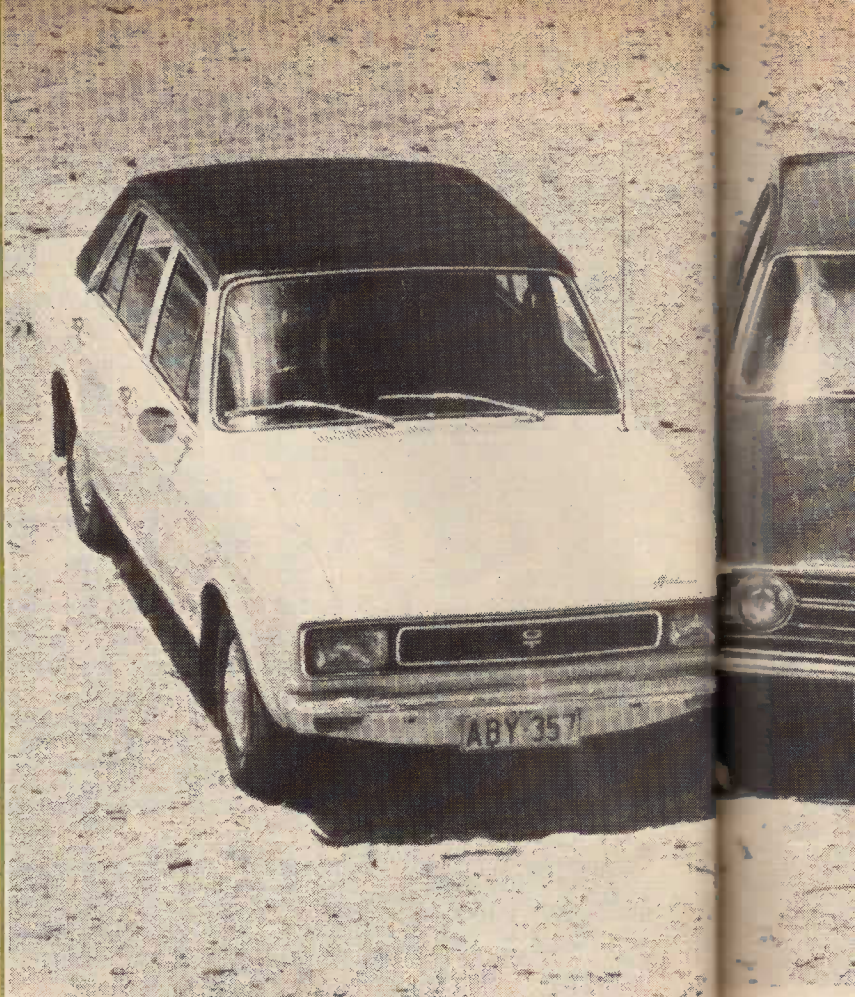


We evaluate the
middle three and ask . . .

ARE THE GTs REAL?



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SCW's technical staff take a searching look into the use of the revered term with the top three Australian manufacturers to find the answer.

IF insurance ratings are any criterion, far be it for us to say the Cortina GT doesn't earn its title. Surely its Baptism of Fire to be accepted for the *In* group could not be doubted. In black and white, the Cortina GT is a Group Four car — and we're not referring to FIA classification.

The same ratings set out by the Fire and Accident Underwriters' Association name the Cortina's next-of-kin, the Falcon GT, as a Group Three car. In terms of straight performance risk, the placid Cortina GT would scarcely rate past Group Two level while the tempestuous Falcon GT must immediately confine itself to Group Four.

Which all goes to prove that while the enthusiast regards the GT tag on a Cortina a mis-naming when considered alongside a true Ferrari, Aston type GT, the insurance companies don't. Tack GT, S or SL on and take the instant consequences. A normal Toyota Corolla will run 85 mph and a 20.0 sec quarter. Add SL, which gives you an extractor, tach, matt boot stripe and a radio and you have 87 mph with 19.6 for the quarter. Meanwhile the insurance rating has descended from Group One to Four.

So a GT — whether it be just one step from

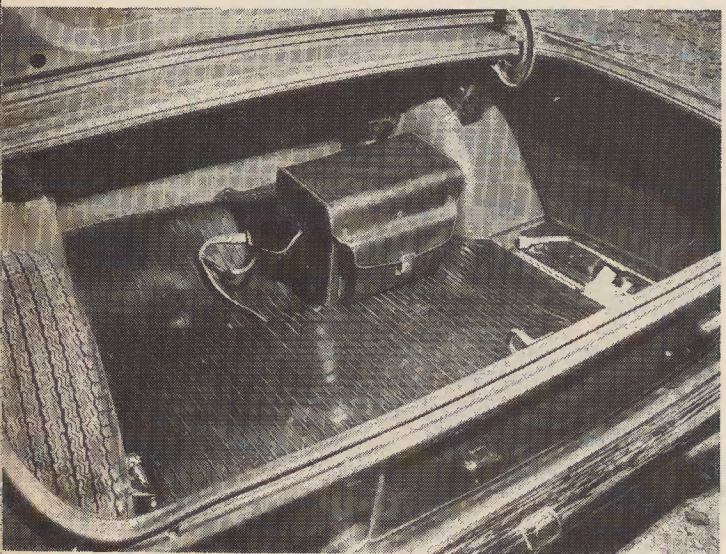
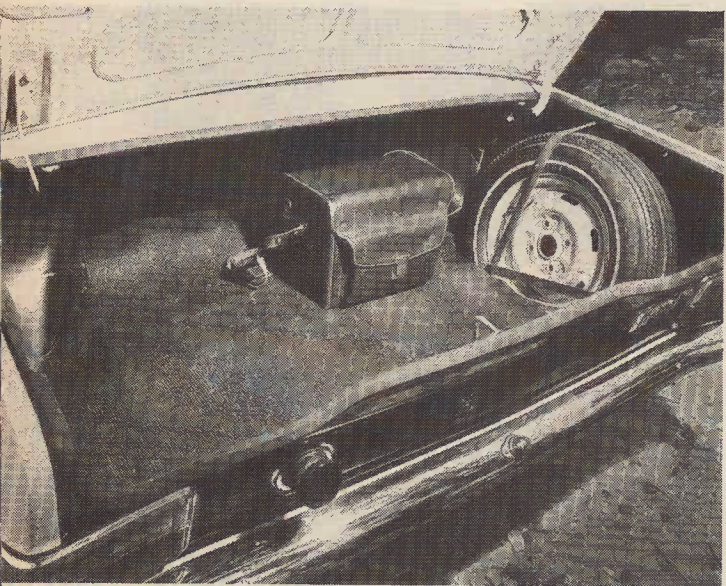
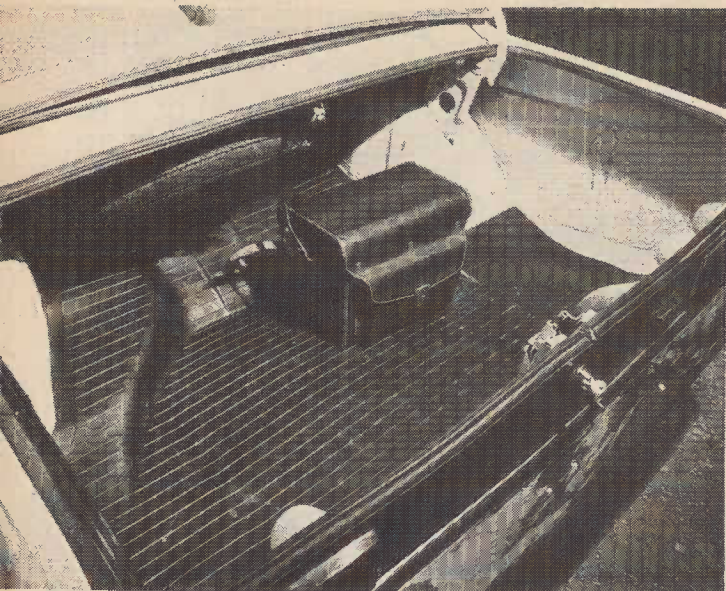
The frontal treatments of our three test cars bear striking resemblance. All have styling nose dip, all have a grille surround. The Hillman GT is the only one to feature square lights while the Cortina GT is the only one to have parker/flashers up beside the headlights.

a sedan hack or a full house Jaguar E — will cost big money to put and maintain on the road. Which brings us to the point of the exercise: do the current spate of sedan GTs deserve their titles and are they any competition for the outright sports car?

If race successes are any guideline, the Cortina GT, with its history of race wins, deserves to be awarded the GT title over the two most recent acquisitions to the sporting sedan field, the Hunter GT and Brabham Torana. For three years up to 1965 Cortina GTs proved their salt under the pressures of Bathurst's annual 500. The current car, released after the Cortina GT500 Bathurst specials were banned from the Mount, is not the "race-bred" model, which can give one "that winning feeling". Many enthusiasts regard the Mk2 Cortina GT as allying itself more with conformity. It has a definite stumpy, squat International look which provides greater frontal area and wind resistance than the "dart" shaped Mk1 Cortinas.

The new body has also burdened the 1600 engine with extra weight which taxes performance. Ford's answer is the cross-flow head. This ups the bhp from 83.5 to 89, but leaves the Mk2 down on the performance of a well-run-in Mk1. The impeccable road manners and excellent gearbox are still there for the enthusiast to revel in.

Compared with the Hunter GT, the Cortina has a slightly wider front track and narrower rear track, which make it steer and balance more precisely. In all situations, the Cortina will remain quite predictable and only dire mismanagement



will see a tight position become an emergency.

The basic car has sufficient reserve in body strength, suspension and braking to withstand the enormous pressures placed on it by ace drivers such as Roger Clark who can perform quite superhuman acts of driving control. With insurance and registration thrown in, a new GT on the road costs over \$2700 — but a true Cortina fan will always maintain he gets value for money.

The less enthusiastic will ask whether the slightly improved performance over a manual 1600, a gearshift console, tachometer, extra gauges, carpet, matt grille, metallic paint finish and ego-boosting GT badges are worth the extra coin.

The Cortina GT goes as close to being a true GT as any sedan will. It does not offer fire-breathing performance but it will respond to good driving. The steering, braking, gearchange and handling will all answer to fingertip finesse, which is a quality found infrequently in volume-produced sedans.

The Hunter GT still has overtones of the homely Hillman, a quality which it finds hard to shake. Whereas the Cortina has been improved from lessons learnt from racing, the Hunter is really a plushier, faster and better-equipped family car than the normal version. It is a tourer, not a Gran Turismo in its present form. The car itself has emerged as the lightest and most easily-handled Hillman for some time and not too difficult for women to drive. The steering column at last points in the same fore-aft plane as the car, which makes steering, gearchanging and braking easier than in its predecessors. While the steering and gearshift are lighter, they still lack a precise, sensitive feeling. The handling is no longer all understeer plough, synonymous with Hillmans. The stiffened suspension will allow the driver to indulge in some quite daring tail-out feats which in most cases are little more than just a neutral-oversteer-neutral flick. Slight understeer is still predominant with even tyre pressures, but this can be adjusted to individual requirements.

The tough, rugged image for the Hunter is emphasised by the London-to-Sydney effort. But the new GT— which is not so far divorced from the Marathon car (but for complete line welding replacing spot welds on all body joins and other trivia) — does not necessarily warrant the specific title because of this or any of its UK rally successes. Maybe it should be called Hunter LS.

For all its shortcomings in a claim for GT status the Hillman does offer excellent value-for-money. It is a very complete car with creature comforts down to headrests, full seat belts, heater-demister and reclining, well-shaped seats. The solid, five bearing crank, 1725 cc engine verges on the unburstable. The finish is good and undoubtedly production will remedy any recurring faults.

General Motors' token gesture at capturing a sporting image for the Torana range does not misuse the GT tag. The Brabham Torana is a match in handling for the Cortina and Hunter GT but lacks good torque power. It is easy to drive the Brabham quite normally and still find the tach running endlessly into the red for no appreciable turn of speed. The car is undergeared but if it were given a higher final drive the small engine would find life just as hard. The power to weight ratio dictates hard revving for some performance but short bearing life; or, slow-revving for little performance and higher bearing life. As the Brabham Torana is a "performance

The Cortina scores on boot size with 21 cu ft of space, while the Hillman has 18 and the Torana 10.9 cu ft. The Hillman is the only one with a boot light operating when boot is opened.



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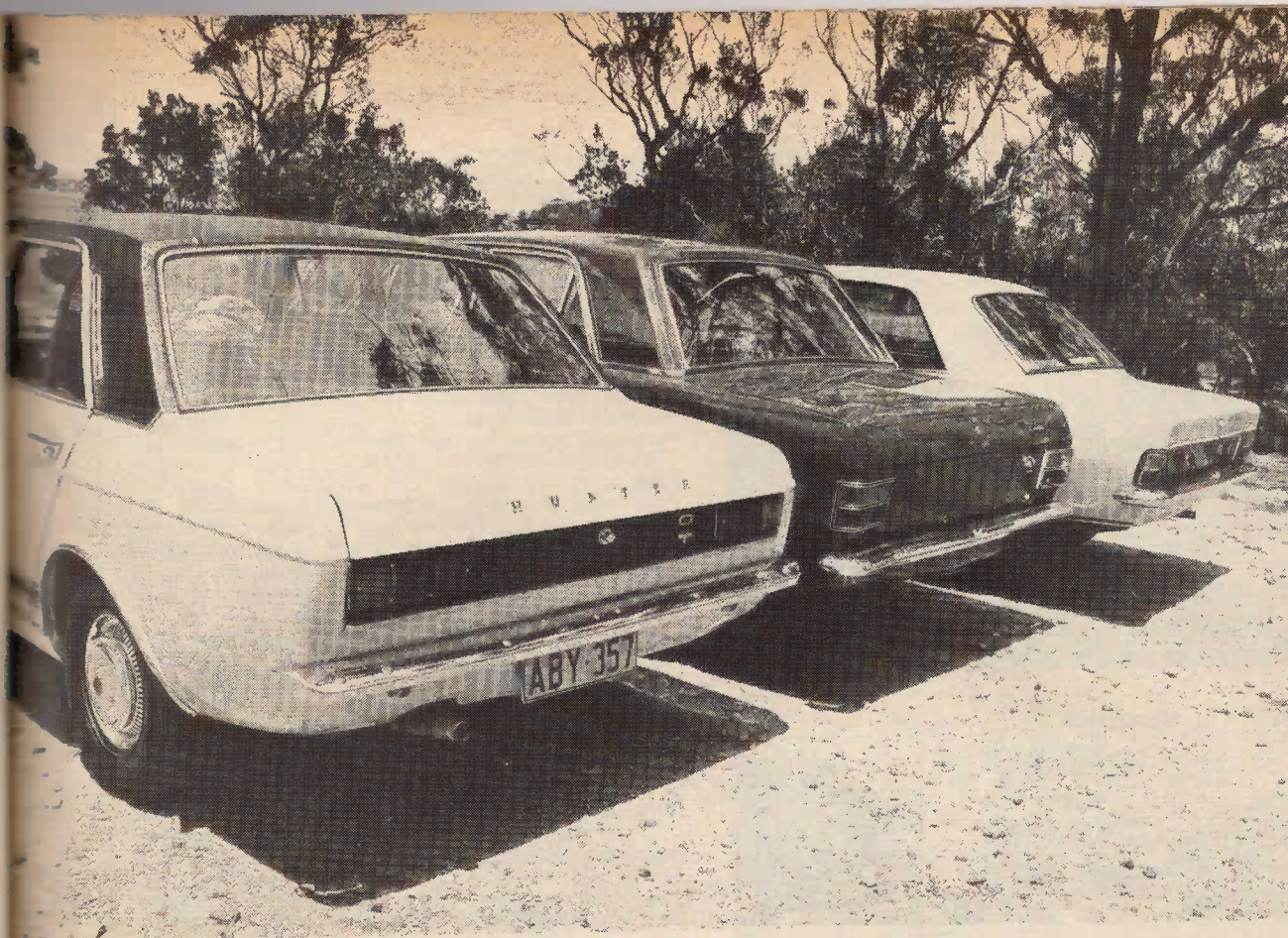
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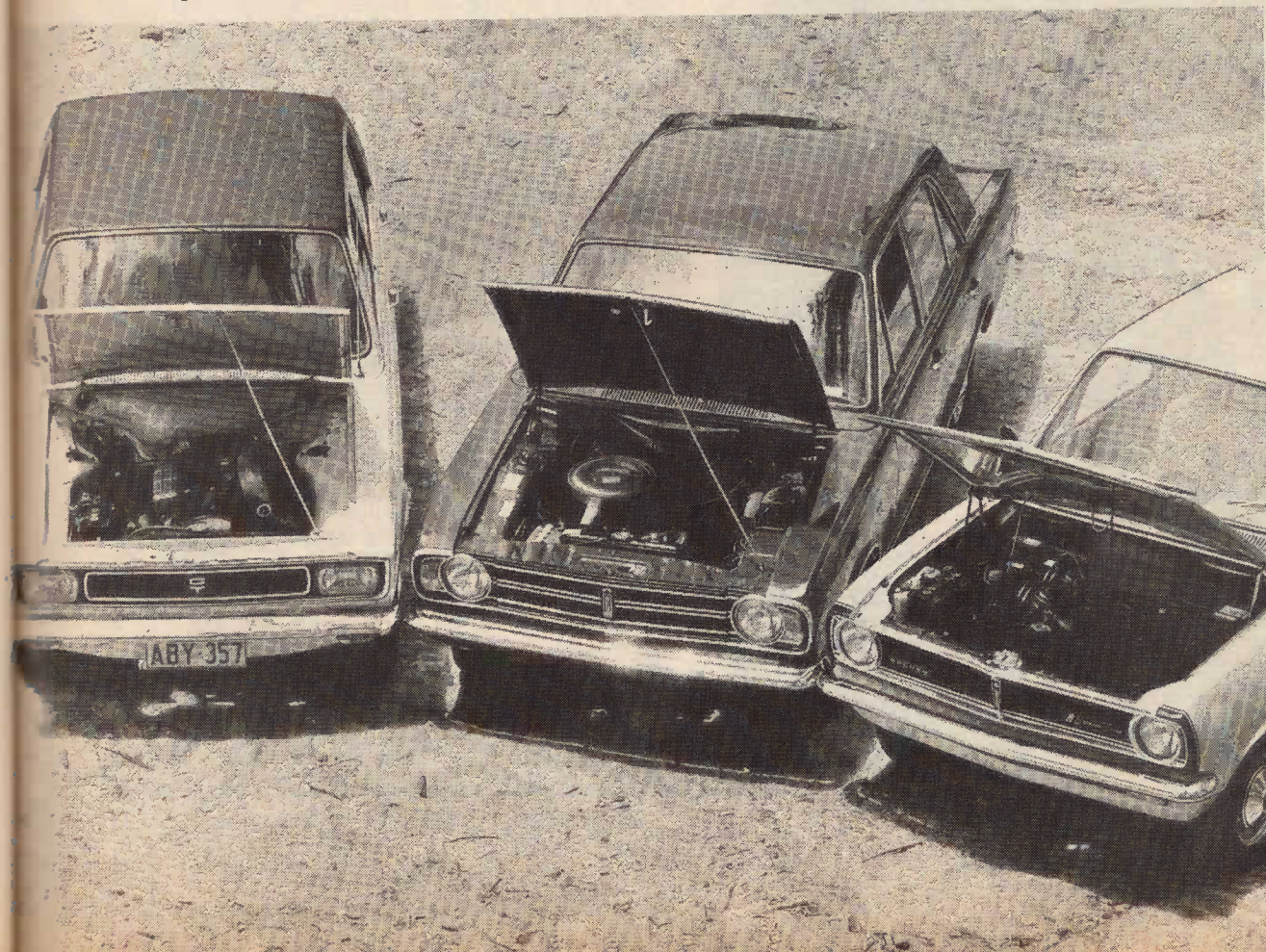
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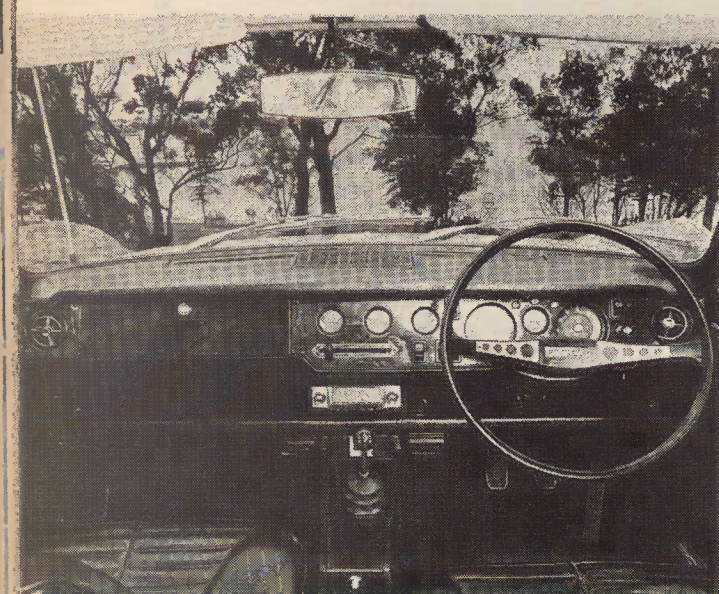
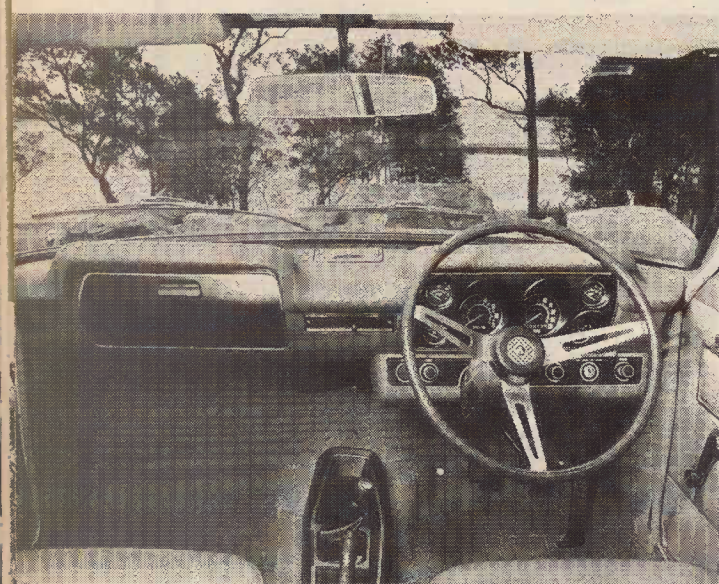
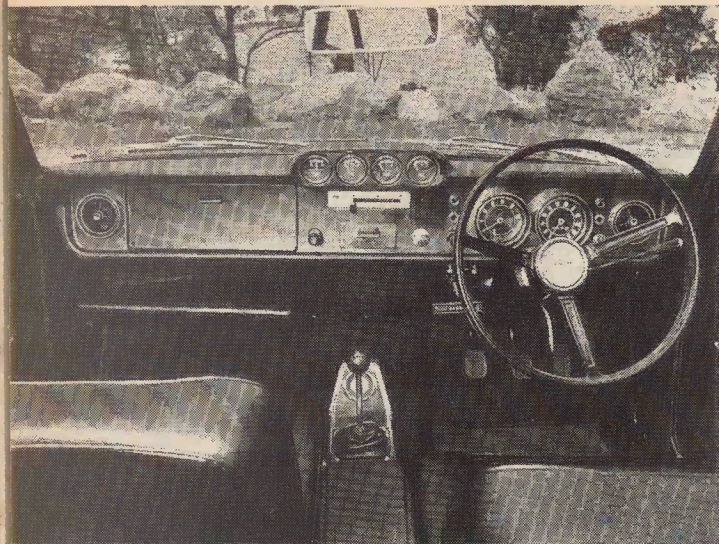
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Cortina has the highest rear deck. Both Torana and Cortina have boot locks on the door, Hillman has it mounted on rear panel. Hillman is only one without wrap-around tail lights.

Engine-wise, the Cortina and Hillman share a 5-bearing crank while the Torana has a three-bearing unit. Cortina has cross-flow head and shares the same unit made of aluminium with the Hillman, although the Hillman is side-flow like the cast head of the Torana.





package", GM has taken the first route. The result is a car which would do well to have a 1500 or 1600 cc engine but in the meantime has to be content with small capacity and high rpm.

Where the Torana can establish true sporting performance is in its handling. The front suspension is quite conventional. The rear is by coil springs which are well-located with trailing arms.

The result is a sedan which will run rings around most small sports cars. The ride suffers from the quite soft rear coils which produce some fore-aft pitch. Although the pitch is no worse than others in the Torana's size class, the ride is not as comfortable as in the Cortina and Hunter.

The sedan GTs do not provide any foil to the high cost of sports car ownership. They rate right alongside the genuine sports car in the higher insurance bracket. This gives the sports car buff no qualms when he indulges in a no compromise sports car. The sedans cannot match the true GT or sports car for real driving response and performance. As a practical compromise, the GT sedans do fulfil their function admirably. Both the Cortina and Hunter can offer near-100 mph performance and comfortable, if not grand, touring with seating for four and, at a squeak, five.

Although the GT sedan cannot compete with the true GT sports car — and they do not really earn their GT title — they do fill a hole in the market. The Hunter GT is excellent value for money. It has copious amounts of the right gear but just misses the boat when it comes to performing the task of a GT. The Cortina GT goes closer to the GT mark in performance-handling but is still hampered by its obvious sedan connotations. The Brabham Torana does make fair pretence at being a with-it sports sedan. For the same price, the MG Midget, with all the disadvantages of a sports car, rates as better value for money. Then you don't have to rate the Torana as a GT — it bears the name Brabham.

Manufacturers have at last seen the light on bright color appeal. Drab colors are all very well for not showing dirt but when people buy cars that are a bit different, they expect them to look a bit different. When we gathered the three cars together for comparison they made a bright, pretty sight, if somewhat garish with the superfluity of GT striping. The comparison was done in the Christmas break while factories were on holidays. Instead of a collection of motley easy-clean colored factory road test cars, we had dealers' demos which were spotless and bright. The Holden came from C. V. Hollands of Rockdale while Peter Warren Ford, near Liverpool, supplied an immaculate red Cortina GT. The Hunter GT, in a lemon yellow slightly lighter than the Torana shade, was supplied from the manufacturer, Chrysler Australia.

The new Hunter GT sets a new standard in the sedan GT category, even rivalling the Fiat 125 for value. It has comparable straight-line performance with the Cortina's, has loads more goodies and is \$71 less. The Fiat 125, which is \$372 more, has only a marginal lead in performance and offers few extras that the Hunter GT doesn't have, apart from the academic oneupmanship of twin overhead camshafts and other mechanical exotica.

As performance versions above cut-and-thrust ordinary hacks, the "GT" sedans fulfil their set functions. But for a true GT or sports car, you have to dig considerably deeper. #

The Torana scores with an alloy-spoked woodrim wheel but loses with no headlight flasher and has at least 80 miles less fast cruising on one tank of fuel. It is also alone with no full-flow ventilation while Hillman scores with cigar lighter, heater/demister and blower fan. Cortina is alone with no reversing light, no exterior rear mirror.

	CORTINA GT	HUNTER GT	BRABHAM TORANA
SPECIFICATIONS:			
Engine	4 in-line, 5 bearings	4 in-line, 5 bearings	4 in-line, 3 bearings
Bore and stroke	3.19 x 3.06 in.	81.5 x 82.5 mm	77.7 x 61 mm
Capacity	1599 cc	1725 cc	1159 cc
Compression ratio	9.6 to 1	9.2 to 1	9 to 1
Cylinder head	aluminium, cross-flow	aluminium, side-flow	cast, side-flow
Carburettors	1 2-bbl Weber	2 Zenith-Stromberg	2 Stromberg CD150
Rocker cover	painted steel	painted steel	painted steel
BHP at RPM	89 at 5500	94 at 5200	79 at 5600
Torque (lb/ft) at RPM	102.7 at 4000	107 at 4000	NA
Transmission	4 sp, all syncro	4 sp, all syncro	4 sp, all syncro
Final drive	3.90 to 1	3.89 to 1	4.125 to 1
MPH per 1000 RPM	17.2	18.4	15.6
Body-frame constn	integral	integral	integral
Suspension, front	Macpherson strut, coils, anti-roll bar	Macpherson strut, coils, anti-roll bar	coils, wishbones, anti-roll bar
Suspension, rear	live axle, leaf springs, radius arms	live axle, leaf springs	live axle, coil springs, trailing arms
Shock absorbers	telescopic	telescopic	telescopic
Brakes	disc/drum	disc/drum	disc/drum
Power assistance	yes	yes	yes
Steering type	recirc ball	recirc ball	recirc ball
Turns l to r	4.25	4.0	3.2
Turning circle	35 ft	30 ft	30 ft 9 in.
Wheels	steel disc	steel disc	steel disc
Tyres	6.00-13 (c-ply standard)	6.00-13 (c-ply standard)	6.20-12 (c-ply standard)
Make on test car	Goodyear G800	Goodyear G800	Dunlop Guardian
Optional tyres	radial	radial	radial
Price	\$2605	\$2526	\$2247
DIMENSIONS			
Length	14 ft 0 in.	14 ft 1.5 in.	13 ft 5.6 in.
Width	5 ft 5 in.	5 ft 3.5 in.	5 ft 3 in.
Height	4 ft 7 in.	4 ft 8 in.	4 ft 5 in.
Wheelbase	8 ft. 2 in.	8 ft 2.5 in.	7 ft 11 in.
Track, front	4 ft. 4.5 in.	4 ft 4 in.	4 ft 3 in.
Track, rear	4 ft 3 in.	4 ft 4 in.	4 ft 3 in.
Ground clearance	6 in.	6.75 in.	5 in.
Weight	18.5 cwt	20.0 cwt	15.5 cwt
Fuel tank	12 gals	10 gals	8 gals
PERFORMANCE			
Top speed	95 mph	98 mph	85 mph
Third gear	73 mph	75 mph	75 mph
Second gear	51 mph	49 mph	47 mph
First gear	35 mph	33 mph	28 mph
Acceleration 0-30	4.0 secs	3.4 secs	4.8 secs
0-40 mph	6.1 secs	5.7 secs	7.2 secs
0-50 mph	8.5 secs	8.3 secs	11.3 secs
0-60 mph	12.9 secs	12.4 secs	16.6 secs
0-70 mph	16.5 secs	16.7 secs	21.5 secs
40-60 mph (top)	7.0 secs	8.7 secs	12.4 secs
50-70 mph (top)	8.7 secs	10.7 secs	14.7 secs
Standing 1/4 mile	18.3 secs	18.5 secs	19.9 secs
Fuel consumption	24 mpg	26 mpg	22 mpg
EQUIPMENT			
Heater demister	no	yes	no
Blower fan	no	yes, 2 speed	na
Seat belts	lap	lap and sash	lap and sash
Windscreen wipers	1 speed	1 speed	speed
Anti glare arms	yes	yes	yes
Windscreen washers	manual	power	power
Cigarette lighter	no	yes	no
Exterior rear vision mirror	no	yes	yes
Gauges	fuel, oil, temp, amps	fuel, oil, temp, amps	fuel, oil, temp, amps
Tachometer	yes	yes	yes
Headlight flasher	yes	yes	no
Fuel tank range (fast cruising)	280 miles	260 miles	180 miles
Reversing lights	no	yes	yes
Through flow ventilation	yes	yes	no
Front seat squab support	poor	fair	poor
"GT" gear	blackened grille, rear flank GT badges	blackened grille, black boot flash, GT sill stripes, GT badges petrol cap and grille, simulated alloy spoked steering wheel	black bonnet stripe, black boot flash, Brabham badges on front flanks, woodrim steering wheel and gear knob.