

The Doretti proves itself to be lots more than just a snob-type Triumph TR-2

Photos by Tom Medley

THERE ARE FEW cars that we've tested that have created as much interest or drawn so much attention as the new Doretti. Every place I parked the car a crowd would gather 'round, poring over it. At stop signals, driver or passenger would lean out of the window of the large car alongside, asking the same question, "What is it?" The answer, "Doretti" would lead to another, "Italian?" "No, English," would be the reply, and if time permitted, a further explanation to clarify the inevitable confusion. "It's the same as the Triumph TR-2, except that it has a different body."

If there was more time, and I saw that they were interested, I'd explain that the Doretti had all the attributes of the TR-2, and had eliminated the disadvantages, introducing only a few of its own. It's another miniature bomb (slightly faster than the TR-2), corners as well as the Triumph (which is exceptional), gives fantastic fuel economy, is comfortable to drive and ride in, requires no correction on a straight road, has exceptional brakes, and above all, is *fun* to drive.

Actually, telling people that the two cars are the same, except for the bodies,

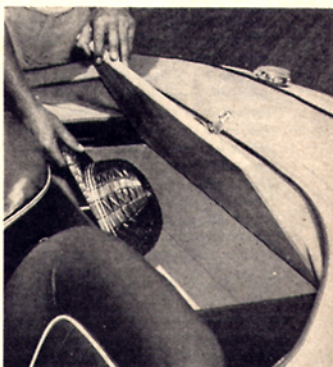
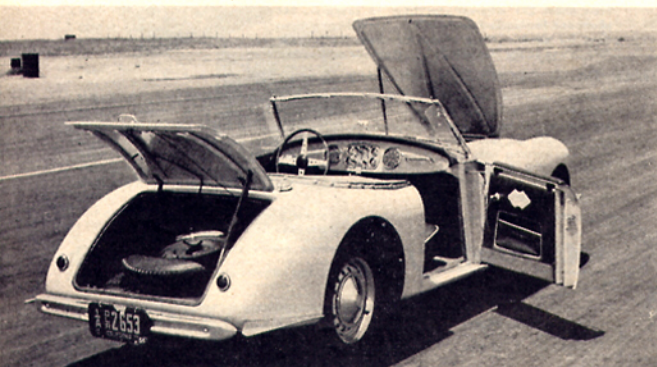
was a hasty explanation. The chassis is slightly different; the Doretti, having a tubular frame, is over 100 pounds lighter than the TR-2 (largely due to the lighter aluminum body, and steel doors). The engines are identical: four-cylinder, 122 cubic inches, overhead valves, 8.5 to 1 head, 90 bhp at 4800 rpm, and wet piston sleeves (no rebore, just replace them). With a stroke-bore ratio slightly higher than unity, this engine should give good reliability. (A Triumph TR-2 finished 15th out of 58 starters at Le Mans, averaging 74.7 mph for 1804 miles.)

As far as stop-signal acceleration is concerned, the Doretti will be able to give most cars fits. It comes out of the chute like the Triumph (which is faster than most comparable sports cars and most American stocks), and will actually shade it at the 1/4-mile post. We clicked off 60 mph (actual mph, not indicated speedo reading, which was four mph optimistic at this speed) in 13.7 seconds average. Best time was 12.9. At the 1/2-mile it was doing 72 mph, reaching that distance in an average of 19.2 seconds. Best time was 18.8. We got these acceleration figures with two people (Fred Bodley and me) in



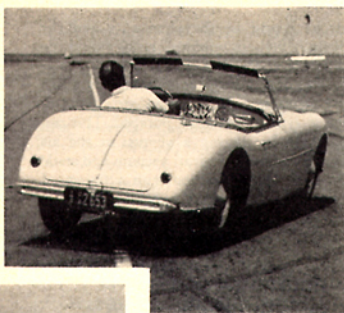
the car and with a full load of gasoline. I stayed in first gear until the engine revved up to 5000 rpm, snapped into second, again revved to 5000, speedshifted into third, which I stayed in till the end of the 1/4-mile. It wasn't necessary to use fourth gear except above 70-75 mph. Incidentally, overdrive (on fourth gear only) is optional for \$154 extra.

There's no reason to suppose that fuel economy on the Doretti won't be as phenomenal as it was with the similar Triumph TR-2. In a quick check of economy with the Doretti we got a tank mile-



Curb-threatened doors, lined with custom-stitched leather, have almost as much room in their big pockets as there is in the deck. Front-hinged hood can't blow open

Removable strapped-in suitcase matches seats, can be opened in or out of car



This maneuver looks like great fun, but can soon chill your plans for the future if you try it in some cars. In the Doretti you'll have a ball at it



control of the car at all speeds, for a quick downshift and a punch at the throttle will invariably pull you out.

It cruises easily at speeds of 50 to 80 mph. Little or no wheel correction is ever necessary. Ride on this model was also a bit choppier because the car was equipped with racing shocks.

Controls are all placed conveniently: Hydraulically actuated brake and clutch pedals are suspended and far enough apart to give you footroom; throttle is next to the driveshaft (which you find yourself resting your foot against); the "fly-off" emergency brake is located right above the driveshaft between the two adjustable (fore-and-aft) seats. Legroom is plentiful for driver and passenger alike.

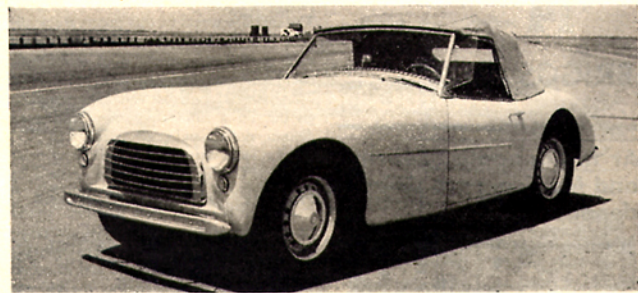
Where we pointed out (May '54 MT) that the distaff side might complain about the wind whipping her side in a TR-2, there'll be no such complaint in the Doretti because of the higher doors. The door is much easier to open from the inside, too; the handle is inside the door pocket. One of the disadvantages introduced because of the different body style is the

inadequate luggage space (if you need it). Where the TR-2 has a spare tire compartment below the luggage compartment, the Doretti has one compartment that is almost completely filled by spare tire alone. It's not large enough to hold much more than the side curtains, a camera case, other odds and ends; however—and this will please the rally-goers—there's a fitted luggage case on a shelf behind the seats large enough for a change of clothes.

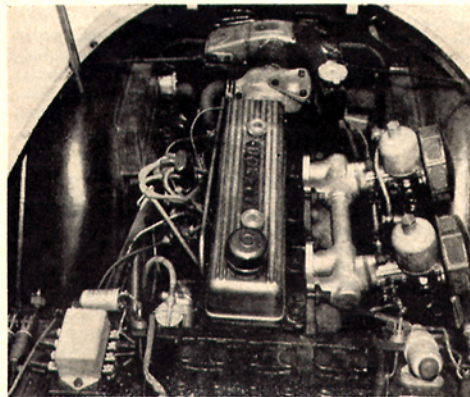
As one member of our staff puts it, "At its former price of \$3295 there was serious doubt in my mind as to whether they'd sell many Dorettis in this country. But, at its new price of \$2980 (including tonneau, heater, and wire wheels) it might be serious competition to some of the better-selling jobs." I hadn't known about the price reduction when I picked up the car from Tony Anthony at Motor Sport, Inc. (Hollywood, Calif.). I therefore quoted the wrong price to everyone who asked what it was. I hereby publicly apologize; kudos to Swallow Coachbuilding and Standard-Triumph Motor Co. for making this necessary.

age of 25.5 mpg, which includes lots of hard, fast driving. Even during our acceleration runs, where we have our foot in the throttle all the time, we wound up with a 17.3 mpg average! (Again, referring to the TR-2's performance at Le Mans, it made 34.7 mpg for the distance. At 74.7 mph average, this is spectacular!)

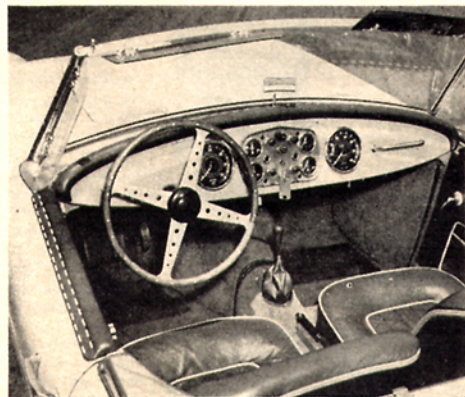
In taking corners as fast as you dare without risk of turning over, the Doretti would go into a four-wheel drift, and until you hit a rough spot or twisted the wheel more than you should, the rear end wouldn't come around. You feel in



Put the top up, and you lose some style, quality appearance and driving vision



Handsome ribbed valve cover is the only sign that this isn't the completely satisfactory engine compartment of a TR-2



Laminated-wood and punched-aluminum wheel, much good leather and carpet, adjustable seats, giant legroom add luxury