

# Concours Judging of Classic Triumphs

## Part 1 of 5

### General Information

by Don Carter and Jeff Harris  
Copyright © 2005

This is the first in a series of five articles that review the concours judging process and provide guidance on how you can optimize your car's score within its class. This first article contains general information and guidelines on the concours judging process. If you better understand how the judging process works, you can better prepare your car to show well.

The remaining articles will discuss each of the four judged categories of the car as defined by the Vintage Triumph Register and that appear on the VTR judging form. These categories are 1) exterior, 2) interior & soft trim, 3) chassis & undercarriage and 4) the engine compartment.

- Concours is a French word meaning "competition". Concours d'Elegance is sometimes translated as a "Gathering of the Elegant".
- A concours judging process provides a systematic and fair way to evaluate cars using a point system. The Vintage Triumph Register (VTR) uses a 400-point judging system with an Official Judging Form that was originally developed and adapted for the older cars of the 1930s - 1950s. In 1994 our own Texas Triumph Register revised the form to incorporate features found on the later models (TR-4 thru TR-8), while keeping intact the items on the checklist that applied specifically to the earlier model cars.
- A perfect VTR concours score is 400. Each car starts with a score of 400 and deductions are made as necessary as each component is evaluated. Note that many other classic car organizations use a maximum score of 100 in their concours-judging process. You may have heard owners speak of a 95-point or the rare 100-point car, meaning one that has scored exceptionally well on the 100-point scale.
- VTR generally requires a minimum of 350 points for a car to be eligible for a first place award, 300 for 2<sup>nd</sup> place and 250 for third place. Judges may elect to reward prizes to the top three scores, even if they don't meet the minimum value. Each car is judged on its own merits against a standard, rather than on a competitive basis against other cars.
- The purpose of a concours is to promote the preservation of the Triumph in its original state. The primary focus of judging is on originality, craftsmanship, authenticity and condition with secondary emphasis on cosmetics. Over-restoration, extravagant paint and extra plating detract from originality. Triumphs were built to be driven, not to be trailer queens. Cars are not expected to be perfect. Some minor road dust and wear is to be expected, particularly for cars that were driven to shows at distant locations.
- Judges are instructed to use the following percentages when determining how to deduct points up to the maximum deduction. Look at the item in question and consider AUTHENTICITY (50%), WORKMANSHIP (35%) and MAINTENANCE (15%).
- It is ideal for a four-person team to do the judging. The same judge should complete the same category for each car in a class. This is to get as much consistency as possible in the judging process. It is important to remember that judges are amateur volunteers from the participants in the concours show, and are not classic automobile appraisers by profession. Inconsistencies are bound to happen, especially from one class to another where different judges will have different ideas about what is and is not important. One of the main reasons to have a judging form was to reduce at least some of the inconsistencies.
- The judging form also helps the judge to organize his category into the systems of the car. For instance, under the category of "**Engine Compartment**" there are seven systems of the car including "General Deduction" and an "Other" space for listing something that may apply to a special car. The five remaining systems that are listed will not apply to all cars, such as an "Emission System" or parts of the "Cooling System" like the *Radiator Shroud's* condition.

- Generally, the owner must start the car, turn on the lights, turn signals and brake lights. Windows must be put up and down (or side curtains presented), doors opened and closed. The engine compartment is inspected for water, oil and fuel leaks. The overall condition of the electrical wiring is also checked.
- The car should be fully operational and driven into the judging position. Cars are to be shown fully assembled. This means with all body panels like wings, bonnets, hoods, boots, and all trim pieces both interior soft stuff and outside shiny stuff.
- The owner (or a designated substitute) should be present for the judging process to answer questions and operate items to be judged (e.g. lights). If the owner is not present, the judges may need to open doors, test lights, etc. A judge may need to sit in the car to evaluate the interior. Judges may ask the owner to start the car and turn on the lights. If there is a malfunction, the owner will be given a chance to correct the fault while the next car in the class is being judged.



**Jay Jablonski Caught in the Act of Judging! Watch Out for That Oil Slick, Jay!**

- Factory options are considered as original equipment. After-market equipment, if available when the car was new, will not add or detract points. After-market equipment that was not available when the car was new, may cause a deduction.
- Convertibles are to be judged with the top (hood) up. Cars with removable roof panels (e.g. TR-250 targa top) should be displayed with panels in place. Cars should be displayed with hoods (bonnets) and trunks (boots) open.
- Routine replacement items such as spark plugs, battery and tires do not have to be the exact original brand provided that the replacement part conforms to the general appearance and size of the original.
- Non-original items that have been added for safety or convenience purposes (e.g. seat belts, fire extinguishers, side view mirrors, roll bars, alarm systems, radios) are acceptable as long as the equipment is installed in a neat manner and does not seriously detract from the appearance of the car.
- Cars that were originally provided with tools and owners manuals should have these items displayed. This adds to the show appeal and the presentation of the car to the judges. While many owners will say it doesn't matter---it does! A guy we know once placed color-coordinated towels along side his car for the judge's use when inspecting the "**Chassis and Undercarriage**" category of the judging form. That guy knew his undercarriage was restored and the closest runner-up's car was difficult to see due to the heavy, wet grass on the concours field. The closest runner-up remained just that, the runner-up to the Best of Show award. The cars in a competition are often so close that it's the little things that can make the difference.

- Judges are often instructed to look at the car first and then locate the item on the form rather than going line by line down the form and then finding items on the car. This instruction is intended to advise “don’t kill the car with deductions because you feel you have to mark something down to prove you’ve judged it”. We agree with not judging a car too harshly, however the form is necessary to improve consistency of judging from car to car, an important issue mentioned earlier. The form also provides documentation of the show results and a relatively easy way to tabulate the points and determine the award winners.
- After one class is judged it is up to the chief judge and the team captains to try to balance inconsistencies among the different classes of cars. This is where the most experienced judges are needed. This step is the hardest one of the day so go easy on criticizing the judges. If you feel you should have won, be patient, you probably will next time. It also helps if you volunteer to judge occasionally. Being a judge gives you a whole different perspective!



**These Friendly Looking Folks Can Make or Break Your Day!**

- A good way to prepare your car for a concours judging is to use the judging form and evaluate your own car. Chances are you will find the areas that could be improved. Prioritize your prep time by concentrating on areas that are worth the most points. This is particularly important as the quality of classic Triumphs seen at concours judging events has increased over the last few years. Even if you are not interested in having your car judged, using this procedure is an excellent way to make sure you’ve cleaned and prepped all the nooks and crannies so that the appearance of the car is as good as it can be.

Next month we’ll review the judging process in more detail, beginning with the “**Exterior**” category of the car. We hope to help your next concours showing by listing many of the things you should and should not do when preparing your Triumph.

**Concours Judging of Classic Triumphs**  
**Part 2 of 5**  
**“EXTERIOR” Judging Category**  
*by Don Carter, Mike Hado and Jeff Harris*

This is the second in a five-part series reviewing the concours judging process, at least the process as we see it. This month we take a detailed look at how concours judges grade the exterior of a vehicle. The exterior is the first thing the judges see so you want to spend some time on preparation. There is a whopping 40-point (maximum) deduction for the general condition of the paint and body so this can really make a difference in your total score.

We're told not to judge a book by its cover, but often the first impression of a classic car is determined by the quality of the exterior as the judge approaches the car. In fact, NADA claims that a quality, high gloss paint job can add \$1000 or more to the resale value of used cars. That dollar amount is even more for a classic car. So, first and foremost, make sure the exterior is clean and as shiny as possible. Articles in previous editions of *The Bluebonnet* presented information on how to wash your car and how to wax your car for best results. Web sites such as <http://www.meguiars.com/> also have valuable information on products and techniques.



The items judged under the “**EXTERIOR**” category are shown in the tabular excerpt from the VTR judging form that follows this article. We've included a few specific pointers from each of the headings:

**Body:** This item includes doors, fenders, hood, quarter panels, trunk lid, hard top, rocker panels, nose section, other panels and panel alignment. This is where most of the deductions occur in this category. Doors, for instance, show that up to 5 points maximum may be deducted for dents, dings, or scratches probably according to the severity. The same goes for fenders and other body panels. A hard top or surrey top and the fixed glass if any have a maximum of 10 points. This is probably because there are so many parts and pieces associated with these factory tops. A non-factory top may receive up to the maximum deduction, depending on the particular judge and his consistency of the day.

The next big item is “panel alignment”. This is an item that the factory often could not get exactly right compared to today's technologically advanced assembly robots. However, this is a critical factor in restoration and in getting good appraisals for any classic auto. Alignment is the consistency of the spaces between panels. If one end of the hood for example is touching the front of the fender but is away from the fender by ½ inch or so near the A post of the car, then panel alignment points should be deducted. Because there are so many panels to align is why a maximum of 10 points has been assigned to this item.

The last of the Body sub-headings has to do with incorrect body materials, such as a fiberglass body panels instead of steel or an aluminum substitute grille in lieu of the original. Up to a 15

point Mandatory Deduction was assigned here for concours cars and this is for the entire car, not per item. Likewise the incorrect paint color for a particular marque may carry a Mandatory Deduction penalty of 10 points. This is a common deduction because of our varied taste and what we feel is a real need to have our fun cars be the color we want, dog-gone-it! However, except for a few late TR-8's, no TR series Triumph came in a metallic, metal flake, or pearlized paint color. So even if your paint job is just out of the shop, but is the wrong color to what was an original factory color, you may take a hit here. If your Triumph is painted an original but rare factory color (or a close approximation), bring along photos, Heritage Certificate, paint chips or other materials that will help the judge evaluate the originality of the car. Paint chips for most of the Triumph factory colors can be found at [www.vtr.org](http://www.vtr.org).

**Lights:** Head, parking/turn, side marker, tail/brake, license plate, driving, and fog lamps about cover all the possible exterior lights on Triumphs, unless some of the older marques came with a "spot light" from the correct period of the make of the car. Make sure that all these work. The judges may ask you to turn on lights or activate turn signals. The plastic lenses of rear and side marker lights can often be cleaned and polished. The inside of the lenses can be cleaned with soap and water and the outside of the plastic lenses can be polished to a like-new gloss with the correct buffing rouge and a polish wheel.

Since this is the shortest heading in this category, it might be useful to know that adding up deductions for all the lights here only totals a maximum of 18 points. This may make one wonder, if you had no lights and no lenses at all that only 18 points could be removed from your score. WRONG! There's another heading called "Other" at the bottom of each category, which allows the judges to deduct whatever they decide is a consistency factor for the overall field of show. So you see, there is plenty room for adjustment of taste and opinion when viewing art...and ART IS WHAT IS BEING JUDGED HERE!

**Trim & Details:** This heading was expanded and from the original form by combining some of the items together. The intention was to put the parts of the car being judged into the order that they are viewed starting at the front of the car and ending at the rear. Grille shells, grilles, radiator cap and ornament, exterior mounted horns, side mirrors, windshield frame, wipers, door handles, running boards, bead/welt, key sockets, stone shields, trunk handle, fuel cap, luggage rack emblems / shields, hinges, and finally license plates round out the items under this heading. Some of these are worth 2, 3 and some 5-point deductions, but the largest is the beading and welting used in the earlier cars between body panels. This item is worth a maximum of 10 points, again because there is usually so much of it.

Next month, we move on to Part 3 in this series, which will cover the INTERIOR & SOFT TRIM category.

1. EXTERIOR	MAX	DED
<b>BODY:</b>		
Doors	5	
Fenders	5	
Hood	5	
Quarter Panels	5	
Trunk Lid	5	
Top (Fixed)	5	
Hard Top & Glass	10	
Rocker Panels	5	
Nose Section	5	
Other Panels	5	
Panel Alignment	10	
Incorrect Body Mat'l.	15M	
Incorrect Color	10M	
<b>LIGHTS:</b>		
Head	3	
Parking/Turn	3	
Side Marker	3	
Tail	3	
License Plate	3	
Driving/Fog	3	
<b>TRIM &amp; DETAILS:</b>		
Shell, Grille	5	
Grille	5	
Cap/Ornament	3	
Horns (ext. mtd.)	3	
Mirrors (side)	3	
Windshield Frame	3	
Windshield Wipers	3	
Door Handles	2	
Running Boards	5	
Bead/Welt (all)	10	
Key Sockets	2	
Stone Shields	3	
Trunk Handle	2	
Fuel Cap	3	
Luggage Rack	5	
Emblems/Sheilds	2	
Hinges	2	
License Plate	2	
<b>OTHER:</b>		
<b>TOTAL DEDUCTIONS:</b>		

**Concours Judging of Classic Triumphs**  
**Part 3 of 5**  
**“INTERIOR & SOFT TRIM” Judging Category**  
*by Don Carter and Jeff Harris*

This is the third in a five-part series reviewing the concours judging process, at least the process as we see it. This month we take a detailed look at how concours judges grade the “**INTERIOR & SOFT TRIM**” category. Items judged in this category include the soft top and the interior components. The first rule is that the interior should be neat and clean. Judges generally do not deduct points for normal wear of original components. However, remember that items like floor coverings and carpets tend to wear quickly, and quality replacements are readily available. Take a critical look at these high wear areas and consider replacement before the show. It may be tough to come up with the money and time to replace all the interior trim pieces at once, but look at the most visible or the most worn item and replace it first. These improvements give a good first impression to your car as the judge overviews the interior. Everyone has heard what one bad apple can spoil...well, one delaminating dash board, or one rear plastic window turning very sun- burned brown can spoil the more competitive participant's hopes.



**Soft Top:** The soft top must be displayed erected and fastened for concours judging. Mandatory deductions of 20 points are assessed for a missing top, 10 for a folded top, and 10 for a top made of the wrong material. The general condition of the top material, trim pieces, fasteners, rear window(s) and top bow/frame, comprise the remaining items that are judged. For cars that were offered with an optional hardtop, the soft top may be removed from the car and the Hardtop components will be scored under the “Exterior” category.

**Interior:** The only mandatory deduction for the interior of the car is if it is upholstered in the wrong materials. This includes door panels, kick panels, carpets, seat coverings and dash vinyls. This is a 10-point mandatory deduction. An example would be a car upholstered in leather when it came in vinyl from the factory. Carpet, floor mats, dashboard, instruments, side curtains seat belts, door jams and other indoor jams and sills are some of the other components that will be reviewed by the judging team. Piping for TR-2s was in upholstery color, for late TR3A/B and TR4/4A it was white. For TR3 and early TR3A, could be white, could be cream, could be upholstery color. Review the chart for this category and inspect your car. Clean with the best and most appropriate cleaners and decide if it is worth replacing that piece of trim.

<b>2. INTERIOR &amp; SOFT TRIM</b>	<b>MAX</b>
------------------------------------	------------

**SOFT TOP:**

General Condition	10
Missing	20M
Folded	10M
Welting	2
Wrong Material	10M
Trim Pieces	3
Fasteners	1*
Rear Windows	5
Top Bow/Frame	5

**INTERIOR:**

Side Curtains	5
Glass (each piece)	3
Seat Cushions (pads)	5
Seat Belts	5
Trim Panels	3
Upholstery	5
Wrong Uph. Mat'ls.	10M
Door Panels	3
Door Handles/Cranks	2
Door Jams and Sills	3
Carpet Pieces	5
Floormats	3
Steering Wheel	3
Pedals	2
Levers/Knobs	3
Dashboard	3
Dashpads	3
Instruments	3
Mirror (rearview)	2
Seat Piping (all)	5
Trunk Interior	5
Hard Top Trim	5
Headliner	2
Misc. Trim Pieces	3

**OTHER:**

--	--



**Concours Judging of Classic Triumphs**  
**Part 4 of 5**  
**“CHASSIS & UNDERCARRIAGE” Judging Category**  
*by Don Carter and Jeff Harris*

This is the fourth in a five-part series reviewing the concours judging process, at least the process as we see it. This month we take a detailed look at how concours judges grade the “CHASSIS & UNDERCARRIAGE” category. This oft-overlooked area (overlooked by both owners and judges) may make the difference in whether your car goes home with an award. A messy or unrestored undercarriage can collect up to a 15-point deduction. We believe that the judging form is very kind here because other automobile concours are stricter when it comes to this category. This is a testament to the fact that the VTR encourages driving our cars and enjoying them to the fullest and that only a limited penalty should be assessed for dirt and road grime accrued while driving our cars.

We have mentioned “*trailer queens*” and words like “*obsessive*” and “*compulsive*” in the same breath in this series of *Bluebonnet* articles. However, we think there is a healthy medium where our hobby can be one of enjoying the maintenance and continued improvement of our Triumphs as we drive them. A deduction of 15 points starts your car off with 385 points, and unless there is such a limited field of cars and some rather lazy judges, no car should win a first place in its class without at least an attempt at presenting a clean and detailed undercarriage.

Most owners have restored and improved the exterior and interior, and some even the engine compartment. But most owners skip the back-straining and messy job of getting under the car and cleaning and detailing floor pans and frame sections. It isn't really that hard. High pressure car wash wands are perfect for reaching half the undercarriage at a time. Spraying on a degreaser before using the high pressure water can get it clean almost immediately, and if not a second cleaning usually will. The final rubbing by hand with a degreaser and paper towels will complete the job while the car is on jack stands. There's very little under the car that can be hurt by using this method. With a roll of masking tape and some paper and some quick drying can spray paints, you can restore the floor pan's original primer red finish, (at least on TR-6's), and semi-gloss black painted frame sections. Remember that paint's gloss will determine how easily it is to keep clean. A semi-gloss finish closely resembles the factory's original, and is more washable than a flat or low gloss finish. Keeping the under side of your Triumph clean will now be much easier. A once or twice a year visit to your local car wash should do the trick.

**Tires, Wheels, Hubcaps, Trim Rings, Valve Stems and Bumper Assemblies:** These items are inspected from the 'topside'. The 15 points mentioned earlier for this category only deals with the undercarriage. Tires should be clean but we recommend that you avoid the surface treatments that make your tires 'glow in the dark'! You may want to apply a light coating of *Armor All* or a similar tire dressing, but then take a clean cloth and buff the tires until the shininess is reduced leaving a nice, even appearance. *Armor All* also comes in a low-gloss finish that may provide a more natural new-tire look. *Meguires* makes a tire care product called *Endurance* that produces an attractive, long lasting finish. This product has a pleasant grape-like smell.

If the car originally came from the factory with redline or whitewall tires but is currently fitted with blackwall tires, judges are sometimes instructed to deduct one point per tire. This is probably because some chief judges believe that since “classic” tires are still produced some deduction is fair due to the owner not staying with an original part. Most of the earlier cars that were offered with whitewall tires (various widths depending on when they were built) were also available from the factory with blackwall tires and therefore do not receive point deductions for not having the old style wide whitewall tires. Some of us think that is a shame because it doesn't reward those cars whose owner's research and buy the classic whitewall tires. Maybe there should be a number of things that “ADD” points back to the deduct system of judging. WOW! what a concept. As they say in Dudeville, “we're not going there, Dude.” One cautionary note about the “classic” redline or wide-whitewall tires that are still available: Many of these tires are made using the original molds. This produces a very accurate reproduction tire, but it also means that the tire is constructed with 30-year<sup>+</sup> old technology. These 'classic' tires are best used for concours show purposes, not for real world driving.

Wheels should be clean and freshly painted. Some owner's even clear coat or have them powder coated to keep them shiny. Triumph steel wheels in the TR series are known to be heavy gauge but they have a tendency to warp at the center near the flat lug bolt area. This bent wheel rim makes balancing and alignment almost impossible until they are straightened. Wire wheels, both of painted and optional chrome-plated variety have their own quirks, but here judges should look at numbers of spokes per wheel and determine if they are of the same vintage as the car. Most TR-3s came with 48-spoke wheels. TR-4s came with 60-spoke wheels.



A 48-Spoke Painted Wire Wheel as Fitted to TR-3 Models  
(Dayton Wire Wheels)

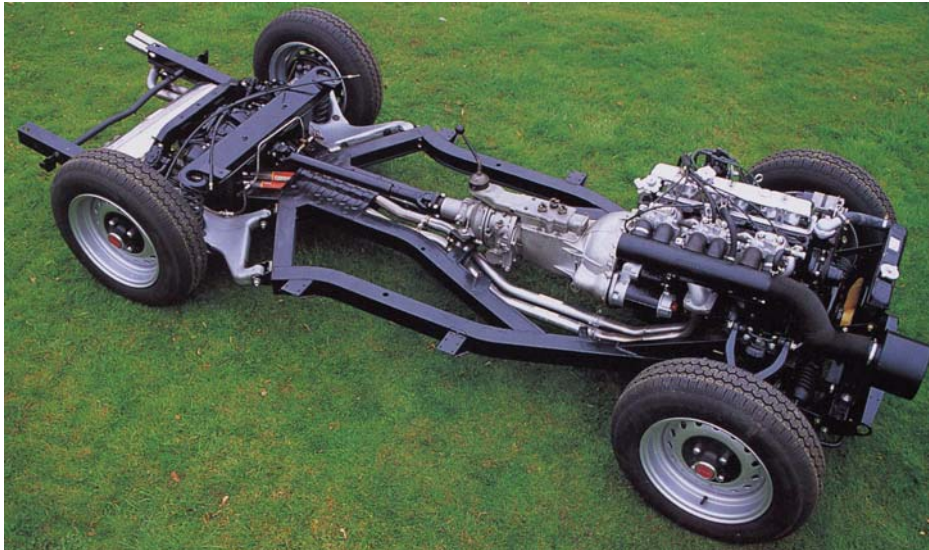
Valve stems are difficult to clean around and judges look at these areas to check the thoroughness of the wash and detailing job. Hubcaps and trim rings whether they are plated, brushed aluminum or stainless should be clean, free of rust and dents and be as shiny as possible. Lug nuts should follow suit. Have you ever washed a car leaving the wheels until last? If you have, then you're washing your car properly and you know that no matter how clean the paint work and top look, the whole car looks dirty until the wheels are cleaned and detailed. The car isn't clean until the wheels and tires are clean!

Bumper and bumper-ette assemblies are probably the easiest items to judge in this category. The maximum deduction for a missing piece is 5 points. The condition of these chrome plated pieces that usually don't protect anything anyway, is also easy to judge. Quality of the plating, rust showing through, or dents in these parts will receive deductions up to 4 points per bumper. Now we've finished reviewing the items in the **Chassis and Undercarriage** category that can be seen while standing. Now, let's drop down to the ground and take a look from the bottom side of the car.

Review the items on the attached list from the *Front Axle* item on down to view what the judges should be looking for under the car. The cleaning of these things has already been covered. There are only a few other minor suggestions to help our fellow hobbyists receive the fewest deductions in the concours. It's making us tired just writing about it, but remember this Category is critical if it is winning you want.

1. Undercoating: Stock or factory undercoating came on some imported cars. Usually on Triumphs a mild spray-on type was used only on under fender areas. At dealerships in the 1960s and 1970s especially, the underside of many of the TR series cars were sprayed with a heavy, tar-like undercoating. For this "undercoating" an additional charge was added to the price listed on the window sticker. Unfortunately many applications were overdone and drain holes were filled, causing these cars to rust from the inside out. It's tough to remove old undercoating, but you should work hard to free-up any clogged drain holes in the doors, rocker panels and front fender enclosures. The advice generally given to judges is to not deduct any points for undercoating, as long as it appears neat and orderly. You may want to remove the tire & wheel assembly, clean the undercoating with a brush and soap and water, then rinse and dry. Finally, spray a light coating of flat black paint to provide a more even appearance. Make sure to mask areas that are not to be painted.
2. Provide a towel or carpet piece to allow a judge to lie down on the ground and inspect your car's undercarriage. One of the authors (any guesses?) went so far at a VTR national event concours to provide color-coordinated towels along side his car for the

judge's use when inspecting the underside of the car. This guy knew his undercarriage was restored and that most of the cars would be difficult to see due to the heavy, wet grass on the concours field. The closest runner-up remained just that, the runner-up. The cars in a competition are often so close that it's the little things that can make the difference. Make the judges' lives a little easier when you can. It can't hurt your score.



**Essence of TR-6 with All the Superfluous Stuff Removed**  
*(from Original Triumph TR4/4A/5/6 by Bill Piggott)*

<b>3. CHASSIS &amp; UNDERCARRIAGE</b>	<b>MAX</b>
Tires	3
Wheels	3
Hubcaps/Trim Rings	3
Valve Stems	1
Bumber/B'rette	5
Front Axle	5
Front Suspension	5
Shock Absorber	3
Steering Assembly	5
Brake Assembly	3
Lube Fittings	1*
Lack of Lube	1
Excess Lube	1
Trans/Driveshaft	5
Exhaust System	5
Exhaust Pipe Clamps	2
Rear Axle	5
Diff. Unit	5
Rear Suspension	5
Springs	3
Chassis Frame	5
Gas Tank	3
Bolts/Nuts	1*

**GEN. DEDUCTION:**

Messy/Unrestored Undercarriage	15
--------------------------------	----

**OTHER:**

**Concours Judging of Classic Triumphs**  
**Part 5 of 5**  
**“ENGINE COMPARTMENT” Judging Category**  
*by Don Carter and Jeff Harris*

This is the final installment of our five-part series reviewing the concours judging process as we see it. This month we take a detailed look at how concours judges grade the “**ENGINE COMPARTMENT**” category and provide suggestions that should help you maximize your cars’ score. Items judged in this category include the **Engine, Fuel System, Electric System, Cooling System** and **Emission System**. As with all of the previous judging categories, the first rule is that the engine compartment should be neat and clean. A messy or un-restored engine compartment may cause up to a 30-point deduction. If your car has the wrong engine for that model, expect a 20-point mandatory deduction. A common example of a “wrong” engine is the Rover V-8 conversion for the Triumph Stag V-8.

It is not currently necessary that the engine serial number be the one that originally came with the car, just that the car is fitted with the correct type of Triumph engine. It does help if the engine is from the same year as the car’s model year because several engine attachment parts changed through the years as our cars slowly advanced in technology or had to meet USA emission standards.

Everyone has heard of concours cars with “matching numbers”. It means that the vehicle identification number relates in some way to the engine, the shell or body, the transmission, and differential numbers stamped into each of these major components. As for Standard Triumph or British Leyland, you can almost forget matching numbers, unless you have the British Heritage boys show you how it left the factory. Triumph component numbers were rarely even close.

**Engine:** Just like any other area of your car, the first impression that the engine compartment makes on a judge is important. So make sure it is clean and neat. The judge will inspect the engine compartment for water, oil and fuel leaks. If your engine block has some of the typical oil leaks and seeps that are so common on British cars, it may be a good idea to start your show preparation by cleaning the engine using a steam cleaner, pressure wash or a spray-on cleaner. It usually helps to run the engine for a short while to warm the block prior to application of the cleaner. Wrap and protect the distributor, coil and other electrical wires and components prior to cleaning. One suggestion we’ve heard about that may work for a fast cleaning is to leave the engine running while you are pressure washing it at a coin operated car wash. We recommend you carry several dry towels to dry off the inside of the distributor cap and other parts sensitive to water, like plug and coil wires, voltage regulators, generator and starter leads and etc.

To the best of our knowledge, all Triumph engine blocks were originally painted black. Once the engine block has been cleaned of all grime and grease, a fresh coat of black paint will help to improve the appearance. Engine enamel in spray cans works very well but be sure to protect inner fenders, under hood and firewall areas from overspray. Masking of any spray-applied paint is very important, as this is critical under the workmanship priority issue of judges. It often will take an hour to mask off something that only takes a couple of minutes to paint-so be patient!

Many owners have installed after-market valve covers. While some are more attractive than the standard Triumph piece, it can garner up to a 5-point deduction. We recommend that you install the standard valve cover for shows. You may also want to consider having the valve cover powder coated in the correct color, or re-chromed for valve covers that were originally supplied in chrome.

While we’re speaking of chrome, the engine compartment is one area where some owners go a little crazy with the plating. There are many items that can be plated (e.g. valve cover, air cleaner assembly) but this is not the way that Triumph built the cars. Since concours judging is all about originality, you may want to save your chroming dollars for bumpers and other shiny stuff that came from the factory that way.

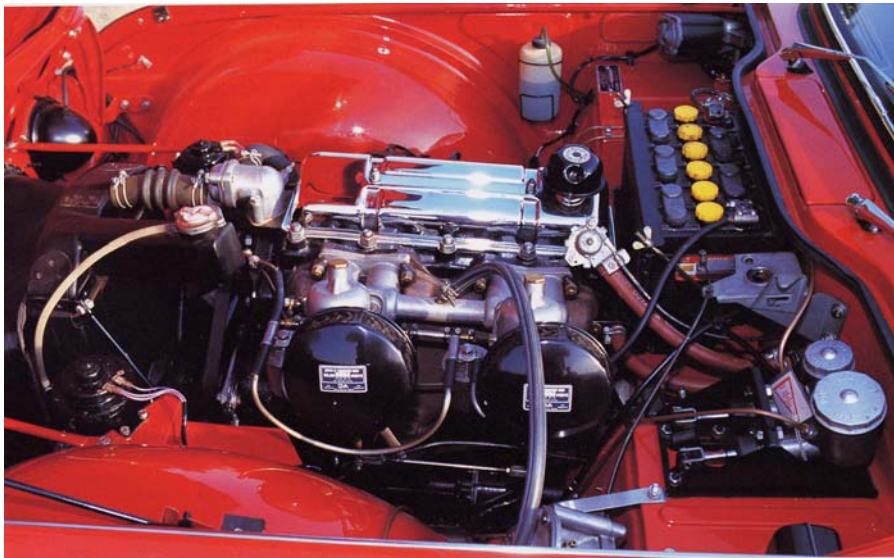
The manifolds (intake and exhaust) are a 5-point item on the judging form. These can be coated with high temperature silver paint to avoid the rusty appearance that is common on cast iron manifolds. Since the intakes are usually aluminum on the TR series, they pose little problem when simply cleaned. The exhaust manifold however, came from the factory of cast iron and will rust and look dirty even when they're not. The hot coating silver paint is nice, but we have not encouraged anyone to deduct for having the clean but slightly rusty original either. This is a matter of owner pride in our opinion.

Many Triumphs have been converted from the canister oil filter to the much more convenient spin-on variety. Some judges will accept this modification with no deduction, but even if the deduction is taken, it is only one point. So the penalty is slim for the ease of changing a filter. The same should be true for any such frequent maintenance feature that prolongs the life of the Marque in our opinion.

Exposed bolt heads that have rusted or oxidized can be removed and cleaned with a wire brush either by hand or electric-powered too;. Some classic car owners (generally of American classics, not British cars) become so obsessed that they make sure that the slots, for example in a Phillips head screw, are all aligned in the same direction. We have never met a Triumph judge who was this detail oriented, or have we?

There is lots of exposed, painted sheet metal visible in a Triumph engine bay (except maybe for the V-8 equipped TR-8 and Stag). Make sure that this sheet metal is clean and waxed. Sometimes you may only need polishing compound and a lot of elbow grease because most previous owners never want to spend time cleaning something that is mostly out of sight. Polished finishes or repainting the engine bay can make a big difference in the overall appearance. However, this requires some time and effort, as it is best to remove the engine and accessories to allow for proper painting. The gloss on the underside of the bonnet and inner wings should be as brilliant as the outside of the car. One of the ways to *compare* this on our cars is to walk down a row of like cars and look only at the underside of the bonnet. For several of our Triumphs we have to do this looking from the back of the car. Notice we said "*compare*", not judge. Judges are not supposed to judge cars by comparing them to other cars, but only the judging form.

***Fuel System:*** This category includes the fuel pump, fuel lines, carburetors (or Petrol Injection). The air cleaners and air cleaner covers are also included in this item.



**Nicely Restored Engine Bay (from Original Triumph /TR4/4A/5/6 by Bill Piggott)**

**Electric System:** There are two primary issues to consider in the “Electric System” category. First is the proper operation of the system and second is the appearance of the components under the hood. The judge may ask you to demonstrate that the electrical system is operational by having you start the car, turn on lights and/or turn signals, operate the horn, or other similar items. Under the hood, wiring should be neat. Wire wrapping should be inspected for loose or frayed ends. Fuses, including spares, should be in the proper place. Cooling fans are included in the Electric System category. Horns should be cleaned and if necessary re-painted. Spark plug wires should be cleaned or replaced. Plastic cooling fans often fade in color and develop nicks and scratches around the edges. Consider installing a new fan for improved performance and better appearance. Many Triumph owners have added supplemental electric cooling fans. Judges will generally not deduct points as long as the modern equipment is fitted in a neat and professional manner.

**Cooling System:** This includes the radiator and shrouding, belts, hoses and water pump. A fresh coat of black paint on the radiator top tank will freshen the appearance. Make sure this brass-topped tank is steel wool brushed and cleaned before painting with engine enamel. Be careful of all the black painted parts under the bonnet on our cars. Many have different levels of gloss and this is important. When buying black paint, make sure you have Flat Black, Semi-Gloss, Engine Enamel, and rarely you will even see High Gloss on something. Try to paint the items the same gloss level as from the factory. This makes the engine bay look more original and you will have a great sense of pride in “restoring”, not just painting.

The pressed board shrouds on some models can be cleaned, painted with flat or semi-gloss black paint to seal and make them last much longer. This can take several coats due to the porosity of the board. On TR-2s and TR-3s, the heater valve is very prominent. The valve body should be polished and the valve handle should have a fresh coat of paint of the original color. Polishing compound or buffing rouge can be successful for most all brass and soft metal polishing. Hoses and clamps are also inspected, as well as the plastic overflow bottle of the radiator. Make sure this bottle, if your car has one, is scrubbed and re-installed. The same is true for the plastic or glass windscreen washer bottles. Clean and refill these about half full of fresh fluid.

**Emission System:** Triumph added emission control equipment through the years to meet increasingly stringent U.S. regulations. Many owners have chosen to remove some or all of this equipment, and many of the components are no longer available. The judging form takes this into account by assigning relatively low point values to this item. If you are displaying your car with emission control equipment in place, make sure the components (e.g. air pump, counter, hoses, tubes, fuel traps, etc) are clean and properly connected.

The table following is an excerpt from the VTR judging form. You can use the point allocation to decide where to prioritize your prep time under your bonnet in the Engine Compartment.

<b>4. ENGINE COMPARTMENT</b>	<b>MAX</b>
<b>ENGINE:</b>	
Block	5
Head and Valve Cov.	5
Oil Pan	5
Oil Filter Cap	3
Oil Filter/Canister	1
Oil Cooler	3
Manifolds	5
Bolts/Nuts	1*
Firewall	5
Starter	3
Generator/Alternator	3
Incorrect Engine	20M
<b>FUEL SYSTEM:</b>	
Carburetor(s)/Injection	5
Fuel Pump	3
Fuel Lines (all)	3
Fuel Filter/Clamps	3
Air Cleaner Cover	3
Air Cleaners	3
<b>ELECTRIC SYSTEM:</b>	
Distributor	3
Coil	3
Horn(s)	3
Connectors	1*
Wiring (all)	5
Tape/Tubing	1
Fans	3
Relays/Solenoids/Fuses	3
<b>COOLING SYSTEM:</b>	
Radiator	10
Water Pump	3
Water Valve, Heater	3
Hoses	3
Clamps	1*
Fans	3
Radiator Shroud	3
Belts	2
<b>EMISSION SYSTEM:</b>	
EGR Valve and Hoses	2
Smog Pump/Belts	3
Counter/Monitor	2
<b>GEN. DEDUCTION</b>	
Messy or Unrestored Engine Compartment	30
<b>OTHER:</b>	