

letters

home-grown items

I very much enjoyed your article on Martin Tanner's Special and also the ones on Eyerly's and Poole's cars. I think it is very encouraging to many readers that a modest amount of money and a lot of ambition and ingenuity can develop an automobile that will beat the best from Europe.

The last few months' improvements in your magazine are causing it to become the favorite sport car magazine of many readers. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

E. S. Mac Arthur, President
Class H Car Club

legal aid

I noticed with much interest in the March issue of SCI the letter of Mr. William Olthoff of North Bergen, New Jersey, about the difficulties he has had insuring his 1600 Porsche.

Being a sports car enthusiast and owner of sports cars myself and also being in the insurance business, I have lately had many calls from a number of people asking for help with their insurance, especially since the new law for Liability and Property Damage Insurance went into effect in New York State.

The fact of the matter is that no insurance company has the right to increase its rates on Property Damage Insurance because of a foreign car which on Liability and Property Damage takes exactly the same rate as an American automobile.

Mr. Olthoff in North Bergen, New Jersey, has a basic rate of \$54 on \$10/20,000. Liability Insurance and a basic rate of \$22 on \$5,000 Property Damage Insurance on his Porsche car—providing the car is used for pleasure only and that he is over 25 years of age. To give him some idea of how a rate can increase, however, he must understand that if he is under 25 this rate would be increased approximately three times. He also should realize that if he uses his car for business, for instance, and is over 25, there would be an increase from \$54 to \$82.80 and from the \$22 to \$34. This, however, has nothing to do with the particular car and these rates apply to European as well as American cars.

As far as Fire and Theft are concerned, the rates applying to foreign cars on Fire and Theft Comprehensive as well as on Collision do not vary greatly from those of the American automobiles.

It might also be of interest to know that if a person owns two or more cars, these can be insured under a "One Chauffeur Warranty" providing one car is used at a time which means that the second and third car would only cost 25% of the first car's insurance rate. Up to January 30, 1957 this type of saving was also pos-

(Continued on page 8)

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Devin Bodies

Many readers of *Sports Cars Illustrated* have expressed an interest in the Devin fibreglass body which was touched on in the story "Small Bore, Big Pull" (May SCI). Literally hundreds of letters and postcards have been received by Bill Devin all asking for details on construction, types of chassis to which the body can be fitted, etc., and for those who might like to learn a little more about the Devin body, here are some facts relative to it:

The Devin Fibreglass-plastic body is now available in nine sizes to fit chassis with wheelbases ranging from 78" to 94", tread from 40" to 52". The body has the same configuration and beautiful, functional lines in all sizes, but has been re-scaled in each instance to take advantage of the stock features of the chassis in various popular size ranges. In other words, the best performing and most available sports cars were carefully considered as possible bases for the bodies in each size. The 88" wheelbase TR, for example, takes a Devin body nicely with no modification to frame, running gear or mechanical components. Bill doesn't advocate that you throw away a perfectly good TR body, necessarily, but if you can find one with fairly extensive body damage at a reasonable price you can build yourself a featherweight sports car with one of the best looking bodies in the world for a figure that's easy on the pocket-book. Incidentally, shucking that TR body will drop many, many pounds off the 2,600 lbs. which most TR's scale. The Devin body weighs only about 100-150 lbs. You'll have a race machine with production-car reliability, as well as a genuine 'flat-out' look.

A couple of interesting cars are under construction at Bill's shop right now. One is an Austin Healey which was bought from an insurance company. The engine had caught fire and burned the car somewhat, but chassis, chrome wire wheels, rear end and steering were perfect. This is the kind of thing we're talking about. A young man paid a mere \$150 for the works after the good parts of the body had been cannibalized. Devin has dropped the appropriate body right onto the chassis and the owner is installing a Chevrolet V8 where the hot four used to be. Moving it back in the frame for better handling was easy because many normal Healey goodies didn't have to be displaced and there is much room in the Devin body. Anyway, this lad will have a going piece of machinery at a fantastically low price when he gets through.

If you have a modicum of mechanical talent you can build yourself a street or

competition machine using regular sports car frames and components. For instance, the little Volkswagens can be adapted simply and easily and slipped under one of the smaller Devin bodies...and it's not unusual to find a VW which has been rolled and crushed, and which can be had. The run of the mill Crosley, MG, Fiat, Hillman, Renault, etc., can be Devinized by you with good results.

For those who prefer larger equipment, Bill is now making a chassis, especially engineered for performance, using altered Ford parts. All the machine work has been done and the chassis (tubular frame, front and rear suspension and axles) is ready to receive any engine, including the late big OHV 8's, and the Devin Body. You bolt on wheels (with your own choice of brakes) steering (Ford Gemmer suggested) etc., all obtainable at low cost from used parts emporiums in your own home town.



Devin is also busy building competition cars. As most of you know, last year his cars were National champions in point standings in their classes, and he will design and build winning mounts in any division using your engine or providing everything. Prices by negotiation, of course. (For further information write to Bill Devin, Devin Enterprises, 44500 Sierra Hwy., Lancaster, California.)

Back to the body, note the clean lines of the car. The headrest is optional (r. or l.) and molded (lined) doors, cockpit liner with bucket seats, molded hood and deck lids and re-inforced hood and deck openings can be specified as well. All bodies are priced at \$295 FOB Lancaster (includes crating, trimming and F.E.T.) or are available at more than 50 dealers in U.S. and abroad. Send \$1.00 deposit to Bill Devin, Devin Enterprises, 44500 Sierra Hwy., Lancaster, Calif., for scaled drawings and full information on how to install the Devin body on the chassis of your choice. *This deposit will be returned with order.*

Write for name of nearest dealer in U. S., Hawaii or these countries: Peru, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Venezuela, British Columbia, Canada, Costa Rica, Luxembourg, Argentina, South Africa, Uruguay, South Viet-Namh, Portugal, Cuba.

(Advertisement)

letters

(Continued from page 5)

sible in New York State which, however, revoked this ruling known as "More Automobiles than Operators Ruling" as of that date. In other states the regulation still holds.

I would be glad to answer any other questions your readers may have. My address is 102 Maiden Lane, New York 5, N. Y. My telephone number: HANover 2-6250.

Yours sincerely,
A. E. Goldschmidt

Mr. Goldschmidt is well known in racing circles—Ed.

talented mechanics

It was gratifying to see the talents of two very fine mechanics acknowledged in "More Push For The Porsche" (SCI, January 1957). Dale Reuter and Al Cecchel (shown holding a cylinder head in an illustration accompanying the article) rescued my tired 1951 Austin A-40 from oblivion earlier this year when I lived in Bakersfield. Their ministrations included head-milling, balancing, and sufficient tuning to somehow make an earnest TD-gobbler out of what had been a slug.

So let it be known that Porsches are not the only things these gentlemen can fix.

Very truly,
E. N. Story
Berkeley, California

to drool or not . . .

As a Bugatti owner allow me to correct a misapprehension in Ken Purdy's April SCI article on F. H. Ludington's Type 59. Some Bug fanatics have been known to drool at the sight of this car—me, for instance. Only thing is, I've learned to keep a straight face, gulp rapidly and swallow. This way, I won't leave a tell-tale spot on the floor to mar the good work of Messrs. Addams and Stein.

Best regards,
Dick Goldberg, Past President
Rolls Royce Owners Club
Tuckahoe, New York

open class?

Your magazine *Sports Cars Illustrated* is terrific.

I write you because I have an idea that would give a lot of fellows like myself more incentive to build and to race our own cars. As it now stands amateur builders and drivers can run into some pretty stiff competition.

Suppose there was an event in races tailored to encourage ingenuity.

I suggest a \$3,500.00 claiming race. Just like horse races. I suggest it be an open class, long distance event. Fender, fenderless, big or little engine. All regulations to

be for safety's sake.

I further suggest running on gas, no fuel.

What a colorful scramble this could be, but most important, what a wonderful incentive to build more for less, in the true American Spirit.

Sincerely,
John Tavian

The Canada Class (June '57) is an attempt to bring just such a situation about. It bears study.—ED

Could you please tell me how many MG-TA's there are in the United States? I am thinking very seriously of putting a '56 Chevy V8 in a 1937 MG-TA if it is not too scarce or too expensive.

Think SCI is the best on the market.

Yours truly,
R. Hunter Lewis
Box 4765, Tucker Dorm.
N. C. State College
Raleigh, N. C.

I frankly wouldn't advise this. The TA is virtually the same as the TC but with a smaller bore and larger stroke. The chassis is a bit whippy for the Chev and you'd run into serious gear problems as well. You'd be far better off using the TD which would probably cost less and which has a much sturdier chassis though not the classical good looks of the earlier series MG cars.—Ed.

I was very interested to read in your March issue in the article "Quick and Deadly", page 62, your remarks concerning the Swandean Spitfire Special. I hope you will not take it amiss if, as manufacturers of this car, I do slightly correct the facts as you present them. Firstly, at Brighton International Speed Trials I have used up to 4000 r.p.m. in the gears and reached within 2 seconds of the course record for the standing kilometre despite a shockingly slow gear shift (inherent in design). I would like to mention in view of your remark "is none too safe" that I do not know the source of your information but I have driven "Spitfire" at around 175 m.p.h. and she is the steadiest car I have ever driven at high speed. You may be interested to know that "Spitfire" is now in St. Louis where I understand her new owner is having a sports body shell fitted for road use!

Regarding the "Triangle Spitfire Special", this car was driven with great success by Ted Lloyd-Jones but it has always been known as the "Triangle Flying Saucer". It does not contain a Rolls-Royce Merlin engine as in "Spitfire" but a 21 litre unblown Rolls-Royce Kestrel of circa 1930. The "Flying Saucer" made fastest time of the day at Brighton and Ramsgate, our two premier sprints, in 1953 & 1954 and has not been raced since. I have now purchased this car and hope to drive it shortly.

Yours very truly,
F. M. Wilcock
Swandean Garage Ltd.
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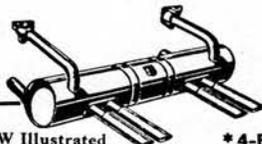
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