

British Born Chinese

MARK ANDREWS

Looking to buy a new car? Talk test drives the MG 5 to see how it weighs in against the current competition.

With the collapse of MG Rover in 2005, ownership of the MG marquee became Chinese: first under Nanjing Automobile Group, which then became acquired by Shanghai powerhouse SAIC, the joint venture partner of Volkswagen and General Motors. MG and Roewe are sister brands and their cars share a lot of the same technology, but the MG marquee in China is predominately aimed at the export market and fashionable young, wealthy Chinese consumers. The MG 5 (pictured) is the company's latest offering and is cited as a competitor to cars like the Volkswagen Golf and Ford Focus. From the front, the new MG has clean modern lines that echo the design architecture of the current MG range. However, the rear is a more acquired taste and the overall 'high on its haunches' look could well pass for a car designed by Toyota or Daewoo.

Interior quality is good, albeit not class leading. While plastics are a bit hard, the dash is of quality materials and the finish is decent. As can be expected from a car based on the Roewe 350, technology plays an important part. Dominating the dashboard is a touch-screen display and the top of the range version that we test-drove provided sat-nav (Chinese only) and a reversing camera with aiming grid to ease you into those tight parking spaces. Surprisingly, it lacks a CD



slot, but input comes via either SD card or USB.

The MG 5 can also come equipped with inkaNet, an Android-based 3G system, which enables web access and also allows you to use an in-car phone. Added to this is iVoka, which operates in a similar method to Apple's Siri and allows two way communications with a support centre. The whole system has comparable capability and functions to General Motor's On Star, but in the MG 5, inkaNet is, unfortunately, only available in Chinese.

Currently, there is no engine choice for the range, with power coming from a 1.5 litre petrol unit that is a little underpowered for the size of car. Added to this, the four speed automatic further dents performance, meaning that the 0-100 kilometres per hour dash takes an asthmatic 12.8 seconds. A five speed manual is available on all, but the top of the range version could do with improving performance.

Driving on the highway, the inadequacy of the current power train shows up with slow gear changes. Road holding, however, is good and the car stays composed. As can perhaps

be expected in China, the ride is generally quite soft, soaking up most bumps in the road. Steering, though, is overly light and has an artificial feel to it which does not necessarily inspire confidence.

Overall the package is competitive with similar cars from joint ventures in terms of build quality and interior and is perhaps class leading in digital technology. However, until the launch of the 1.5L, this car is somewhat lacking in the performance department. Prices range from RMB 87,700 to RMB 132,700.

Advertorial

Fat Tuesday Carnival 23 February - 4 March

MARDI GRAS is a traditional holiday celebrated in the USA and Europe. It is also called "Fat Tuesday" because it's the last day that many people eat meat before Lent begins. The most famous celebrations take place in Venice, New Orleans, Louisiana and Rio with its famed Carnival. The people there enjoy this celebration by going to parades where they catch beads, doubloons, cups, and trinkets that are all thrown from floats.

The creative culinary team of Le Royal Méridien have created a series of celebrative and authentic cuisines to bring the carnival to Shanghai. Join us for memorable dining experiences on Fat Tuesday.



GUEST CHEF - ALBERTO FOL

Executive Chef at The Westin Europa & Regina

As a renowned Michelin-starred chef, Alberto Fol has a strong commitment to refined local ingredients. His biggest passion is to bring new elements to traditional Venetian recipes. Following the time-honored tradition of using only the freshest of ingredients, Chef Alberto promises to surprise and delight.

FAT TUESDAY MASQUERADE PARTY

Favola Italian Restaurant, Level 8

Show off your creative mask while enjoying a delicious antipasti buffet prepared by Chef Tino and the renowned guest chef Alberto Fol. Surprise us and win a prize at the Fat Tuesday Party.

23 February
19:00 - 22:30

RMB120 includes two drinks

- Best Mask Competition Prizes as below:
- Complimentary two night stay for two at The Westin Europa & Regina (includes buffet breakfast)
 - Dinner for two at The Westin Europa & Regina's La Cusina Restaurant
 - RMB500 Favola dining voucher
 - More surprising prizes await

For reservations please dial 3318 9999 ext. 7778
Restaurant Manager - Exequiel GonzalezConcha 158 2114 6291



A TREAT FROM OVERSEAS

Favola Italian Restaurant, Level 8

Chef Tino and our guest chef Alberto Fol, from The Westin Europa & Regina, have prepared a magnificent selection of Venetian antipasti and a specially designed a la carte menu that's awaiting your discovery.

23 February - 4 March
12:00 - 14:30

RMB168+15% per person, antipasti Buffet

Lunch
18:00 - 22:30
A la carte menu

For reservations please dial 3318 9999 ext. 7778
Restaurant Manager - Exequiel GonzalezConcha 158 2114 6291

BRUNCH A LA CARNIVAL

Le Bistrot Signature Restaurant, Lobby Level

You are in Shanghai. You are in New Orleans. Experience a colorful brunch in true carnival style. A live jazz band, our Resident DJ, a French cancan parade and magicians will be performing for the celebration.

24 February
12:00 - 15:00

RMB388+15% No Alcohol

RMB498+15% Brut Champagne package
RMB598+15% Rose Champagne Package

For reservations please dial 3318 9999 ext. 7001
Restaurant Manager - Simon Li 134 7267 0628

BRAZILIAN CARNIVAL ON THE 66TH FLOOR

789 Nanjing Lu Bar, Level 66

Dance the night away with Brazilian vibes accompanied by our resident DJ Scotty B. and live dancers while tasting Brazilian caipirinha.

24 February - 4 March
Monday - Thursday and Sunday
17:00 - 01:00
Friday - Saturday
17:00 - 02:00

For reservations please dial 3318 9999 ext. 56500
Restaurant Manager - Bastien Van Opstal 131 2071 6256