



NASH
HEALEY
NEWS

January/February 1985

Issue No. 26

Car club

A VISIT TO NASH-HEALEY HEAVEN by Michael Feingold

Recently, club member Ed Moore and the writer were privileged to tour the fabulous Nash-Healey collection of Leonard McGrady which at last count totaled approximately 50 examples of the marque. Quite a few are one-of-a-kind consisting of a 1953 veteran of the 24 Hours of LeMans, prototypes and the personal cars of Nash-Healey enthusiasts among the corps of Nash engineers, stylists and management. Even among the regular production vehicles differences abound to such an extent that no two seemed to be identical. The diversity of the collection was astonishing even to this "thought-I'd-seen-everything" Nash-Healey enthusiast. No less impressive than the cars he loves, Len McGrady has devotedly spent countless hours and considerable financial resources in saving many of these unique cars which otherwise would have been scrapped and forever lost. He has had many parts reproduced at considerable expense for personal use and offers them to restorers as a service and at prices that only begin to reflect the time and investment necessary to have them remade in today's economy.

Acknowledgement

Many thanks to Leonard McGrady for taking time out from his business to conduct a personally guided 30 minute tour which lasted some 4 hours.

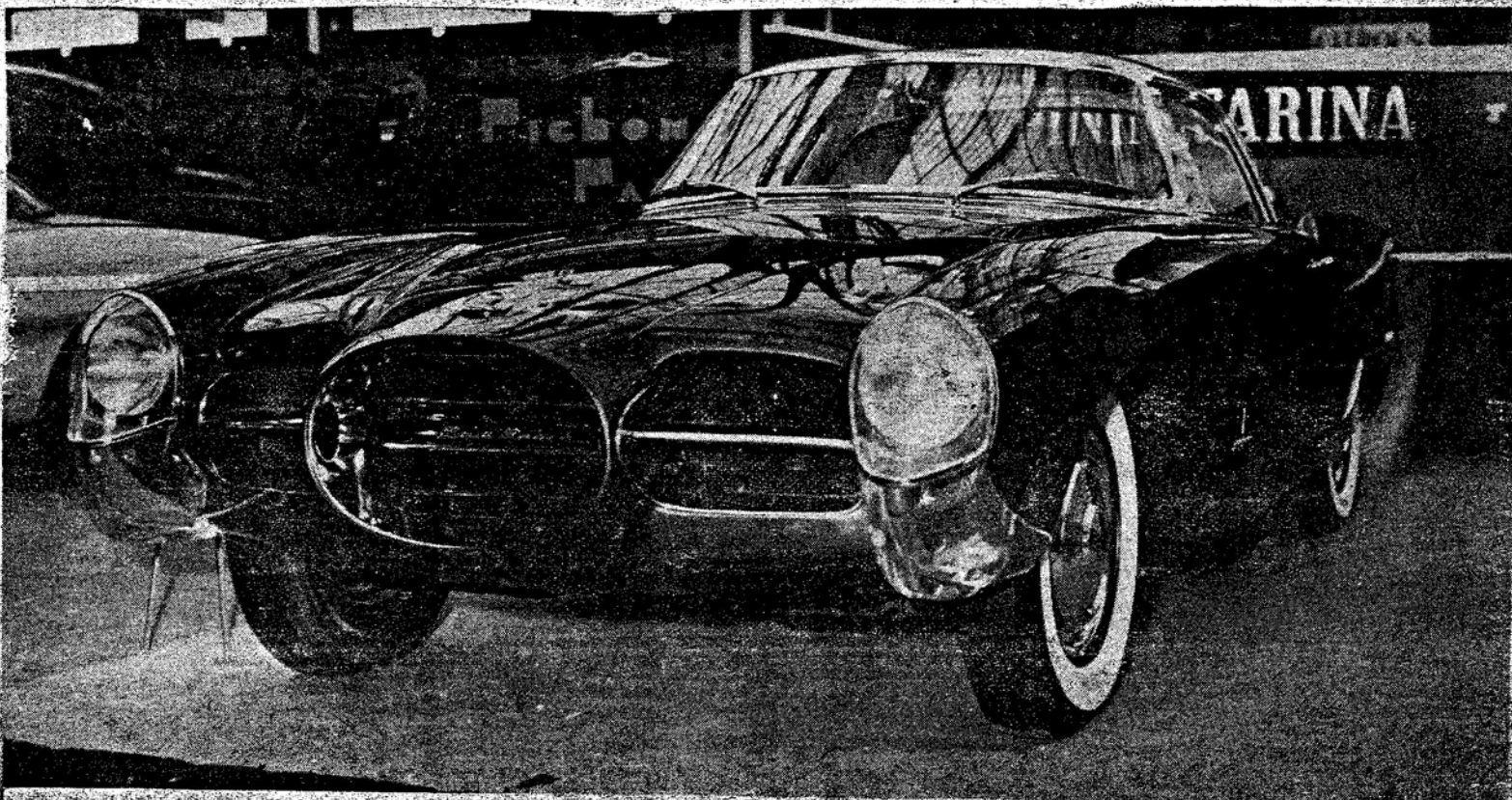
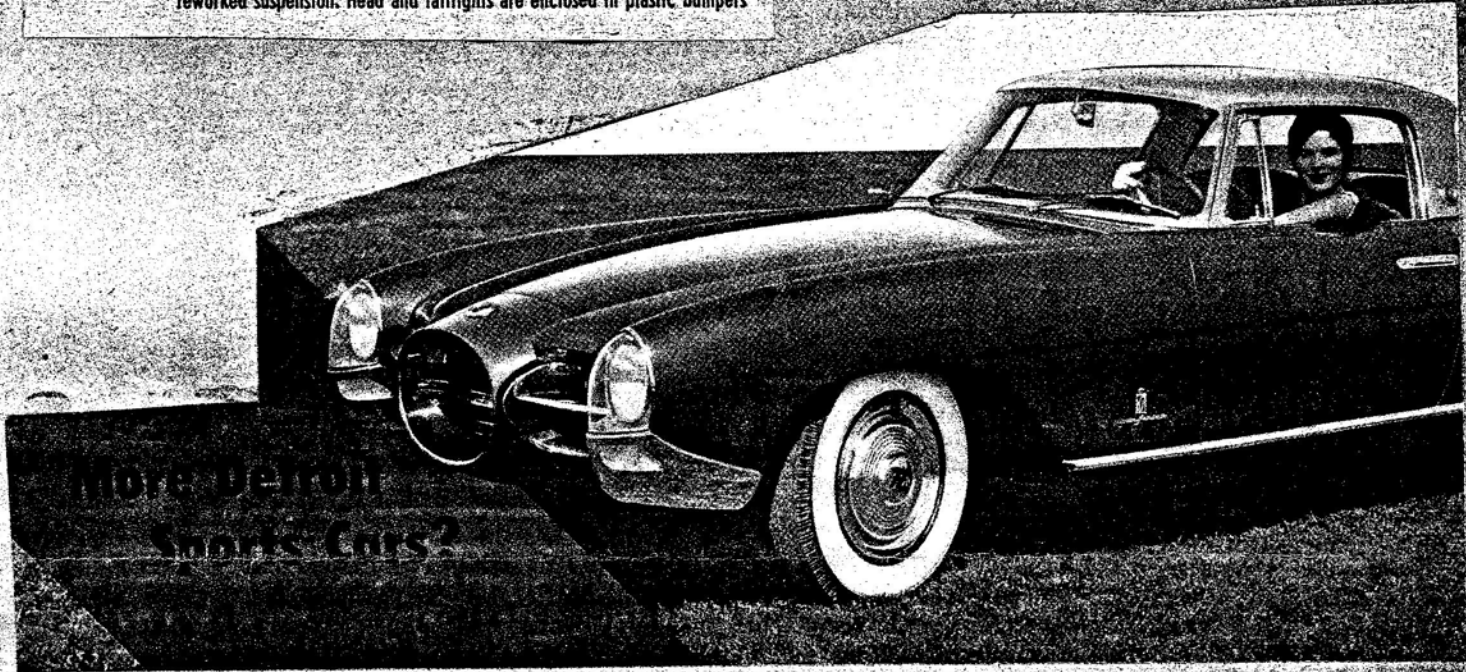


The "Palm Beach" coupe by Pinin Farina is hardly recognizable as being a Nash Rambler. The body is mounted on a specially low Nardi frame and reworked suspension. Head and faillights are enclosed in plastic bumpers



RAMBLER

FARINA Designed Rambler Palm Beach One Off-Show Car Hand Made Aluminum, Steel Body. Original Cost \$18,000. Like new \$4,500 Phone 212-CL-2-2237.



Styled by Pinin Farina, is this Nash Rambler "Palm Beach" which is not quite as restrained in front end treatment as us-

nally associated with Farina. In contrast with most European customs, the "Palm Beach" model has white side wall tires.

LETTER FROM MEMBER

Dear Joanne,

This may be of interest to Nash-Healey and early 1950's Nash Ambassador owners who need an engine overhaul but can't locate parts.

DIVCO the truck chassis, body manufacturer used Nash Ambassador engines in the early 50's and remain a source of supply. I'm rebuilding a 1953 Ambassador engine 252 CID and will install in my '53 Nash-Healey.

AUG. SCHMIDT CO. of Milwaukee has been very helpful in providing engine parts either from his stock or from the DIVCO factory.

Pistons for instance, are available in standard, .002, 5, 10, 20, 30 and .040 over size. The wrist pin is over size so you have to push out the bushing in connecting rod and convert to a semi vs full floating wrist pin. Also, pistons are approximately 60 grams heavier due to stronger construction so they should be changed as a set. I found, however, enough material can be removed to get the weight down to original Nash weight.

Also, located an owner Bob Loudon. He has been busy swapping out original engines with early AMC 327's and conversions to 12V systems.

Interesting but I'm trying to stay as original as possible.

James A. Dapp
6223 S. 23rd St.
Milwaukee, WI

NOTE FROM PRESIDENT

A few weeks ago I received a telephone call from member John Conde of Michigan. John would like to inform the membership that he is writing an article about Nash-Healey's to be published in 'Collector Cars' magazine early 1985. If you are a subscriber to this magazine look for the article soon. If you are a non-subscriber watch for it on the newsstands.

ADDITION IN ROSTER

Frederick S. Roth: Body No. 13607; Chassis No. 3106; Motor No. 1433.

COMMENT FROM EDITOR

Article on Pinin Farina, pages 6 thru 10, was sent to us by Kent Martin, former President of the Nash-Healey Association.

CLASSIFIED

FOR SALE: Rubber for doors for all Farina coupes, limited supply. Also have some extra outside door handles and a few other goodies: Frederick Roth - 1255 LaBrea Dr. - Thousand Oaks, CA 91362 (805)497-1955

FOR SALE: by Sieg Wroebe - 1215 Pearl St. - Alameda, CA 94501 (415)523-0454

1959 Rambler "American" 2 door sedan, good running condition, off white color radio needs work, brakes, lights & trans. very good. Sold as is - \$750 best offer

1947 NASH 2 door coupe, Ambassador - good running condition partial restoration - maroon color, O.H.V. 6, new tires, \$2,600 best offer.

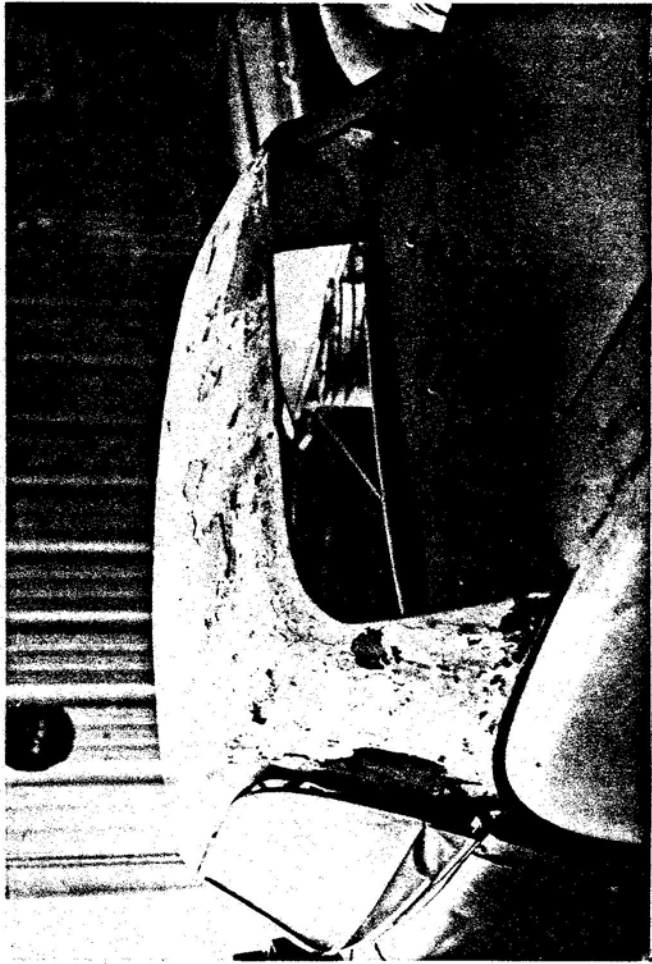
1934 NASH BIG SIX #1223 Brougham, 4 door wire wheels, rear mount, fair condition needs restoration, wood is bad, engine turns over, not running, have extra parts glass is good. Sold as is \$1,500 best offer.

NEEDED: New gas pedal, gas tank sending unit, extra fuel pump, how about a new steering wheel; Frederick Roth - 1255 LaBrea Dr. - Thousand Oaks, CA 91362 (805)497-1955

ABOUT TYPIGRASOPHIAN ERPERS

Unluse youhave effer tryed to edet and typo a publicasion of these kund you prably don' realise tha prablms up aboiding errus. Yur editor hus purpusily leFt a fue in thiis issue mainnly two sea hao elert yu are in deticting thum. Alsoo,/¢ ut wull guve yoo somethin to due uf thw subject mutter i s knot inturesting. Addutionully, uf u cun makke thas aut too cun reed must anythin./¢// Fullining is a compleet alphebet and a fue othr spara purts too use as nuddid to maik corrictions. abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz. 3476529-08¢!/0?@5478-+. Now is the time for all good men to some to the aid of their. Yoo must remumburer yur editor niver maks mistreaks - intentionallily.

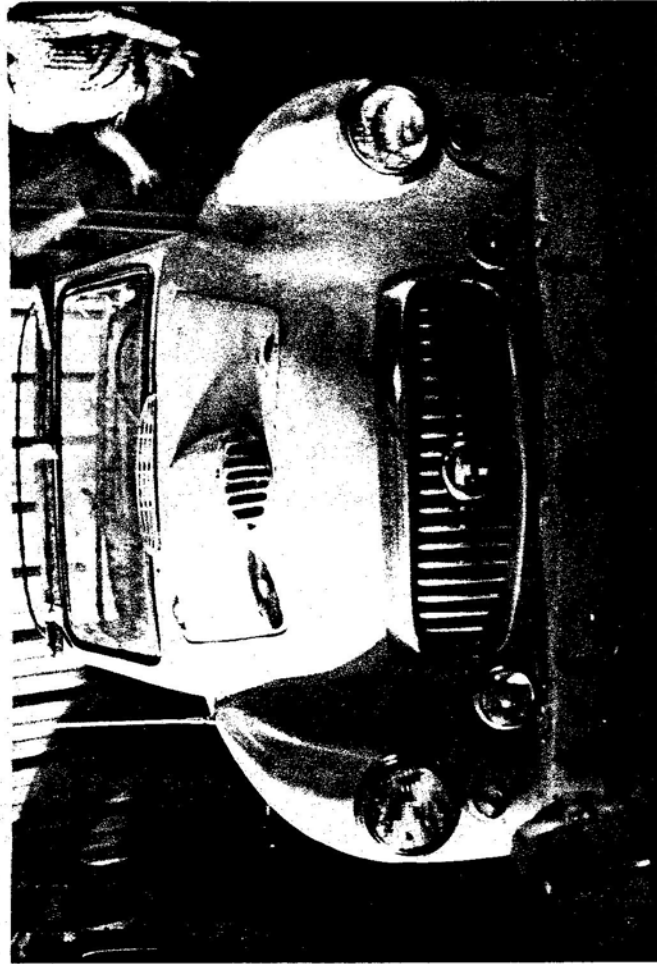
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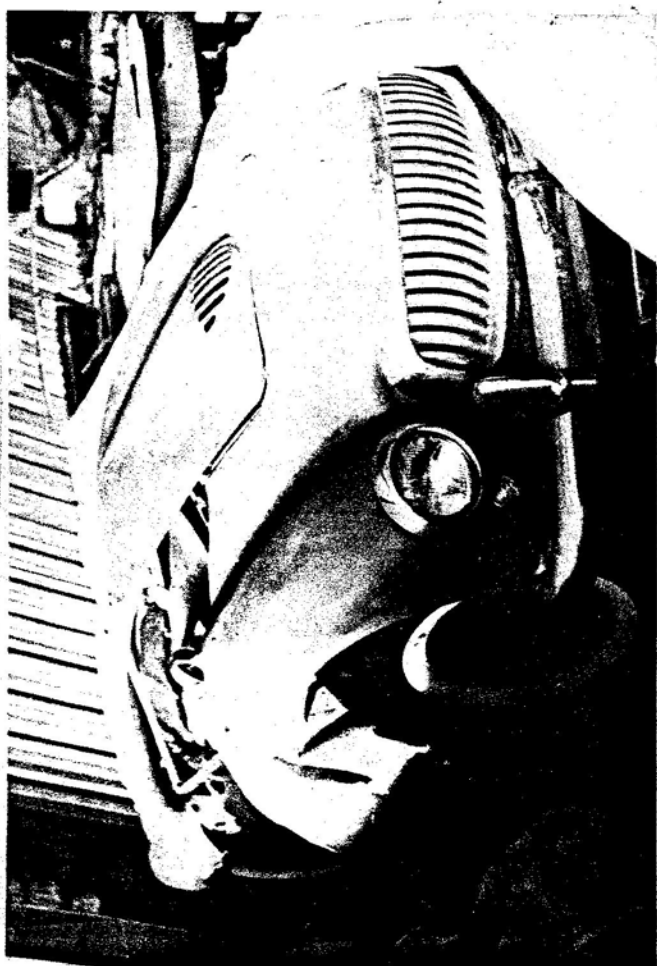
Reportedly one of five made, this factory built removable fiberglass hardtop was produced to the order of a Nash engineer for his Farina roadster.



Although Universal Laminations of England offered a removable hardtop for 1951 models, the maker of this example is not known.



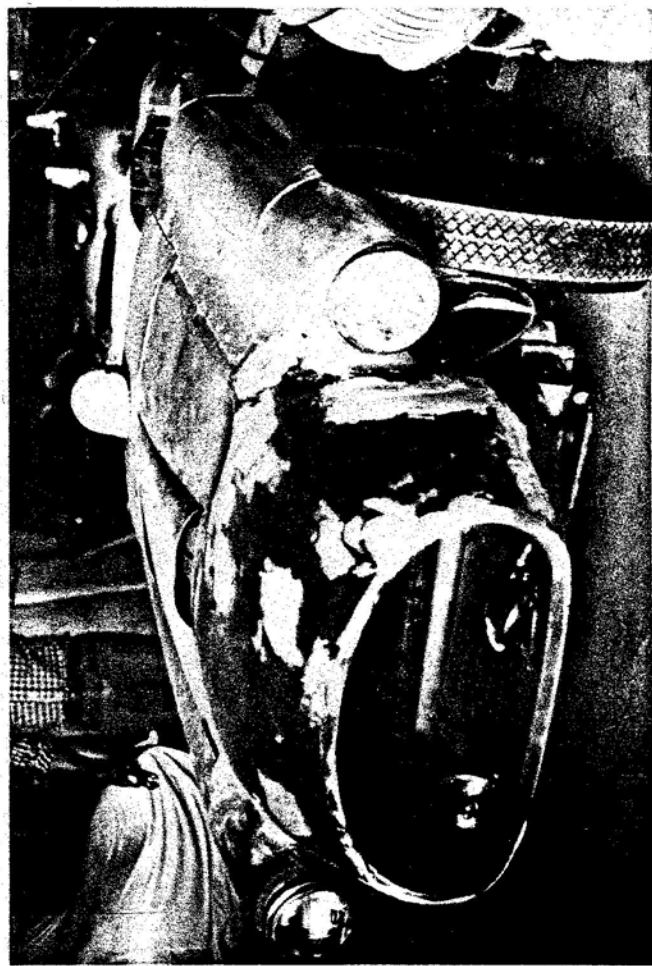
Similar to standard 1951 model but sporting unique rear styling, power top, Hydramatic transmission, walnut dash, one-piece windshield, and defroster vents the purpose of this prototype remains speculative.



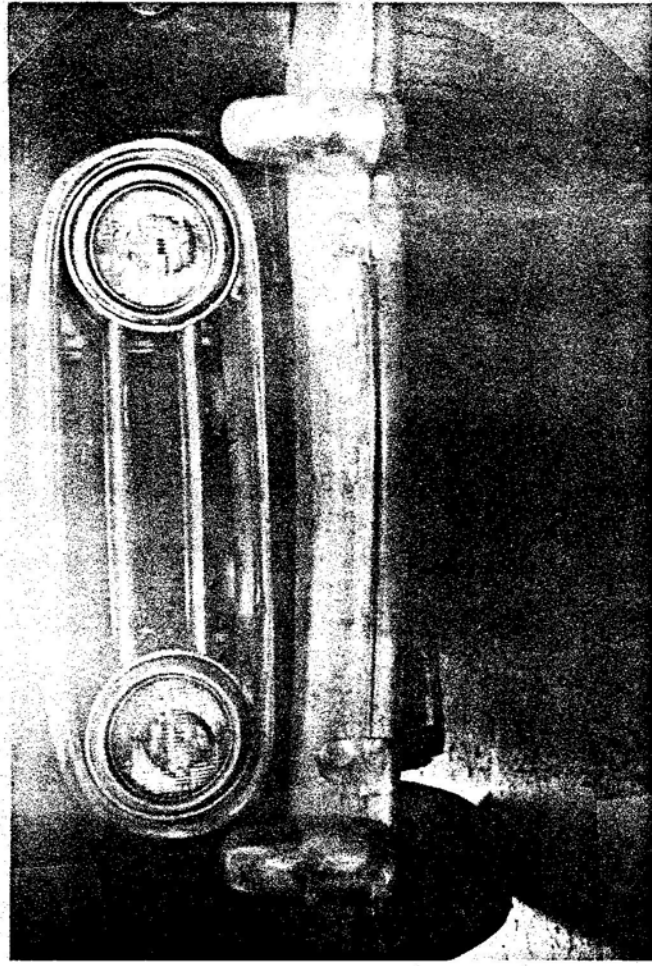
Former owner drove this once immaculate roadster from California to New York without incident and was promptly sideswiped by a Pontiac on a quiet Sunday morning in Manhattan.



Genuine new old stock rear fend, Nash-Healey part #3116367, waits patiently.



The original body of this 11th place finisher at the 1953 Le Mans race was later destroyed. A new body was fabricated using surviving photos of the original as a guide.



Bumper guards on some 1952 models were placed outboard of later position. Trim plates were used to cover the bolt holes of the modified Nash humber rail.



Close-up of trim plates. Last 2 digits of body number are stamped on back side as they are on many other Farina body parts. Often, these parts fit only the specific vehicle for which they were intended.

FROM:

Public Relations Department
Nash Motors Division
Nash-Kelvinator Corporation
Detroit 32, Michigan
2652

FOR RELEASE FEBRUARY 13, 1952

AND THEREAFTER

NASH MOTORS ANNOUNCES 1952 NASH-HEALEY

SPORTS CAR DESIGNED BY PININ FARINA

Chicago, Feb. 13 -- Nash Motors today unveiled its new 1952 Nash-Healey sports car, featuring original hand-built body styling by Pinin Farina, world famous European custom body designer.

A production model of the new sports car will be shown for the first time at the Chicago Automobile Show (Feb. 16-24), according to H. C. Doss, vice-president in charge of sales. It will be late Spring before cars are available in sufficient quantity for delivery.

"Nash Motors' new 1952 sports car combines the superb styling skills of Pinin Farina with American engineering and Donald Healey's British road racing chassis," Doss said. The brisk lines of its hand-built body and richness of interior appointments are unexcelled by any custom sports car available today. To top it off, the new car has the reliability and easily serviced mechanical features of Nash Motors' improved Ambassador power plant and other moving parts."

Engine and major mechanical parts are manufactured by Nash Motors in the United States. Chassis with "trailing link" front-end suspension are made by the Donald Healey Company, Warwick, England. Pinin Farina's famed custom body plant at Turin, Italy, hand builds the sleek custom bodies.

Low-slung and racy in appearance, the new Nash-Healey is characteristic of Pinin Farina designs, surfaces of which are curved and subtly blended, never joined in sharp edges.

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(more)

Front fenders rise above the hood line and continue through the door panels. The distinctive lowered hood affords an excellent view of the road.

Flowing front to rear lines are accentuated by trailing rear fender fins, which add sweep to body styling. Rear fenders, rising slightly above the rear deck, are a molded part of the body, forming an eye-pleasing curve around the wheels.

The wide, lower hood provides a balanced frame for a clean-cut grille, creating an outstanding impression of power and beauty. Headlights are set in a racing air scoop grille. Gracefully rounded front fenders extend forward of the grille line.

Power plant of the Nash-Healey is the "Dual Jetfire" Ambassador six-cylinder, overhead valve, 125 horsepower engine. Equipped with an aluminum cylinder head it has a compression ratio of 8:1.1. Engine has two British S. U. horizontal carburetors working in conjunction with an oversized "Sealed-In Iso-Thermal" intake manifold. Its seven-bearing crankshaft is 100 per cent counterbalanced.

A major mechanical feature of the new sports car is its chassis, using the famous Healey "trailing link" front-end suspension which provides outstanding road holding and "cornering."

Each front wheel is mounted on a "swinging arm" pivoted far ahead of the wheel centerline and cushioned against a coil spring. Coil spring suspension is also used at rear wheels. All four wheels have direct acting aircraft type shock absorbers mounted in towers attached to the chassis frame. It has torque tube type drive.

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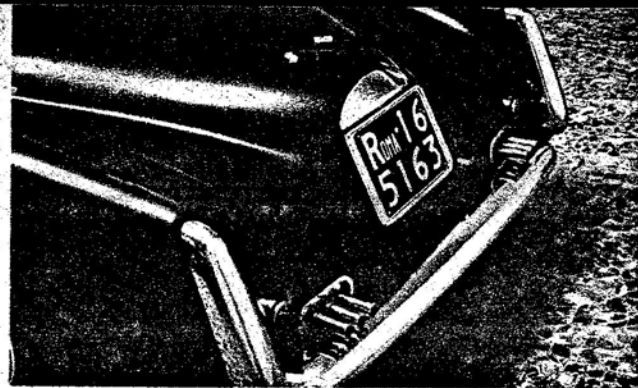
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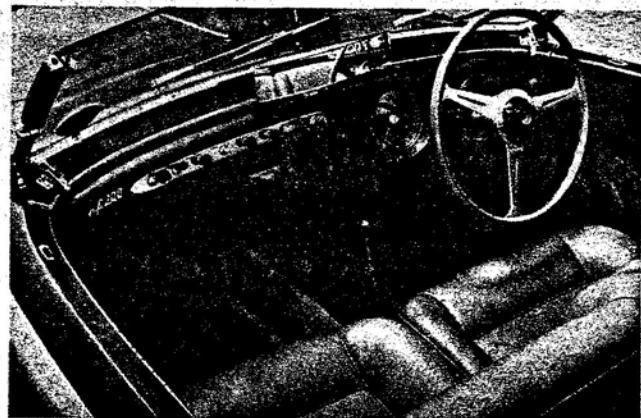
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PININ FARINA

By JOHN WHEELLOCK FREEMAN



Rear end of the new Lancia "Aurelia" roadster. Note the verticle chrome "fins" and the twin "rocket" exhausts.



View of the driver-passenger compartment gives a good idea of the quality associated with Farina's products.

Photos by Alexandre Georges



Startling torpedolike front end of the "Aurelia" is one of the more recent examples of Pinin Farina's art.

Italy's master coachbuilder captures and channels the force of a strong current of artistry and good taste handed down from the classical period and the Renaissance.

SOME are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them," according to Shakespeare. In Pinin Farina's case, each part of this statement applies. He was born into a family of carriage builders with a reputation to uphold. He emerged after World War II with a policy that increased this existing prestige. And the excellence of his work imposed on him the leadership, not only of Italian car design, but of the entire world's activities in this field.

No one is more surprised or more pleased with this success than Pinin Farina himself; he gives the impression of having unexpectedly discovered the reward of a lifelong search. Short and stocky, strikingly distinctive in both features and manner, Pinin Farina is an individualist whose flair for perfectionism reaches into every corner of his factory. He watches carefully over the shoulders of his draftsmen, suggesting design ideas. The work of his specialists must meet an exacting standard before the little Farina emblem may be attached to the side of a finished body.

The life of a perfectionist and a stylistic leader is full of worries, however, as Pinin Farina has learned during the recent years of his ascendancy. Labor difficulties, material shortages, and transportation problems are serious in Italy. Indeed, except for prestige, Italy's economy really has no basis for supporting an automotive industry at all. The most successful firms are susceptible to financial failure—and also, alas, to the pervasively influential jealousy of the mammoth FIAT trust. While it may seem strange that the world's top designer and builder of auto bodies is in constant danger of bankruptcy, we need think only of the existing state of affairs in our American motor industry, where excellence has little to do with supremacy. To complete Pinin Farina's list of woes, he recently had to witness the failure of the old family organization, Stabilimenti Farina, which had been run by his brother since Pinin Farina's formation of his own company.

Farina is relieved to hear that many American executives worry themselves into premature graves and that other businessmen besides himself have troubles, but despite deep-seated Latin pessimism, he appears in robust health. The European tradition of a two-hour lunch period gives him an opportunity to relax daily, temporarily forgetting his cares. When we first interviewed him, he was preoccupied and serious, painfully conscious of the camera, a perfect prototype of what he thought a person in his position should be. After a few minutes of conversation on topics that agreed with him, however, he revealed his true personality to be warm, genial, and full of life. Oblivious to the camera, he was snapped in a series of pictures that are undoubtedly the best ever taken of him, simply because—being unposed—they show him as he really is. Not that Farina is averse to publicity, despite his apprehensiveness toward cameras; he keeps a leather book of clip-



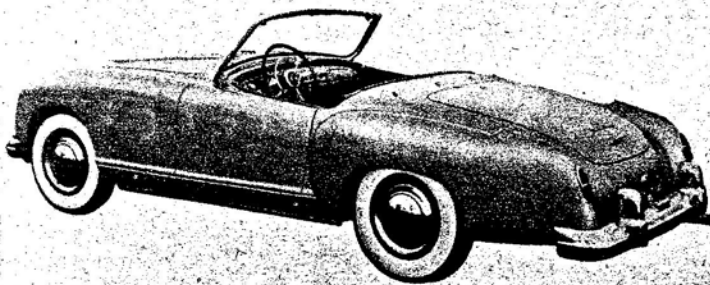
Pinin Farina is an idea man. Any car that his factory builds must bear his own personal stamp of approval.



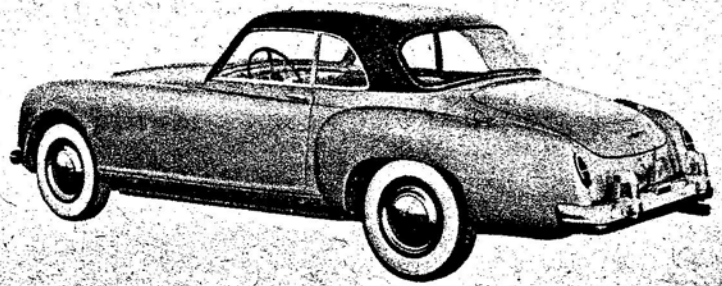
In showroom at his factory, Farina talks with his son, Sergio, at the left, and author John Wheelock Freeman.



This is the Farina factory, which produces some of the most talked-about automobile bodies in the world today.



Popular Nash-Healey roadster, with Farina body, seats three, is finished in pastel metallic lacquer shades.



Hardtop version of the Nash-Healey, with two-tone paint job, offers good visibility and greater carrying space.

heavily and sluggishly without a proper sense of control, corners like Beebe's Bathysphere (which it also tends to resemble on the outside), and practically somersaults if too enthusiastically braked. Farina cannot, of course, control such engineering details as weight distribution or steering ratio, but he can eliminate blind spots and lower the center of gravity to promote safer and better handling. Throughout his discussion of family cars, there sounds a note of awe and respect for the immense difficulties of housing the required baggage space, headroom, legroom, elbowroom, and glass area in a decent-looking package. Sports cars, he emphasizes, present no such problems; they're meant to be driven, not ridden in. Although sports cars are basically suited to his temperament and give him the ideal outlet for his designing talents, Farina regards passenger-car design as a challenge and a vast field for potential improvement.

Farina's executive assistants are his son, Sergio, and his son-in-law, Renzo Carli, both engineers. Of the three, Carli is the public-relations specialist. A diplomat to the core, he has mastered English, a language which still finds the elder Farina pretty much at sea. All three men take an active interest in the motor industry, from a technical standpoint as well as from a coachbuilder's. The consensus of their opinion is in favor of the Lancia V-6 "Gran Turismo" as Italy's best all-round sports car, and Pinin Farina has chosen one himself to drive on business trips.

The Lancia "Gran Turismo" is, by some coincidence, a product of Pinin Farina's factory. A trim four-seater coupé, it holds an admirable competition record in such long-distance road races as the Mille Miglia and Tour of Sicily. The bodies are manufactured in limited quantities by

Farina, then sent to the nearby Lancia factory for mechanical parts, and finally returned to Farina for painting and finishing. Although offered by Lancia as a special luxury job at a price of \$4,600, it's upholstered in cloth and isn't distinguished by the same finish that Farina puts on more expensive prototypes and single orders. Because of this, the "Gran Turismo" doesn't have Farina's crest attached to its side. Another semiproduction job is the convertible Alfa-Romeo 1900-C, which sells for \$5,200 and has leather upholstery. The convertible top is custom-tailored and insulated with warm padding.

The third model produced in quantity by Farina is the Nash-Healey, a truly international sports car with British chassis, American mechanical parts, and Italian bodywork. Considering its regal price tag (\$6,400 in New York), the Nash-Healey isn't one of the best values in the sports-car field, nor is it one of Farina's more exciting designs (the grille and rear fenders have been pretty well "farmered up"). But it is beautifully finished and it performs and handles like a thoroughbred, although only a midget can drive it comfortably. The side curtains on the convertible model are carefully fitted to eliminate rattling, scratching, and a makeshift appearance; such attention to detail characterizes the entire car. As an experiment in searching towards an eventual American sports car, it undersells its only rival, the Cunningham, by a margin of some \$4,000.

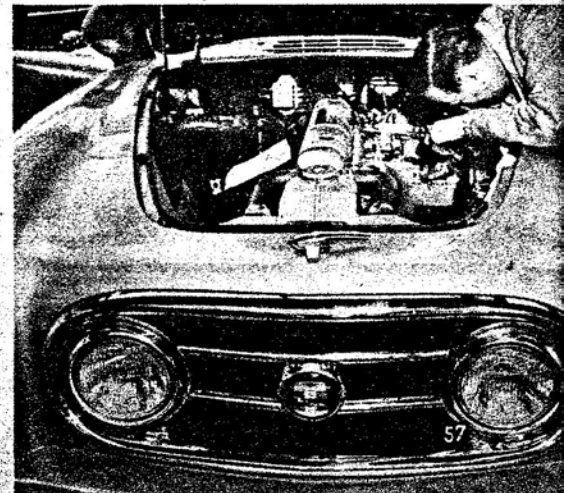
The procedure of building a custom body in Italy is the same, with some variations, at most of the shops which do such work, from a one-room establishment like Frua to the impressive factory of Pinin Farina. From the drawing-board stage, blown-up drawings are translated into a three-dimensional, full-size

[Continued on page 74]

All surfaces of metal body must be sanded down before painting.

Ready now for doors, trim, hood and trunk lids, car will soon be prepared for paint.

After a final mechanical check, car is ready for shipping to U. S.



Pinin Farina

[Continued from page 57]

wooden model. Workers hammer sheets of aluminum over various parts of this dummy to shape various corresponding parts of each car body. When the first body (prototype) has been finished, it can be studied to see whether it looks as well as the designer's original idea. If, as an afterthought, the designer wishes to make any changes such as lowering a window, lengthening a fender, or raising the rear deck, pieces of wood are added to modify the dummy. As many duplicates as desired can be run off by using the same dummy, or it can be changed for each car. Once the various parts are formed by hammering metal sheets over the dummy, they're welded together to form a body shell, which is mounted on a metal frame, usually tubular, making it rigid, and attached to the chassis. Workers next smooth the welded joints and the entire metal surface to eliminate any ripples that might show when the car has been painted. Interior fittings, upholstery, etc., are of course all installed by hand; they meet the most exacting standards of skilled craftsmanship. It's impossible for any worker to perform this sort of job satisfactorily unless he takes real pride in it; each operation, far from being just a step along an assembly line, requires an accomplished artisan. Thus, the finished products have two obvious advantages over production-made cars. In the first place, each individual part is made to closer tolerances. And then, since the cars are entirely assembled by hand, they end up as harmonious units, rather than a heap of components with ill fitting seams, etc.

This method of work, which requires businessmen and laborers alike to be artists, explains why Italy is the last refuge of really first-class automotive design and assembly. Under the American mass-production system, an individualist like Farina would quickly be throttled and submerged in somebody's "styling department," his ideas ready prey to the whims and prejudices of tasteless Babbitts on the Board of Directors. The skilled artisan like those in the Farina factory would find no work unless he was willing to be reconciled to twisting a certain bolt several thousand times per day.

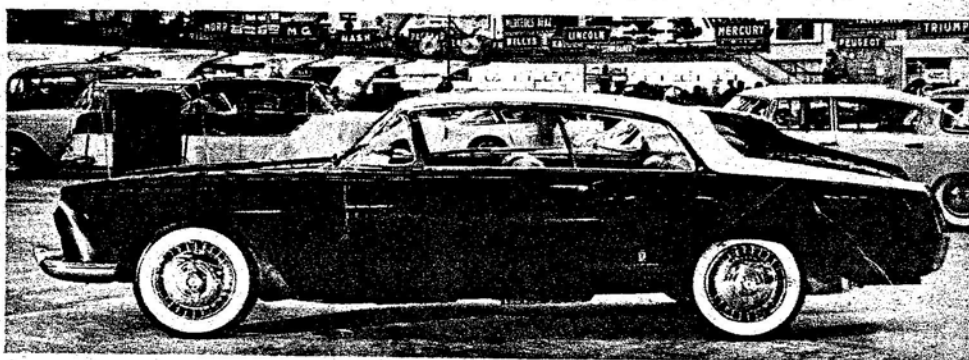
Fortunately for men like Farina and for the rest of the world, however, Italy's cultural heritage and traditional leadership in the arts have made possible the first truly great era in motor-car design since the Depression. This isn't to imply that Italian coachbuilders are never guilty of producing bad designs; far from it. But the ratio of successful ones, few as they are, is higher than anywhere else. Thus we can forgive Farina 10 ordinary designs if, unlike other builders, he also produces one masterpiece. It's the very seldomness of excellence, as against the everyday incidence of mediocrity, which exempts genius from the requirements of consistency. Beauty—as Emily Dickinson once wrote, long before sports cars—is its own excuse for being. •



One theory regarding this Nash is that here is the way Pinin Farina would have preferred the 1955 production car.

This beautiful Ambassador is or was in Milwaukee and the property of a Sports Car dealer. He isn't anxious to part with it. You can easily see what a prize possession it would make, if for nothing else than it's beauty alone. (NOTE FROM EDITOR: This car is presently owned by Lee Bortmas of Butler, PA and has been to several recent Nash Car Club Nationals.)

'56 FARINA special aluminum 4 door sedan on Nash Ambassador chassis. Long, low dream car driven only between auto shows in Europe as American Motors exhibit of future styling.



This beautiful Lancia Aurelia by Farina reflects the same quiet good taste that is shown in the Ambassador Show Car in the background.