

## Bond Bug 700ES—for economy



**AA**

The Bond Bug was launched as the car designed for the 17- to 25-year-olds. Yet of the first dozen owners in London, the youngest was twenty-six and the rest were staving off middle age. Youth appeal does not seem to run to a £600 price tag.

Bugs do become cheap when you own one. Annual tax is £10, the car is in the cheapest insurance category and it should average 40mpg.

With a loud raspberry from its chrome-tipped exhaust, the 700ES reaches 50mph at the same rate as an Austin 1300 and scurries down the road in its bright orange livery like a demented wedge of Leicester cheese. You ricochet off bumps while the engine cowl roasts one side of your body and draughts from the sidescreens chill the other. The steering wheel chafes your knees and at speed the engine lets forth a 93 decibel howl.

The Bug will park within the length of a medium-

sized saloon and scoot through traffic. There is a small luggage locker in the back. Stability is reassuring, provided the car is never treated like a Mini. Despite its steel chassis, the Bug is unlikely to give much protection in a crash.

There is no synchromesh on the whiny first gear and little on second. The brakes are excellent.

The entire roof canopy lifts like a lid to reveal an ingenious pair of seats, comfortably moulded from the main bulkhead. Speedometer and switches are tucked away awkwardly at thigh level and the engine is so buried that even checking the oil is an effort.

### SPECIFICATION

**Engine**—700cc, 4 cylinders, producing 32 net bhp at 5,000rpm, service every 6,000 miles or six months.

**Transmission**—4 forward gears. **Suspension**—front independent, rear coil spring. **Brakes**—drum all round. **Fuel**—5gal. **Length**—9ft 2in. **Width**—4ft 7in. **Boot capacity**—6cu ft. **Colour**—tangerine.

### PRICE

on the road	<b>£664</b>
basic	480
purchase tax	148 19
road tax	10
average delivery	12

seat belts	13	1
wing mirrors	standard	
<b>COST</b>		
per week	<b>£6</b>	<b>1</b>
running	3	8
depreciation	2	13

Mike Smith, 29, a printer, lives at Streatham Hill, London. He was without a car for two years before he bought a Bug.

One of our first drives was a round trip to Sevenoaks and Maidstone. By train it would have taken three hours each way, involved six changes and cost about £4. In the Bug it took forty minutes each way and cost 3s 1½d in petrol.

I get about 65mpg from the Bug, tax and insurance are low and there are only three tyres to replace. The glass-fibre body's durability should help to keep the secondhand price up.

Wing mirrors should be standard and the instrument panel is too low. Rainwater drips on to the seats when the roof is opened.