

SPORTS CARS

and Specials

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SPORTS CARS, P. 12**

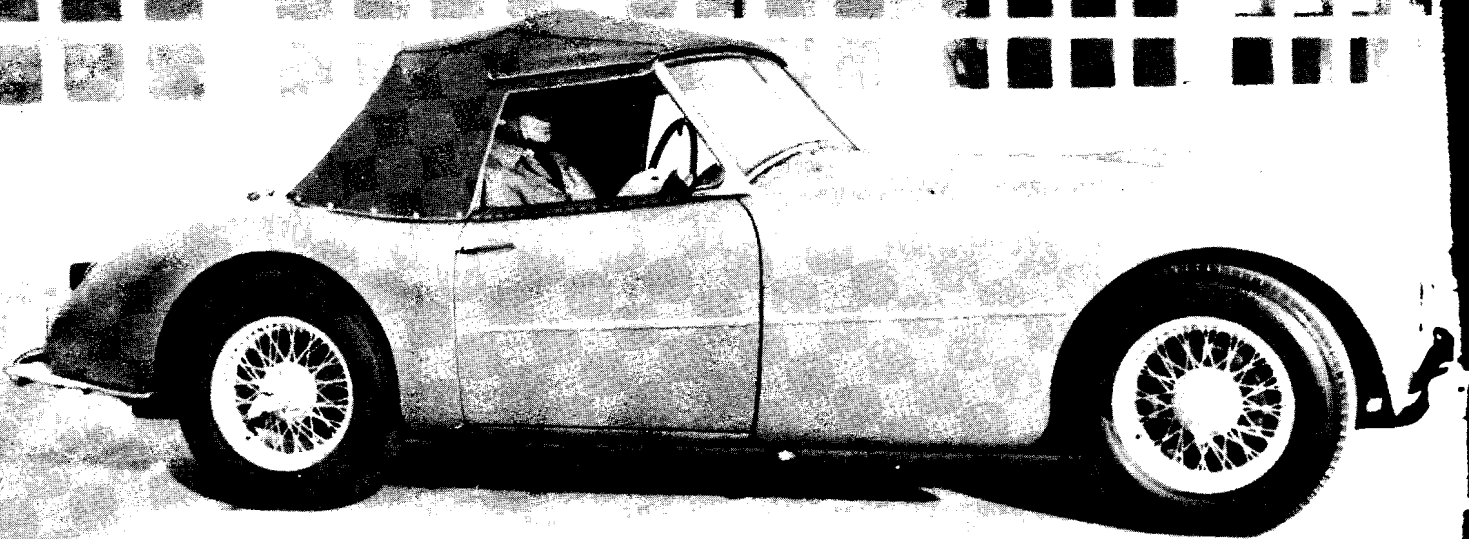


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Doretti is a Crowd-Stopper

ABOVE: With the hood up, Doretti offers good weather protection. The rear window is big enough to atone to some degree for the lack of quarter lights . . .

By IAN FRASER

A FRIEND was recently lent a sleek grey sports car for a short drive. He parked the vehicle in Flinders St., Melbourne, and rushed into Tattersall's to buy a lottery ticket. Five minutes later he returned to find his car was the centre of the day's biggest traffic jam. Hundreds of pedestrians, dozens of car drivers and a few trams had all stopped to look at and admire that elegant Swallow Doretti.

Although the Doretti has an Italian name, it's made by one of England's most famous car builders—the Swallow Coachbuilding Co., of Staffordshire. Before

the war they made the low and fascinating SS sports cars.

Because it's using the same motor and transmission as the Triumph TR 2, people are inclined to think that the Doretti is a snob version of the Triumph. Far from it. The newcomer has a tubular steel chassis, longer wheel-base and the motor seven inches further back in the frame.

Only a very limited number of Dorettis were landed in Australia before the new models arrived recently. The distinctly Continental lines, plus the name Doretti on the front make this car a real crowd-stopper.

Moderately priced at a little under £1,600, the Swallow offers high speed luxury for two people.

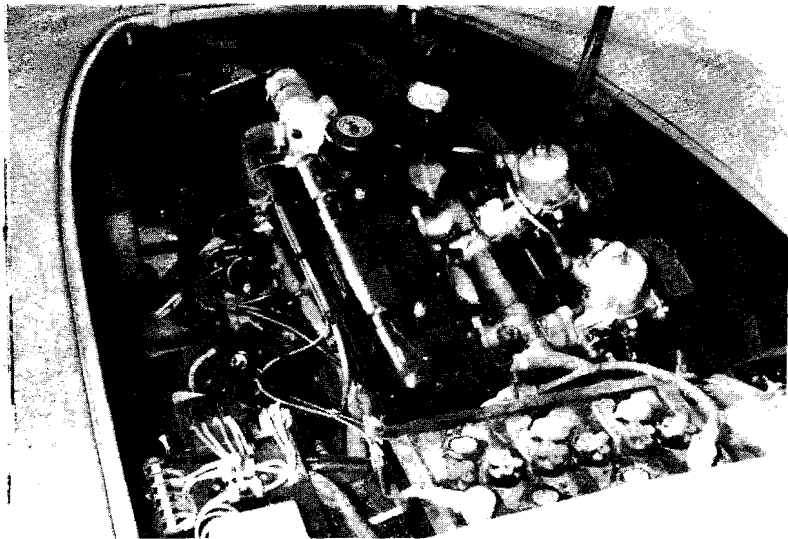
The latest Dorettis have wire wheels and an electric Laycock de Normanville overdrive as standard equipment, putting the car well into the 100-m.p.h. class.

Weighing just on 18½ cwt., the Swallow scales the same as the Triumph, in spite of a heavier-looking, all-enveloped body. The body construction uses the double skin principle with a 22-gauge steel inner shell and 16-gauge aluminium outer skin. The complete body shell is bolted onto the chassis, but sections of it can easily be removed for unbending in the event of a smash.

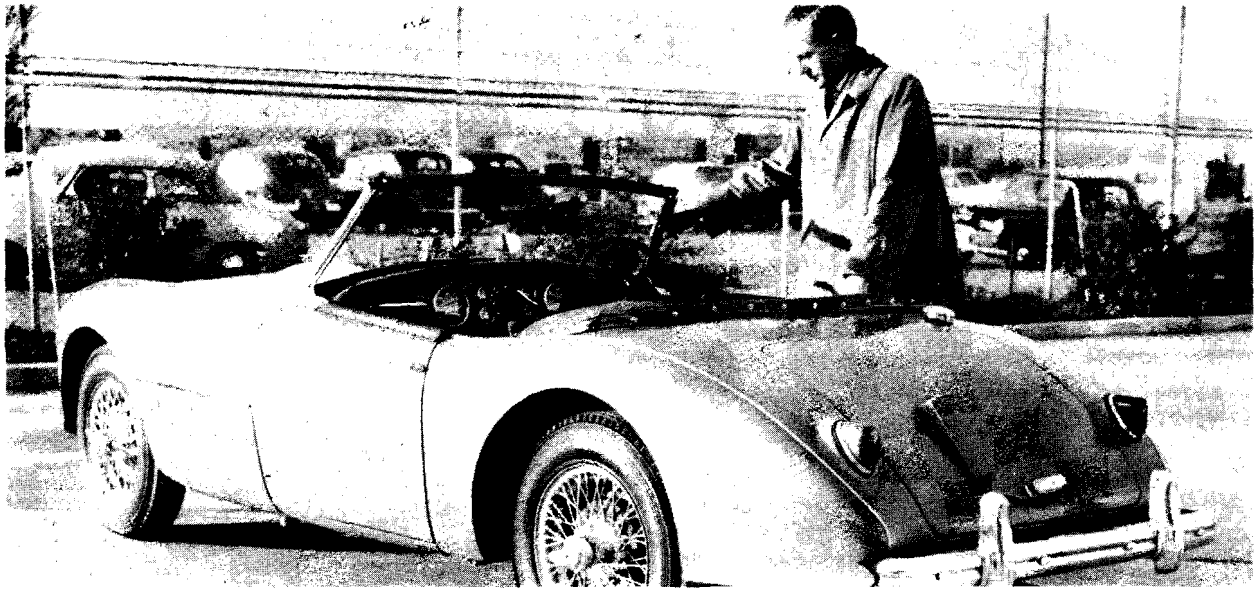
Well streamlined, the Doretti has an unusually long bonnet with an impressive power bulge centrally situated up front.

A one-piece curved windscreen is standard equipment, but for the competition-minded, an aéro screen can be obtained amongst the speed equipment which includes an undershield, cockpit cover and rear wheel spats.

The door sides are as high as the mudguards and give good weather protection as does the plastic soft



Under the forward hinged bonnet of the Doretti every point is easily accessible. Unusual header tank is worthy of notice . . .



top. Excellent side curtains are fitted and the rear vision window is big and made of flexible plastic material.

A full length tonneau cover is provided, and it's divided down the centre by a slide fastener, to allow the passenger's seat to remain covered.

An effective heating and demisting unit is standard equipment in the Doretti.

In the control department, all knobs, levers and buttons are conveniently placed to make the very pleasant task of driving the Doretti even better. The instruments and steering wheel look like a Triumphs, but with a different layout.

Approval cannot be given to the position of the Tachometer, which is in front of the passenger. Any handy man could simply swap the speedo and tachio around.

The catch for the front-hinged bonnet is mixed in with the other switches on the dashboard. The bonnet itself fits beautifully and is sealed with rubber.

Fitted right between the two very comfortable front seats is the hand brake. Big and practical, it is powerful enough to lock the back wheels. Following good sports car practice the hand-brake is of the fly-off type.

The driver in the Doretti sits low, but has a commanding view just the same. The stubby gear lever sticks up through the floor and the operator's left hand falls naturally on to it.

Pockets in both the doors are large by any standard, but huge for a sports car. The door handles are located in them, thus eliminating annoying projections to catch the occupants' knees.

There is nothing at all unusual about the centre lock wire wheels and the brakes, which are the same as the TR 2. The bumper bars—fore and aft—are of reasonable size and should be able to cope with batterings.

Luggage space in the Swallow is, unfortunately, poor. The spare wheel resides in the boot, leaving room for a couple of overcoats or small parcels.

A useful amount of space is provided behind the seats with accommodation for enough luggage for two people going on a long weekend holiday. For an out and out vacation, however, things would really be crowded, if not impossible.

There would be no problem if the manufacturers could dream up another place for the spare wheel.

On the performance side, the Doretti should be very

Designed for speed, the Doretti has a full range of instruments in the cockpit. Chrome strip between the rear wheel arch and the back bumper is a splash guard. Interior is elegant.

much the same as its relation, the Triumph, accelerating to 50-m.p.h. in about 7.5 seconds with a maximum speed in overdrive of around 106-m.p.h.

The go-water consumption should therefore be at least as good as the TR 2—that is, about 35-m.p.g.

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine: Four cylinders 83 x 92 m.m., 1,991 c.c. capacity.

Pushrod overhead valves. 90-b.h.p. at 4,800 r.p.m.

Compression ratio, 8.5:1.

Chassis: Tubular frame underslung at rear.

Independent front suspension by wishbones and helical springs.

Semi-elliptic at rear. Cam and lever steering.

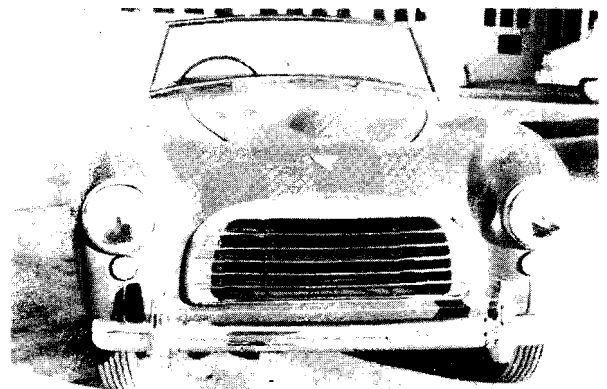
DIMENSIONS

Track, front, four feet; rear, three feet nine inches.

Wheelbase, seven feet 11 inches.

Ground clearance, six inches. Turning circle, 34 feet.

Price, £1,587 on road.



Impressive front view of Doretti, with its oval radiator grille and bonnet power bulge, reflects current Italian influences . . .