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# CAR

MARCH 1969 3 shillings



**A very,  
very British  
CAR of  
the YEAR**





**JAGUAR XJ6** For judges' comments on an outstanding CAR of the Year, turn to page 16



**PEUGEOT 504 A** A close and worthy runner-up, and already winner of a Dutch award



**BMW 2002** Immensely popular among enthusiasts, this very fast saloon was a surprise third



**BMW 2500** The new six-cylinder from Munich gave BMW two cars in the top six



**FORD ESCORT** Unexciting mechanically, Britain's only new 'popular' car for 1969 scored on value



**FIAT 124 SPECIAL A** A real dark horse, and the third Fiat in three years to make the first six

**CAR OF THE YEAR COMPETITION** run in conjunction with the judging, with promotional help from Esso, drew literally hundreds of intelligent entries. Winner of the 10day BUA holiday in East Africa at Safari time is Peter G Trigger, a 20-year-old draftsman from Bath. Runner-up T I Jenner of Alton, Hampshire, gets 400 gallons of Esso.

**PAST CAR OF THE YEAR** Award winners have been 1966 Standard Triumph International, for the Triumph 1300 1967 Jensen Motors Ltd, for the four wheel drive Jensen FF 1968 Neckarsulmer Fahrzeugwerke, for the NSU Ro 80

**PAST TROPHY DESIGNERS**, chosen from among stylists working in Britain on automotive design, have been 1966 Dennis Adams, best known for the Marcos 1600 1967 Trevor Fiore, best known for the TYR Trident coupé 1968 Tom Karen, managing director of Ogle Design

deputy editor Mike Twite  
 assistant editor Jeff Daniels  
 art editor Jeffrey Bodecott  
 advertisement manager Andrew Frankl  
 advertisement associates Tim Miers/Constance Roberts/David Richardson  
 publisher Roger Barrett

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**Q** CAR starts on page 61, and includes tests of a Viva that not only goes faster but does it on less petrol, and an Elan which takes you right into the road-burner class

**COMPETITION NEWS Races!** What happened to the Porsches at Daytona—and how a Pontiac came in third; how the Tasman series finally worked out, with a round-by-round account of this series which keeps growing in stature and attracting more and more of the world's best drivers; columns by Jackie Stewart and Mike Twite; and our up-to-the-minute small-ad section with its growing list of bargains.

**NEXT MONTH** April sees CAR taking a look at the Italian car industry, from the humblest Fiat to some of the mightiest cars from the specialist constructors. One famous Italian saloon faces up to a near neighbour in a Giant Road Test; three more humble ones take on Italy's biggest-selling import (do you know which?) in another group test. First news of a new Italian model, too. But we shan't forget the regular CAR features, or the rest of the world. And meanwhile there's a very important development: starting next month, CAR'S COMPETITION NEWS comes inside the magazine itself. New printing techniques ensure that it is as up-to-date as ever!

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**NOW READ ON**

THE 1969 CAR OF THE YEAR WAS conceived and executed by a relatively small team with a very clear idea of what they wanted to achieve. They were little influenced by the approach of the vast corporation of which they now form a part. Their very success throws into focus the difficulty which the larger British groups are having in producing truly significant new cars—as opposed to the carefully market-researched, automotive-bromide models of which we are seeing a great deal.

This tendency to give the public what they want, and to fight shy of new ideas in case they put up production costs or fail to gain public acceptance, is dragging us into a quasi-American situation. How can public demand ever change unless somebody takes it by the scruff of the neck and shows it that something can be done a fundamentally different, better way?

There are other factors besides transatlantic influence which should make us fear lest we become an introspective little market. It has been rumoured not only that the cost of a vehicle licence is going up, but that a differential element based on engine capacity is being introduced. The thin end of a wedge if ever there was one! At present, were the politicians able to see beyond the ends of their noses, our flat-rate taxing system is a distinct advantage, giving our industry an important edge over the other car exporting nations.

Another thing which Europe will eventually have to take a stand over is the question of safety regulations. There are plenty of signs that in America this self-perpetuating movement, with its growing bandwagon of lawyers and civil servants, has reached a point of diminishing returns. How much effort is it worth putting into hamstringing car design (which can't hit back, like a bad driver; and doesn't cost the government money, like a bad road) to save how few lives? If America goes much farther along such a path of unbalanced development, we may yet see Europe let her go hang, whatever the rewards, and concentrate instead on the fast-growing markets on its own doorstep and in the developing countries of the world.

Should this ever happen, we need one major manufacturer who can go along with the best of them. And the one good way BLMC could do this is to encourage its skilled, balanced, dedicated teams to do what Jaguar have done. ❁