

LOW BUDGET SPORTS

With ever increasing costs for sports cars, here's one which should be good and only moderately priced to suit those who can't afford anything in the £2,000 class.



Cockpit of the Holden is spartan, utilises Holden components wherever possible. All the running gear is Holden, some stock, some modified.

The body of the Holden special is quite well finished, has largish luggage locker, which also accommodates fuel filler.



A N.S.W. country panel beater with a new plan to introduce a cheap sports car on the market should win strong support from those who cannot afford to pay £1,400 to £2,000.

His idea is to put fibreglass bodies on what will otherwise be almost standard Holdens.

The secret of the low price—£950 complete with hood—lies in the fact that the engines and some parts will be taken from damaged cars.

Mr. Keith Short, of East Maitland, is the panel beater and also second-hand car dealer who thinks his plan will be a boon to enthusiasts with restricted finance.

He aims to put on the road a car which will have the performance and lines that brand a sports car as an exciting instrument and yet will have a price within reach of young motorists.

Practically without exception, sports car owners like an engine they can hot up and there will be plenty of scope for them in Keith's Holden special.

When I saw the Holden in its sleek Buchanan fibreglass body it was nearing the stage where it could be put through a thorough road test.

It gave promise of some interesting results.

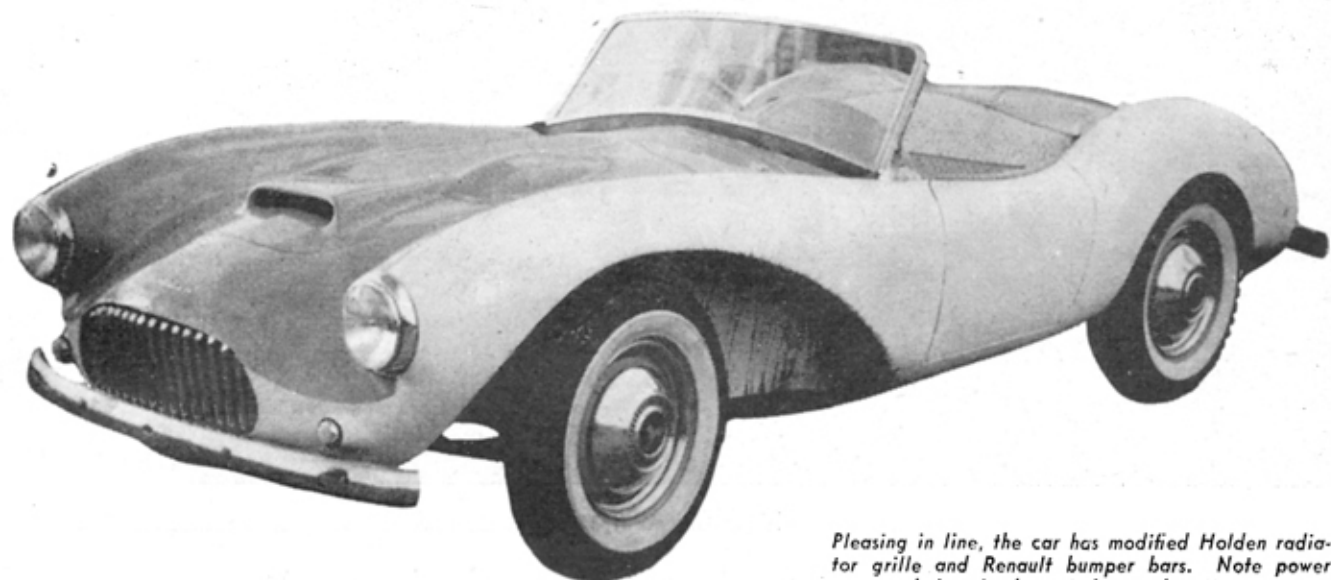
To date, partly because rear shocks have not yet been fitted, speeds have been restricted to 60 miles an hour.

The outstanding result has been in acceleration. With something like six cwt. less to pull—it weighs 14½ cwt.—the car appears to have roughly the same pick-up in top gear as a normal Holden has in second. And that with an engine that has done 43,000 miles and has not even been overhauled, let alone tuned up.

The fibreglass body is designed to house twin carburettors but Keith has only a single standard carburettor fitted. Because of the restricted room allowed by the blister on the left side of the bonnet, it has not been possible to

SPECIAL

By D. J. PAINE



Pleasing in line, the car has modified Holden radiator grille and Renault bumper bars. Note power bulge in bonnet for carburetors.

put an air cleaner on it. Twin carbies will sit lower, creating the necessary space for cleaners.

With a standard Holden engine, Keith thinks his car will top the century comfortably. Tune it up and 120 miles an hour, perhaps more, seems likely.

Mileage, too, is expected to be four to five m.p.g. better than the normal Holden because of the lighter body.

Main modifications have been the construction of a chassis, shortening of the tail shaft and narrowing of the rear track.

The chassis is of 2 in. steam tubing and is reinforced underneath with $\frac{3}{4}$ in. tubing. One foot nine inches has been cut off the tail shaft, allowing the motor to be moved back 6 in. and making the wheel base 7 ft. 9 in. The track of the rear wheels is 4 in. less than at the front, a move which is hoped to give better cornering.

To keep the weight as low as possible, the diff has been slung under the chassis and the engine is 5 in. lower than in a normal Holden. Despite this, the car has a good clearance.

Because of the drastic reduction in weight, $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. were cut off the front coil springs to improve the riding ability of the car.

The gear column, of course, is on the floor on the left side of the driver.

Unlike most sports cars, a single bench has been preferred to individual bucket seats. The seat, of attractive two-toned Vynex in a leopard design over Dunlopillo, is particularly eye-catching and is certain to appeal to anyone with a fancy for smartness and colour. Those who regard bucket seats as essential should find replacement a reasonably easy task.

Keith thinks a casual seat is a very desirable feature in a sports car and most of his vehicles will probably have one. This necessitates cutting a section out of the body. Besides allowing for extra seating, it could improve the luggage position, as much of the room in the boot is taken up with a nine gallon petrol tank and one or perhaps two small cases would be all it could be expected to take.

Many fibreglass bodies fitted to sports cars have been left with an

open tunnel for the air intake but Keith has produced a rather unusual effect with a cut-down 1950 Holden grille.

Non-Holden parts on the car include Renault bumper bars, Lucas lights and twin motor bike exhausts.

Access to the engine is fairly good, the bonnet being hinged at the front, and the body can be lifted clear with the removal of 10 bolts.

As the car, mechanically is practically a standard Holden, owners should have no trouble in getting spare parts. Likewise, the tuning up process is simplified. Keith plans to keep one of the cars for his own use, suitably hotted up, of course, with a Repco head, hot camshafts, etc.

Without its £40 windscreen, the car is 3 ft. 1 in. high at the turrets and 2 ft. 11 in. at the back of the seat. Sitting in it, the driver can comfortably reach the ground.

Its general appearance is attractively smooth and streamlined. The big question is: How will it perform? This can only be answered by time. ●