

TRACK REPORT: Supercharged LYNX PEUGEOT

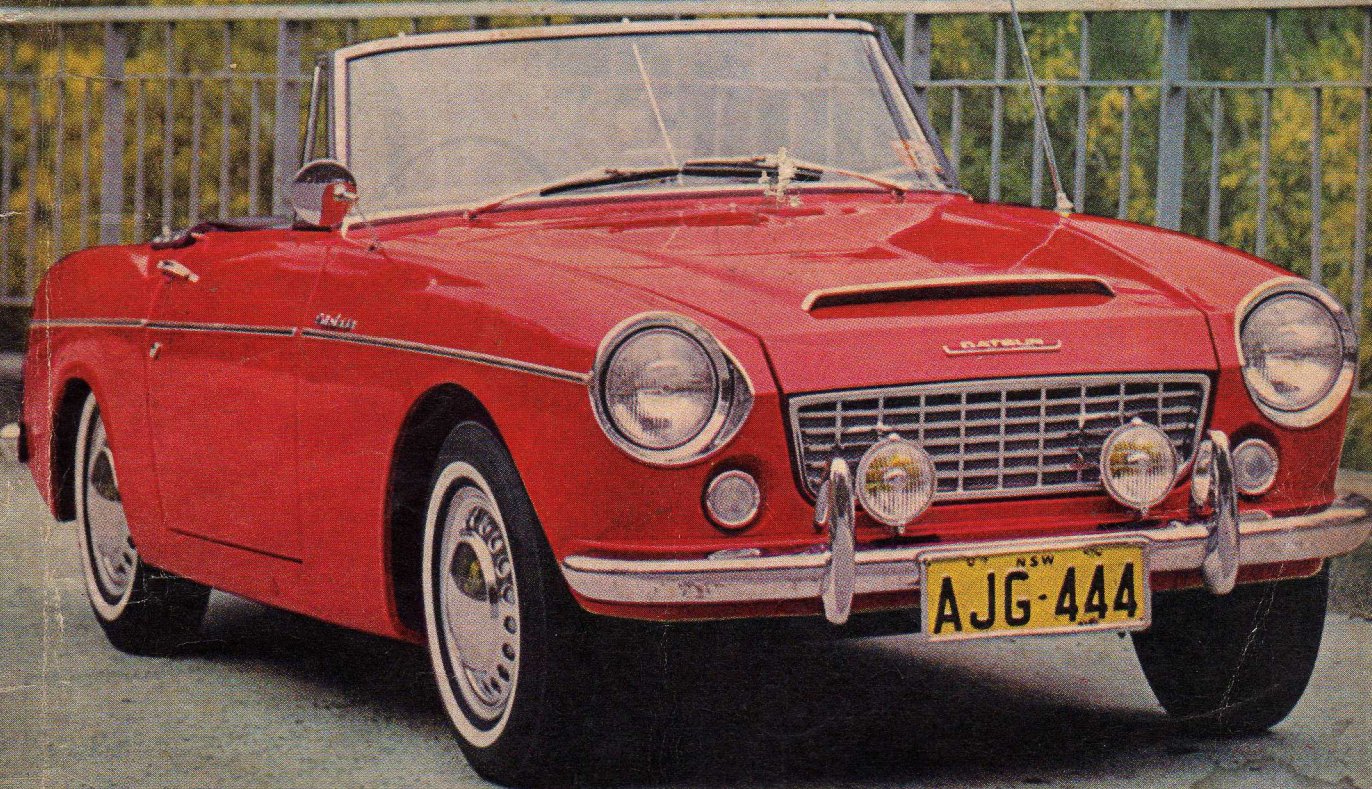
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SPORTS CAR WORLD

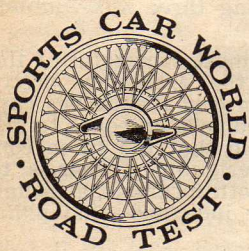
Registered at the GPO, Sydney, for transmission by post as a periodical.

DECEMBER, 1963

Datsun Fairlady

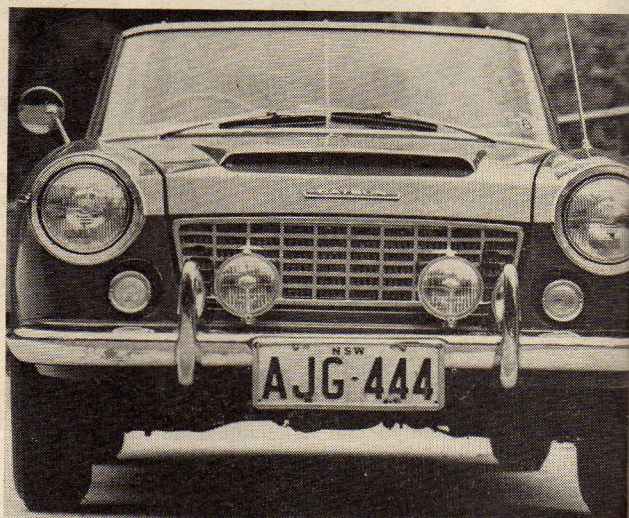


FULL ROAD TEST: JAPANESE RIVAL TO MGB ▲
FORMULA JUNIOR . . . Where to Now ?



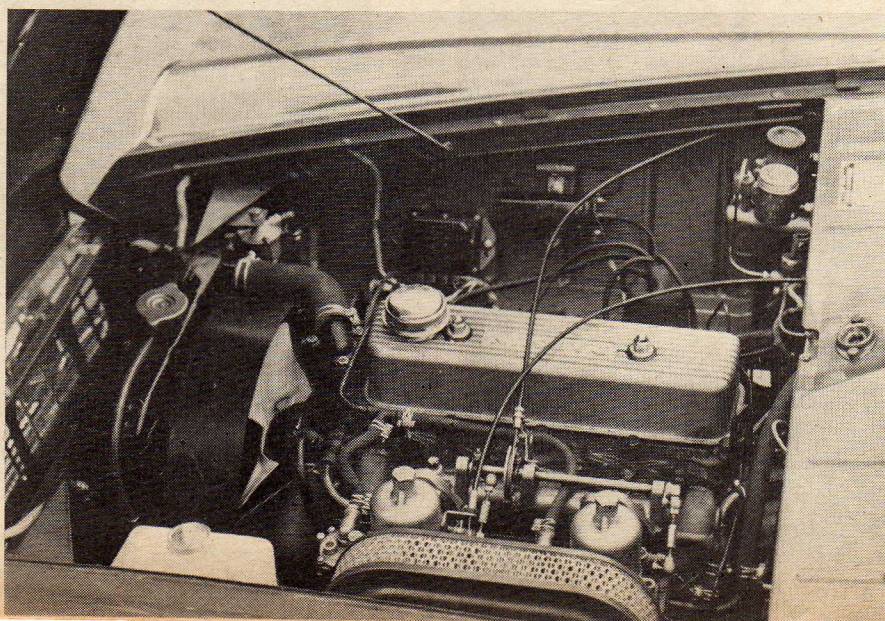
CHRIS
BECK
DRIVES

DATSUN'S FAIR LADY

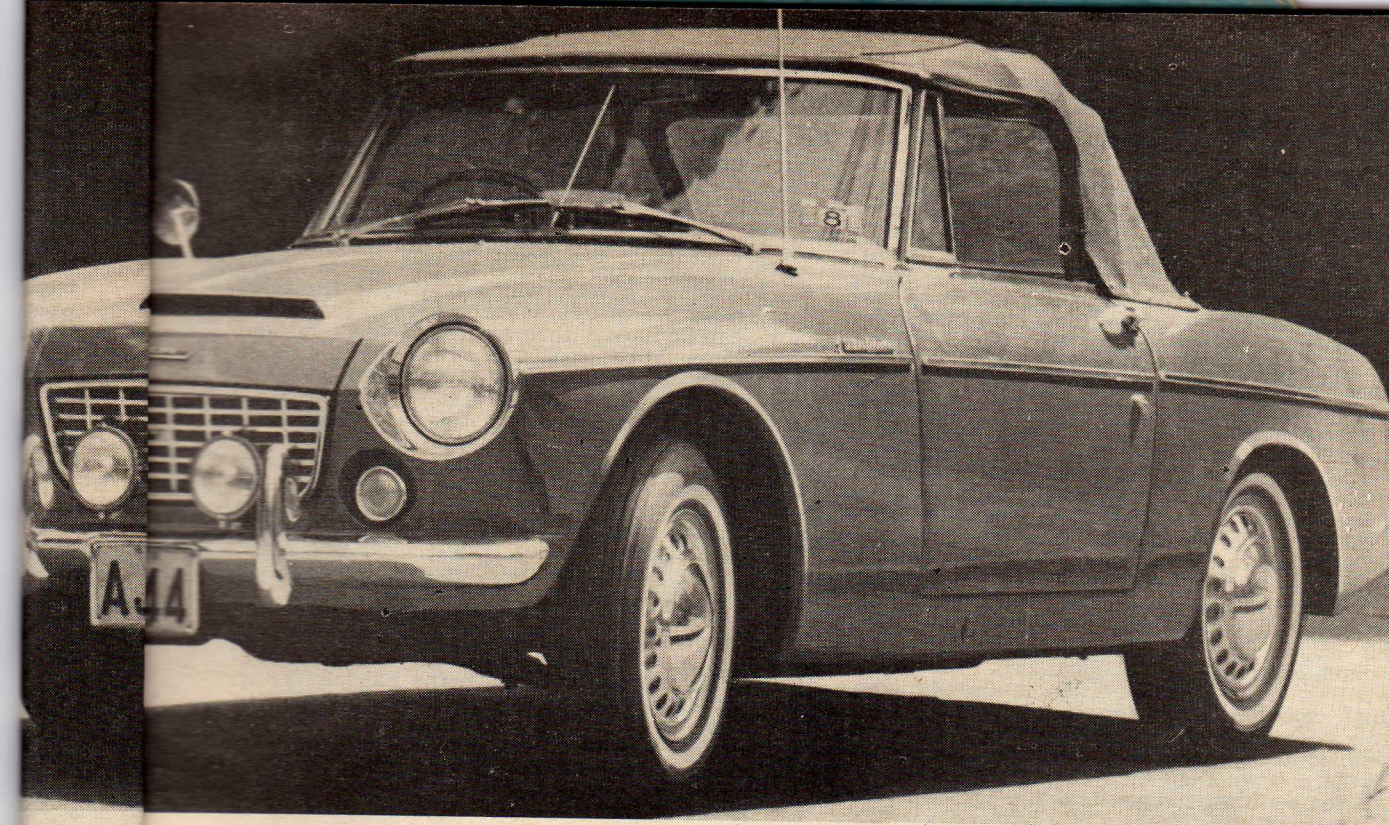


Above: The rear of the car is faintly over-ornamented. Filler cap protruding from the right of the number plate looks asymmetrical. Foglights are fitted as standard equipment. At the front the car is neat, pretty and conventional, but not extremely ornate.

Right: The 1488 cc four cylinder motor develops 85 bhp at 5800 rpm. It will push the car to a maximum speed of more than 100 mph but only in favorable conditions.



RATHER hit the first At first Nippon one or two The Italian tied up a seemed to — would car our and served standard might be At first the Fair the same sculpted far to the discerning is lower air scoop knowing apparent from any A close 1966's Car has the side and different. Sub-compact indentation temporary straight trailing easily. Exterior type and sides. A headlight just short The part one on to which side Below the backing it is selected standard



RATHER like sukiyaki — containing a little bit of everything — the Datsun Fairlady is the first Japanese sports car to reach Australia. At first we brushed off the importation of these Nipponese “beauties” with the thought that only one or two and no more would be brought out.

The feeling was that BMC, Rootes and Australian Motor Industries had the soft-top market tied up and another car — which on the surface seemed to offer no more or do its job any better — would not really sell well. After testing the car our opinions changed drastically. If the sales and servicing facilities are up to competitors' standards this end, then the Fairlady could eat a mighty large hole in the sports car market cake.

At first glance, front-on, most people mistake the Fairlady for the Fiat 1600s Cabriolet—it has the same type of grille, and the headlights are sculpted back into the mudguards in a way similar to the Renault Floride's. It takes the most discerning eye several seconds to realise that it is lower than the Fiat and the bonnet, with the air scoop moulded into it, helps deceive the unknowing. Take a long, hard look and it becomes apparent that this eye-pleasing line is different from any other car's.

A closed comparison of the Fairlady with the 1600s Cabriolet will show that the latter is higher, has the airscoop/power bulge on the left-hand side and the grille and headlight placement is different.

Slab-sided, devoid of any horizontal bumps or indentations, the car in profile follows the contemporary European trend of having a perfectly straight upper edge which gently slopes from the trailing edge of the doors to the tail light assembly. Exterior door handles are of the push button type and there are key operated locks on both sides. A chromium trim strip runs from the headlight surround down the length of the car to just short of the amber tail-light.

The parking, tail and braking lights are stacked one on top of another on the angular, flat rear which slopes up to the lip of the boot lid. Below the rear bumper is a clear rectangular backing light which operates only when reverse is selected. A lockable fuel filler cap is fitted as standard and is situated at the right of the num-

Initially the Fairlady understeers before breaking away to oversteer. Roadholding is good, but not exceptional. It is sensitive to tyre pressures.

ber plate mounting. The semi-wraparound windscreen is cleaned by single-speed non-parallel action wipers which leave an unswept vee in the centre.

Probably the item our staff most disliked of this car was its complex hood arrangement. Erection of the hood is slow and tedious; the best time I managed was 6 min 55 sec. Things have to be unscrewed here and screwed up there but when the operation is complete the car is reasonably weather-proof. Wind-up side windows, which require two-and-a-half turns to fully raise them, also contribute to the airtightness of the car. At speed, the hood flaps wildly, but this is a problem in cars costing far more. It seems rather astonishing, though, that Japanese ingenuity has not devised some simpler form of soft-top.

Like most mass production European sports cars, a lockable boot is provided, but one would be hard pressed to fit a medium sized travel case into it. Obviously the solution to this problem is the use of soft baggage. A vinyl-covered spare tyre lies on the floor and the jack and tools are packed beside it.

Actuated by a cable pull under the dash near the driver's right knee, the bonnet opens forward to give a remarkable amount of access to the engine, which nestles in a clean, tidy bay with everything well within reach.

As in the Austin Healey Sprite and Triumph Spitfire, the car is available only with pressed metal wheels, which are fitted with a chromium wheel trim as standard. Personally, I feel the car would have a greater appeal if it were fitted with the traditional wire wheels with knock-off hubs but undoubtedly economics play a big part in producing for such a low price, and these attractive extras would make it a much more expensive proposition. During the test, the right rear wheel trim rattled and groaned most persistently and at first our testers thought a wheel bearing had run-

The general opinion of our staff was that the body design lacked complete individuality and owed some lines to other cars, but styling is an intensely personal thing and probably many will vehemently disagree. Like Topsy, the shape grew on us and when the time came to return the car we had to admit that even though the coachwork was not revolutionary or extremely aerodynamic, it was far from being the ugliest sports car around. In fact — we will now stab ourselves in the back — we rather like it.

Executed immaculately, the interior is entirely original and Datsun really deserves top marks for such a high standard of finish. No rude steering wheels for the Fairlady; the wheel is a drilled alloy tri-spoke with a plastic rim.

In the centre is an imitation mother-of-pearl horn boss with a small inset "dee", for Datsun. On the passenger's side of the dash there is a lockable glove locker and grab handle while the entire top and leading edge is crash padded. To the right of the glove locker is a round pull-out ash tray and beside this the push/pull lights and wiper switches. On the driver's half of the fascia, which is finished in a matte black to reduce reflection, are four dials of equal size. From right to left they are: an automatic clock, an optimistic 120 mph speedometer with an odometer in the centre, a Kanto Seiki 6000 rpm tachometer which is redlined at 5500 rpm. To the left of these three dials there is another that houses the fuel and water temperature gauges and the ignition and oil pressure light. It seems a pity that a car which is so well instrumented has no oil pressure gauge — considered essential by most sports car purists.

Above the transmission tunnel, attached to the fascia, is a console which contains the heater and navigation light switches, the cigar lighter and the radio, which is classified as an extra. A small amber light glows to indicate the heater is on.

Sprouting from the tunnel just to the rear of the console is the 10 in long chromium plated gear lever topped by a white-patterned, black plastic knob. Although its movement is short and

fairly crisp it is difficult to operate because of the short-reach. Beside the driver there is a pull-up ratchet-type handbrake which works on the rear wheels only, but held the car even on the steepest hills.

Well padded, but giving little lateral support the bucket seats are adjustable for length, and the backrests hinge forward to give access to the rear passenger's seat, which is placed transversely across the car. On hard cornering, both occupants can be moved, thrown around severely. The rear seat could be used — we seem to say this about so many sports cars, but it is true — for carrying two young children or an adult for short distances. This rear area is also excellent for carrying the miscellaneous items that usually find their way into a sports car and on long journeys would supplement boot luggage space.

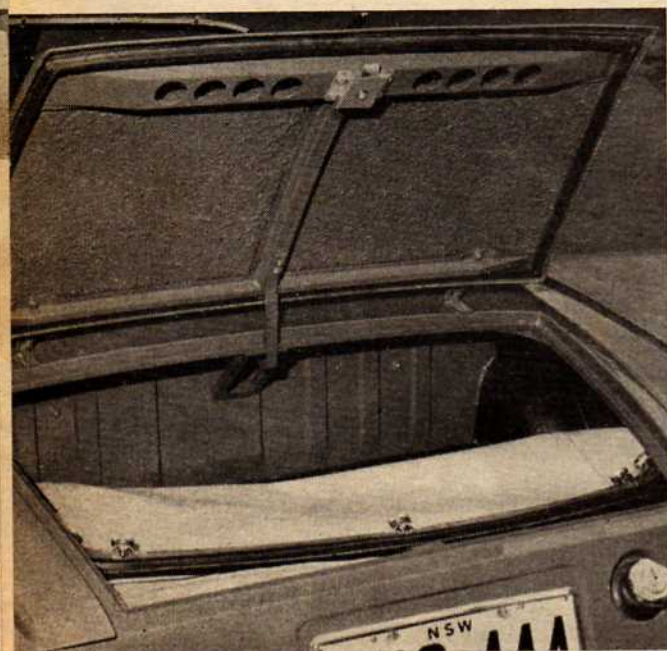
Unlike most European sports cars under £2000 that are imported into Australia, the Fairlady is fully carpeted throughout. The test car was fitted with a completely black interior save for the dash panel, which was in the same lustrous flame red as the exterior.

Wide-opening doors make the age-old leg-bending entry problem out of date and it is probably as easy to enter or leave the Fairlady as an ordinary family sedan. During our testing with the hood down and the side windows wound down, wind rushed right across the interior, but this was lessened by winding the side windows up. Although it did not completely alleviate the problem it did improve interior conditions above 50 mph. Operation of the clutch, brake and accelerator requires medium to heavy pedal pressures and the dimmer foot-switch is well located on the left-hand side of the clutch pedal. When cruising at high speed there is plenty of room for the driver to put his feet and relax. One thing that really did get on our nerves while testing was that the driver and passenger continually knocked their knees against the window winders, which are placed low on the door.

For its performance one would think that a two-litre motor was housed under the air/scooped bonnet. Staff members were most surprised at the way the car accelerated and the times it recorded through the quarter mile.

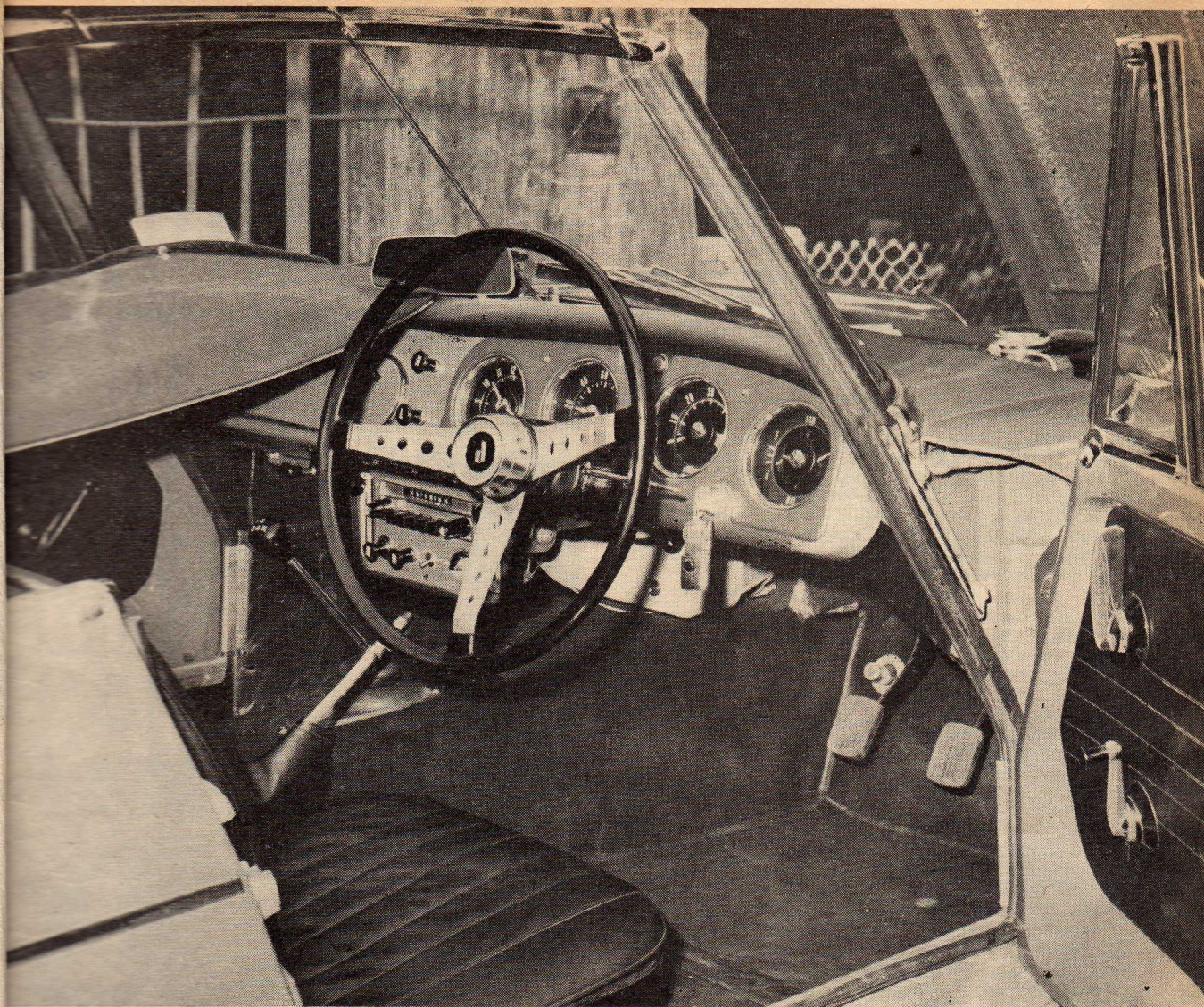
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Only big enough to carry a very small travel case, the boot would nevertheless put away a lot of soft baggage.



PERFORMANCE

Top speed average	96.1 mph
Fastest run	96.7 mph
Maximum, first	30 mph
Maximum, second	47 mph
Maximum, third	78 mph
Maximum, fourth	NA
Standing quarter mile average	19.3 seconds
Fastest run	18.7 seconds
0 to 30 mph	3.8 seconds
0 to 40 mph	6.6 seconds
0 to 50 mph	9.6 seconds
0 to 60 mph	14.4 seconds
0 to 70 mph	20.4 seconds
0 to 80 mph	26.2 seconds
0 to 90 mph	NA
0 to 100 mph	NA
0 to 60 mph to 0	16.4 seconds
40 to 60 mph	Top 10.2 secs Third 8.5 seconds
50 to 70 mph	11.0 secs 9.0 seconds
60 to 80 mph	10.1 secs 8.9 seconds



Well laid out, the interior is comfortable and functional.

Brake fade resistance on test hill	78 percent
Fuel Consumption, overall	NA mpg
Fuel Consumption, cruising	NA mpg

SPECIFICATIONS

CHASSIS AND BODY DIMENSIONS:

Wheelbase	8 ft 6 in
Track, front	4 ft 0 in
Track, rear	3 ft 11 in
Ground clearance	6 $\frac{3}{4}$ in
Turning circle	32 ft
Turns, lock to lock	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Overall length	13 ft
Overall width	4 ft 11 in
Overall height	4 ft 2 in

CHASSIS:

Steering type	cam and lever
Brake type	drums, all round

Swept area	109 sq in
Suspension, front	independent, wishbones, coil springs
Suspension, rear	live axle, inverted semi-elliptic springs
Shock absorbers	telescopic
Tyre size	560 x 13
Weight	18 cwt
Fuel tank capacity	9.5 gals
Approx cruising range	285 miles

ENGINE:

Cylinders	four, in line
Bore and stroke	80 mm x 74 mm
Cubic capacity	1488 cc
Compression ratio	9 to 1
Fuel requirement	100 octane
Valves	pushrod, overhead
Maximum power	85 bhp at 5800 rpm
Maximum torque	92 ft/lbs at 4400 rpm