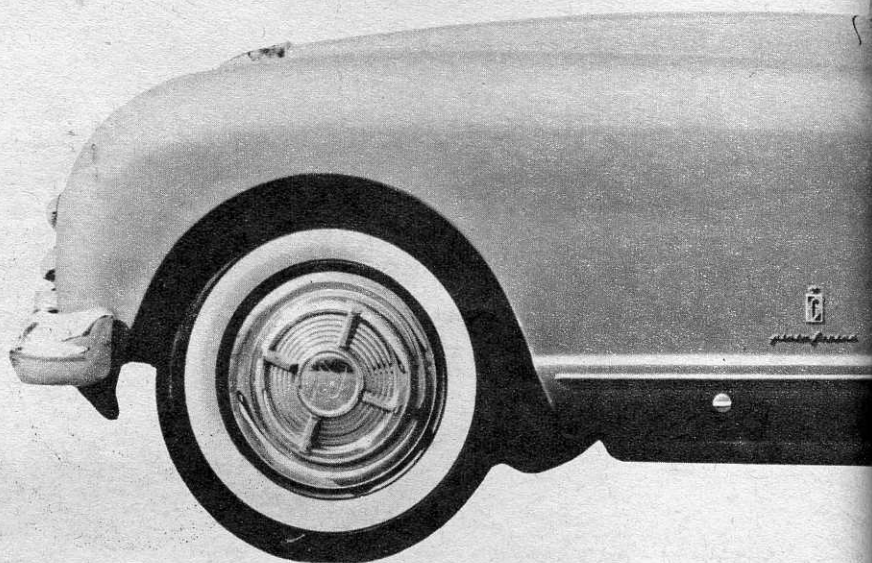


## AMBASSADOR V8 INTO A NASH-HEALEY:



# STRICTLY A FAMILY

BY JAMES MOORE

**T**HE Nash-Healey, with its Pinin Farina body, has achieved a quiet reputation among connoisseurs as a classic example of the Italian school of automotive design. The car was the result of the fertile imagination of the late George W. Mason, who, as President of Nash Motors, not only foresaw the present trend to smaller cars over ten years ago, but also sensed the probable potential of the sports car in this country. Unfortunately, Mr. Mason's Nash-Healey never came close to approaching the smashing sales success of his Rambler. However, the unique combination of the Pinin Farina body, the rugged Ambassador 6 engine, and Donald Healey's race-bred chassis marks it as a most unusual car. Not only is it a thing of beauty, but it also possesses a proud pedigree established by amazing successes in several of the renowned 24-hour LeMans races.

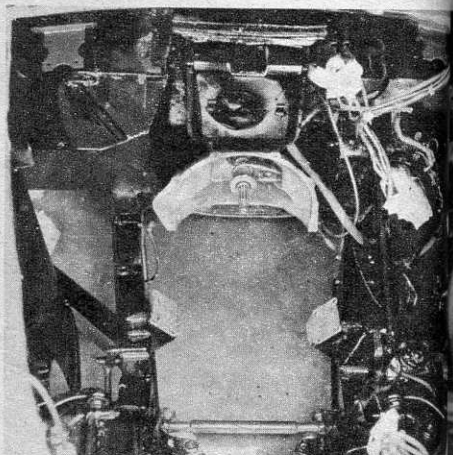
It is little wonder then, that Les Viland (of Mobilgas Economy Run fame) and I quickly jumped at the opportunity to buy the last Nash-Healey roadster that American Motors put up for sale. This particular car had been used for exhibition purposes and had extremely low mileage. The body is identical in appearance to the "production" Nash-Healeys, as was the engine. However, all similarity ends underneath the car, for the chassis is frankly experimental, being

specially built in Italy by the SIATA organization.

The car was purchased last spring, and we spent a pleasant summer dazzling native Detroiters with the sheer beauty of the Farina body. The car handled beautifully with light and precise steering that was a joy—even the exhaust had a pleasant note bespeaking power that wasn't there. Ay! there was the rub — the power that wasn't there! We could haughtily ignore the various Detroit "personal cars," but couldn't abide being stranded at stoplights by middle-aged businessmen in family sedans. Thus, we somewhat reluctantly concluded that a large V-8 was in our Nash-Healey's future.

Les Viland is a quiet perfectionist, and I prefer to plan ahead and get things done the easy way by anticipating situations before they arise. We knew that Ed Anderson and Carl Chakmakian, who are charter members of the American Motors' Nash-Healey Club, had already begun V-8 conversions. True to type, we very craftily decided to lay back in the weeds and benefit from their triumphs and mistakes. This plan was blown to smithereens when careful checking revealed that our experimental chassis presented a new set of problems peculiar to our car only. In other words, we couldn't borrow on the ex-

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Nash-Healey's engine compartment yawns invitingly awaiting receipt of Ambassador V-8 mill.

Close-up shot from underneath looking forward shows the rear engine mount installation.

