

# Milestones

**1959 Triumph launches** its new Herald small sedan, which is powered by a four-cylinder 948-cc engine.



The Michelotti-designed Herald range included a coupe version.

**1962 The Vitesse is launched** as a beefed-up, six-cylinder version of the Herald with a quad headlight nose.

**1965 The addition of twin Stromberg carburetors** boosts the power output of the 1.6-liter engine.

**1966 The 2.0-liter model** supercedes the 1600.



Triumph's Spitfire was the Vitesse's contemporary small sports car.

**1968 Following criticisms** of the handling, the MkII is fitted with rear wishbones and has an extra 9 bhp.

**1971 While the Vitesse-engined**

Spitfire-derived GT6 continues in production, the Vitesse and Herald are axed.

## VALUE GUIDE

### ORIGINAL PRICE

1969 \$2,499

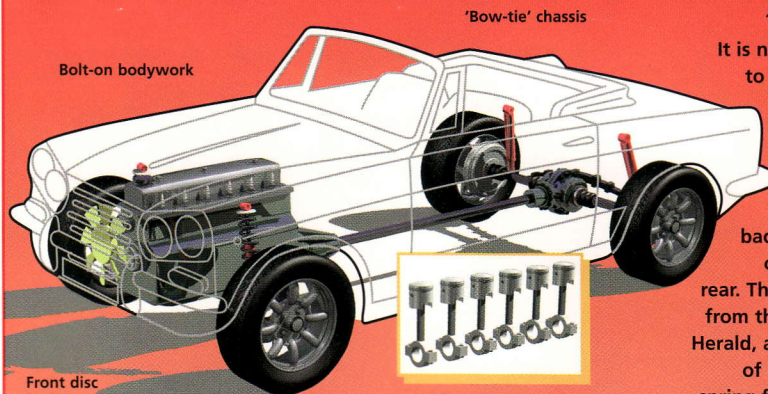
### CURRENT VALUE

\$1,600-\$6,500

### PRODUCTION TOTAL

51,212

## UNDER THE SKIN

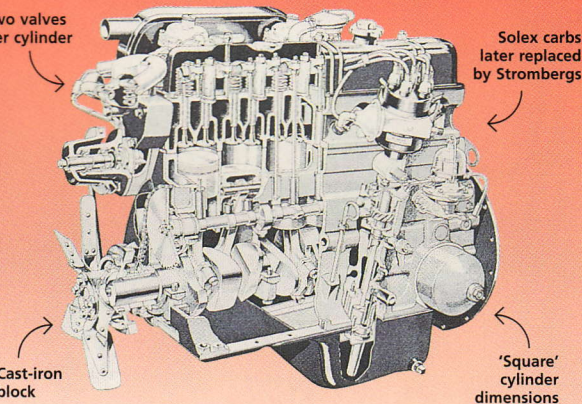


### THE POWER PACK

## Six-cylinder punch

The peppy little in-line unit fitted to the first Vitesse was just 1,596 cc, thanks to a tiny bore of only 2.63 inches and a stroke of 2.99 inches. It was a tight squeeze to get the engine under the hood but it was a gem, outperforming other 1.6-liter engines by a mile. In 1966 the launch of the 2.0-liter version really got the Vitesse going. The 1,998 cc unit had a bigger bore that made it nearly 'square' and produced 95 bhp at 4,700 rpm. In its ultimate MkII guise, from 1968, the engine developed 104 bhp at 5,300 rpm.

Two valves per cylinder



Cast-iron block

'Square' cylinder dimensions

## A kit of parts

It is not too far from the truth to describe the Vitesse as a kit car, for all the major bodywork components are simply bolted on. Underneath lies a chassis of two curved backbone sections, splaying out toward the front and rear. The transmission is derived from the Standard Eight via the Herald, although with the option of overdrive. Wishbone/coil spring front suspension allows a tight turning circle.



Late versions cured handling horrors and offered optimum performance.

## MkII convertible

By 1968 the Vitesse had become a mature compact sports sedan, with its powerful 104-bhp MkII engine and proper wishbone rear suspension that transformed its handling. Of the two body styles built, the convertible is certainly the more appealing.

## NOSE TO NOSE Sunbeam Alpine Series V • MGB Roadster • Triumph Vitesse

TOP SPEED	0-60 mph	POWER	WEIGHT	RIVAL CARS
100 mph	13.6 sec.	92.5 bhp	2,246 lbs.	SUNBEAM ALPINE SERIES V
105 mph	12.5 sec.	95 bhp	2,075 lbs.	MGB ROADSTER
102 mph	11.9 sec.	104 bhp	2,170 lbs.	TRIUMPH VITESSE



# Triumph **VITESSE**

'Vitesse' means speed in French—an apt name for Triumph's stylish compact sports sedan and convertible. No other British car could match its combination of good looks, low price and punchy pace.



## Six-cylinder engine

In the early 1960s, six cylinders had never been heard of in a British compact family car. As a result, the Vitesse became an icon in much the same way that BMW's six cylinders did in Germany at this time.



## Michelotti styling

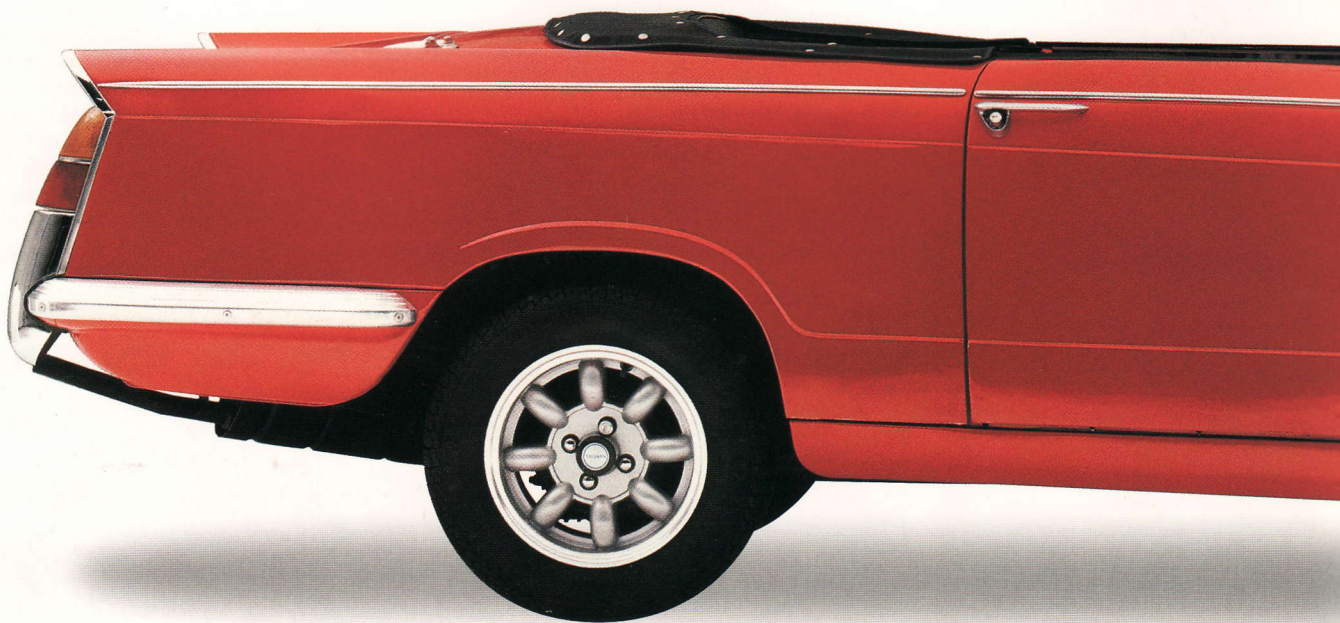
Giovanni Michelotti, head of the Michelotti styling house in Italy, was responsible for designing the sharp lines of the Herald and Vitesse. He and Triumph's chief of design, Harry Webster, collaborated as early as 1957, creating the legendary tail fins.

## Forward-hinging hood

The whole front section was designed to hinge forward in one piece. All you have to do is unclasp the rear base of the fenders on each side and tip the whole thing back. This opens up an unrivaled view of the engine bay, providing superb access.

## Four seats

True to its economy sedan origins, the Vitesse was a proper family car, with space for four (although the convertible was more restricted). That led Triumph to use the ad line 'The Two-Seater Beater'—suggesting that their four-seater car was faster than sports car rivals.







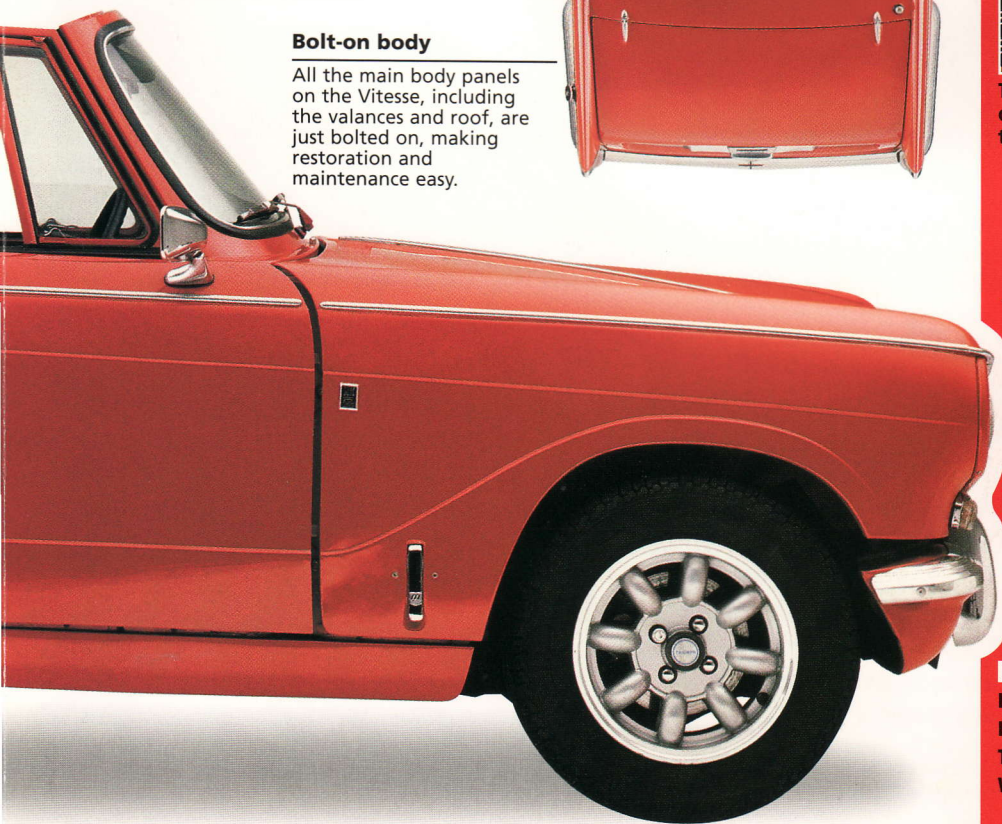
### Separate chassis

Unusually for a European car conceived in the 1960s, the Vitesse has a separate chassis. This was really due to logistics—there was no supplier able to produce a unitary body for Triumph at the time. The 'bow-tie' chassis is ultra-simple and acts as a jig to make sure the body fits correctly.



### Bolt-on body

All the main body panels on the Vitesse, including the valances and roof, are just bolted on, making restoration and maintenance easy.



# Specifications

## 1969 Triumph Vitesse 2.0-liter MkII

### ENGINE

**Type:** In-line six-cylinder

**Construction:** Cast-iron block and head

**Valve gear:** Two valves per cylinder operated by a single camshaft via pushrods and rockers

**Bore and stroke:** 2.63 in. x 2.99 in.

**Displacement:** 1,998 cc

**Compression ratio:** 9.2:1

**Induction system:** Twin carburetors

**Maximum power:** 104 bhp at 5,300 rpm

**Maximum torque:** 117 lb-ft at 3,000 rpm

### TRANSMISSION

Four-speed manual with optional overdrive

### BODY/CHASSIS

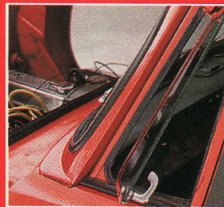
Separate chassis with steel two-door sedan or convertible body

### SPECIAL FEATURES



The sporty look of the sloping quad headlight nose was unique to the Vitesse.

The front quarter windows betray the period when this car was first designed.



### RUNNING GEAR

**Steering:** Rack-and-pinion

**Front suspension:** Wishbones with coil springs, shock absorbers and anti-roll bar

**Rear suspension:** Swing axles with lower wishbones, transverse leaf spring, and shock absorbers.

**Brakes:** Discs (front), drums (rear)

**Wheels:** Steel, 13-in. dia.

**Tires:** 155 x 13

### DIMENSIONS

**Length:** 153.0 in.    **Width:** 60.0 in.

**Height:** 52.5 in.    **Wheelbase:** 91.5 in.

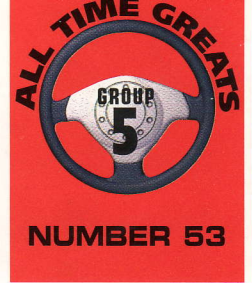
**Track:** 49.0 in. (front), 48.5 in. (rear)

**Weight:** 2,170 lbs.





UK 1962-1971



# Triumph VITESSE

This British sports sedan and convertible was given one of the smallest six-cylinder engines ever. The Vitesse's sharp Italian styling and keen performance soon brought it universal popularity, and surprisingly low prices helped.

Produced by  
Triumph, Coventry,  
England



## VITAL STATISTICS

Top speed:	102 mph
0-60 mph:	11.9 sec.
Engine type:	In-line six
Displacement:	1,998 cc
Max power:	104 bhp at 5,300 rpm
Max torque:	117 lb-ft at 3,000 rpm
Weight:	2,170 lbs.
Gas mileage:	23.5 mpg
Price:	\$2,499



*"...classy six-cylinder power."*

*"No question, the best thing about the Vitesse is its engine. Firing it up produces a satisfying rumble in front matched by a purposeful sounding exhaust note. And then there's the performance, which is more impressive than many contemporary sports cars. The handling, however, demands some care. Because of the swing-axle rear suspension, hard cornering produces severe tuck-in, which can be very scary."*

*The Vitesse combines a classic interior and a great engine. Early cars had twitchy handling.*

