

Back to the

*Motor
Madness*

Ian Lamming takes a rose-tinted look at a legendary brand brought up to date

Future

NOSTALGIA, it catches up with us all in the end.

Rosy specs, fond memories, a time when responsibility could be devolved to dear old mum and dad.

Summers were long, skies were blue, smoking was good for you, as was concentrated animal fat.

The octagonal badge of a 60s icon stirred the soul and we weren't even put off by the fact MG actually stood for Morris Garages.

My dad owned a red MGB roadster, well at least until the UV faded every panel to a different shade of orange. Still, we didn't mind because there was dandelion and burdock to be drunk, burps to be belched and a carpeted plinth where back seats and seats belts would now reside.

It made a lovely noise, it appeared to go round bends and we all survived to tell the tale. Hurrah!

Dad's second came more than a decade later, it was bright yellow with black moulded bumpers/grille/nose cone. We called it the tin of custard but at least it stayed a consistent pus-like yellow and we all survived to tell the tale.

Forty years later and the MG badge is back, it has survived to tell the tale thanks to a new

owner SAIC, China's largest vehicle maker.

But it is designed, engineered and therefore made in Britain, Birmingham to be precise.

Recognising the current obsession with SUVs, MG has turned out the GS and it is special in many ways.

Let's not consider the price, that would be crass, yet it is so important that you simply have to. But first let's set that in context because I was way out.

GS really is a fine looking car, especially the top of the range Exclusive. At a glance you think RAV4, then you notice a subtle MG grille lurking under the bonnet line. The 18in black alloys and bold swage lines set off very appealing modern lines. The attractive rump is set off by a black boot line. It works very well indeed.

Design excellence stretches inside too. Centre console houses touch screen and key switches, the clocks are attractive, the controls nicely placed. Sports seats are leather and the spec is exhaustive, both in terms of luxuries and essential safety technology.

Exclusive mates a willing and refined 1.5 petrol turbo with a seven-speed automatic gearbox and the suspension feels good quality too, so the ride is controlled and handling confidence-inspiring.

So, to sum up; it is designed and made in Britain, looks splendid inside and out, drives well and feels nicely put together.

So back to the price – it's just so cheap. GS starts at £15k and the range topper is just £19,595, which is literally thousands less than its rivals making it, surely, the bargain of the year.

The 'rose-tinted view' always implies that reality doesn't quite live up to the nostalgic perception. Not this time, oh no, modern MG is spectacularly better and ready to drive into the blue.

Fact File

- Engine: MG GS 1.5 Exclusive DCT
- Power: 166PS
- 0-60mph: 9.6 secs
- Top speed: 112mph
- Combined MPG: 45.5
- Transmission: Seven-speed automatic
- CO2 g/km: 141

