differential is fitted and even under full-power take-offs there is no problem of wheel spin.

Rich mixture for cold starts is provided automatically, and occasional difficulty with cold and hot starts was probably a matter of technique rather than any fault in the system. The handbook tells one to depress the accelerator slowly to about one-third of its full travel before turning the starter key. The fast idle when cold makes it advisable to let the engine warm for a minute or so before moving off, otherwise there is a job as the transmission engages.

Even at the engine's normal "warm" idle the test car's transmission would creep, and it had to be held by a light pressure on the accelerator. To avoid this, some of us chose to let it idle in neutral in traffic hold-ups.

Good Automatic Transmission

All in all, the Chrysler Torqueflite transmission suits the car's character admirably, and for most people would be preferable to the alternative three-speed manual box. Although for certain changes one has to apply a little care to prevent, or at least minimize, lurch, this unit has the clear advantage over certain other automatics that it provides full engine braking on the overrun in any gear.

A downward change by means of the kick-down switch under the accelerator inevitably means a pronounced lurch and one can do much better by using the selector lever and adjusting the throttle opening accordingly. On the overrun, downward changes from top to intermediate are barely perceptible; a similar move between intermediate and low, however, can be violent unless one opens the throttle wide just after moving the lever. In fact, the keen driver may well take up the challenge with some relief that skill is still required of him to drive the car really smoothly.

While the selector moves easily and precisely in its quadrant behind the steering wheel, one must criticize the fact that the knob in the lever and must be pressed in for every move between top and intermediate. There is no lurch between top and normal, nor between intermediate and low. As is customary with automatics—especially those with torque converters—returns from rest on 1-2-3 are ridiculously easy, and the very powerful self-adjusting handbrake is some compensation for the lack of a transmission lock.

In second, the governed peak before a change-up was 79 m.p.h. on this test, and 71 m.p.h. the highest speed at which the kick-down from top would operate, but 90 m.p.h.

represents the advised top limit when using the hold. As there is still an abundance of power in top from that speed, the three ratios provided are completely adequate. So quiet are the engine and transmission that, up to about 85 m.p.h. even a driver familiar with the car may occasionally find that he has been running in overdrive in the belief that it was top.

Rapid acceleration and a high speed potential can be had unless there is decelerative power to match. In this respect the Jensen merits nothing less praise for its Daimler than most Kelsey-Hayes cars. They proved fully up to the job in wet or dry conditions, and a 1.0g stop was recorded at almost every attempt with only 750 lb load on the brake pedal, slightly higher pressures were required until the discs had warmed. A unique feature of the Jensen is that one of the main frame tubes is used as a large-capacity reservoir for the vacuum assisters. One would have liked to see displaced brake lines, or at least independent hydraulic circuits for front and rear braking systems.

Driven hard the C-V8 will use fuel at the rate of 13 m.p.g. With more leisurely progress, this figure rises to about 19 m.p.g. With the overall figure of 14.4 m.p.g., the car's 32-gallon fuel tank should give a range of over 240 miles. A warning lamp on the face starts flashing when the fuel tank contents drop below 3 gallons.

Having established that the car can really go and stop,

luggage has to be stowed over the rear seat. At night two lamps provide adequate light for loading. The fuel filler cap can be opened manually by the pad lock to the left of the opening.



Evening then a fairly roadbound to that of earlier years, and the car does give a feeling of solid worth. The stepped rear quarter lights are of Permaplex, a rubber material which sets into the back bumper.



one can now qualify earlier remarks about its behavior in the other all-important respects. One aspect of its superb balance and control on the road must be the unusually even distribution of weight between front and rear, and the fact that this does not vary very much with changes of load. Perceptive passengers who had not ridden in a C-V8 before (and very few have!) were apparently quick to note the car's inherent stability and quick response while being driven hard on give-and-take roads; for an experienced driver, in turn, can usually detect when his passengers are relaxed or on edge. The Jettison was found to keep its tricks up its sleeve when passed to the limit.

Straight-line Stability

The geometrical simplicity and precision that go with rack-and-pinion steering are irrefutable, but the reversibility of this type of gear does bring some road shock back to the steering-wheel. Once really rough going such as sand this became almost violent, and on the open road one learned to avoid the worst patches. Although the rack has hydraulic dashpot dampers to offset this, on the test car they seemed somewhat ineffective. Coldly enough, for minor bumps and blisters in a road surface are scarcely noticed, and in all other respects the steering is fine. One can place the car so accurately that it never feels large or cumbersome, and the straight-line stability right up to maximum speed is very consistent.

While as a general principle we prefer small steering-wheels to large ones, the Jettison's 12-inch is most forgiving. One needs the leverage for walking-pace manoeuvres, and the relatively high gearing for speed work.

As for the springing, a very successful compromise has been evolved between the relative firmness needed for high-speed work and the ride comfort expected of a car costing nearly £3,400. Even when pottering about in town it is by no means harsh, and although riding quite stiffly on speed, with low-rate movements very efficiently damped, it takes those really rough patches now occasionally encountered on motorways extremely well when travelling at near its maximum speed. As expected, there is almost no body sway on corners, and the smoothness of the line over hilly terrain is right up to par. Over the special surfaces at the Motor Industry Research Association's testing grounds the car acquitted itself very well, especially over the simulated washboard. From about 25 m.p.h. up to nearly 70 m.p.h. it practically "lives" there, and its behavior over the sand section gave convincing proof of structural rigidity.

Body paneling (except for the aluminum doors) and part of the main structure are assemblies of resin-bonded glass-fiber, which helps to insulate the passengers from extremes of outside temperature as well as from noise; there is never a hint of drumming or other annoyance. Those used to the low-spirited modern saloon may at first find this car's seat-

s a bit high, which seems to weary some, but others not at all. The front seats have finely adjustable backrests, and plenty of free-end-of-strap range. A vertical adjustment would overcome the wrattle-height criticism for those a bit short in the hip-to-eye measurement.

Seat wire is in unglazed fabric, and the foam-rubber cushions are nicely shaped to hold one in place unobtrusively. The backrests, too, are very comfortable, with sufficient lateral curvature. An angle-diagonal safety harness are standard fittings and very easy to attach and adjust, one can leave it to them to hold one securely in place when driving (or being driven) along winding roads. Driver and passengers can travel far and fast in the C-V8 without becoming tired or bored. A hard division between the rear seats holds its passengers in place. Although the body is compact, there is more room in the back than one expects. The seats are full-sized, and four adults should not find the car too cramped for a long journey.

Between the front seats—and over a very deep transmission tunnel—there is a particularly handy and practical compartment for odds and ends, topped by a padded lid. Other storage space includes a pocket, in each door behind the

The lowest and most weight in a whole A8 up to reveal the small engine. Accessibility is another, even for the sparking plugs under the exhaust manifold. The alternator can be seen behind the top radiator hose.



mirror-outdoor-pull, and a deep locking rubber hole in the fascia. Speedometer and rev counter are where they should be, right in front of the driver, the less important gauges grouped in the middle of the fascia. There are vital schools of thought about the layout of minor controls, while the Jensen's look a little scattered, this makes it easier to differentiate between them once their positions have been memorized. Instruments are black-faced with white digits, and the panel lighting has alternative trimmings.

Jensen have always had a conscientious approach to matters of safety, and in addition to liberal cross-position, you find the traditional—for Jensen, that is—fire extinguisher under the driving seat and first-aid kit under the left armrest beside the back seat.

There are two independent systems for ventilating and heating the interior. Beneath the headlamps are slots closed through to slats beside the front occupants' feet; fully opened, these pass a temperature blast of cool air when the car is moving fast. Then there is a wide intake just forward of the screen which feeds the heater, and a self-regulating, thermostatic water valve holds the selected temperature constant. With this valve closed, of course, it can deliver cool air. A rectangular outlet beneath the middle of the fascia is intended to direct some of the flow between the front seats towards the rear compartment, and there is a two-speed fan to boost the overall output. Two-speed wipers with a quiet-running, omni-motor have anti-lift blades, which are aerodynamically shaped to keep them on the screen as speed

Other standard features include a fully mechanized radio with its aerial concealed in the roof panel, a reversing lamp and an adjustable radiator blind. Radiator cooling, incidentally, is by two electric fans cutting in and out at pre-set temperatures. With the front fender nose quarter mirror open, exhaust lanes could be stuck inside the car.

The fuel filler cap has a self-lock release, its switch to the right of the fascia; this proved rather temperamental, as did the alternative manual release fitted within the boot. The decelerity supply is provided by an alternator, which feeds up to its reputation by occasionally pushing the ammeter needle right to the limit of its charge side, even with the engine idling quite slowly. Automatic lamps in the bonnet and base led are lit if these are raised when the head lamps are switched on. A quite comprehensive tackle includes, among other items, a tyre pressure gauge, three screwdrivers and three open-ended spanners of good quality. While there are not many grease nipples to bother with, six of these on the front suspension and steering require the gun every 1,000 miles.

There is no doubt that the Jensen C-V8 can strike at virtually any speeds possible anywhere in Britain. Driver and passengers can chat or listen to the radio comfortably at well over 100 mph, and at this speed the engine is still below its "noisy" revolutions—if such a word can be used for such a refined unit.

To sum up the Jensen C-V8 in one brief sentence—here, indeed, is a car that more than fulfils great expectations.

Specification

Scale: 0 in. to 1 ft.

Options unrepresented.

ENGINE	
Cylinders	8 in V8 dry, wet sump
Capacity	100.0 (112.0)
Power	100.0 (112.0)
Compression	12.0:1 (12.0:1)
Valve gear	Overhead, pushrod and rocker, four-valve system
Compression ratio	12.0:1
Ignition	One-lift, battery-powered, distributor, 12V, 20A
Oil pump	Cast-iron, gear-driven
Oil filter	Cast-iron, 100 mesh, 100 mm
Max. speed	100.0 mph (112.0 km/h) at 4,000 rpm
Max. torque	100.0 lb ft (136.0 Nm) at 2,000 rpm

TRANSMISSION	
Make	Chrysler Torqueflite automatic, 4-speed, with torque converter
Construction	Cast-iron, 100.0 (112.0)
Final drive	Cast-iron, 100.0 (112.0)

CHASSIS	
Construction	Insulated frame of welded tubes and sheet metal, gas filled and reinforced with panels

SUSPENSION	
Front	Whitworth coil and spring, 4-wheel drive, coil springs and shock absorbers
Rear	100.0 (112.0) coil and spring, 4-wheel drive, coil springs, shock absorbers, torque converter, 100.0 (112.0)
Steering	Engineering, Whitworth, rack and pinion, 100.0 (112.0)

WHEELS	
Type	Cast-iron, 100.0 (112.0)
Construction	100.0 (112.0)
Total wheel area	100.0 (112.0)

WHEELS	
Type	Cast-iron, 100.0 (112.0)
Type	100.0 (112.0)

EQUIPMENT	
Radio	100.0 (112.0)
Headlamps	100.0 (112.0)
Wipers	100.0 (112.0)
Brakes	100.0 (112.0)
Exhaust	100.0 (112.0)
Interior	100.0 (112.0)
Exterior	100.0 (112.0)
Tools	100.0 (112.0)
First aid kit	100.0 (112.0)
Fire extinguisher	100.0 (112.0)
Other	100.0 (112.0)

MAINTENANCE	
Oil	100.0 (112.0)
Water	100.0 (112.0)
Spark plugs	100.0 (112.0)
Timing belt	100.0 (112.0)
Brakes	100.0 (112.0)
Front drive	100.0 (112.0)
Grease	100.0 (112.0)
Tire pressure	100.0 (112.0)

