

# *Estatey Stag*

by Gordon Bruce

“If you had all the money in the world, what car would you buy?” she asked. Come to think of it, so have many others, though few of them were as beautiful as she. I explained that unfortunately no manufacturer made “my” car though one at least was on the right lines. She looked puzzled. Then glancing at the sea of vehicles that constituted Earls Court’s ground floor, she said, “You mean not one of these would suit you?”

Cornered! I had to admit that the Ferrari Boxer would keep me amused for awhile and that, well, yes, I had always had a yen for a Porsche. But, damn it, not one of them was quite Bruce’s ideal machine. “Tell me about your dream car then.” I pointed out that apart from outstanding performance and handling it must be practical and spacious with comfortable reclining seats – she smiled – and a decent stereo system that the car allowed you to listen to. Then of course it must have Sundym glass, a sunshine roof and, oh yes, be able to tow the Bruce racer with ease at 70, sorry, I mean 50mph.

Perhaps if we had then left for dinner in Del Lines’ Triumph (it’s all right, we’ve got to the point at last) the evening might have continued in the same dreamy vein, but somehow jumping into the Fiat 127 had as much effect as dinner for two at the local Wimpy. Still it was a good try.

So is the Lines Triumph. In fact it does come remarkably close to “my” car. Basically it is a Triumph 2000/2.5 estate car with Stag engine, transmission and suspension and a host of goodies added to complete the effect. In reality it is one of the most pleasant multi-role vehicles I have ever driven. And thought of as a car in its own right – rather than a conversion – must be a worthy challenger to the coveted Scimitar.

It all happened by accident really. He had a Triumph 2000 with an engine that was on the verge of collapse and a redundant Stag unit. A quick survey showed that mating the two was possible and he set to work.

The result was so pleasing that friends started to order replicas. Now five have been produced and a further four are on order. The necessary body modifications are surprisingly few, namely replacing the original engine mounts with Stag ones, modifying the floor and transmission tunnel to take larger twin exhausts, moving the battery tray and changing the wiring loom. The only alteration to the exterior is where the rear arches have been “pulled” to accommodate the fat wheels and tyres.

Undoubtedly the biggest bonus of fitting the V8 powerplant is the extreme flexibility and smoothness that one enjoys, though as can be seen from our comparison chart the car is no sluggard either. In fact with the relatively slippery shape of the estate body and the transmission geared for performance rather than low rpm cruising, it will comfortably out-perform the PI and even the Stag itself come to that. Of course there is no reason why, with a little jiggery pokery, that lovely engine couldn’t be made to part with a few more horses still – as you see the possibilities are endless.

Criticisms of the unit in our test car (Del’s own transport as if you hadn’t twigged from the registration) were of a slight vibration at high speed and relatively heavy fuel consumption, the latter being the product of the lower gearing and hard driving on our part.

At the moment Del drives through a standard Stag clutch which although unfussed about a full-blooded wheelspin start does seem to judder in normal use. Our man is aware of the problem and has persuaded AP to make some special ones for future conversions. We



certainly had no other criticisms of the transmission which consisted of a competition Stag gearbox (standard ratios) and competition overdrive unit coupled to a 3.7:1 Salisbury limited-slip diff. If you’re still with me, you may by now have noticed the lovely gold 7 in x 13 in Minilites, which are fitted with low profile Dunlop SPs, again lowering the gearing and, on this car at least, sending the speedometer round to an astonishing and somewhat optimistic 130mph.

Pleasant though the idea of the two extra cylinders is, it was the handling of the car that really won my heart over completely. The canny Lines has been underneath the beast as well you see. Stag springs and Armstrong heavy-duty dampers look after the rear and a Stag roll bar provides suitable roll stiffness at the front. Bearing in mind that the ordinary estate handles well, one cannot fail to be impressed with these alterations. Turning into a corner one is immediately aware of the extreme lack of roll and the stability afforded by taut suspension and a good helping of rubber to road contact.

Initially, understeer messages find their way through the power steering to the tip of the tiny Australi wheel, but a touch more lock and a good helping of power will bring the tail round in a gentle, most controllable slide. There is so much feel in the car (the combination of small wheel and power steering is a lesson to Jaguar, BMW and Mercedes alike) that you are inclined to forget you have a large estate body behind you and what is well over a ton of motor car at your disposal, especially as the ride is still very acceptable. The only quirk of the handling is a slight exaggeration of the spline lock from which all big Triumphs appear to suffer.

Talking of weight brings the brakes to mind. Here a Stag dual circuit system with Stag rear drums distinguish the set-up from standard. This particular car suffered from extreme fade due to a mistake over the pad compound, but with the trusty DS11s installed there is no reason why braking should not be more than adequate.

Having built a car that performed, handled and stopped, Del then set about adding the comforts that can change such a fun machine into a Grand Tourer in the true sense of the phrase. Those Recaro seats for instance, they may cost a whopping £175 for the pair, but you’d be hard pushed to better them (Del incidentally is an agent for them). Then there are the windows – Sundym glass all round with a banded front screen and electrically operated side-windows. The final touch is a beautifully made Helandia electrically operated sun-

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roof fitted by Bristol Coach Builders. The Stereo Eight system is another welcome inclusion.

Take the whole package minus the LSD and you'd have to find around £3,000. This must be good value when you consider the standard PI costs £2,502. Of course this is assuming you buy the complete outfit new from Del. If you want your own car converted it will be a more costly exercise. Saloon versions are available as well and in both cases the specification is to your own choosing.

If you glance through *Motor's* new car price guide you will see that apart from the Scimitar the car really has no rival at home or abroad, the current Citroën Safari being about the nearest comparison. Perhaps then, while puzzling why it should take a privateer to show BLMC what sort of car they could be producing, we should express our gratitude that such cars are at least available in limited quantities. Thank you, Mr Lines.

**Make:** Triumph  
**Model:** Stag Estate  
**Makers:** Atlantic Garage, Weston-super-Mare  
**Tel:** 01934 26208  
**Price:** Approximately £3,000 including sun-roof, Recaro rally seats and Minilite wheels

### MAXIMUM SPEED

	Triumph PI saloon with o/d mph	Reliant Scimitar mph	The Lines V8 mph
Lap	110.5	116.9	120.3
Best 1/2 mile	117.6	120.0	121.9

### IN O/D TOP

	mph	sec	sec	sec
20-40		11.9	11.3	10.5
30-50		11.1	11.3	9.9
40-60		11.6	11.0	9.5
50-70		12.9	12.5	10.1
60-80		15.3	14.8	11.3
70-90		18.4	15.9	14.0

### ACCELERATION

mph	sec	sec	sec
0-30	3.3	3.1	3.0
0-40	5.1	4.5	4.7
0-50	7.1	6.6	6.6
0-60	9.7	8.7	8.9
0-70	13.5	11.6	12.2
0-80	17.1	15.5	15.6
0-90	22.5	20.1	21.4
0-100	31.3	27.8	29.8
Standing 1/2 mile	17.0	16.1	16.8
Standing Km	31.9	30.3	31.1

### IN THIRD

	mph	sec	sec	sec
10-30		6.1	5.8	5.6
20-40		5.8	5.7	5.0
30-50		4.9	5.3	4.9
40-60		5.8	5.0	4.8
50-70		7.3	5.3	5.5
60-80		10.2	6.6	7.3
70-90		-	9.3	-

### FUEL CONSUMPTION

	mpg	mpg	mpg
Overall	22.2	21.7	18.7
Touring	-	28.2	-

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