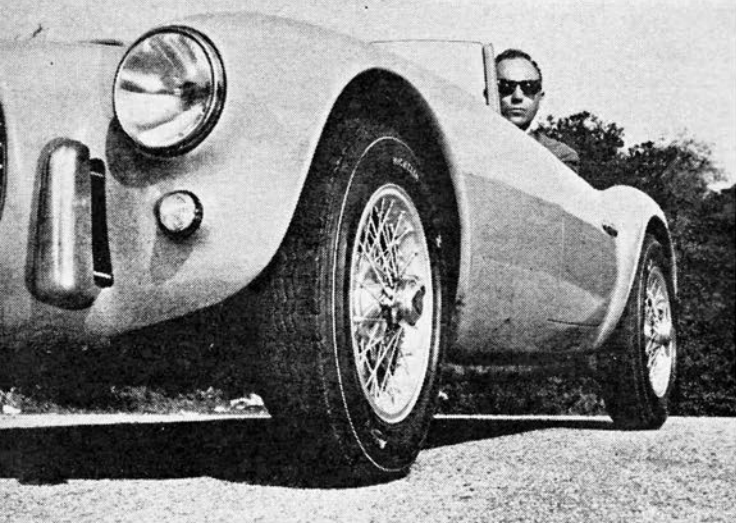


Driving around with Walt Woron

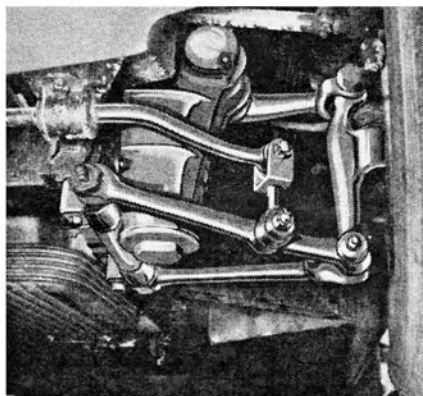


What if you had all the cars you needed, and wanted another just because it was plain fantastic to drive? Then try these!

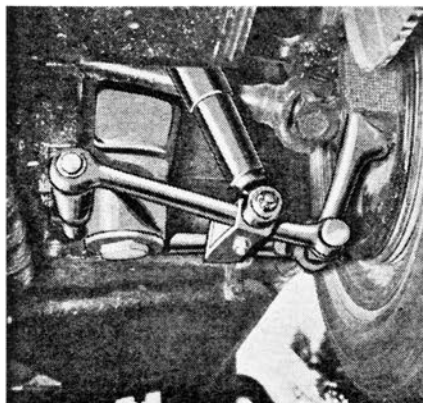


Photos by Bob D'Olivo

There's nothing on the Siata that doesn't have a job to do, from the minimal top to the tucked-under, streamlined sides



Finned oil pan and oversize brakes (with rotating air pump for cooling), uniquely covered suspension mean a man's car



Independent suspension at the rear uses 4 universals and 4 shock absorbers for the most assured roadholding we've felt

The rear fenders are the sole spot that looks like a concession to style, and they're high for stability. Note gas cap

IF YOU WANT to enter sports car competition, and you've got the loot, plunk down \$5700 (give or take a few hundred) on the nose of a Siata 208S, and you'll win consistently in the 2-liter class—providing you're any kind of driver at all. A strong statement? Sure it is. But I don't have to back it up because the car does that for itself.

Ernie McAfee, distributor of Siatas in the States, has been doing a creditable job in road race competition with his personal Siata (which has been lightened somewhat, but is otherwise stock). As for driving his car on the road he claims that nothing touches him, anywhere from a standstill to top speed.

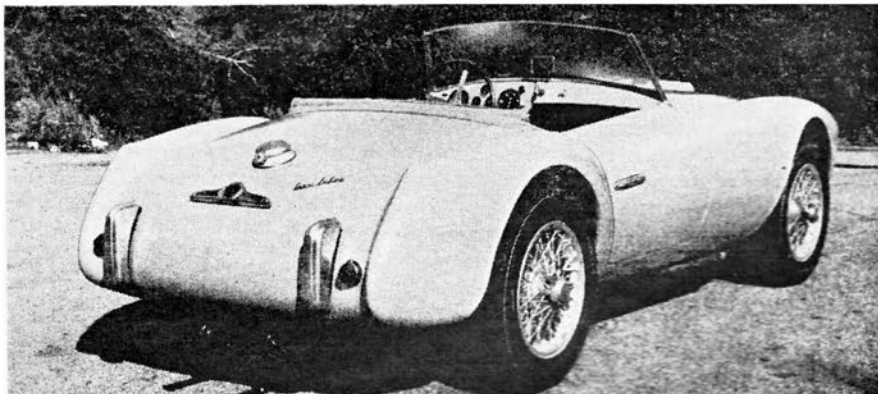
Here's what Ernie claims for it: A time of 15.8 seconds in the standing quarter. A top speed of around 115 mph. Lazily turning over only 4000 rpm when cruising at 80 mph. Fuel economy of around 22 mph in the city and 29 on the road. Quite creditable, I'd say.

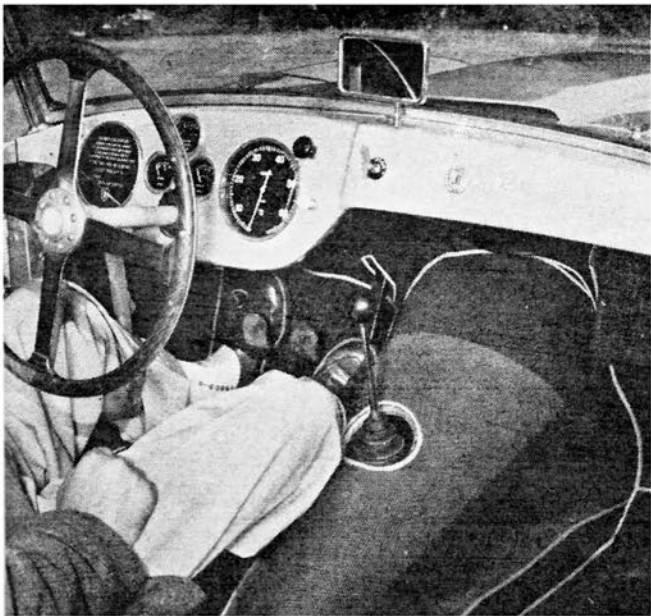
When I took out one of the Siatas (destined for some well-heeled and lucky customer), I wasn't able to prove or dis-

prove his boast. In place of the speedometer there was a plaque that cautioned the new owner not to exceed 3800 rpm for the 1st 1500 miles. Since the car develops its peak horsepower (110) at 6000 rpm, the engine was loafing while I had it. Even so it felt as good as most sports cars in its class, and broken in would probably make them look mighty small in the rear view mirror.

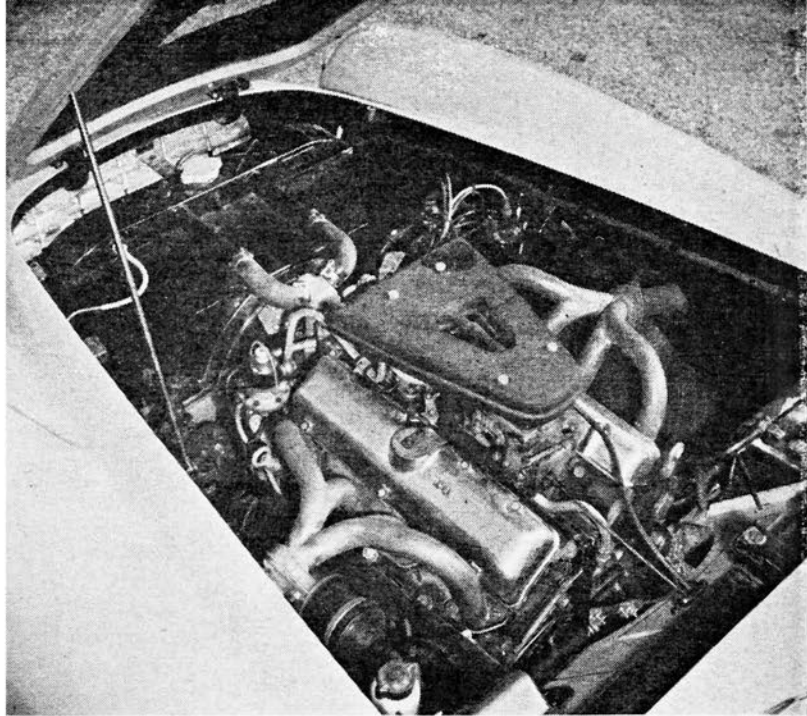
The Siata 208S (208 for the number of cc's in piston area, the S for Spider) has some specifications that don't necessarily set it apart from other sports cars: 90½-inch wheelbase, 4-speed gearbox, 122-cubic-inch V8 engine. But these are definitely *not* on all sports cars: big brakes with aluminum drums, each equipped with a rotating air pump; 78-spoke Borrani racing wheels; a weight cut to 1940 pounds (wet), by the use of aluminum wherever possible. As Ernie put it, "At first glance you can't see \$6000 in the car, but when you realize with what care the car has been built, how close the tolerances are kept, then you can."

Sitting behind the wheel, everything is





No thick carpet here, and no cabinetwork either. The controls, since they're meant to be used, are easy to get at



The Fiat V8 under the hood gives its all at a touch of your toe, snarls with pleasure as it scoots you past other cars

right in front of you: the tachometer, speedometer, and other instruments (all in their circular dials) are grouped centrally; the conventional American-type emergency brake is under the left side of the dash; the gearshift is floor-mounted and just a bit of a stretch to 1st and 3rd; the brake and throttle are fairly close together, taking some getting-used-to so you don't hit the throttle when you apply the brakes. Vision is incomparable, as in most sports cars with top down; there's somewhat of a blind spot to the right rear with the top up, but a slight head movement quickly erases it. Legroom (even for the left foot to the left of the clutch pedal) and shoulder room are good; headroom is a bit cramped with the top up.

On the road, you'll soon become familiar with the surface, because that's the price you pay for the Siata's fantastic cornering ability. Over dips it levels out quickly, with little or no up-and-down movement. There's virtually no sidesway.

If ever a car deserved the credit for going around a corner on rails, the Siata is it. The Siata stays glued to the road

like a squashed bug on the windshield. Around corners taken at high speeds, it drifts slightly, indicating definite understeer characteristics. It's set up better than any car I've driven in a long, long time. There's no wind wander. If you go off the shoulder of the road, you needn't fear that you'll spin or flip; an easy tug on the wheel brings you back onto the asphalt. With all this, it's still an easy car to drive, unless you have an aversion to constant shifting to keep up the engine revs.

To my mind, the Siata 208S is the original sports car (minus the cycle fenders). It's the rough-riding, snarling brute that makes no bones about being a car that provides you with myriads of niceties like an adjustable column and sliding seat, a soft ride, no-shift driving, etc., etc. It's a sports car built for the enthusiast who *really* enjoys driving. It makes no pretense about being all things to all people. It has a specific purpose—that of providing you with hot performance for over-the-road driving and/or competition—and it looks, acts, and feels it, purposefully.



Though it's not a car for just doing the marketing, ventilated seats conceal useful non-slip space for small packages

PEGASO

WHILE I WAS IN DETROIT gathering material on the '55 cars and road testing several of them, a couple of lucky stiff (namely, Jim Potter and Pete Molson) back in our home office in Los Angeles had the rare opportunity to drive a \$17,000 Pegaso, Spain's contribution to pleasurable motoring. Here are their impressions:

"It looks better in person than in the photos' was our first comment when importer Warren D. Brewster of Oyster Bay, Long Island, N.Y., introduced us to his small (92-inch wheelbase) streamlined Pegaso coupe. He had just driven it cross-country with one important stopover at the finish line of the recent Mexican Road Race.

"From the fierce-looking grille to the abruptly curved rear pan-



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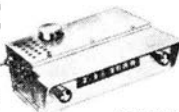
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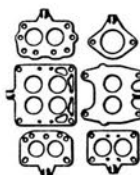
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sion of ruggedness, fully capable of master-
ing the open highway in the hands of a
driver who wants a man's car, for that is
just what we discovered when we took her
out for a fast run over a winding road.

"Its double-overhead-cam V8 engine,
with a reported 150 hp at the rear wheels,
idled roughly (needed new plugs). This
unfortunate handicap together with the
fact that you have to shift its transmis-
sion through all 5 speeds forward makes
the car an impractical traffic machine, de-
spite its nimble handling qualities.

"Away from the snarled congestion of
the Hollywood Freeway, we had a chance
to appreciate the real purpose of this
Pegaso built for the open road. Its bucket
seats held us tightly as we accelerated
onto our curved course. Taking curves
on the high-crowned road was no prob-
lem. Occasional dips and rough spots were
felt, but oscillation and bobbing were
non-existent; recovery was rapid. You

went around curves as if on a rail, with
no lean whatsoever. For such a small car
the steering was hard but, of course, pos-
itive. You couldn't make it do anything
but go where you pointed.

"At low speeds it had only fair accelera-
tion, although this was checked only by
'feel,' as we didn't have our stopwatches
with us. In the cruising speed range, how-
ever, you simply knew she had the stuff,
because of the fantastic surge of power.
One interesting peculiarity: you can shift
back and forth from 4th to 5th speeds
without using the clutch, a handy feature
especially if you're planning on racing
your machine on the circuits.

"Would we like to own one? Well,
hardly, not at that inflated price. But for
those few who demand a car with a
rugged look as well as action, a prestige
name, and one that's practically the only
one of its kind (so far only 4 have been
imported into this country)—then the
Pegaso is for you."

This dealer really means it when he says

"LOOK AT ALL 3"



DETROIT'S LARGEST Chrysler-Plym-
outh dealer, Petzold Motor Sales Co.,
has instituted a unique and irritating (to
competition) method of merchandising
Plymouths. Inside the showroom is a dis-
play featuring Chevrolet, Ford, and Plym-
outh sedans of equivalent series. These are
lined abreast, partly to show off Plymouth's
greater length, but mostly to let customers
take in the features of all 3 cars at a glance.

Outside, a fleet of demonstrators of each
make stands ready for customer driving,
and the prospect is urged to try each, one
after the other, by himself. President Tom
Petzold claims that buyers choose Plym-
outh as a result of this test by a wide mar-
gin and that his sales have boomed. Typi-
cal customer comments have been: ". . .
swell idea, first time I've seen cars together
. . . not like an auto show where different
cars are far apart . . . can see them all here."

One obvious question: Are preparation
and maintenance fair to the 3 different
cars? To forestall doubt, Petzold promi-
nently displays notarized certificates that
swear to the impartial care given the test
cars his customers drive.

Another question: Would Petzold sell
one of the Chevrolets or Fords if the cus-
tomer was unmoved by Plymouth's per-
formance in the demonstration? The an-
swer is no, but Petzold would like to. He
visualizes the auto dealership of the future
as a kind of department store, where the
customer can pick and choose from many
makes, just as he does now with refrig-
erators and television sets.

What is the factory's reaction to all this?
Plymouth Sales Manager Bill Byrd tells us:
"We are always glad to see one of our
dealers come up with something that
shows an unusual amount of enterprise . . ."