

Simple Stuff

MG T-Party

by Bob Vitrikas

Can you believe it's been 46 years since the last MG was imported into the U.S.? Even more surprising, the last MG imported into the U.S., a 1980 MGB Limited Edition, was bought by none other than Henry Ford II and delivered in February 1981.



The MG TA, the model that started the T-Series.
Photo courtesy of Classic & Sportscar Centre

Now on to the subject of this article, the naming of the T-Series MG. Back in the pre-WWII days, MG was merrily rolling through the alphabet as a number of new models were introduced. The fascination with letters began with the M-Type (also known as the MG Midget) in April 1929. Pretty obvious where the "M" designation came from. Soon to follow were a flurry of lettered MG models including the C, D, F, J, K, L, N, P, Q, and R. Those were sport models designed for spirited use on the road and track. Then MG took a completely different tack, introducing a series of three luxurious 4/5

seater cars, the SA, VA and the WA. MG skipped over the E, G, H, I, and O for reasons obvious and not so obvious. Please use your imagination.... And yes there were MG ZA and ZB models but those were four door sedans sold from late 1953 through late 1958. Let's see where was I? Oh yes the T-Series.

As you can see there was no TA luxury car model because ... the first of the T-Series sports cars, the TA was introduced in mid-1936, shortly after the SA came to market so the alphabetical sequence was in fact preserved, SA, TA, VA and WA. MG continued with the T-Series designation with the short lived TB which was produced from early 1939 to late 1939 when WWII stopped car production at Abingdon and elsewhere.

In late 1945 MG resumed T-Series production with the much loved TC which was a warmed over TB but it filled a niche need, especially in the U.S. market. 2,000 TCs were officially imported into the U.S. and another 1,500 were brought in from returning U.S. servicemen and women. For those trivia buffs among you, there was a variant of the MG TC labeled the EXU for export to the North American Market. Just 494 of these were produced. The TC was followed by the TD and finally the TF, when MG entered the modern envelope body era with the MGA in June 1955. The MG line continued with the MGB, MGC, MGB GT V8.



The end of the T-Series line, the TF 1500. Photo courtesy of Jim Purdin.

But wait there's more. Thanks to the federal Imported Vehicle Safety Compliance Act of 1988 any foreign car at least 25 years old can be legally imported into the U.S. without having to meet safety and emission standards. How about this juicy 2001 MGF Limited Edition Trophy 160?

