

**JOHN BOLSTER tests**

## THE JENSEN CV8 MARK 3

**T**HERE are two excellent ways of going fast. For the first sort of driving you need something very like a racing car, with at least five gears, and lots of interesting noises. The other sort of fast driving demands a very big engine that you can't hear and the minimum of exertion for the driver. The Jensen is a most unusual car because, although it certainly falls into the latter category, it is still a genuine sports car.

When we last tested a Jensen, I had occasion to remark that the scuttle was rather high for a short driver. The new Mark 3 model of the CV8 has a similar engine and chassis to its predecessor, but it has a lower scuttle and deeper screen, which improves the view from the interior and enhances the appearance of the car. A new front-end treatment, in which the chromium-

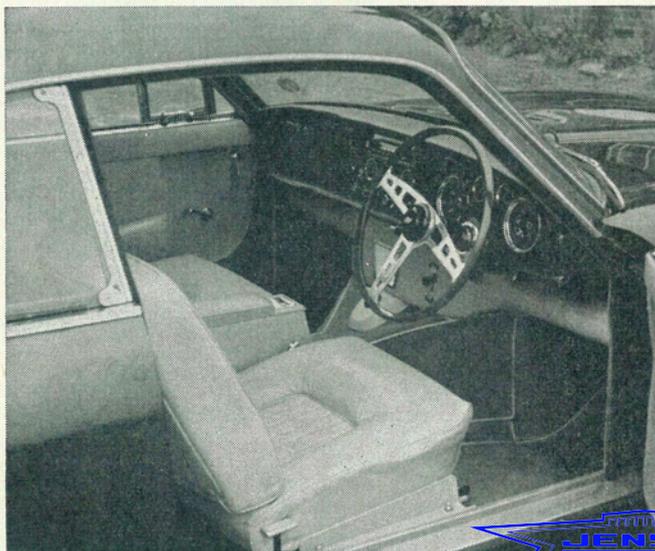
plated surrounds of the headlamps have been deleted, gives the big machine a more purposeful look. Adjustable face-level ventilation, heater ducts for the rear compartment, and an electrically demisted rear window, are all new features.

The car is built on a very rigid twin-tube chassis frame, to which a glassfibre body is attached. The quality and finish of this coachwork are remarkably fine, quite irrespective of the method of construction. The interior woodwork and upholstery are also of the highest quality. The separate front seats have an adjustment for angle and can also be dropped back to a reclining position. At the rear, there are in effect two separate bucket seats, but the rear passengers are by no means "occasional," being perfectly comfortable for long journeys

unless the driver is quite exceptionally long in the leg, the access to the rear compartment being reasonably easy through the two wide doors.

The chassis and body structure is mounted on helical springs and wishbones in front, with semi-elliptic springs and a rigid axle behind incorporating the Armstrong Selectaride control. There is an anti-roll torsion bar at the front and the rack and pinion steering is fitted with dampers. The servo-assisted Dunlop disc brakes on all four wheels are self-adjusting and are controlled by independent tandem master cylinders.

The power-unit is a Chrysler V8 of 6,276 c.c., giving 330 b.h.p. and lots of torque in the middle ranges. It has a Carter four-barrel carburettor and a compression ratio of 10 to 1, which naturally entails the use of the best





petrol. The automatic transmission is the high-performance version of the Chrysler Torqueflite, with a torque converter and three-speed gear. The control quadrant lacks the usual "park" position, having the much more sensible attribute of selecting second or first speed instantly, which is extremely useful, particularly when one doesn't want to "kick-down" on greasy roads.

I have driven a CV8 with manual transmission, and with a smaller engine I would prefer that alternative. With 6.3 litres of Chrysler, however, and an automatic box as good as this one, I'm pretty sure that the performance figures could not be equalled with a hand change and foot clutch. It's as good as that.

Although the car is substantial and very luxurious, it fairly leaps off the mark, changes very smartly into second as 50 m.p.h. approaches, and does another power-sustained change into top at over 80 m.p.h. In either case, the change can be delayed until a higher speed if the driver takes over control, but in fact the engine has so much torque that the acceleration times are not improved by taking the rev counter into the red. It does pay, however, to change down manually when approaching a corner under the brakes, and to hold the intermediate gear through the bend. During more leisurely driving, the box stays in top most of the time and the engine just plays with its load.

The car will reach 128 m.p.h. on any reasonable straight and 130 m.p.h. will come up on a good long run. With large, heavy cars, some extra speed can always be attained by pumping the tyres very hard. I could no doubt have got a few more m.p.h. in that way, but such an exercise always seems rather pointless to me, and 130 m.p.h. on standard tyre pressures is an excellent maximum, and an honest one too.

So, the Jensen has speed in abundance, and acceleration is its middle name. Such performance would be wasted without roadholding and brakes to match, as the owners of many American cars have found to their cost. The CV8 gives a firm ride and remarkable freedom from roll, with just sufficient understeer for stability at high speeds. There is enough power to cancel the understeer and the tail may be hung out a little on occasion. Although I prefer the hard setting of the Selecta-

ride for fast driving, the axle behaves astonishingly well under all conditions, and there is no tramp when the wheels spin.

This good behaviour persists on wet roads. The car is evidently heavy enough to avoid aquaplaning, and 100 m.p.h. cruising on roads like rivers seems safe and sensible—on the Continent, of course. The brakes are well up to their work, and are equally unaffected by wet or heat.

The steering seems lighter than that of previous models, but it is still unusually quick for a large car. In subtle ways such as this, the Mark 3 is that little bit better, though there are no visible design changes. The instrument panel is very attractive, with all the proper round dials, and the hand brake is unusually powerful—a feature for which I award extra marks. Nevertheless, it is that wonderful sense of gliding in silence, with almost unlimited power in reserve, which makes this such a delightful car for long journeys.

For those poor mortals who are forced to motor in this purgatory which is England, there is still great charm in

handling so much power, even below 70 m.p.h. It is that sudden surge of shattering acceleration which can then be such a wonderful safety feature. Other drivers, bored and sleepy, may suddenly put you in jeopardy, but a jab on the accelerator flings the Jensen clear of trouble, and an impending accident becomes a trivial incident because you just aren't there any more. All the same, it's a pity to waste such a car, and the Continent should be visited whenever possible.

The Jensen is a luxury car that handles like a sports car, and in spite of having 6.3 litres it uses rather less petrol than you would expect. It is remarkably free from wind noise, which probably means that the body shape is efficient, and much of the standard equipment is usually regarded as extra, even on expensive cars. On paper, its specification is strictly conservative, and its price is by no means low. Yet it is exceptionally well made, has an outstanding performance, and could easily be serviced by any competent garage. It seems a very practical way of going fast to me.

#### SPECIFICATION AND PERFORMANCE DATA

**Car Tested:** Jensen CV8 Mark 3 two-door four-seater saloon, price £3,490 including P.T.

**Engine:** Eight-cylinders 108 mm. × 86 mm. (6,276 c.c.); pushrod-operated overhead valves with hydraulic tappets. Compression ratio 10:1. 330 b.h.p. at 4,800 r.p.m. Carter four-barrel downdraught carburetter. Chrysler coil and distributor ignition.

**Transmission:** Three-speed automatic transmission with torque converter, ratios 3.07, 4.45 and 7.52 to 1. Open propeller shaft. Hypoid rear axle.

**Chassis:** Steel tubular frame with glassfibre body. Independent front suspension with helical springs, wishbones, and lever-type dampers. Anti-roll torsion bar. Rack and pinion steering. Semi-elliptic rear springs with Armstrong Selecta-ride telescopic dampers. Dunlop disc brakes all round with servo and tandem master cylinders. Bolt-on disc wheels fitted 6.70-15 ins. tyres.

**Equipment:** Twelve-volt lighting and starting. Speedometer, rev counter, ammeter, oil pressure, water temperature, and fuel gauges. Clock. Two-speed windscreen wipers and washers. Heating and demisting, including rear window, with full ventilation system. Seat belts. Cigar lighter. Radio.

**Dimensions:** Wheelbase 8 ft. 9 ins. Track (front) 4 ft. 7½ ins. (rear) 4 ft. 8½ ins. Overall length 15 ft. 4½ ins. Width 5 ft. 7½ ins. Turning circle 38 ft. Weight 1 ton 10 cwt.

**Performance:** Maximum speed 130 m.p.h. Standing quarter-mile 15.2 secs. Acceleration: 0-30 m.p.h., 2.8 secs.; 0-50 m.p.h., 5.5 secs.; 0-60 m.p.h., 7.4 secs.; 0-80 m.p.h., 12.9 secs.; 0-100 m.p.h., 19.6 secs.

**Fuel Consumption:** 14.0/18.0 m.p.g.

ACCELERATION GRAPH

