

# EUROPEAN

# SPORT CARS



Arbath Special, powered by 1.1-liter Fiat, seats three.

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CAR LIFE FEATURE WRITER

**T**HE sport car scene got its pleasant jolt last year with the introduction of the Austin-Healey 100.

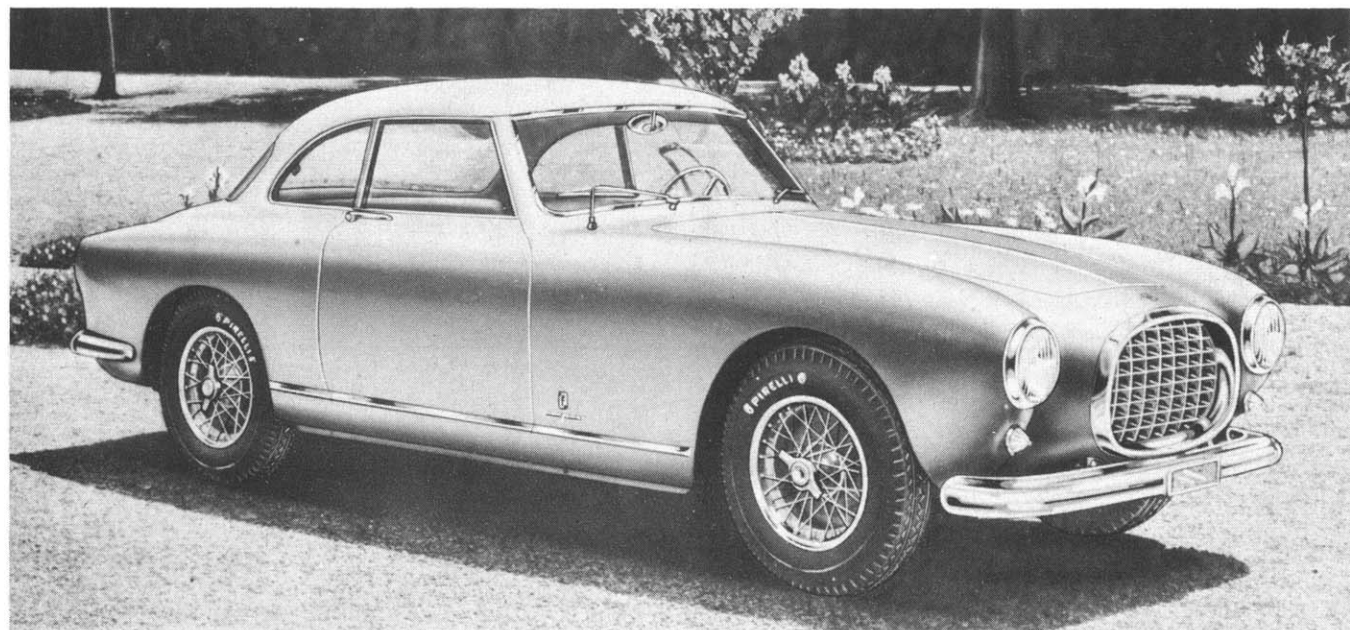
#### AUSTIN-HEALEY

Powered by a 90 BHP Austin engine, the 100, since its debut, has been ripping pages out of the speed record book. Recently, the car set a record average of 104.19 MPH for 30 continuous hours on the Bonneville Salt Flats, Utah.

But the best thing about this baby is its price: about \$3,000 (port of entry). This places it within the reach of MG owners who long for more horses, as in a Jag, but who can't make the price.

Included in the relatively low price are wire wheels, overdrive and a heater.

But delivery has been disappointing. Labor trouble and other difficulties have slowed an estimated weekly production of 120 cars to a trickle. Production should be going full bore by midsummer, however.



The beautiful Ferrari 250 Europa closed sport car, with body designed by famed Pinin Farina.

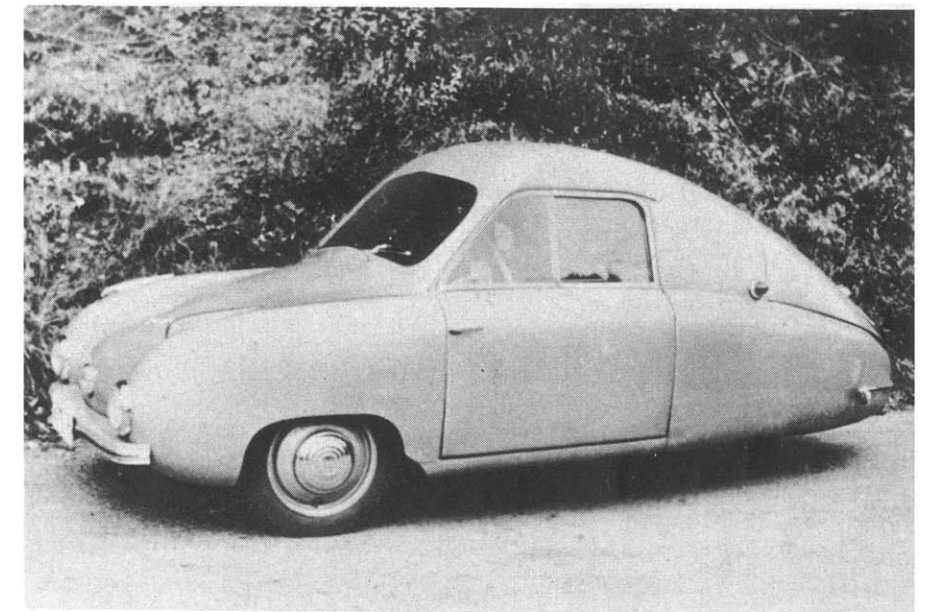
Anyway you look at this car, it's a beauty. Open the trunk lid and there's enough room for five times the amount of luggage one can usually stow in a sport car. The windshield can be adjusted to almost any angle. The two seats are upholstered in top grain leather and as you slide into them and close the doors, there is a satisfying, solid-sounding latch click. Body work generally is excellent. Most of the cars seen so far have been painted a metallic blue-gray.

The few persons who have driven the car say it handles well and has a comfortable ride.

The big 4-cylinder engine (over twice the capacity of the MG) has overhead valves, a 3.44 x 4.38 inch bore and stroke and a 7.5 to 1 compression ratio. The engine is said to peak at 4000 RPM, but special equipment that will be offered will boost output to 100 HP at the same revolutions. Stock, the car can do 110 MPH.

#### ABARTH SPORT CAR

Abarth's 1954 prototype sport car, presented at the London Motor Show at Earles Court, is basically a 1,100 cc (67



German economy car, 3-wheel Penguin, sells for \$750



The body on this luxury Ferrari was designed by Vignali . . . it's the 375 America.



cubic inches) Fiat. Its disc-shaped body overhangs the wheels by about four inches and the extremely low center of gravity has dictated a height which forces a 6-foot man to fold in half before entering the 3-seat coupe.

But once inside, the Abarth sport car offers more leg room and hip room than many larger models, although headroom is a bit scant. A top speed of 112 MPH is possible with a tuned version of the engine but the tourist model peaks at just above 100 MPH.

The engine is a stock model Fiat, but with a higher compression and fitted with a special intake manifold, multi-carburetion and a hotter cam to produce more than 60 HP. Horsepower to weight ratio is 13 pounds per HP.

#### FERRARI

Ferrari, in 1954, will concentrate largely on two new and fantastic cars.

They are the Ferrari America, 375, and the Europa, 250. The America has a 4.5 liter engine and the Europa, 3 liters. Both are of the same basic Ferrari design of 60 degree V12 engines with overhead camshafts, three carburetors and 8 to 1 compression ratio. They put out 300 and 200 horsepower.

With closed bodies weighing approximately 2,500 pounds, these super-expensive bombs really go. The America is rated at 155 MPH in top gear using 15-inch tires. The Europa claims a top speed of 135 MPH.

Both cars have wheelbases of 110 inches, equal treads of 52 1/4 inches, and 4-speed synchromesh transmissions.

Typical of the super aspects of these cars are their gas tanks. Should you order the gas station attend to "Fill 'er up," you'd have to shell out about \$12. Tanks have a 38-gallon capacity. But then, anyone who could afford to own one of these beautiful machines wouldn't be worried about that.

#### JAGUAR

The Jaguar factories at Coventry, England, offer no new models this year, but their cars are improved.

Recently, an XK120M, fitted with catalogued equipment and a belly pan, clocked the amazing time of 172 MPH on the Ostend-Brussels highway in Belgium, setting a new world's record for stock production sport cars.

The car that did it isn't so different from the usual Jag seen so often these days. The engine used had a compression ratio of 9 to 1 and a rear axle ratio of 2.92. After the dash, the engine was stripped and certified stock by members of the Royal Automobile Club of Belgium.

The Jaguar, which before the war was known as the S.S. (Standard Swallow) this year continues production of its fast XK120, the XK120C (for competition) and the Mark VII Saloon, which also has the XK engine.

The engine is a double overhead camshaft 6 that puts out 160 horsepower with little protect. Considered the 'sexiest' sport car here, the XK can be had for a little over \$4,000.

This is a fair price for the car which

has won two of the last three 24-hour endurance races at Le Mans, France.

#### JOWETT JUPITER

The Jowett Jupiter, for some unexplainable reason, has generally been ignored by American sport car buyers. It seems to have all the requisites for its class (1 1/2-liter).

And some extras. For instance, it has real roll-up windows and excellent weather protection. Anyone who has taken part in bad weather rallies will appreciate this factor.

A little known fact about the JJ is that it has a wheelbase one inch shorter than the MG. The car's rather pronounced fore and aft overhang gives the illusion of a much larger wheelbase.

The engine, a flat, opposed four with overhead, push-rod operated valves, sets way up forward of the front axle. Coupled to a 4-speed gear box, it pushes the Jupiter at better than 90 MPH. That's not bad for 1,500 cc, considering the car weighs around 2,000 pounds.

The Jupiter, this year, is served up in two series, the Mark I and Mark IA. The only difference seems to be a larger trunk on the latter that can be reached through the usual outside lid. One has to stow baggage in the Mark I from behind the front seat.

The Mark I will sell at about \$2,495 and the Mark II for slightly more.

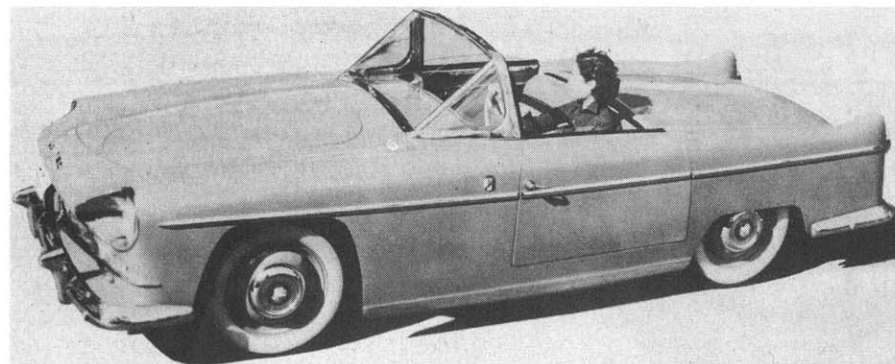
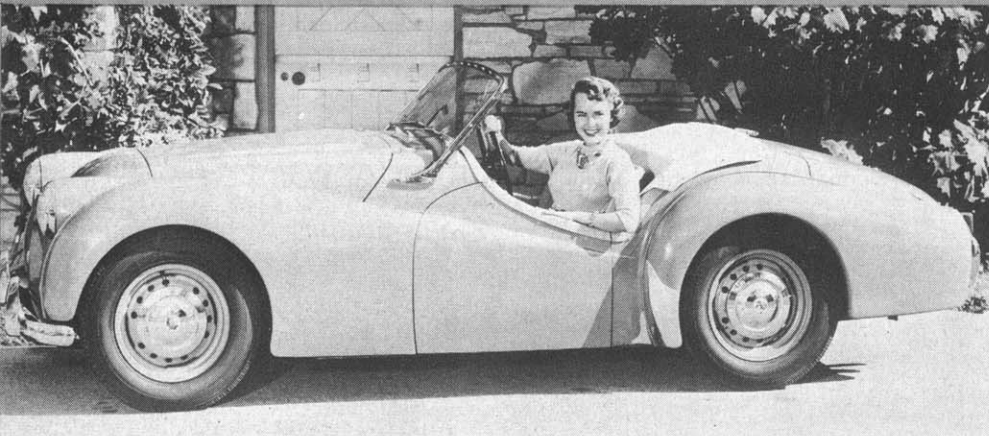
#### MG SPORT CAR

MG—which outsells all other sport cars in the U.S.—recently brought out its bid for top seller in '54, the MG TF.



Hillman-Minx Convertible sells for \$1899 at port of entry.

↑ Terry Moore and the Triumph TR2, capable of 108.499 mph. ↓



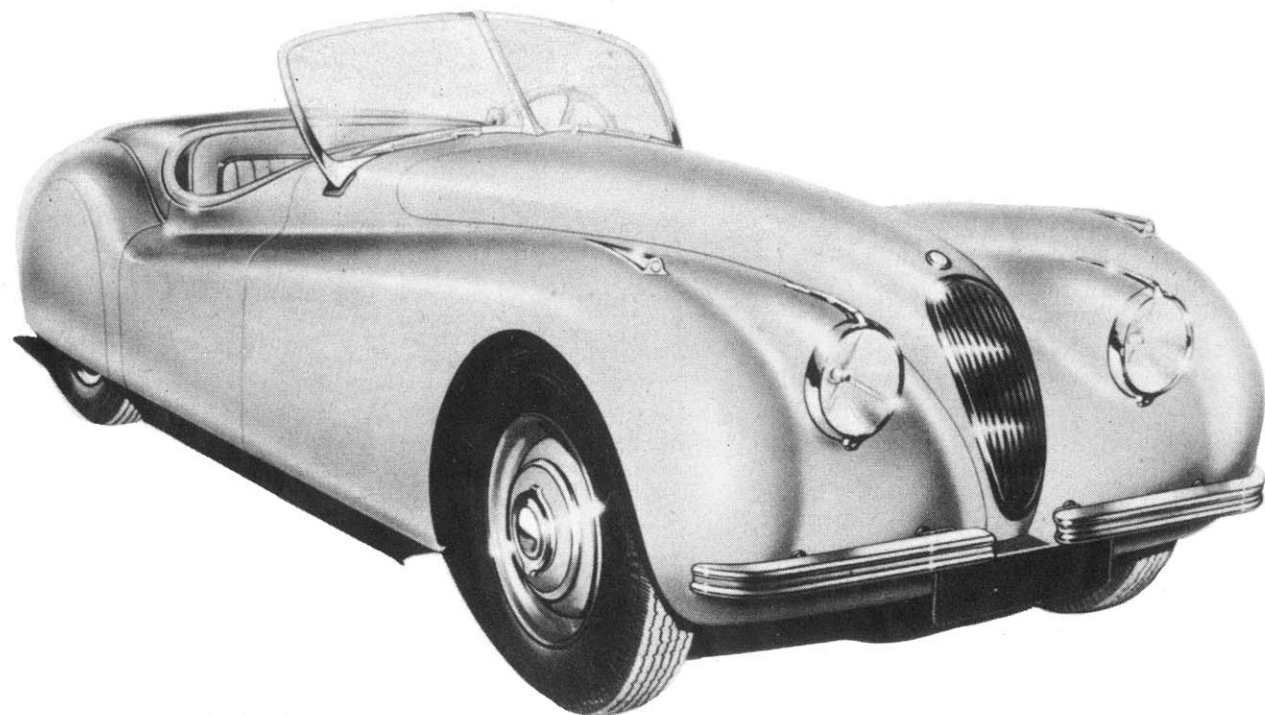
New Argentine plastic sport car unveiled at Madison Square Garden.



Jowett Jupiter has a 1 1/2-liter powerplant, 4-speed gear box and can hit better than 90 miles per hour.



Arnolt-Bristol 2-liter sport car, built in England, described in detail in last month's Car Life.



Jaguar XK120 Convertible is one of the most popular European sport cars.

At its October premiere in London and more recently in Los Angeles, this latest of MG's doughty four-bangers seems to be getting the nod from enthusiasts.

There are some mechanical changes, but the big news is in the body, obviously styled for export. More MGs are sold here than at home and this fact is apparent in the new design.

If a survey could be taken, it probably would show that the TF appeals to more women than either the TD or the stark, narrow-shouldered TC. We hope that sport car manufacturers are not following Detroit's efforts to please the lady, but still. . . .

Sweeping front fenders with fared-in headlights and longer rear fenders key-

note the design. The hood has been lowered and there are fewer louvres on the side hood panels. Tail lights are attached to the rear fenders.

Inside, there is a new fascia board with three octagonal instrument dials: left to right, tachometer, a grouping of fuel, ammeter, oil and temperature gauges and the speedometer. The curved cowl this year is covered with padded leather.

The dependable engine is rated at a 5.7% increase in brake horsepower over the TD. Although still of 1,250 cc (76.28 cubic inches) capacity, the engine now has an 8.00 to 1 compression ratio. This change, together with larger valves, heftier valve springs and bigger carburetors, are said to increase top

speed by several MPH. The more streamlined body and a lower numerical axle ratio boost top end performance.

Specifications:

Price—about \$2,200 at entry port.

Wheelbase—94 inches; tread, 48.2 front, 50.8 rear; tire, 5.50 x 15.

Weight—2,010 pounds.

Engine—4-cylinder, 2.62 x 3.54 inches, ovæ; two 1½ inch S.U. carbs; brake horsepower, 57.5 at 5500 RPM.

Transmission—four forward speeds, 2, 3 and 4 synchro; ratios: 4.875, 6.752, 10.09 and 17.06 to 1.

#### PORSCHE

Porsche again offers its type 356 in the America and Super series for 1954. This husky little mite is most popular

here when equipped with the 1,500 cc engine, although the car also is made with two smaller engines. All Porsche engines are flat fours with overhead valves and are air cooled. The 1,500 model puts out 70 HP at 5000 RPM.

The engine is unique in many ways. For instance, the entire plant can be removed and put on a bench in about one-half hour. The cylinder walls, made of a light alloy, are not smooth like those in American engines, but have tiny pits designed to retain oil. The engine and all drive components are located in the rear of the car allowing for a very low frontal area and an unexcelled view of the road.

The engine is linked to a fully synchronized (floor shift) transmission with three forward speeds, plus overdrive and reverse. Much of Porsche's publicity deals with this transmission, or 'box,' in European parlance. It is called a thing of "sheer pleasure to operate" by persons who enjoy driving.

The car's speed belies its engine capacity. Largely contributing to its top speed is the beautifully designed body which has been called the most perfect aerodynamically designed shape on wheels, with the exception, of course, of the all-out speed record cars.

Porsche claims the car equipped with a 1,500 cc engine will accelerate from a standing start to 60 MPH in just over 14 seconds, using first, second and third gears. Top speed is about 110 MPH.

The Super engine is a hotted-up version of the America type. Both have the same displacement.

The sedan will seat four persons fairly comfortably, though the rear seat is not for persons with long knees.

Handling characteristics of the car are impeccable. Wheelbase is 83 inches, front tread is 50¾ inches and the rear 49¼. Turning radius is 33 feet.

Retail price on the East Coast is about \$3,500 for the America and \$4,300 for the Super.

#### SUNBEAM ALPINE

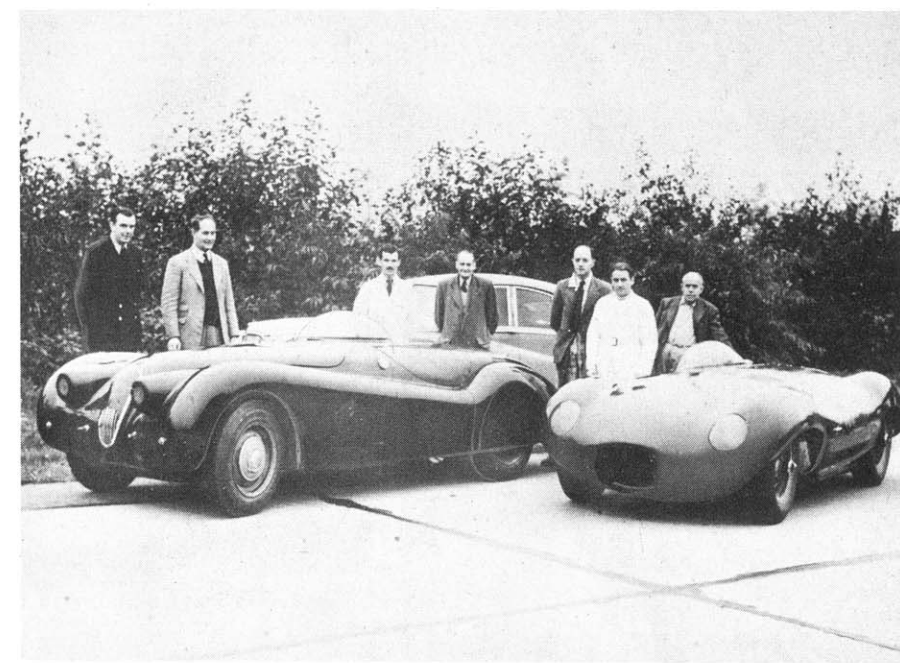
Although not really a fast, competition car, the Sunbeam Alpine is a good looking, dependable car, nicely priced between the XK120 Jaguar and the MG TF (\$3,000).

In last year's Alpine Rally, four Sunbeams won trophies for perfect runs over the grueling 2,000 mile, 6-day event.

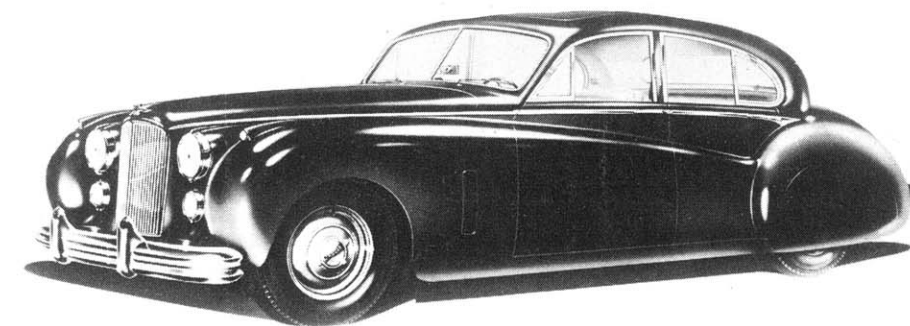
This car has sliding windows, lots of luggage space and a hidden well for the spare tire in the trunk. Three can sit comfortably in the leather-upholstered seat—if one is a baby.

Adding a racy appearance to the car is the sharp grille and two rows of louvres on the hood. Under the hood is a conventional 4-cylinder engine with overhead valves, one carburetor and a compression ratio of 7.42 to 1 which puts out 80 brake horsepower at 4200 RPM. Top speed in fourth gear is 85 MPH.

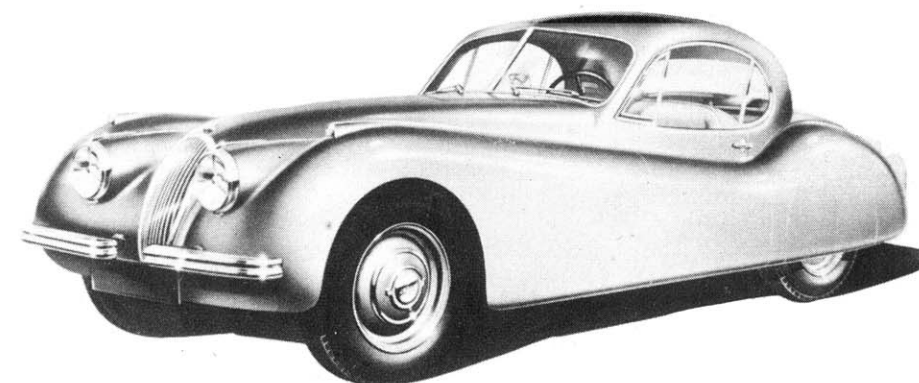
The snappy little car is sprung by coils up front and by semi-elliptics in back. This car is no speed wagon but is whistle bait. ☆ ☆



Jag XK120, left, hit 172.412 mph. and Prototype XK120 hit 178.383 mph.



A luxury British car is the Jaguar Mark VII.



The Jaguar XK120 closed coupe for those who want comfort and speed.