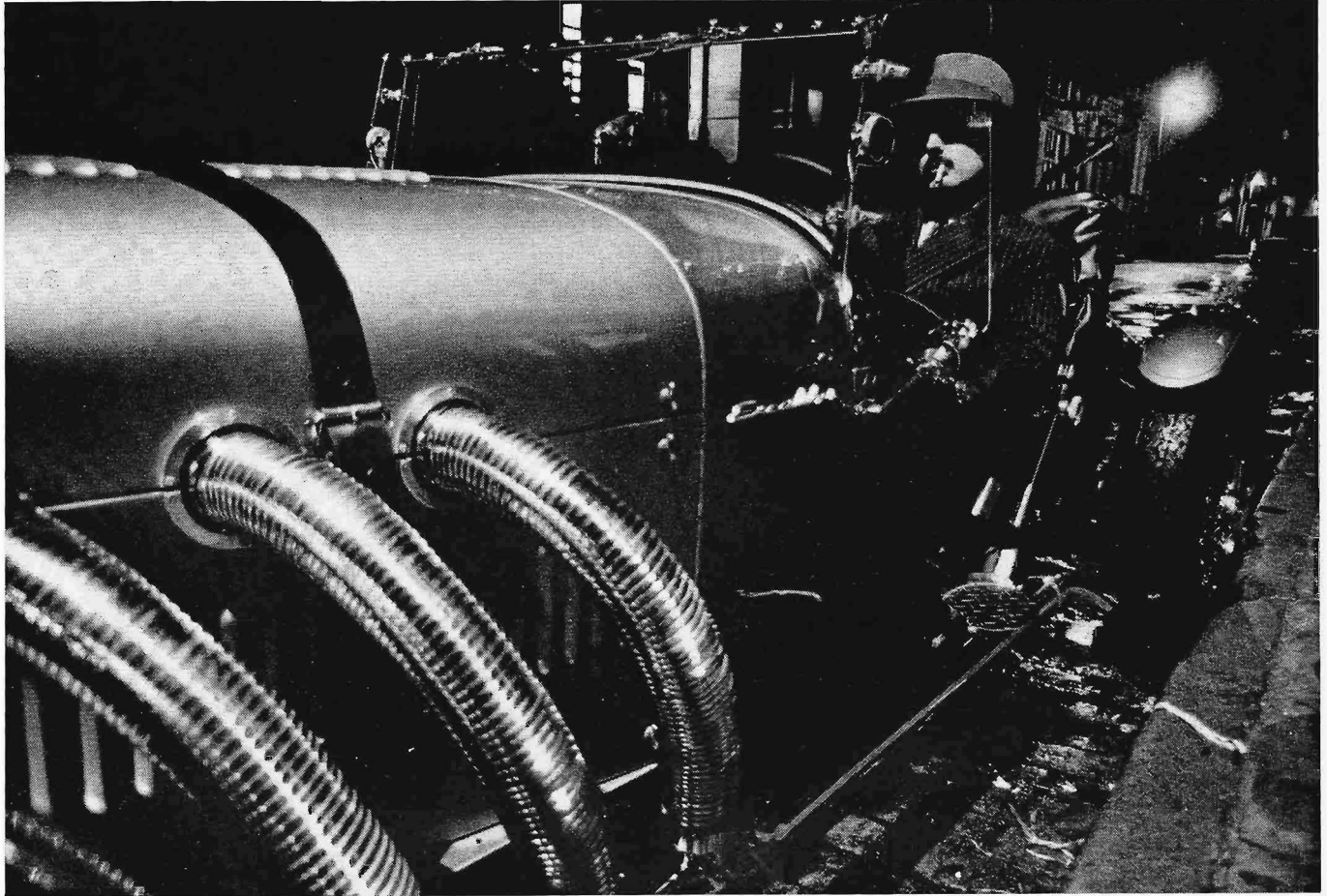


CAR and DRIVER ROAD TEST

EXCALIBUR SS

In your heart,
you know it's right

PHOTOGRAPHY: TONY RAY JONES



What you've got to understand is that this is a car that captures the functional honesty of the past. The days when men, morals, and radiators stood four-square and upright. When old-world craftsmen toiled lovingly over every tiny niche and facet of automotive embellishment. Honesty! None of this knuckling under to the perverted minions of the styling and sales departments. No compromise in the face of secondary considerations like aerodynamics and creature comforts. An automobile that is all automobile. No cowardly design considerations. *Design!* This car wasn't designed, it was *hewn!*

Stroll around the car. Examine it.

The first thing you notice is the exhaust system, right? Great huge masculine *tubes* sprouting out of the side of the hood and dangling down into one great big collector pipe on each side. Well, yes, there *are* three per side, and it is a V-8. As a matter of fact they also brought the headers upwards from the engine so that they can curve back down again from the right place. But look at that diameter! That *chrome!*

Step to the front. Examine the separately mounted clam-shell fenders, the exposed frame rails with (another large diameter chromed *tube*) nerfing bar bolted solidly across the front. See the erect fold-down windshield, the wire wheels,

piano-hinged hood with leather strap, running lights and chrome-braced headlamps, the nuts-and-bolts-and-knobs-and-fittings-and-*attachments*. Snip, slide, click-click. *Controls!* Let you know you're operating the beast. A car with great, solid viscera. *Cojones*, Robert Ruark probably would've said. Just look at that radiator. (No, wait around *front*. Let's not look at the back right now. Let's look at the radiator. All right?)

Better yet, try it. Take the wheel; put yourself in command. Step over the low-cut side paneling and get in. Well, no, you have to swing your leg a little higher than that. A little higher yet. You don't raise your foot

up high enough and you snag your heel on the genuine leather kidney pads, and we catch hell when we take the car back. That's it. Once you get your foot up that high, all you do is plunge it right on in there under the dash until you hit a pedal or something, and then kind of twist it—no, you have to bend some at the knee and the ankle simultaneously, and angle your leg down under the rim of the wheel and then back up again. That's it. Now lean your head over—a little lower, to clear the top—and insert head and shoulders as far as they will go. Sure, it hurts when you put any weight on your leg in that position, but once you get on to it, you only have to do it for a second.

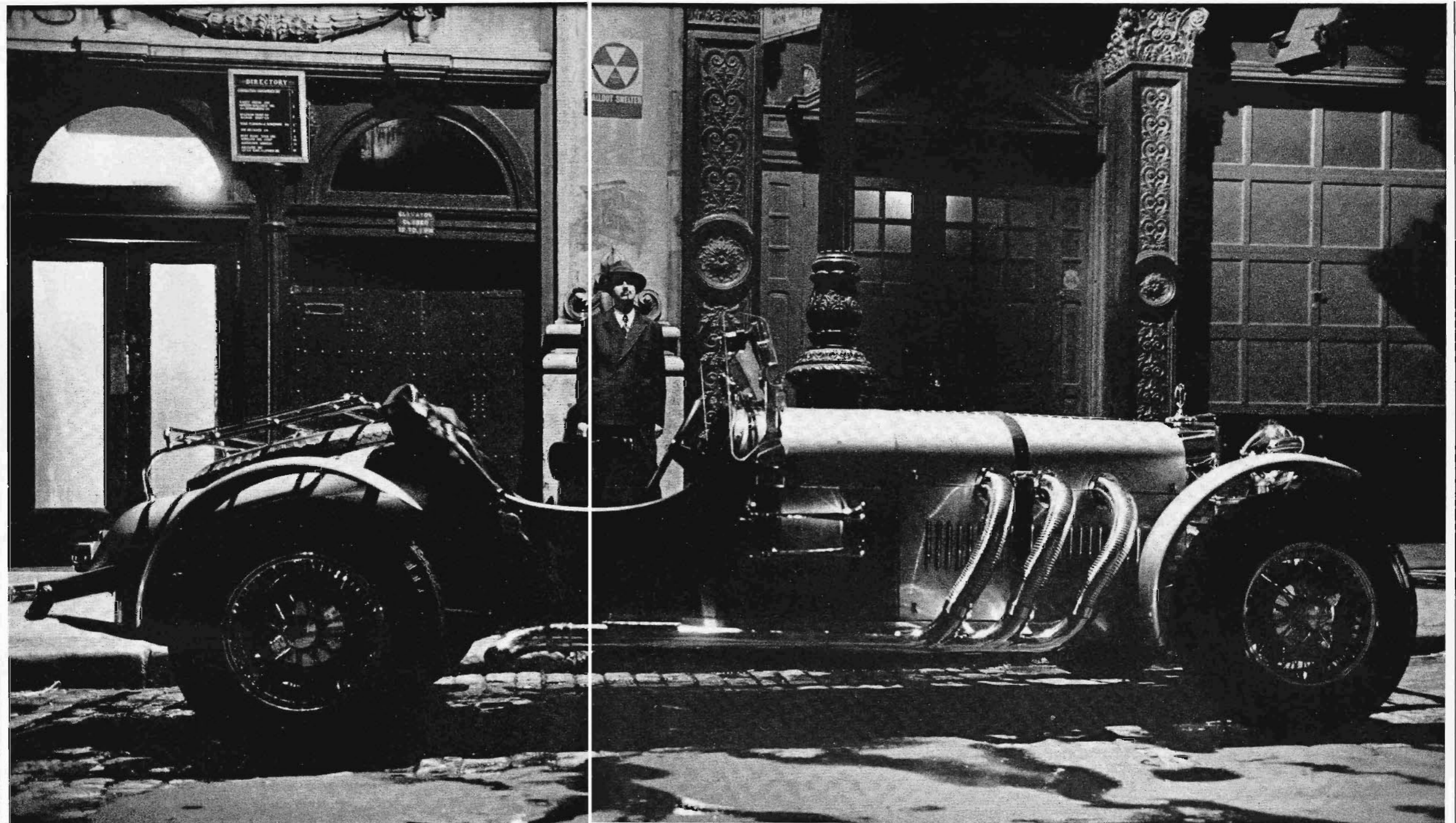
Now. Keep your leg tucked back under there, and kind of follow in with your shoulder and right arm and neck. You have to get yourself in up to about the waist before you take the weight off that leg that's still outside, or you'll fall back out of the car. Didn't I tell you?

All right, now you've got it. You didn't scratch the paint or anything when you swung your leg up that time. Over you go. Look, it's like, well, it isn't easy to get on a horse, either, but some mighty good men have ridden them, eh? Okay, grab a good handful of that steering wheel—isn't that a hefty hunk of steering wheel?—and you can lever right on in there. If you'd caught hold of the windshield rim with your other hand when you picked your foot off the pavement, you wouldn't have fallen over the transmission tunnel that way.

Aw, once you get onto it, it's easy. That was nothing, though—you ought to try it when that big old chrome pipe is glowing hot. The one that hits you in the shin when you stand beside the car.

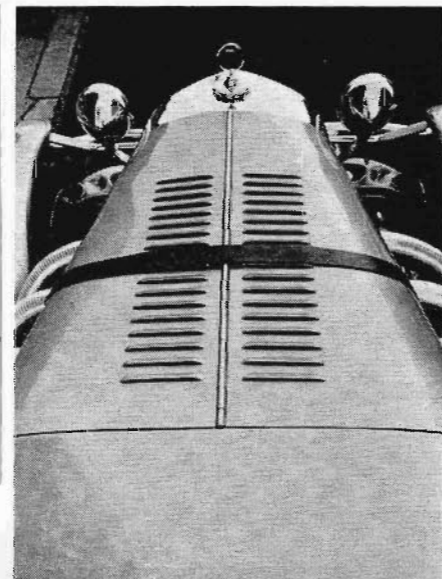
Funny you should mention girls. I watched a girl try to get into one of these things for fifteen minutes the other day. Listen, that was just about the *funniest* thing I ever saw in my life. Well *sure* there aren't any doors. That's the *point*. Look. You go putting doors in, and you have to take this slice right down through a good sturdy side panel. Bang, you've lost some of your torsional rigidity. The whole thing about a car like this is you don't have to *compromise* on things like that.

All right, you're in. Hey: *Feel the heft of that steering wheel rim*. Doesn't that tell you something? Doesn't that just *say* it? No, there's no seat adjustment. You know in a lot of these slick little low jobs, the front of the seat cushion comes up under your thighs and cuts off the



circulation. Dangerous. It's really a lot better for you to drive with your knees well up. Gives you quicker reaction time or something.

Go ahead, start 'er up. Listen to those *tubes*! Well sure, if you go driving around like a silly kid you can get arrested. You don't *have* to go roaring around and screeching your tires, you know. Look, try taking it around the block. Just ease it off. If you grab that big zipper back there by the seat back and run it all the way up, and then forward to the windshield, and unsnap the bottom edge of the side curtain and push it out a bit, you can see to pull away from the curb. You



have to realize, a car like this isn't made to be driven with the top up. It's, well, it's for *fun*. Get a little air in your lungs. Do you good.

Before you pull out, now, check to see if you can get your foot on the brake pedal. A lot of fellows have a problem finding the brake down there, because of the transmission tunnel and gas pedal. Yeah, it's a big transmission tunnel, all right. They moved the engine back 18 inches from where Studebaker used to put it to get better weight distribution. Studebaker. See the engine-turned dash? Yeah, well they still sell some cars, in Canada, anyway—that's where they build them—and these

guys take Studebaker chassis and put big mother Chevrolet engines in them—back 18 inches, like I said. It means the transmission tunnel has to be like that. Anyway, see if you can kind of turn your foot edgewise and slip the side of your shoe sole in between the clutch and accelerator. That's it. Listen, you don't have to worry too much about good contact. This baby has discs in front, so all you need to know is where the brake pedal is.

Okay, let's go. See? It's just as easy and natural as any other car. Just ease along. Listen, you don't want to get funny, not around town. I mean you have a lot of horsepower

up there, and it's a nice light little package. It'll go. You go framping down on it like that around here, and you'll have every cop for miles breathing down your neck. Just keep it down until we get out a little bit, and then you can have some fun.

Ride? Well, that's what we call traditional. I mean, isn't it *honest*? See, back when they really made cars, they didn't have a lot of effete modern innovations. So the only way they knew to get good road-holding was to really cram those tires down on the pavement, and make damned sure they stayed
(Text continued on page 85, Specifications Overleaf)

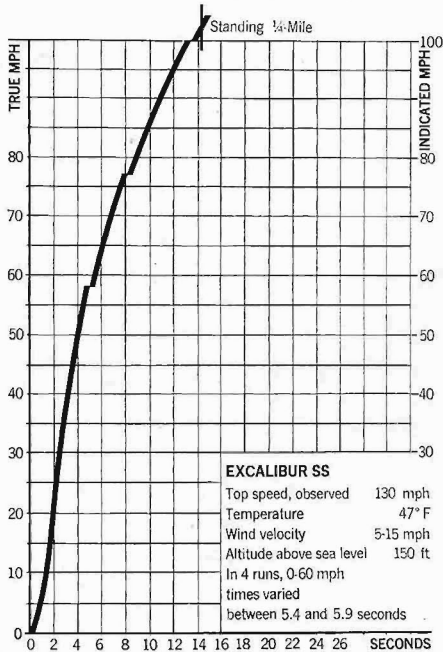
EXCALIBUR SS

Manufacturer: S.S. Automobiles, Inc.
4001 North Wilson Drive
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Price as Tested: \$7450 (delivered in N.Y.C.)

ACCELERATION

Zero To	Seconds
30 mph	2.9
40 mph	3.2
50 mph	4.0
60 mph	5.4
70 mph	6.8
80 mph	9.0
90 mph	11.0
100 mph	13.4
Standing 1/4-mile	102 mph in 14.3



ENGINE

Water-cooled V-8, cast iron block, 5 main bearings
 Bore x stroke..... 4.00 x 3.25 in, 102 x 83 mm
 Displacement..... 327 cu.in, 5359 cc
 Compression ratio..... 10.5 to one
 Carburetion..... Single 4-barrel
 Valve gear. Pushrod-operated overhead valves, hydraulic lifters
 Power (SAE)..... 300 bhp @ 5000 rpm
 Torque..... 360 lbs-ft @ 3200 rpm
 Specific power output..... 0.92 bhp per cu.in, 56.1 bhp per liter
 Usable range of engine speeds. 500-6000 rpm
 Electrical system... 12-volt, 60 amp-hr battery, 450W generator
 Fuel recommended..... Premium
 Mileage..... 12-18 mpg
 Range on 20-gallon tank..... 240-360 miles

DRIVE TRAIN

Clutch..... 10-inch single dry plate
 Transmission..... 4-speed manual, all-synchro

Gear	Ratio	Over-all	rpm	mph
Rev	2.26	8.42	9.3	56
1st	2.20	8.20	9.6	58
2nd	1.64	5.11	12.9	77
3rd	1.27	4.73	16.6	100
4th	1.00	3.73	21.1	130

 Final drive ratio..... 3.73 to one

CHASSIS

Wheelbase..... 109.0 in
 Track..... F 57.4 R 56.6 in
 Length..... 167.5 in
 Width..... 67.0 in
 Height..... 47.0 in
 Ground Clearance..... 5.0 in
 Curb Weight..... 2350 lbs
 Test Weight..... 2728 lbs
 Weight distribution front/rear..... 48/52%
 Pounds per bhp (test weight)..... 9.09
 Suspension F: Ind., unequal-length wishbones, coil springs, anti-sway bar
 R: Rigid axle, semi-elliptic leaf springs, torque control arms
 Brakes..... 11.5-in discs F, 10-in drums R, 490 sq in swept area
 Steering..... Recirculating ball
 Turns, lock to lock..... 2.5
 Turning circle..... 40 ft
 Tires and wheels..... 8.25 x 15 on 6-in rim

CHECK LIST

ENGINE

Starting..... Very Good
 Response..... Excellent
 Noise..... Unacceptable
 Vibration..... Excellent

DRIVE TRAIN

Clutch action..... Very Good
 Transmission linkage..... Very Good
 Synchromesh action..... Very Good
 Power-to-ground transmission..... Fair

BRAKES

Response..... Good
 Pedal pressure..... Fair
 Fade resistance..... Good
 Smoothness..... Very Good
 Directional stability..... Good

STEERING

Response..... Very Good
 Accuracy..... Fair
 Feedback..... Fair
 Road feel..... Good

SUSPENSION

Harshness control..... Poor
 Roll stiffness..... Excellent
 Tracking..... Fair
 Pitch control..... Poor
 Shock damping..... Good

CONTROLS

Location..... Poor
 Relationship..... Poor
 Small controls..... Poor

INTERIOR

Visibility..... Poor
 Instrumentation..... Very Good
 Lighting..... Good
 Entry/exit..... Unacceptable
 Front seating comfort..... Poor
 Front seating room..... Poor
 Rear seating comfort..... —
 Rear seating room..... —
 Storage space..... Poor
 Wind noise..... Fair
 Road noise..... Fair

WEATHER PROTECTION

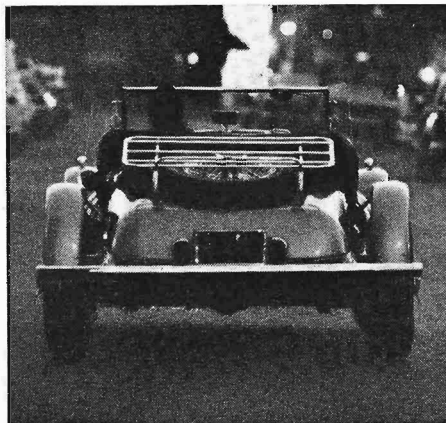
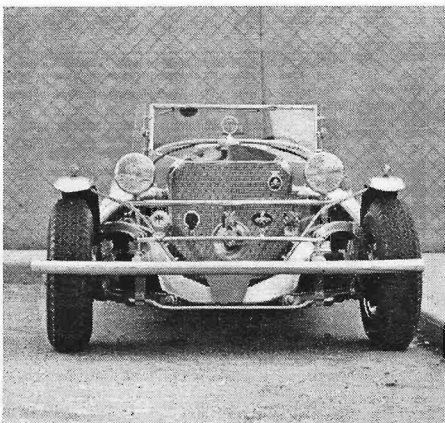
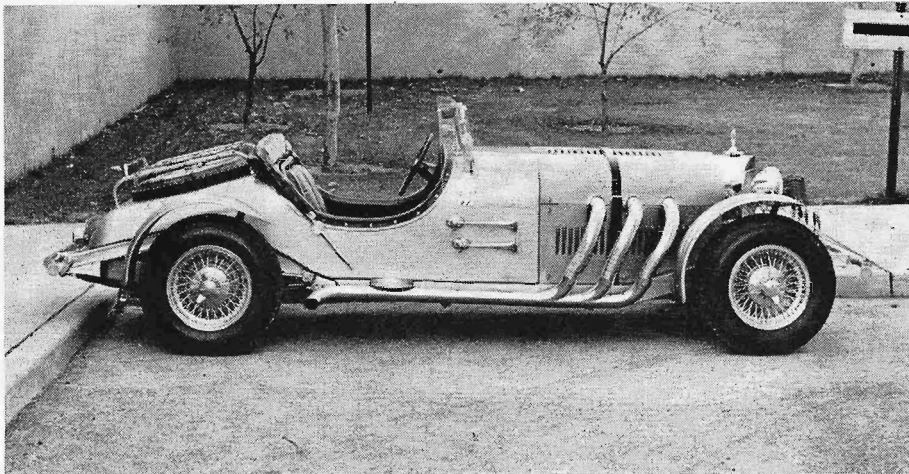
Heater..... Fair
 Defroster..... Poor
 Ventilation..... Good
 Weather sealing..... Unacceptable
 Windshield wiper action..... Poor

QUALITY CONTROL

Materials, exterior..... Good
 Materials, interior..... Very Good
 Exterior finish..... Very Good
 Interior finish..... Very Good
 Hardware and trim..... Very Good

GENERAL

Service accessibility..... Excellent
 Luggage space..... Unacceptable
 Bumper protection..... Good
 Exterior lighting..... Very Good
 Resistance to crosswinds..... Excellent



there, no matter what. Stiff springs and shocks and all that. This car recaptures that flavor.

Okay, there's nobody around. Go ahead, take it right on up to red line. Let it out a bit. What do you mean, you can't see the instruments? Look, wait until we get to that smooth stretch up ahead, and everything'll settle down so you can tell what you're doing. Once you get used to it, you just shift by ear, anyway. And you have to admit that those elegantly simple round dials with big legible numbers on them give you all the information you need when they're being still enough so you can see them.

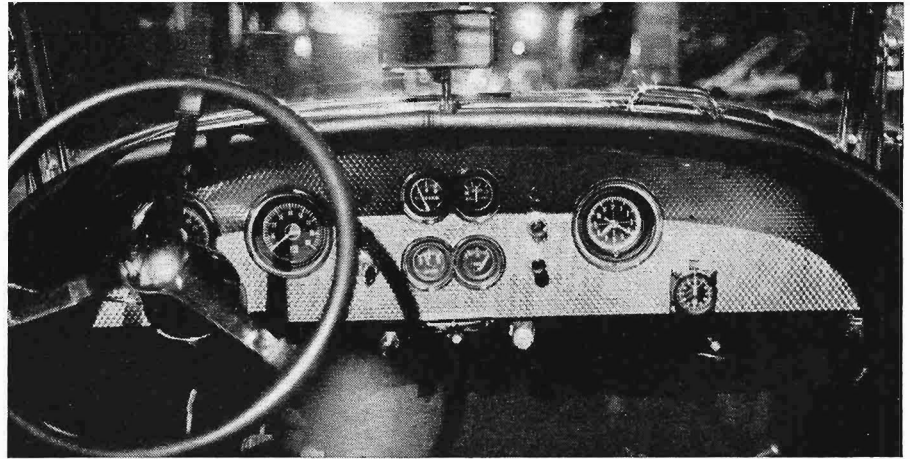
See, didn't I tell you it'd go? I mean right now. Look, the best way to handle that fishtailing under hard acceleration is to keep the old hammer down and ride with it. Just keep up with it with the steering. But doesn't it give you that feeling? Man, it always reminds me of an Indianapolis car, back about the late Forties. You get to sawing away at the wheel, bellowing and smoking the tires, and I don't know, it just always makes me feel like Vukovich or somebody. Or Caracciola on the Au-

tobahn, averaging over 200. Or just imagine putting some swell looking Paulette Goddard-type in there with you, top down, and blasting around the Riviera back in the days before Ugly Americans. Screw all this modern sophistication; this is a car that takes you back to those days when a real man could make real money, and then really spend it.

Look, you don't have to be picky about it. You go just halfway, make the slightest effort, and you'll find you really love it. With all that go,

and all that snap, well, hell, it's just pure, unadulterated fun!

What do you mean, chopped and channeled Model B Roadster? Did you ever see workmanship like this on a hot rod? Well, I know some of those boys are good, but jeez, this car is handcrafted. Those old roadsters, why nothing fit. The seating position was always a little bit wrong, and the controls weren't right, and . . . what do you mean, that's what you mean? Listen, fella, *this is a replica of a MERCEDES-BENZ. . . .* **CJD**



LOOKING FOR ACTION

ON A COLD WINTER NIGHT?

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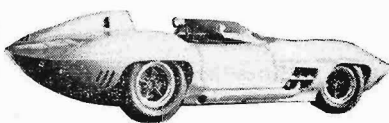
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SEND \$1.00 FOR BROCHURE

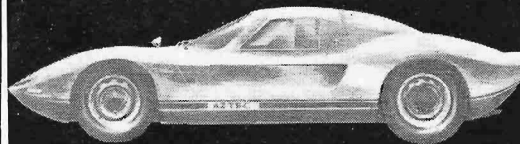


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