



Although there is still a natural resemblance to the DB 35 Aston-Martin, a completely individual, appealing car has resulted.

The BUCHANAN Bodies

IN case readers should imagine that cheesecake is edging its insidious way into the chaste columns of "A.M.S.", we hasten to assure them that the reference matter for this discussion is chiefly the fibreglass body building being carried on at the N. W. Buchanan Body Co. Ltd., at Annandale, Sydney, which we visited recently. The Buchanan MG, driven mostly by Bruce Maher, has made itself very noticeable in competition during this year, and goes very much harder than any other TD in our experience—partly due to its light weight and partly due to the mechanical ministrations of Bruce and his partner Jim Johnson, also owing not a little to Bruce's forceful and competent driving.

It was intended as a prototype and travelling test bed, to be used as hard as possible in order to make things break if they were going to, also to get the Buchanan body before as large a public as possible. This vigorous publicity campaign is fulfilling its purpose, the Company having sufficient orders to tax its small working space to the utmost; at the time of our visit, the workshop was packed full, with a body being fitted to a Lotus for Wal Anderson of Queensland, another destined for a Holden special, a Y type MG chassis waiting for its body, and one still curing in the mould for Wright, who rolled his TR2 at Mount Druiitt recently.

We were reasonably used to the appearance of the Buchanan MG which Bruce Maher drives, but some weeks ago, we saw a car on our way to work which intrigued us vastly; obviously new, it looked most attractive in a dark shade of green, and for a while we debated whether it was a Sebring Frazer-Nash, maybe an Arnott Bristol, or what—it was decidedly hard to pick. Subsequently, of course, we learned that it is John Kinsella's Buchanan MG, based on a TF chassis, and with sundry modifications on the prototype which subtly altered its appearance and make it a very nice looking car. Its photographs were used to illustrate this article and, as is so often the case, barely do it justice, despite the presence of the artful Bernie Coward behind the lens.

The original model, of course, was Tom Sulman's DB35 Aston-Martin, upon which the master moulds of fibreglass were most carefully built. So that the mould will draw easily from the body shell which is

built within it, it is made in several sections which are bolted together and can be readily separated. The main body of the mould is built into a framework of wood and steel tubing (without support, fibreglass is not completely rigid, and as can be imagined it is most important that the mould should be kept in shape) which is suspended on counterweights so that it can be thrown up into the roof when not in use. Minor assemblies such as boot lid, doors and bonnet top are made up in separate moulds. Tom claimed, as his fee, the first body built, and Nat has it stowed away in the loft awaiting further instructions.

Once out of the mould, the shell is fitted up and finished ready to mount on the customer's chassis; as sold, it is complete with fitted doors, boot lid and bonnet top, both the latter having adequate drip channels around their openings. Body hardware is normally a matter for the customer, as is painting, for which Nat's limited space offers no facilities. The various doors and lids fit beautifully—very cunningly universally adjustable hinges assisting this no end in the case of doors. A detail which appealed to us is that the inner panels of the doors and fascia panel have a grained finish like that of Vynex, so that no additional trim is really necessary—suitably painted, this looks quite effective.

During moulding, various small modifications can easily be made to meet individual customers' requirements—for instance, the body for the Holden special needed a differently shaped firewall, and that which Barry Taylor had made for his sports-racing Gladiator has several differences in outline, notably a different bonnet top because, with his MG motor four inches lower than standard, he doesn't need the standard air scoop. Fibreglass, being a delightfully adaptable material, makes these alterations comparatively easy.

As Nat has no particular desire to branch out into woodwork, he does not supply floorboards, boot floor, or fascia backing, but instead provides heavy paper patterns for these items from which the customer can make up his own from plywood or other suitable material. He is, at present, working on a nosepiece which fits into the front cowl aperture and gives the effect of a ducted radiator, which will be available to all who purchase his bodies. Seats, instruments, lights, screen wipers and so on normally inherited



from your own car's previous equipment, but we consider that not many people will be able to resist the replica Porsche seats when they are available (these will, we understand, be for sale separately, and will fill a long felt need for good, light, strong bucket seats).

Nat, like most of us, was inclined to wonder whether he could accept all he had heard about the strength and resistance to impact of a glass fibre body; his doubts were set fully at rest when he was able to examine the results of a fairly high speed marker post bashing carried out by one of his cars down the N.S.W. South Coast. The damage was very minor and nothing like that which would have been suffered by a conventional steel or aluminium body; at the actual point of impact there was no fracture, the load having been transmitted to another part of the front mud-guard, which was quite easily repaired.

John Kinsella, whose car was used for the illustrations, went to great lengths to finish his car properly, and there is no doubt it looks a real picture. His instrument panel is surfaced with cedar grain Laminox, which gives a pleasant effect, the interior is properly trimmed to match his TF seats, and other refinements include the curved glass screen, fitted carpets, lightweight wood rim steering wheel, Lucas le Mans light units in the headlamps, crash padding on the scuttle rim and so on. It is probably rather heavier when fully equipped than the average Buchanan MG would be (normally they finish up around 14½ cwt.) but even so has a considerable advantage in this respect over the standard TF, with correspondingly improved performance.

Although a large majority of the bodies already made have been fitted to MG chassis, they are not by any means confined to this application, as we have indicated above. They will fit chassis of varying wheelbase within a range of about 8 inches and, if required, a special chassis of the type made by Arthur Rizzo (two-tube ladder frame with TD suspension assemblies) can be arranged. Also, Nat's Company will supply to order a simplified version of the body specially suited to sports-car racing, with only one door of regulation size, minimum interior fittings etc., the weight ready to fit in this form being in the vicinity of 90 pounds.



Top: This body was completed before the newly developed front cowl insert was available; the smaller bonnet hump clears the carburettors. The beautiful finish is typical of the Buchanan Motor Co.'s bodies.

Above: From any angle the body remains well proportioned and retains its clean, pleasing lines.

Below: John finished the instrument panel with cedar grained laminox, using his TF instruments suitably disposed, and made his own lightweight wood rimmed wheel.

