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HONEST CHARLEY SPEED Box ML 1904 Chattanooga, Tenn SHOP, INC.



by John Lawlor

IVERY sports car enthusiast has looked forward to driving the new Sunbeam Alpine and I'm no exception. When I had the opportunity, I discovered the car to be one of those rare specimens that really lives up to its advance notices.

It isn't a true sports car, though. It's more of a personal two-seater along the lines of the original Thunderbird. The unit body is a convertible, not a roadster, with roll-up windows and a weather-proof top.

Mounted on an 86-inch wheelbase, it measures 155.25 inches long, 60.5 inches wide and 51.5 inches high. The weight of the particular car I drove was 2140 lbs.

The Alpine has the same 91.2-cubic-inch, four-cylinder engine as the Hillman Minx, Singer Gazelle and Sunbeam Rapier. With such modifications as an aluminum cylinder head that raises the compression ratio to 9.2-to-1 and new intake and exhaust manifolding, it products 83.5 hp at 5300 rpm. Torque is 89.5 lbs.-ft. at 3600 rpm.

It's surprisingly flexible for such a small, fast-revving powerplant. The car will pull away from 15 mph in top gear with no difficulty.

The four-speed box has a solid, precise feel and is a delight to shift. Accidental engagement of reverse, located to the left and down, is unlikely because of a stiff spring in the linkage.

Shifting at 5500 rpm, the redlined figure on the tach, the following acceleration times were recorded: o-30 mph in 5.5 seconds, o-45 mph in 8.9 seconds and o-60 mph in 14.9 seconds.

Fuel consumption, under fairly vigorous driving conditions, was 18 to 23 mpg.

Around corners, the Alpine has a definite tendency to understeer. Too much power, however, will cause it to break away at the rear, in effect, to oversteer. Combined with quick steering, these characteristics make fast cornering a simple matter of balance between steering angle and throttle pressure.

The suspension, front coils and rear semi-elliptics, is engineered for comfort as well as handling. Consequently, there's some lean on tight turns but not enough to be upsetting. And the ride is excellent for a small two-seater.

Cockpit comfort seems to depend on the driver's size. I could sit quite comfortably

with my arms almost straight out to the steering wheel but I think a bigger person would be cramped. The wheel is quite close to the seat cushion and anyone with beefy thighs would have to bend his legs around it.

One detail I didn't like was the placement of the handbrake left of the driver's seat. It's in the way when he gets in or out and isn't as convenient to use as a centrally mounted control.

But, overall, the Alpine impressed me as ideal for those who want the fun of a sports car without the discomforts. Portof-entry prices start at \$2595 and the list of extras includes a removable hardtop, overdrive and wire wheels.

Many a road racing fan likes to decorate his den with pictures of famous drivers. Ideal for such a purpose is "Tribute to the Greats," a portfolio containing a dozen photos of such noted competitors as Briggs Cunningham, Juan Fangio, Mike Hawthorne, Phil Hill, Stirling Moss, the Marquis de Portago and Carroll Shelby.

The collection is the work of Skip Eveleth, who has been clicking his camera at sports car races along the Eastern Seaboard since the early events at Watkins Glen and Bridgehampton.

Eveleth, also well known as a yachting photographer, offers another portfolio called "Famous Sailing Yachts." This may be a little out of automotive territory but is interesting in that it, too, depicts Briggs Cunningham, this time aboard his America Cup-winning vessel, the Columbia.

"Tributes to the Greats" is \$5.00 and "Famous Sailing Yachts" \$5.75. They're available from Classic Photographs, Box 4746, Fort Lauderdale, Florida.



SLEEK TWO-SEATER from England, the 1960 Sunbeam Alpine is more of a personal car. a la T-Bird, than a true sports machine.