

UGLY DUCKLING

Le Mans Sprite

The Donald Healey Motor Co. produced a special Austin Healey Sprite for Le Mans. This consisted of normal Sprite components fitted with an alloy body to the new F.I.A. regulations, then the car was modified to the same stage available for a normal Sprite. The engine was tuned to give over 70 mph and disc brakes were fitted together with a close-ratio gearbox, wire wheels, stiffer suspension — in fact, the lot! The effort was worth while, for the Sprite ran away from the D.B.'s, Fiat-Abarts and Ocas to win the under 1,000 cc. class at Le Mans.



Inelegant but effective, alloy-bodied Sprite took first in class at Le Mans, finished 20th overall.

I received an email from Mike “the Sprite” Edworthy. Always on the look out for interesting snippets on Sprite themes, he had struck up a conversation, with his good friend (and Lotus Guru / Author) Michael Oliver, also a resident of Witney, West Oxfordshire. Their conversation drifted onto the subject of the little Falcon Sprite - the “Ugly Duckling”, which came good. Ed.

Hi Rod - A possible little magazine article.

Mike Oliver sent me some info on an unusual Sprite at Le-Mans in 1960. I've done a bit of research. The Falcon Sprite was built by Roger Menandue in 1958 for the Nassau race using a kit body on a Sprite chassis. It won its class there!

John Sprinzel and John Lumkin raced it at Sebring in March 1960. During practice Geoff Healey was concerned that Sprinzel was using too many revs and the engine would not last, so they asked Stirling Moss (who was competing in a Maserati) to take it out for a run. After 3 laps he knocked 4 second off Sprinzels time using lower revs!.

They went on to finish 41st with a class win after being delayed with a blown head gasket.

Hope this is some use to you.

Cheers

Mike (the Sprite).

Michael Oliver wrote:

Here's a couple of pics of the unusual-looking Sprite I mentioned to you yesterday that raced at Le Mans. Judging by the dates (the news took a while to get to Canada!) the car must have competed in the 1960 Le Mans. The car had a 996cc engine and finished 16th overall and 1st in the up to 1000cc class. Drivers were John Dalton from Derbyshire and an Amercian I am not familiar with, called John Colgate (who seems to have had a background racing Austin-Healeys in SCCA events in the US).

John Dalton was very much a club racer who competed for fun. He was the grandson of the founder of Dalton & Co, a supplier initially of veterinary products to local farmers in the early 1900s who diversified into lubricants, launching the Silkolene brand in 1962 (initially of petroleum jellies but which later was used for the company's lubricants). So he wasn't short of money!

In 1962 he funded the construction of a pair copies of a Lotus 18/21 Formula 1 car for a young up-and-coming New Zealand driver called Tony Shelly and fellow Derbyshire man Tim Parnell and he did actually sub for Parnell in a non-Championship Formula 1 race at Mallory Park that year, when Parnell was unable to drive due to being unwell. Later on, in the 1970s, Dalton also provided the finance for the abortive Amon Formula 1 car, for another better known Kiwi driver, Chris Amon.

Anyway, hope this is of some interest!

All the best

Mike (Oliver)

We are grateful for the two cuttings showing the 1960 Le Mans “Falcon” Sprite, taken from Canadian Track & Traffic Magazine's Sept 1960 and Jan 1961 issues. Ed.



FIRST IN CLASS

Austin-Healey Sprite averages 85.58 mph at 1960 Le Mans

Hard-driven in the famous 24-hour Le Mans classic, this modified Austin-Healey Sprite covered over 2000 miles to win its class against cars costing hundreds more. Performance like this has made the Austin-Healey Sprite one of the world's most popular sports cars. And there's more! At its price it's the world's best sports car value, too! See and drive your new Austin-Healey Sprite - today!

Test-Drive the Austin-Healey Sprite for '61



LISTE OFFICIELLE DES VOITURES VÉRIFIÉES

NUMERO des voitures	MARQUE de la voiture	CYLINDREE	VOITURE engagée par	PREMIER CONDUCTEUR (Brossard vert)	DEUXIEME CONDUCTEUR (Brossard rouge)	NUMERO des voitures
1	CHEVROLET-CORV.	1441 cmc.	B. S. Cunningham	B. S. CUNNINGHAM	W. E. KIMBERLEY	1
2	CHEVROLET-CORV.	1440 cmc.	B. S. Cunningham	R. R. THOMPSON	P. N. WINBRIDGE	2
3	CHEVROLET-CORV.	1440 cmc.	B. S. Cunningham	F. FITH	R. E. GIBSON	3
4	JAGUAR	2.997 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	T. JELLEY	F. GAMBLE	4
5	JAGUAR	2.997 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	R. LOCKHART	R. HALPHED	5
6	ASTON-MARTIN	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	W. L. HANSON	R. S. GUNDSY	6
7	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	B. SALADONI	J. CLARK	7
8	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	M. L. BAILEY	J. C. FAUDIAN	8
9	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	V. G. VON TRIPS	P. HILL	9
10	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	W. WARDEN	P. GONZALEZ	10
11	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	P. EBBE	C. GONZALEZ	11
12	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	C. S. BARTON	P. GONZALEZ	12
13	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	A. G. WHITEHEAD	H. C. TAYLOR	13
14	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	P. JAVAN	P. LONDEL	14
15	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	R. RODRIGUEZ	A. GONNEE	15
16	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	G. KRIST	P. DAST	16
17	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	W. STUBBS	P. DAST	17
18	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	L. BANGH	18
19	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	M. SORLET	19
20	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	L. C. GANER	20
21	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	C. DABH	21
22	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	C. DABH	22
23	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	C. DABH	23
24	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	C. DABH	24
25	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	C. DABH	25
26	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	C. DABH	26
27	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	C. DABH	27
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47	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	C. DABH	47
48	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	C. DABH	48
49	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	C. DABH	49
50	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	C. DABH	50
51	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	C. DABH	51
52	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	C. DABH	52
53	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	C. DABH	53
54	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	C. DABH	54
55	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	C. DABH	55
56	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	C. DABH	56
57	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	C. DABH	57
58	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	C. DABH	58
59	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	C. DABH	59
60	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	C. DABH	60
61	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	C. DABH	61
62	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	C. DABH	62
63	FERRARI	2.960 cmc.	Canard U.S.A. RT	J. HANON	C. DABH	63



Sélection I.P.O. • Bureaux : 34, Bd de l'Yser, PARIS - 17 • GAL 76-13
USINES : 14, Boulevard Maréchal-Foch - EPINAY-SUR-SEINE (Seine)