

Close neighbours to DJ, the Unique may not be available for much longer.



This company brought three cars - one powered by 350 Chevy, another by a Ford 302 cid, and one with a mighty 1000 bhp Donovan 510 cid squeezed in the engine bay. Unfortunately, the 1000 bhp car (estimated at 700 bhp at the wheels) developed a fault in the clutch before we were able to drive it. It would have been nice to take it round the track, but being as it's not really representative of the range, if one car had to go wrong perhaps it's as well it was this one. We have a date to test it later.

Unique Autocraft have a name for sound engineering, and the owners we spoke with said the cars go together without trouble. The three cars we examined on the test day were very well presented, with good panel fit and nicely finished interiors. We were impressed by the general finish of the visible metalwork; well made and plated brackets, tidy welding and neat engineering solutions were evident.

So it's a great pity that the company, run by three partners, have decided to move out of the replica market. They are neither going broke nor under any pressure to wind-up the company, they simply have another fish to fry and wish to go in another direction. The moulds, jigs, documentation and all rights are up for sale, so if you feel like swimming in the crowded waters of the replica kit car business, give them a call.

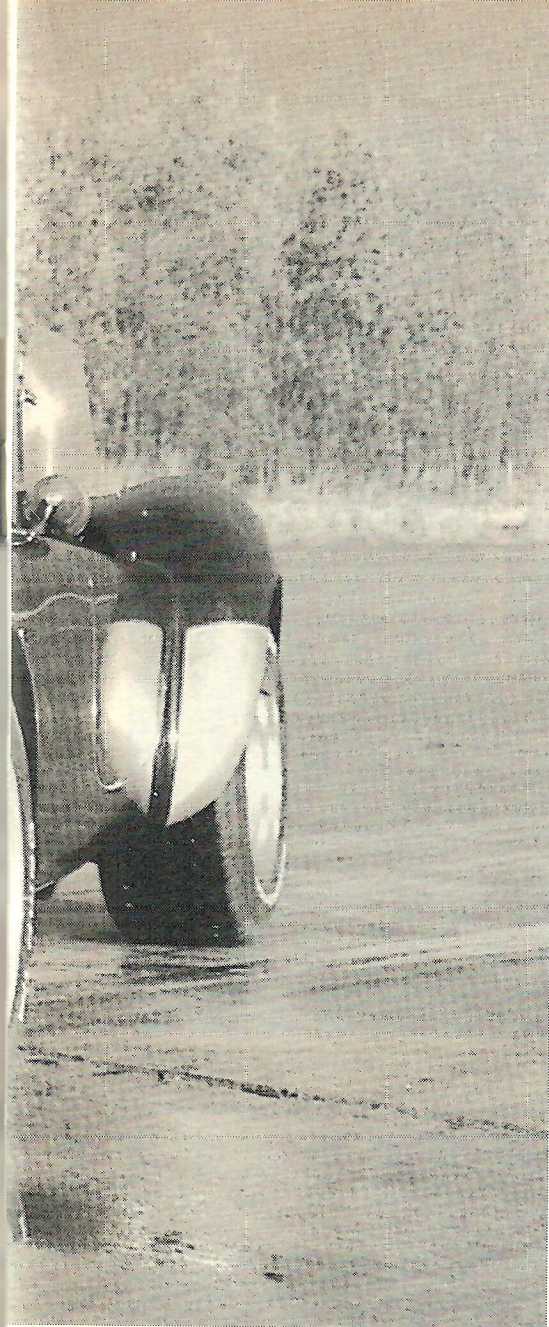
The Unique Autocraft Python uses XJ front and rear suspension. a ladder-frame chassis stiffened by front and rear subframes which form a safety cage around the passengers and a good quality

glassfibre bodyshell - not so different from other Cobra replicas, but the detailing is exceptionally good.

On the track both of the cars we tested performed well and matched other cars, point for point, they were neither outstandingly good nor exceptionally bad. And that should not be read as damning by faint praise, the general standards were high - and these cars met them.

John Kalli said of the Ford powered car. "At first I could not come to terms with an automatic gearbox in the car of this type. Because of this I was not comfortable with the car and couldn't drive it quickly - call it

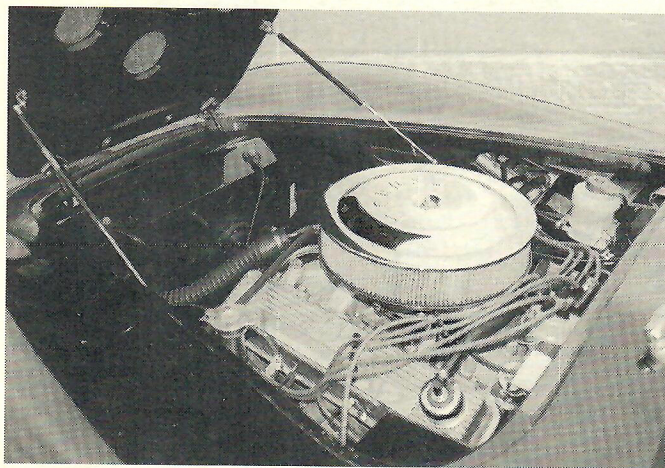
Unique A



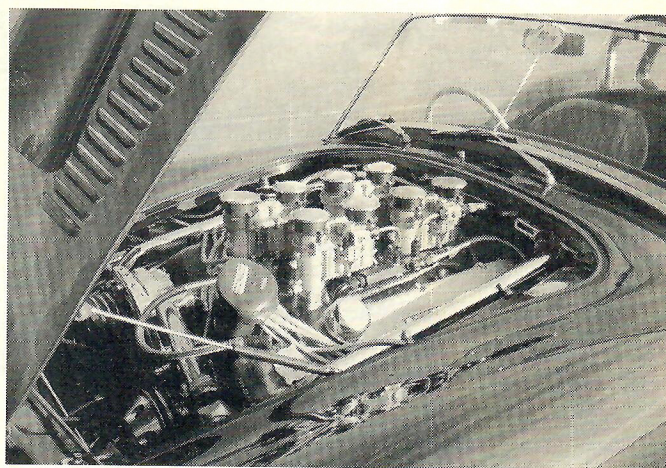
FANGS **UNIQUE**

FOR THE MEMORY

Respectfully considered as one of the stalwarts of the component car industry, Unique was formed in 1981, by three partners, Peter Gottlieb, Kris Brown and Rob Whitwell. All of the partners originate from the Hot Rod side of the speciality car industry and banded together to produce a car that could be easily assembled and practical in its application. In the competitive world of Cobra replicas Unique chose to engineer and market a product with unquestionable quality, where price was a secondary consideration, a policy which has been maintained throughout the history of the Company. Unique's mode of operation, in the future, will be based on the demand and supply of complete kits and complete cars, with a continuous focus on quality. A single chassis design will be adhered to, which will, as today, accommodate a variety of large capacity V8 engines from Rover through to one specification which with "tweaks" produces close-on 1000bhp!!! from a 510 cubic inch GM derived V8. Looking nicely standard on the outside, when the "wick" is turned up the performance effect is anything but standard.



We did have the option of driving this Chevy powered Unique, but...



... the 1,000 bhp Donovan milled machine chewed up and spat out what was supposed to have been a bulletproof clutch before we had the chance.

Autocraft Python



Near traditional dash in a wide cockpit. The transmission tunnel though is an odd shape.

Again the large boot, the contents give an idea of the space available.

prejudice. As I became familiar with the auto-box, and began to recognise which gear I was in, I began to enjoy the car. On the early morning wet track I was eventually going quite quickly. The car was well balanced, with sharp steering and good brakes which inspired confidence. Overall, the Python was a well mannered car with a feel of quality about it."

He made similar remarks about the car with the Chevrolet engine fitted. This time he positively enjoyed the auto-box and felt that it had definite advantages for a touring car. 'Effortless gear change, ideal in heavy traffic conditions but I felt the gearing was wrong because I was constantly searching for a higher gear. A well balanced car with a controllable amount of understeer. Good brakes and a comfortable driving position. Altogether a very pleasant car.'

Mike's remarks were similar. "Both the Unique Autocraft cars handled well and felt safe, The build quality was good and they had a solid and reliable air about them. They were difficult to fault. However, they lacked that indefinable spark which transforms an ordinary car into something special. Nevertheless, I would not hesitate to recommend them to a friend. For myself, I'd like something with a bit more charisma."



Unique Autocraft Python

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