



MORGAN THREE WHEELER

The success of the Morgan Motor Company was founded on an icon, the Morgan Three-Wheeler. This exceptional but simple design, by skilled engineer and company founder Harry Morgan, became one of the most celebrated lightweight cars of the early days of motoring. Tim Barnes-Clay reports...

The principle of fitting a powerful motorcycle engine and uncomplicated transmission into a featherweight chassis and body inspired a new type of vehicle, which generally became known as the 'Cyclecar'. As a result the fashion for 'new motoring' introduced the freedom of the open road to those of more modest means.

The Morgan Runabout was at the forefront of this movement and therefore Harry Morgan can be regarded as the man who first introduced motoring to the masses. Built at the original Morgan factory in Malvern Link, Worcestershire, not only was the Morgan one of the first Cyclecars, it was, without doubt, the best engineered, the most reliable and the most successful vehicle in its class, which set the standards for other car makers to follow.

Within a few weeks of its launch in 1910, Harry Morgan entered the Runabout in the London to Exeter Trial, and his remarkable

performance won a gold medal. This was the first of many such victories in all forms of motor sport, such as reliability trials, as well as racing and record breaking. Three-Wheelers were to remain popular for years, and Morgan survived two World Wars, but eventually, due to changes in fashion and taste, the last Three-

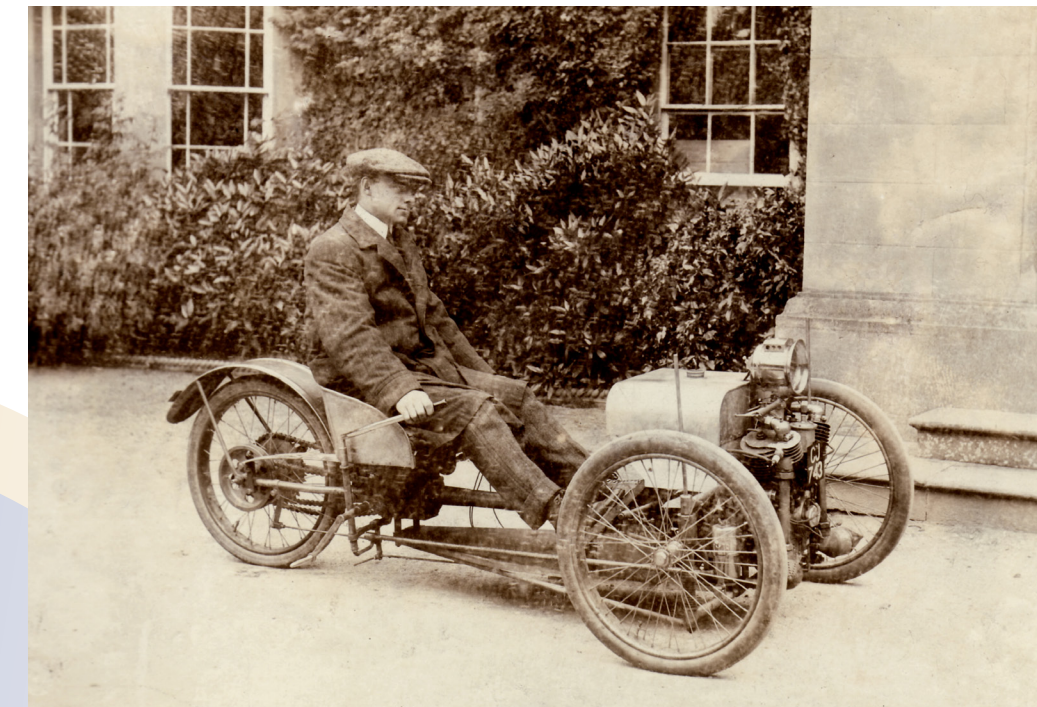


Wheeler rolled off the Morgan production line in 1953.

It is now nearly 60 years since the last Morgan Three-Wheeler was built, and whilst the world is a very different place in 2011, Morgan has decided that the time has come to re-launch the legend. But why now? Well, the future of road transport in the 21st Century has two big issues: the conservation of precious resources and the protection of our natural environment. Downsizing and a philosophy of simplicity are ways of dealing with these problems, and that is where the very latest Morgan 3 Wheeler comes in.

In production now, the car has been updated with 21st Century technology. The powertrain is a V Twin fuel injected engine, mated to a Mazda 5 speed (and reverse) gearbox. This provides smooth "get in and drive" convenience with the thrill of extreme performance. The car is a fusion of old and new.

Safety is paramount with a reinforced



tubular chassis and twin rollbars for driver and passenger. A sturdy V belt provides traction to the reinforced rear tyre. Some things have not changed though - the Morgan Three-wheeler still holds long distance speed records for one litre cars set in the 1930's, so why change the shape? The pronounced bullet shape and the exposed chassis and aluminium tub are accompanied by the aeroplane profile of the

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car's sides. The shape is of a gentle yet powerful missile at the front leading to a beetle back tail at the rear.

From the design viewpoint, Morgan claims the focus was set on making the car as close to an aeroplane as possible, while retaining handy extra space for driver, passenger and a

holdall in the rear. But above all the Morgan 3 Wheeler is designed for one purpose alone, to make driving fun. A leather padded cockpit, complete with aircraft instrumentation adds to the sense of flying on the road. The car is easy to control, with compact dimensions offering a perfect view ahead and to the rear. The car seems to respond as much to thought as physical input.

Dynamism is further enhanced by what the Morgan design team calls a sporty "race on Sunday" design philosophy. The car's lines do not end abruptly but instead flow organically and echo the smooth shapes of a racetrack. The profile makes the car look sleeker and lower. The sculpted bonnet and boot enhance the aerodynamic feel and the short overhangs, front and rear, emphasize the sports car's sense of purpose.

Morgan chassis experts have worked on the driving experience of the new Morgan 3 Wheeler with the same passion given to the development of any new Morgan. The result is a driver's car with properties that do the sporting appearance full justice. The weight of





the engine is counterbalanced by the mass of the passengers and the car has a planted feel with a very low centre of gravity to ensure it remains super-glued to the road.

During the development process, the chassis team worked on the new 3 Wheeler in parallel with the forthcoming Morgan EvaGT. The result is a solution that features changes and refinements to virtually every single detail that affects a car's cornering capabilities.

The new Morgan 3 Wheeler is approved by US and European road transport authorities for safety and emissions. With an economical 115 horsepower, the motor provides maximum power at minimum revs, whilst big torque spells effortless hill climbing ability.

Bespoke leather and paint are available at extra cost as on the classic Morgan. A polished engine, stainless steel tailpipes, cowl, polished cowl, headlamps and roll hoops are also extra

cost options for a more classic look. On top of all that, high quality decals are available to give the driver the opportunity to boost the sporty attitude of the new Morgan 3 Wheeler. These include special designs including US military and British Air Force inspired logos, oval racing numbers and stripes, a fearsome shark nose, chequered winner's bonnet, official national flags and the Morgan wings.

So, if you're in the market for a vintage style car, backed up with the reliability of a modern engine, then you really should take a look at the Morgan 3 Wheeler. At £30,000 it's not cheap, and, okay, it doesn't have a roof, which can leave you feeling a little exposed, but I have a feeling this car will win anyone over who dares to drive it.

- Max speed: 120mph
- 0-60 mph: 4.5
- Combined mpg: 35 - 50mpg
- Engine: 2.0-litre V-twin petrol
- Max. power (bhp): 115
- Price: £30,000 On the road

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