



Phenomenal Avoider

ALTHOUGH he drives as Tybalt fought duels, "by the book of arithmetic," Stirling Moss has used up more than a cat's ration of lives in his nine years' racing. Not counting the certified wildmen of the game, few fore-front drivers in Europe today have so picturesque a record of what Sammy Davis calls phenomenal avoidances.

Most of these have resulted from mechanical failures or malfunctions, several from chance proximity to ham handlers in their moments of aberration, some from spins on unforeseeable oil spillings, and a few, as Stirling would admit, from his own momentary misreadings of the book of arithmetic.

Twice in his first year in Continental racing, 1950, when he was on the late John Heath's H.W.M. team, Moss's car broke a front stub axle at over 100 and lurched to a standstill on the brake drum. The second time this happened, during the Circuit of Lake Garda, Italy, H.W.M. pulled in another of their team cars for Stirling to take over. Mechanics were manhandling it into position, empty, when this one too shed the corresponding wheel.

1952 wasn't exactly humdrum, either. In the Formula III Grand Prix of Brussels this son of a London dentist arrived too early and too fast on the scene of an entanglement involving five other cars. Four more promptly piled into the debris, to which Moss' Kieft, a complete wreck, had already added some 500 pounds of scrap metal. Then at Monaco, Stirling spun his C-Jaguar into an *hors de combat* Aston Martin that had collided on spilled oil with a Ferrari. Next, at Spa in the Belgian G.P., Moss went off the road in flames after the experimental G-type E.R.A. he was driving had thrown a rod through the crank chamber, and wound up with a sickening crash into a trackside rock.

Finally, back home on a British course — Fairwood airfield, in Wales, there was a peculiar episode in which Moss and his 500 Kieft were assaulted from ahead and astern almost simultaneously. Another Kieft which was leading him spun through 180 degrees and rammed him head-on. A split second later an upcoming Arnott clambered up the tail of Stirling's car, aviated over the cockpit and came down like the hubs of hell on the front end. The base of the Arnott's engine scored weals in Moss' helmet.

Although he doesn't go all the way on rabbit's-foot philosophy, Stirling can't quite make himself laugh superstition off, either. He, therefore, compromises by taking a miniature horseshoe along with him on races. In particular, the Mille Miglia country has been a constant proving ground for this talisman.

His very first reconnaissance of the M.M. itinerary, in an XK Jaguar prior to the '51 race, ended in a head-on shunt with a truck that was overtaking on a blind curve. Moss and companion stepped out unhurt.

In the race itself that year, he arabesqued on spilled oil within minutes of the start and slammed a stationary Fiat — off which Alberto Ascari had just ricocheted, killing a spectator. Moss never got a scratch.

While training again for the fateful Mille Miglia of 1955, in which he was to break a 17-year spell of continuous victories by Italian drivers, his Mercedes went full smack into a truck carrying unexploded bombs. And didn't explode them.

Finally, in this year's marathon his Maserati went amok near Rome, bouncing from a wall into a tree. The car wound up teetering precariously over the edge of a 200-foot precipice. Undamaged, Stirling and his famous bearded disciple, Denis Jenkinson, scrambled back up to the road and out of the race.

Morgue cheating runs in the family. Over 30 years ago, when Stirling's father was practising for the first of his two Indianapolis drives, he blew out a front tire on his borrowed Fronty-Ford. Somebody who knew the car's background better than he did, took a casual look and said: "Well, no wonder — those tires haven't been changed since Chevrolet won here with this car two years ago."

Dennis May

Volvo

(Continued from page 19)

maneuvers, yet steering feel is good at all speeds. No road shock is telegraphed up the steering column.

The Volvo has an honest, unaffected character and the job it undertakes it does with craftsmanlike thoroughness. The ride and general tautness of the chassis, for example, never let you down. The car feels solid and secure at 40 mph and feels no different at top speed. There's no body shake or drive-line vibration to give you the feeling at high velocities that things are beginning to come unglued.

The chassis' shock-absorbing ability is up to good modern practice on average road surfaces. But when you hit bad roads in the Volvo you find its reaction hard to believe. You can charge at 50 mph through horrible ruts and chuck-holes that would shatter the running gear and occupants of most cars. Yet you feel scarcely a ripple in the Volvo, and this statement is meant *literally*, not figuratively.

Scarcely any engine vibration is felt inside the car at any speed and the engine is quiet except at idle, when it emits a pleasant tic-tic that sounds like a chronometric tach digesting rpm. As soon as a load is put on the engine, its sound changes to a quiet hum and it remains smooth up to the peak-rev range, when the rocker box naturally begins to make itself heard.

Extreme reliability is claimed for this short-stroke four, and the factory, usually conservative in its statements, says that it is not unusual for a Volvo to go for more than 120,000 miles before the first rebore. Many pains have been taken to build this durability into the engine, including hardened surfaces on all bearings of the three-main crankshaft, porous-chrome piston rings, lead-bronze bearing inserts, case-hardened rocker arms, and spectacularly machined cam followers.

The engine's designer obviously has a passion for control of internal temperatures, and so much water jacketing is provided around the cylinders and in the head that the fan is almost entirely unnecessary. The cooling of plugs, combustion chambers, exhaust valves and cylinder bores should never be a problem. We understand that large numbers of Volvos are sold in North Africa and the Near East, and that in the most torrid climates they are never known to overheat, which is easy to believe.

Such is the extent of this emphasis on engine cooling that a warmup blind is