

TWO NEW FIBRE FRONTS FOR SPRITES!

2'6

SPORTS CAR WORLD

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OCTOBER, 1960



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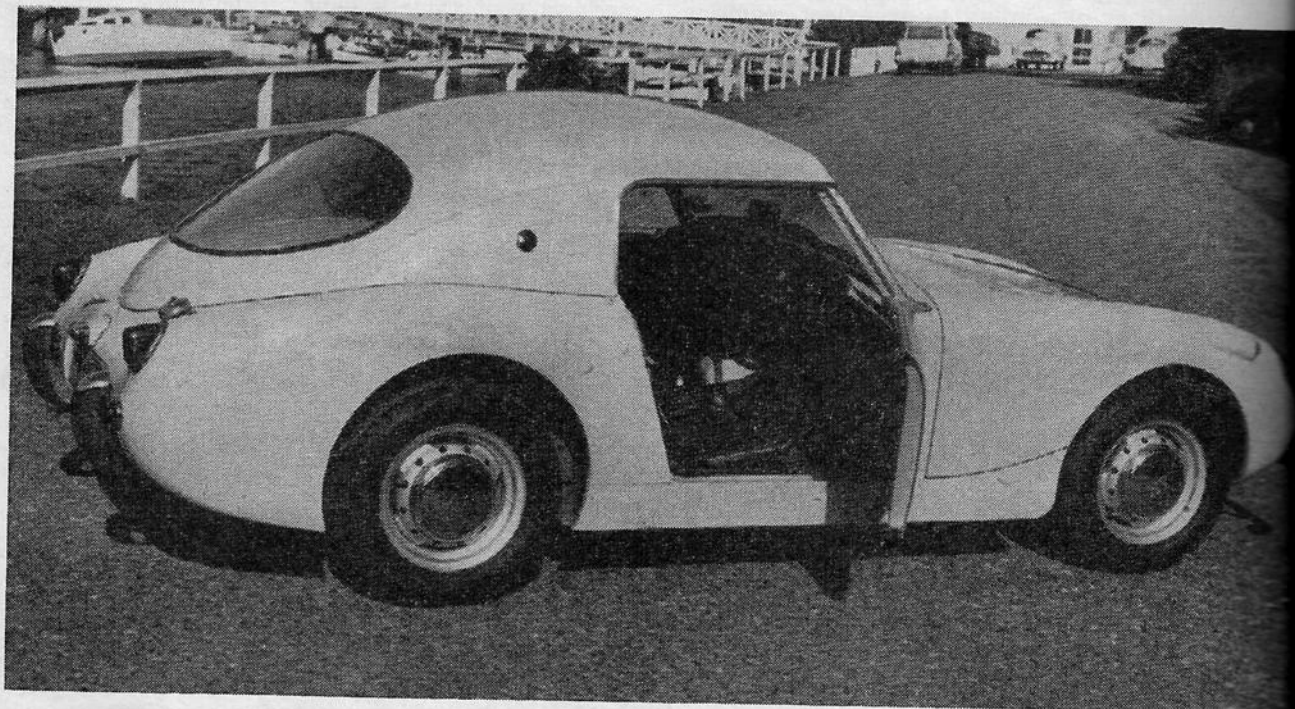
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J and S approach is more direct, simply involves relocation of lights in fibre.

Sprite

Adams-Brown conversion improves streamlining, should add speed. Top clips on in minutes.



TWO OF AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST FIBRE FREELANCES

12 SPORTS CAR WORLD, October, 1960

QUOTE: I had an inspiration. Come right over—we've really got something to show you this time! Unquote.

Clive Adams dropped his receiver. I dropped mine. Lucky, that Clive Adams. If ever a man can conjure up inspirations, it is Clive.

This time, we were kept in suspense only so long as it took us to hotfoot from Mosman to the Adams establishment at Hill Street, North Sydney—a tiny lane tucked away in the shadows of the MLC giant. It turned out that Clive and arch-collaborator Stanley F. Brown *did* have something to raise the eyebrows. There, tucked away in a corner, was a glamorous little Gran Turismo coupe looking as though it had just left the hands of Europe's most talented coachbuilder. The nameplate? Austin Healey Sprite was what it said.

BMC's ugly duckling stood trans-

formed with a graceful new bonnet, recessed headlights, and a snug hardtop that just begged you to climb in behind the wheel and go places, even on a bitter winter's day like that one was.

As a prototype, the original Adams-Brown conversion Sprite is about as good a one-off as I've yet laid eyes on. After all, it's far from easy to strip a production car and go ahead improvising and building a new set of lines and character into it, eventually finishing with something that really does look better than the original. There's no question that Adams and Brown have improved the Sprite. Even without the top, it looks more in line with modern sports car thinking, more individual, more tempting.

But then Clive Adams is one who appreciates the aesthetic qualities in a motor car. He and Stan Brown implemented their own ideas in the Prad-Alta—alias Prad-

Holden—with remarkable success.

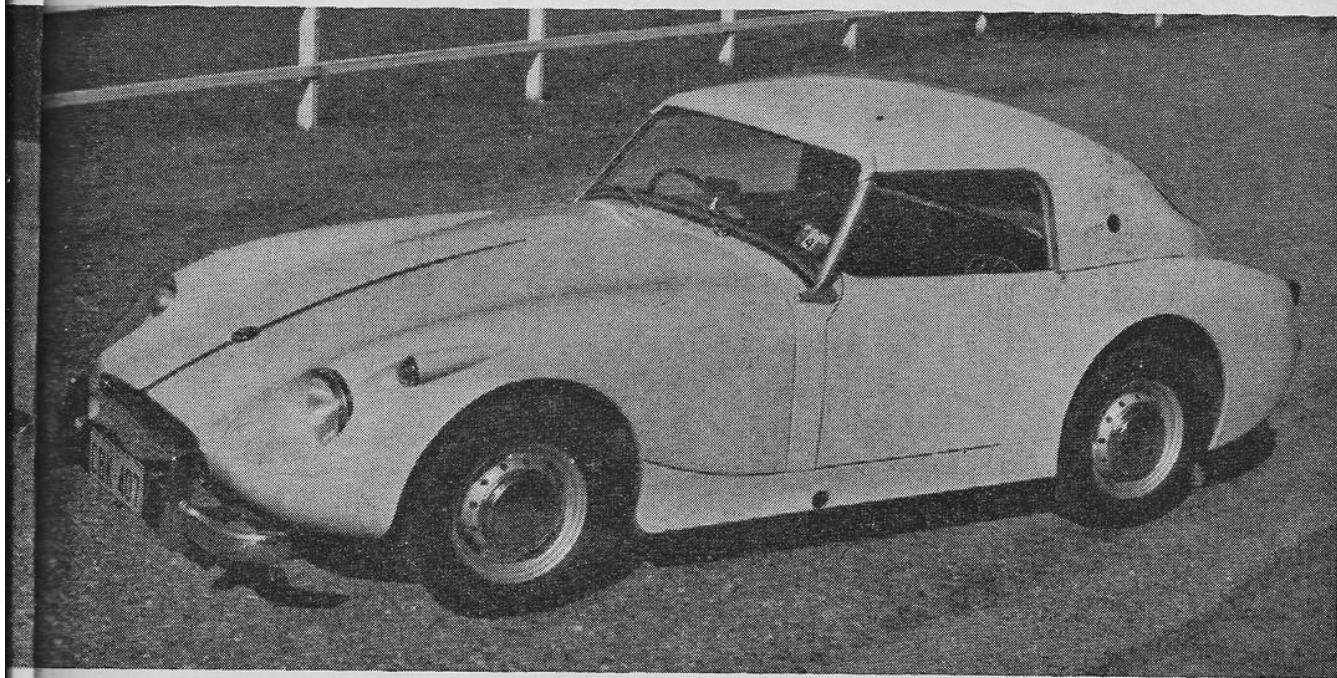
Manufacturing a one-off machine is an expensive business—as anyone who has designed, built and fully finished a special will appreciate. The number of unfinished chassis and bodies in people's garages is testimony. Few ever manage to complete the project. But the Adams-Brown Sprite is no one-off. JWF Glass Fibre Industries will turn out fibre replicas for sale. JWF predict a big sale for the top and for the front, both together and as separate units. We're inclined to see their point.

We were told originally the Sprite got its bug-eye look because shortage of time forced BMC to cancel plans for retractable lights. Overseas designers were quick to take advantage of enthusiasts' demands for beautification, but up to now Australians have had to sit back and bear it.

(Continued on page 64)

Transformation

Stan Brown-designed nosepiece gives tiny Sprite a hunched, almost fierce look.



TURN THEIR THOUGHTS TO BMC'S BUG-EYED BABY.

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SPRITELY TRANSFORMATION

(Continued from page 13)

These days the Sprite is replacing the gap left behind by the square-rigger MGs and the like — small and fairly inexpensive sports cars which the average young man with some financial juggling and a kindly parent or relative could afford to buy. Cost of the fibre front and top, painted and installed, brings the car's total price back almost to the level it was before BMC made its recent £200 reduction — but for that you get plenty more car.

The Adams-Brown offering is one of the first in Australia for the Sprite. It is certainly the most ambitious. To cut costs, the pair joined forces with JWF—a small but highly successful outfit run by three very enthusiastic young men. Manufacturing each conversion car in aluminium would be a long process, and necessarily costly. So fibre it is. The prototype bonnet and hardtop in aluminium became the moulds for the fibreglass article. That method was used for Bill Buckle's highly successful Goggomobil Dart, which shows the results of having a perfect, ripple-free mould.

Clive Adams did not build the first conversion to an order. He bought a used Sprite and set his ideas down on a drawing board. Then for several weeks he and Brown hammered and rolled away on the aluminium replacements, sparing nothing in the way of expense or time to perfect the design.

The bonnet, shaped to blend in with the lines from the scuttle back, hinges on its original mountings and uses the production radiator grille, swept back at a sharper angle. A tapering chrome strip breaks up the bonnet line. Headlights are recessed in nacelles under detachable perspex covers. The wipers, moulded into the frontal curve of the mudguards, sit slightly above the headlights. Among other benefits, the replacement front brings a 30 lb weight reduction and a lower frontal area.

Chrome thumb screws clamp the hardtop to the windscreen pillars. It is held down at the back by three crocodile clips. The structure is very secure, but quite easily detachable — in fact it can be removed in less time than it takes to lower the Sprite's normal hood, which of course remains inside all the time.

Drip rails extend over both sides to keep rain well away from the cockpit, and the interior of the top is flock-sprayed to give added comfort and warmth. Headroom should be plenty for even the tallest drivers. The rear window is of perspex, held in place with rubber strip. The sidescreens fit so well that draughts have no chance of entering.

View through the (standard) windscreen is impressive. Vision

is up on the standard model. Both mudguards drop away quite sharply. What with a reduction in weight and better streamlining top speed goes up accordingly — probably as much as five to 10 mph.

Under CAMS regs, the converted car is eligible for GT racing only if the sidescreens are made non-detachable. Adams and Brown plan production soon of fibre headrests and tonneaus for Sprites, rather like the conversions they do for Berkeleys.

Another Approach

Meanwhile, J and S Fibre Glass (Sales) Pty Ltd, a rival Sydney fibre house, is busy with its own plans for the Sprite. J and S co-director Geoff Simmonds says his team prefers to concentrate on the less wealthy Sprite owner, who after all bought his car in the first place because it was cheap. Geoff reasons that the only thing wrong with BMC's original tin design is headlight placement. By relocating the lights in the customary place on top of the wings, J and S designer Len Moir has transformed the Sprite. As a by-product of his choice of fibreglass as a material, of course, he has gained a big weight advantage. Price at £45 including tax but without paint (£12/10/-) or fitting (£10) is dead low.

Finish is good. Sprayed body color, the front in place looks as if BMC put it there. It uses only the hardware from the original. Nothing else to buy.

Additionally, J and S offers a simple fibre hardtop for the Sprite. The top uses a stock Volkswagen rear window. It fits on to the normal hood clamps at the back and, using special clips, to the screen frame in front. Because of difficulties with a slight change in BMC's specification for the front hood fixing, the design for that part of the top was in the air as we went to press. J and S plan to remake their original mould, making for a neater joint. Cost of the finalised top will be £45 complete, plus £10 for spraying. #

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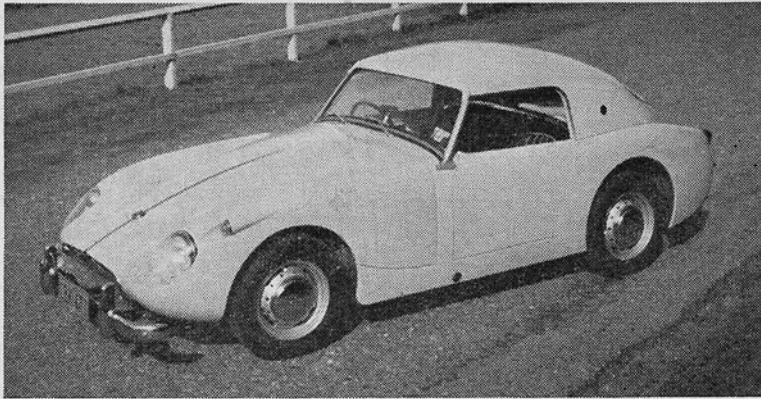
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