

MG marred by noise nuisance

Is this turbo diesel the least refined car ever?

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THE Rover 75 was an under-rated car, developed during the BMW ownership of MG Rover. It foundered with the rest of the company. Today the skeleton of the 75 is once again on the road, brought up to date to an extent and assembled at the old factory which, like MG, is owned by the Chinese company Shanghai Automotive. Most of the content comes from China. The Magnette saloon came first in mid 2011, followed by the liftback, called the GT.

The boot lid carried MG6 and Turbo D badges, redolent of the days when a turbo diesel was a rarity and the badge added status. The 6 in MG6 implies a six cylinder engine? The engine is in fact an 1849cc four cylinder and

develops just under 150 brake horse power, and 258 lb ft of torque. It is made in China.

To get the tech stuff out of the way: it is rated at 53.5mpg and 139g/k of carbon with a 0 to 62 mph time in 8.9 seconds. It costs £21,195 which makes it competitive on price with its phalanx of rivals. The alternative engine is a 1796cc petrol 4, rated at 158bhp, with 158 lb ft of torque, 37.7mpg, a hefty 174g/km CO2 and 0-62mph in 8.4 seconds. It costs £19,955, a £1,200 saving on the diesel, which on paper is more attractive to the average-mileage user.

Not that attractive, though, as UK sales in the first six months of this year have slumped 75 per cent to just 129.

This MG is not the worst car I have driven but it is possibly, even probably,



perhaps definitely, the least refined car being produced in Britain today or for some years past.

The dominant nuisance is noise – a combination of gear whine, road roar and engine gruffness. On some surfaces the tyre noise was thunderous. There is a vibration through the steering wheel, too. It was running on respectable 225/45/18 Dunlop SP Sport tyres.

There was a lot of other stuff that muddled the proud MG octagon badge – a silver emblem on the steering wheel boss. The ride was often clattery.

There was reflection of the ventilation slots on the windscreen. The concave plastic face of the radio/navigation display can be occluded by sunlight. The hatchback needs a hearty slam to close (but does have an electronic release). The interior door release latches need a double pull – designed that way but why?

The handbrake struggled to hold the car on even a modest slope. The push-key/declutch ignition system was fiddly and needed precise coordination to fire the engine. The car was fitted with stop-start ignition to save fuel but this

never operated. My car was supplied with an explanation of how to restart if the car stalled. It did stall several times. While I accept the possibility of some driver error the fact that MG supplies an information sheet on the matter of stalling is significant.

The handling is fine thanks to the firm suspension but marred by bump-steer deflection over road faults. Unusually for a car in the executive class, the rear wiper does not operate automatically when reversing in rain, with the front wipers on. There is a reversing camera but without guidance lines. It has a real ashtray and ciggy lighter, which says something about its Chinese owners. This is at the expense of storage pods on the central console.

Oh dear. Something good to say, then? The leather seats were comfortable. The gear change was easy and fine. The car cruised quietly at 70 in sixth at just 1,750rpm (but at 80 became rowdier). The fuel economy on test (according to the tripmeter) was good, with a low of 47 miles a gallon and a best of 56mpg. □

Verdict: Good economy but the car has too many deficiencies to put it on my shortlist.