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JAP SPORTS CAR RELEASED HERE—FULL ROAD TEST

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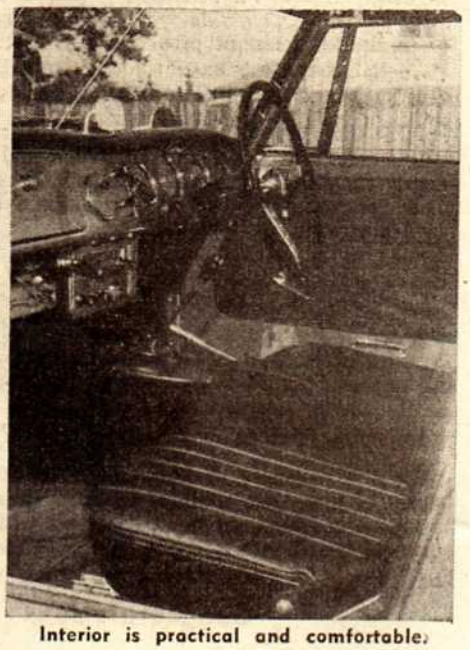
In this issue

The Fairlady is well styled and ruggedly built. Fog lights are standard fittings.

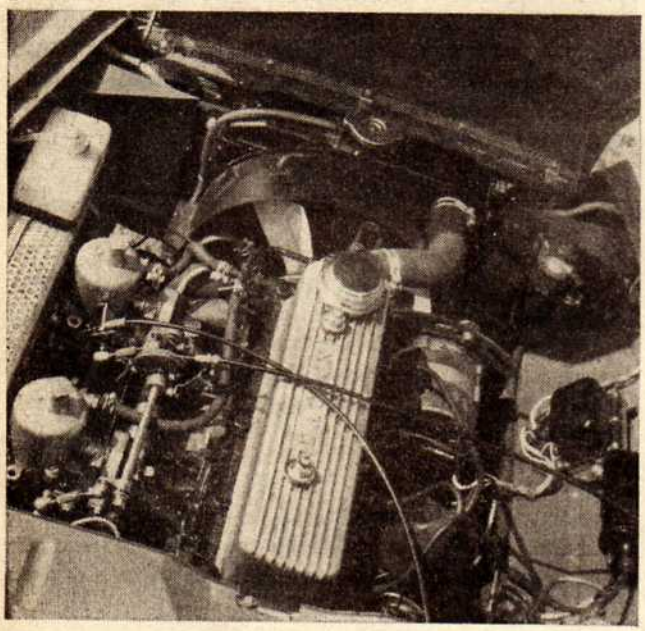


Interior is practical and comfortable.

DATSUN FAIRLADY

Story and pictures from BRUCE POLAN

The Datsun's engine, complete with alloy rocker cover and twin carburettors, develops 85 b.h.p.



THE Japanese have already shown a startled world that they are one of the most technically advanced manufacturers in many fields ranging from electronics to motor cycles.

Their cars have been praised for their rugged dependability and good finish even though specifications were not advanced and performance, although satisfactory, was nothing startling.

Now the Datsun company is moving into yet another field, formerly exclusively British, and is manufacturing the handsome Fairlady sports car. What's more, the new car has many features which make it a most desirable touring car.

One of the "new breed"

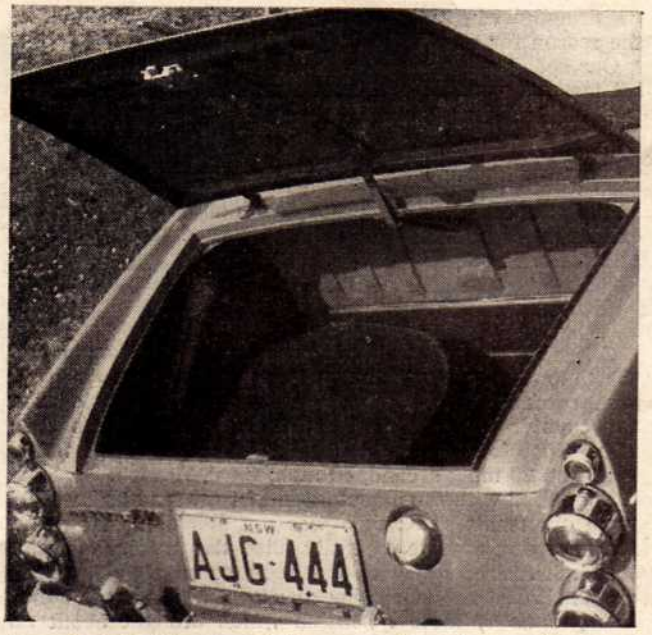
Styling, vaguely similar to the Austin Healey range, is neat, functional and sporty enough to suit those who buy this kind of car on appearance alone. The engine, an 85 bhp 1488 c.c. four cylinder unit, produces enough power to suit the man who buys a sports car to drive hard and fast.

The Fairlady is one of the "new breed" of sports cars. It is not a stark, hairy machine designed for racing but rather a well-equipped car for the more enthusiastic motorist. As this kind of car it rates well.

It seats three people, two in front and another in a rather ingenious crossways seat behind them, in reasonable comfort. Controls are well placed and it didn't take long to get the feel of the car. Acceleration was brisk, the gear change fast and the clutch as soft as silk.

First stop after picking up the car was at a hostelry where some of the more knowledgeable enthusiasts hang out. The Fairlady passed their keen scrutiny with flying colors, especially when they saw the way I could wind up the windows and lock the doors—something you could not do with sports cars in this price range until recent times.

The car is fully equipped with a heater-demister, individual fresh air controls for driver and passenger,



Boot is big enough for normal touring needs.

A JAPANESE SPORTS CAR WITH GOOD LOOKS AND PLENTY OF GO

windscreen washers, fog lamps, a map light and a reversing light as standard equipment.

Instrumentation is fair—there's a speedo, rev-counter, fuel gauge and temperature gauge, but the oil pressure and the electrics are guarded only by a pair of idiot lights.

Driving through Sydney's peak-hour traffic I found that 3000 rpm was all that was needed to keep with any other car and the all-synchro close ratio gearbox helped to make the usual tough job of threading through the evening chaos relatively simple.

Conventional, but rugged

When driving a car like the Fairlady with all its accessories and comfort it is difficult to realise how we enjoyed those spartan sports cars of a few years back so much. Despite its frills the Fairlady's construction is rugged — a characteristic of Japanese cars which is becoming appreciated more and more in Australia. This is one sports model which should not fall apart after a few thousand miles of pounding over our country roads.

A conventional design is used starting with a pressed steel braced box section chassis. The suspension is independent at the front, using unequal wishbones and coil springs, and at the rear there's a live rear axle and semi-elliptic leaf springs.

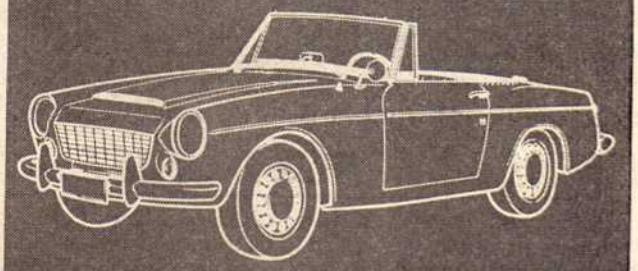
Steel disc wheels fitted with wide base rims are used with 5.60 x 13" Japanese Dunlop tyres.

At first the Fairlady's handling seemed to be anything but what you'd expect from a lady. I found the tail brake breaking away severely on corners with little warning. Then I found that some clot had put the front tyre pressures up to 32lb. and dropped the rear tyres to 20lb.

After changing things to 26lb. all round I found the handling had been transformed. There was no roughness in the front end and the rear held on like glue. From then on the cornering power of the Fairlady was almost "as

Continued Overleaf

DATSUN FAIRLADY



ENGINE: 4 cylinders ohv.
Bore and stroke, 80 x 74 mm.
Capacity: 1488 cc.
Output: 85 bhp at 5600 rpm.
Carburettor: Twin sidedraught.

TRANSMISSION: Four-speed, all synchromesh.

SUSPENSION:
Front: Independent coil springs and wishbones.
Rear: Live axle, with semi-elliptic leaf springs.

BRAKES: Hydraulic drum, 109 sq. ins.

STEERING: Cam and lever.

TYRES: 5.60 x 13 ins.

CHASSIS: Press box section with X member.

BODYWORK: Two-door, 2/3-seater sports.

DIMENSIONS:

Wheelbase: 89.8 ins.
Track: Front, 47.8 ins.; rear, 47.1 ins.
Length: 155.6 ins. Width: 58.9 ins.
Height: 50.2 ins. Ground Clearance: 6.3 ins.
Weight: 2365 lb.

PERFORMANCE:

0.30, 4.2 secs.; 0-40, 6.8 secs.; 0-50, 8.9 secs.; 0-60, 13.5 secs.
Max. Speed: 92 mph.
Fuel Consumption: 34 mpg.

PRICE: £1265 (inc. tax).

Clean, efficient styling should make the Fairlady a winner.

FAIRLADY ROAD TEST

quick as you're game." Corners could be taken at speed with all four wheels drifting and just a trace of understeer. When the limit was reached, the rear end would gently break away but embarrassment could be avoided by correct throttle control.

The distributors did not consider the car to be 100 per cent as taken on test. The reason is that it had been used, or "misused," very severely since new for innumerable demonstration and test drives. The major defect was a slipping clutch which prevented us from obtaining any rapid acceleration times and the engine was inclined to detonate under load and "run on" when switched off. This may well have been the result of a little too much carbon in the combustion chamber coupled with a 9 to 1 compression ratio. On the other hand the carburettor to manifold joint should normally have been a flexible neoprene mounting to counteract float bowl vibration. On the test car these mountings had cracked and, as none was available locally, it was necessary to use solid gaskets which appeared satisfactory at low revs but were probably the reason for a fall-off in power above 5200 rpm.

Our speedo check showed this instrument to be reading 3% fast at 30 and 40 mph and, using the corrected figures, we began our performance runs. Due to the slipping clutch only one attempt was made at the standing quarter-mile. Nevertheless a time of 19.5 secs. was recorded using only 5200 rpm, which meant pulling into top gear for the last 50 yards or so. With a decent clutch and, say, 500 to 600 extra rpm, it should be possible to reduce these times by at least one second.

Top speed 92 mph

Official details were not available; however, we estimated the following speeds in the gears per 1000 rpm. First 4 mph, second 8 mph, third 13 mph and top 17.5 mph. The rev counter was red-lined at 5250 rpm through to 6000 rpm. Therefore, change points and speedo readings would be: First, 20 mph; second, 40 mph; third, 70 mph.

Compared with the manufacturers' top speed claim of 96 mph, our result of 92 mph was not startling. However, the following day we carefully filled the tank to capacity to check fuel economy on our 100-mile run to Oran Park and back. At the same time the local Shell dealer added two gallons of methyl benzine which brought about an appreciable change to the engine. All detonation and running on disappeared and we detected a clearer note at high revolutions. It was unfortunate we were unable to conduct further performance tests using this fuel as a comparison, but no doubt there would have been some improvement. Our trip was most pleasant and the Fairlady carried two adults, two young children and the necessary gear for a day at Oran Park without difficulty. Petrol consumption measured on return gave the result of 34.3 mpg.

It appears that the Datsun Sports will be assured of a ready market when deliveries commence in a "few months" time. The price will be approximately £1265 including tax, and for this the buyer certainly gets sports car looks and performance in the modern manner.

Another Japanese car for Australian market

A NEWCOMER to Australian motoring, the Toyota Tiara 1500 was released in Victoria by Australian Motor Industries Ltd. on October 7.

The Tiara 1500 is the first Japanese car to be assembled in Australia, and AMI are confident that it will become a popular seller in the under £1000 bracket. The sedan is priced at £915; the station wagon version is £999; and the utility £849.

Mr. K. R. Hougham, managing director of AMI, said recently the first Tiaras would contain initially 50 per cent local content and this would be increased progressively.

The four-door Tiara seats five and is powered by a four-cylinder 1452 cc, 65 bhp ohv motor which gives a top speed of 85 mph.

The Tiara is a special export model from the Toyota Motor Company, which is the oldest and largest manufacturer of cars and trucks in Japan.

Assembly kits and bulk shipments of spare parts for the Tiara 1500 were shipped to Melbourne early in April and assembly at AMI and distribution of spares throughout the dealer chain began almost immediately to ensure Australia-wide availability of spare parts to Tiara 1500 owners.

The car has three forward gears, with the gear change adjacent to the driving column.

Specifications of the Toyota Tiara 1500:
Length: 13ft. 1½in.
Width: 4ft. 10½in.
Height: 4ft. 8¾in.
Weight: 2160 lbs.
Wheel base: 7ft. 10½in.
Wheel tread: 4ft. ½in.
Ground clearance: 6.7in.
Turning circle: 34ft.
Engine: Toyota model R, 4-cylinder, 4-cycle OHV, 1452 cc.
Compression ratio: 8:0.
Maximum hp: 65 bhp at 4500 rpm.
Maximum gross torque: 83.6 ft-lb. at 3000 rpm.
Gears: 3 forward 1 reverse. Synchromesh on all three forward gears.
Braking: Foot—Hydraulic, operating all four wheels. Hand—Mechanical operating rear wheels.
Suspension: Front independent torsion bar with double-acting heavy duty shock absorbers. Rear semi-elliptic 5 leaf springs with double acting heavy duty shock absorbers.

The Toyopet Tiara — first Jap car assembled in Australia.