

**Luxurious Zephyr-based coupes
with 120 b.h.p. engines
will cost £1750 with tax**



STYLING is sleek, finish impeccable. Bonnet air-scoop grille is still to be fitted.

NEW PLASTIC CAR BUILT HERE

FULL marks to Nat (Buck) Buchanan for this original and beautifully finished plastic sports coupe, recently completed in Sydney.

Based on a Zephyr chassis, it has a body made entirely of fibreglass and ducoed a rich tomato-red. The prototype is powered with a hotted Consul engine, but when Buchanan markets the car, customers will be offered a choice of Consul or Zephyr unit.

Biggest feature of the car, apart from the remarkable finish, is its light weight. With front seats fitted and a full petrol tank (10 gallons) the Consul-powered model tips the scales at 15½ cwt. A Zephyr engine will raise this to 16 cwt.

Unlike several other local attempts at plastic-car production, Buchanan's

venture appears to have a real chance of success. Determined not to go off half-cocked with a car that's only partly ready for the market, Nat won't offer his new model to the public until he has production well under way. This, to Nat, means a stock-in-hand of six completed cars and an immediate capacity for turning out one new car per week.

If the car performs as well as it looks, and sells for the estimated price of £1750 with tax (that's with the Zephyr engine—the Consul version will cost about £70 less), we'll bet Nat's only problem will be keeping the queue in order.

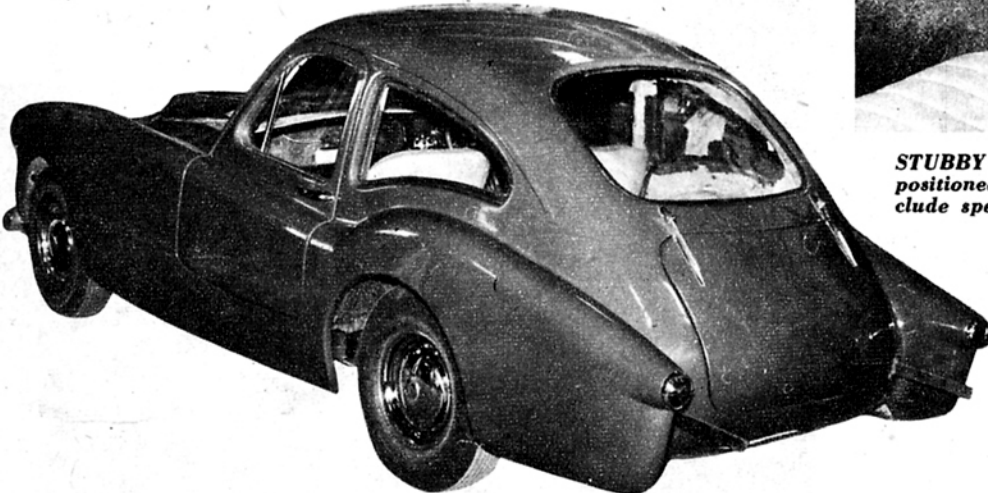
Both engines will be fitted with Buchanan-Warneford multiple-carburettor conversions which give the

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STUBBY gear lever is well positioned; instruments include speedo and rev counter.

VAST rear window is plastic, too. Bumper bar wasn't ready for our cameraman.



PLASTIC CAR

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Zephyr power-pack a developed horsepower of 120 and the Consul 80 (with the new-model engines).

Standard diff ratios will be retained, but others will be supplied on request. Nat expects the car to reach 120 m.p.h. with the Zephyr engine, 95 to 100 with the Consul.

Gearbox is also a standard three-speed Ford unit, although a sporty floor lever rings the changes instead of the normal steering-column shift. A four-speed MG box will be offered as an optional extra, along with wire wheels and a few other variations on the original theme.

Only breakaway from the Ford chassis and suspension system is at the front end, where Peugeot-type front springing has been introduced.

Interior trimming is tastefully and faultlessly carried out, while the polished wood-grained dashboard comprises glovebox, radio grille, speedo, rev counter, oil pressure and water temperature gauges, plus oil and ignition warning lights.

Two comfortable bucket seats are installed in front, while the rear seat will accommodate two children comfortably or two adults sardine-fashion.

There is a fair space for luggage,

or a lot of space without any rear-seat passengers.

A neat boot lid gives access to luggage and to the spare wheel, which lies on the floor and fits ingeniously into the curve of the horseshoe-shaped petrol tank, to keep the centre of gravity as low as possible. Ground clearance of 7 inches is very generous for such a low, sporty car.

Engine is most accessible under the rear-hinged bonnet lid, and good access to the gearbox area can be obtained by lifting the red-carpet-trimmed tunnel forward of the front seats.

First deliveries of the car are expected to be made within six months. Nat thinks he will call it the Sabre but says he may yet change his mind about the name. • • •

ALL THE WAY . . .

(Continued from page 21)

Travelling fast to make up time lost in tyre-changes at Broome, we crested a small rise at 60 and found the far side deeply rutted with bulldust holes. The front suspension bottomed with a thud that shook the whole car, then the front flung up and the car buck-jumped to a halt, with crew and contents scrambled inside.

We set off again, but found a few miles later that the flexing of the motor in the rubber mounts had opened up a small seam in the radiator, and we were losing our cooling system water. We finally overcame the trouble by using seawater from the Indian Ocean.

Our second encounter with bulldust holes was on the Roy Hill-Meckatharra section. Again, the

holes came suddenly in a patch of good road. The car, tossed like a small boat on a rough sea, stopped with its tie-rod smashed, the front wheels toed-out at 60 degrees and the interior a confused mess of bodies, coffee and cut lunches. Repair of this damage set us back several hundred points.

Tyres Lasted Well

Tyre manufacturers have come nearer to meeting the needs of out-back Australia than the designers of front suspensions and shock-absorber systems. Few cases of tyre failure were reported on the trial, although competitors complained that supplies of new tyres were inadequate at Fitzroy Crossing, Broome and Port Hedland, where they were needed most. With many others, we spent half an hour chasing around Broome's scattered garages and stores in an attempt to buy two tyres.

The tyre discovery of both the Mobilgas and Ampol trials was the new Olympic winter tread, which resembles some of the European snow treads in its close zig-zag pattern. We used two of these winter treads on the rear wheels of the Customline from Sydney to Perth, and found they gave even greater traction on loose going than the lug-and-rib types used in previous trials, gave much more resistance to slide on corners, and were quieter on bitumen. Unfortunately, makers hadn't been able to lay down stocks of the new pattern in W.A.

Costly Organisation

The Vacuum Oil Company spared no expense in organising the trial—guesses at the budget ranged from £80,000 to £100,000. They even transported a catering staff to lonely Fitzroy Crossing, at a cost of £400, to serve two meals to the 100-odd crew members who got that far.

Despite the thoroughness of the arrangements, some things went wrong. Biggest error, of course, was re-routing the field away from the difficult sections towards the end. If the organisers regarded the route as flexible, they would have done better to scrap the Kajabbi stretch, or else set a more reasonable speed for it.

Mr. MOTORIST!

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