



Griffith Club of America

October 1976

I am happy to report "The Annual" came off very smoothly. Clear skies, nice accommodations, and friendly people were just a few of the weekends attributes. Griffiths motored in throughout Saturday afternoon creating an impressive lineup. Bob Mariani drove his "Deuce" sedan and just had to uncork the headers and make a quick pass around the block. Our old friend, Foster Crippen, was there along with new members Dave and Julie Greenfield, Gary Courtney and Fred McKinney.

Fred McKinney flew in on his motorcycle from New Hampshire. With his full leathers and wrap around Bell helmet, he looked too much like the biker in the movie "Gumball Rally". Poor Fred hadn't seen the movie but took all jokes like a real sport. The security guard arrived on time, took one look around, and as far as he was concerned, this was it, Gumball Rally again! He had just seen the movie but didn't think people like that really existed. Some of us spent part of the night making a believer out of him.

Dinner was a blast and most of us partied well into the morning. And what about that unscheduled midnight cruise? We won't talk about that.

After breakfast, Sunday morning, we all fired up our Griffiths and with Dean Pallas leading the way, paraded over to Meriden Mountain, a beautiful park with a state line to line view.

That just about wraps up "The Annual" weekend. Check out the pics, they tell all.

George DeStefano's meet had no problem living up to the reputation it's gained from previous years. A super meet! Many Griffiths, Shelbys, vintage Fords, a Pantera, and one lone 427 A.C. Cobra were on hand. Rip Collins drove his early "Griff" 008. This was its first ever Griffith Meet. The chassis is completely rebuilt and detailed. Paint and upholstery are next. Nice Rip! Fred McKinney drove his newly acquired red "200" while Dave and Julie Greenfield throttled around in the "Dean Pallas" Griffith.

George's entire family takes part in putting on this beautiful meet. The food is always terrific. It almost seems like they have the whole affair down to a science. I'm sure everyone joins me in saying, "Thank you DeStefanos for a great time!"

A while back, Bob Mariani and I paid a visit to Craig Swinn in Pittston, Pennsylvania. Craig has managed to fit a good portion of his Griffith in the spare bedroom. This car is completely apart! All suspension has been rebuilt, painted and is ready for assembly. And those heads! Craig has a set of heads that came off Mark Donohue's Shelby race car. Slightly bigger valves and ports than stock, eh Craig? He hopes to have it all together for next year, our 5th Annual. I hope so too.

Recently I received a letter from author Peter Filby of England. Peter has just finished a book titled "Success Against The Odds". The content deals with the history of T.V.R.s with a chapter devoted to Griffiths. This book will be released in about a month. We will be taking orders through the club in the next newsletter. Peter is in the process of doing another book, a pictorial, and would like our help. More on this later.

We have recently started corresponding with the T.V.R. Club in England. Presently we are exchanging newsletters with permission to reprint. They put out a beautiful bi-monthly newsletter full of photos, informative articles, humorous tidbits and a great classified section.

They have requested that I extend an invitation to all Griffith owners to become a member of their club. Their address is: T.V.R. Car Club, 4 Ninnings Lane, Rabley Heath, Hertfordshire, England. I have a limited supply of application forms.

Hopefully, in the future, we can lay down some really meaningful bonds between the two clubs.

I hope you all enjoy the first photos to appear in our newsletter. I would like to make photos a permanent part of our publication providing our funds allow us to do so. In the summer we can show pictures of the various meets. But what about the winter? Well, I would like to do a "feature article" on one or two Griffiths a month. If you would like your car to be "featured" please send at least four photos (prefer black & white) along with a detailed description of your car. These photos will serve two purposes.

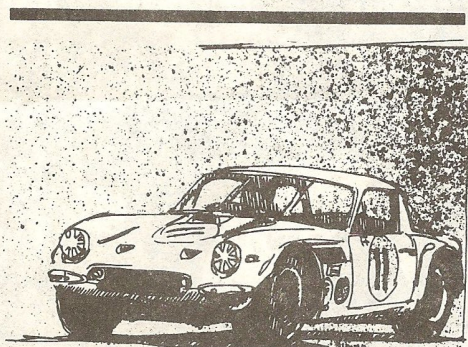
Peter Filby needs photos for his new book. All photos I receive will be used and forwarded to him. Everyone will have a chance to see his car in a published book. Don't delay, send those photos and descriptions today!

The Club presently has many projects in the works. Chassis Dynamics is in the process of installing a Salisbury rear in Bob Mariani's "200". Bob's car is being used to develop a prototype conversion kit. The kit will be complete, strong, reasonably priced, and simple to install. It will be marketed through the club possibly as early as next issue.

The Paint Pit has offered to do reproduction Griffith bonnets and body panels. Their Fiberglass is top quality and is sold coast to coast. The price of a repro bonnet would be around \$550. Anyone interested drop me a line.

Griffith nose plaques will be reproduced this winter. Hang on!!!!

Well that about wraps it up for now. Hope you enjoy the Super Stock Road Test. Special thanks to Art Patstone for the road test, Tom Uss for the photos, and Bob Mariani for those crazy cartoons.



DRAWING: DENNIS SIMON

Sincerely,

Randy

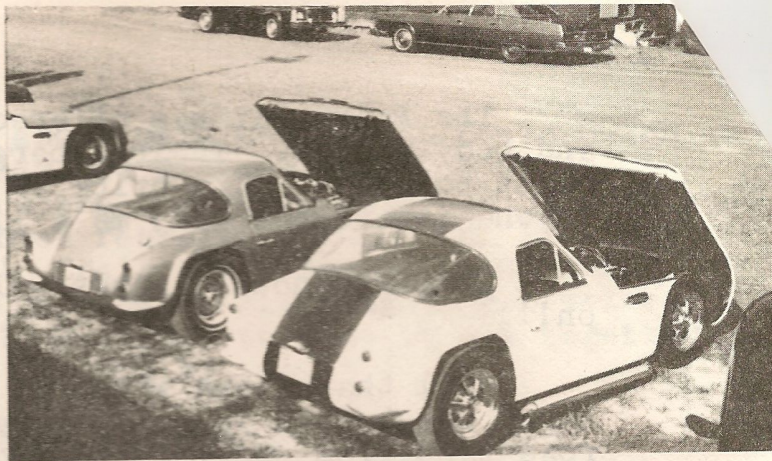
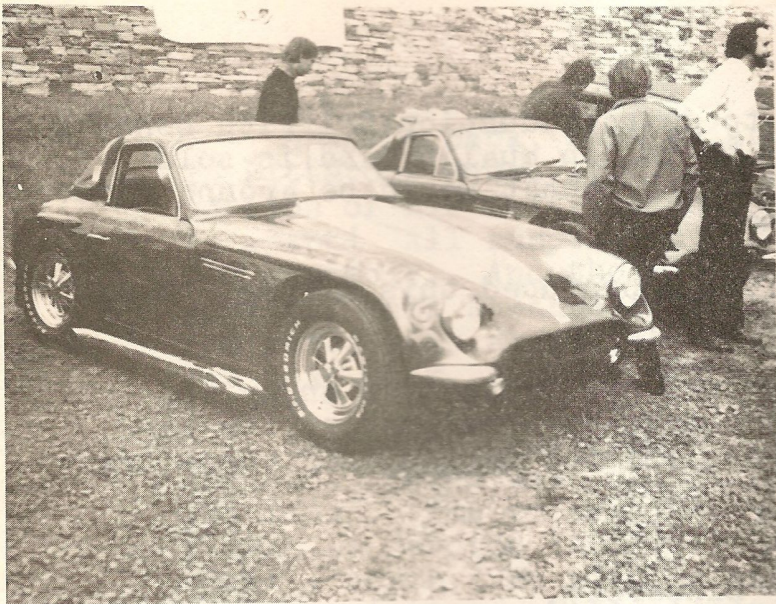
Randy Hartigan
Director

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BACK NEWSLETTERS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>PAGES</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
June 1973	1	\$.20
August 1973	2	\$.40
March 1974	2	\$.40
August 1974	1	\$.20
February 1975	5	\$1.00
June 1975	3	\$.60
August 1975	6	\$1.20
October 1975	12	\$2.40
December 1975	14	\$2.80
February 1976	10	\$2.00
April 1976	8	\$1.60
June 1976	8	\$1.60
August 1976	10	\$2.00



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1. Unfortunately, black & white photos do a gross injustice to this beautiful "200" owned by Dean Pallas. A base color of metallic purple with multicolored ribbons and highlights make this car a real attention getter. The sidepipes are new this year and were completed just in time for the meet. Dean fabricated a complete header system that ties into the sidepipes making all eight tubes functional. Super Nice! This muscle motored "Griff" has been observed traveling every direction but straight.

Danny Magnon, of Color Creations fame, cruised in with Bob Rapisarda's chocolate brown "400". Just about every steel piece on this car has been reproduced in stainless. A super interior, much chrome, nice finish and plenty of detail put this car in a Ferrari class.

2. Roger James and Jasper Kassay motored in together from New York in these two beauties. Both cars have late model T.V.R. bonnets. Roger's white and black "Griff" with the Cragars looked mean enough to bite. What a sneaky looking "Griff"! Jasper's car was a beautiful shade of metallic blue and wore TR 6 wheels. This car had a super clean look about it and was on the receiving end of many compliments.
3. This first Griffith motored in from Maine carrying Mr. & Mrs. Erving Davis. A good six hour drive. The car, as you can see, is being preped for a repaint. Sounded real nice!

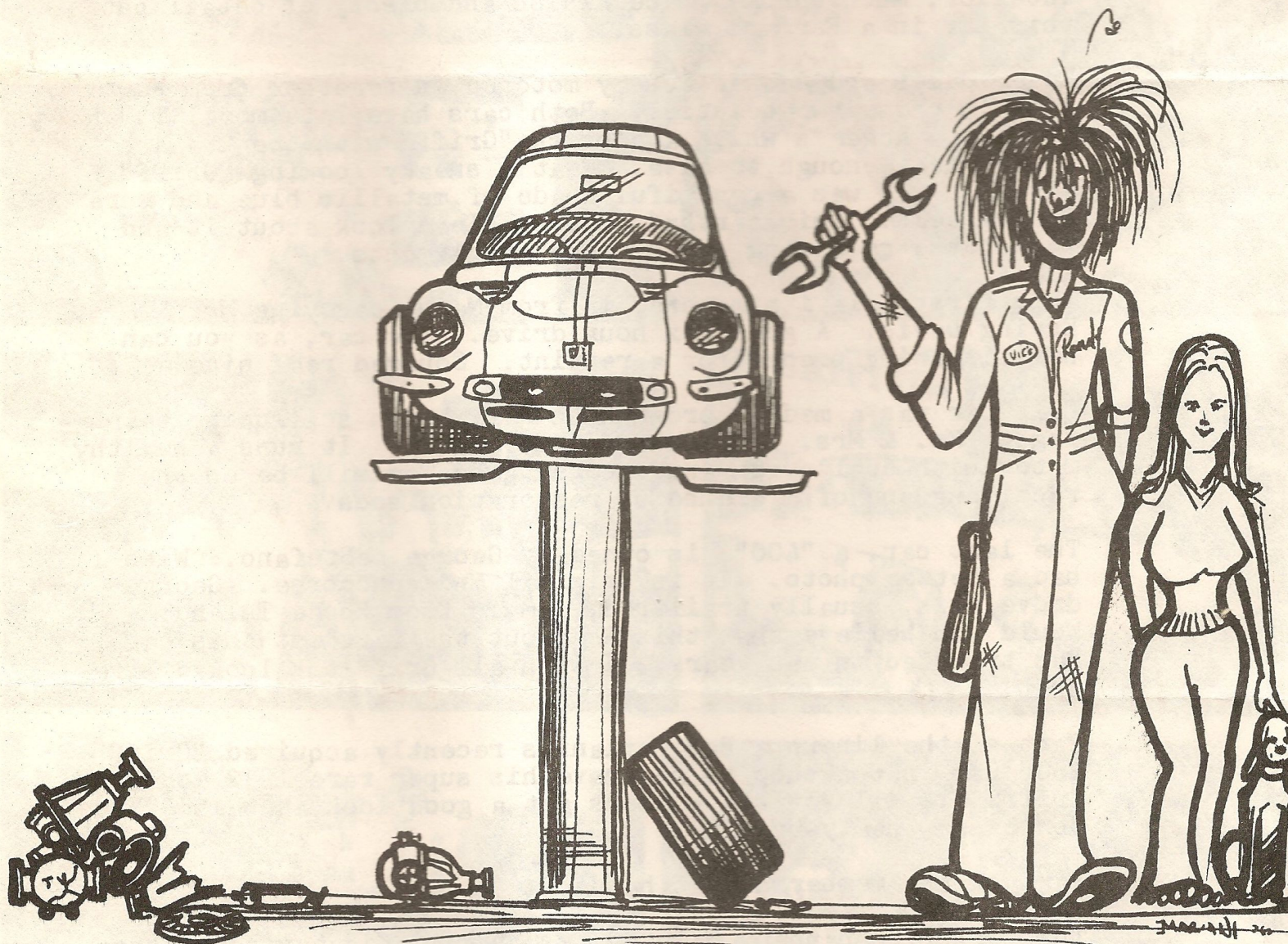
Next car was a medium brown with dark brown scalloping belonging to Mr. & Mrs. Tom Uss from New Jersey. It runs a healthy motor with dual quads and according to Tom will be on the receiving end of a ground up restoration soon.

The last car, a "400", is owned by George DeStefano. Wish I had a better photo. It is original and concourse. George drove this, usually trailered, gem in from Rhode Island. Would you believe that this is about the farthest this car has traveled in ten years. I wish all Griffiths looked like that!

4. Part of the lineup. Bob Mariani's recently acquired "Griff 200" was in the shop so he drove his super rare 1932 model Griffith. All you new members get a good look at this! You don't see them very often!
5. Part of the membership at hand.
6. That Griffith banner, painted by Bob Mariani, has seen three years of Griffith Meets. And the car? Well, that's mine seemingly enjoying its first ever annual Griffith Meet. I still can't get used to it not being scattered all over the garage in pieces. Boy, it sure felt good to drive a Griffith to a Griffith Meet for a change. The car is a metallic silver with Cragar Mach 8 wheels and a fairly torquey 302.

7. WHAT A DAY!

8. Another shot of Jasper Kassay's beautiful "200" with new club member, Gary Courtney's car alongside. Gary's car was a refreshing candy apple red with tan interior. Very nice! Runs some stiff gears and a stock motor. Hope to see him at future meets.



"Got rearend problems?" well
wait until you see the Next Issue!

Sports car handling and dragster acceleration are just two of the fine points of this hot new entry in the high performance field.

BY HAL KEMPER

GRIFFITH AU-GO-GO

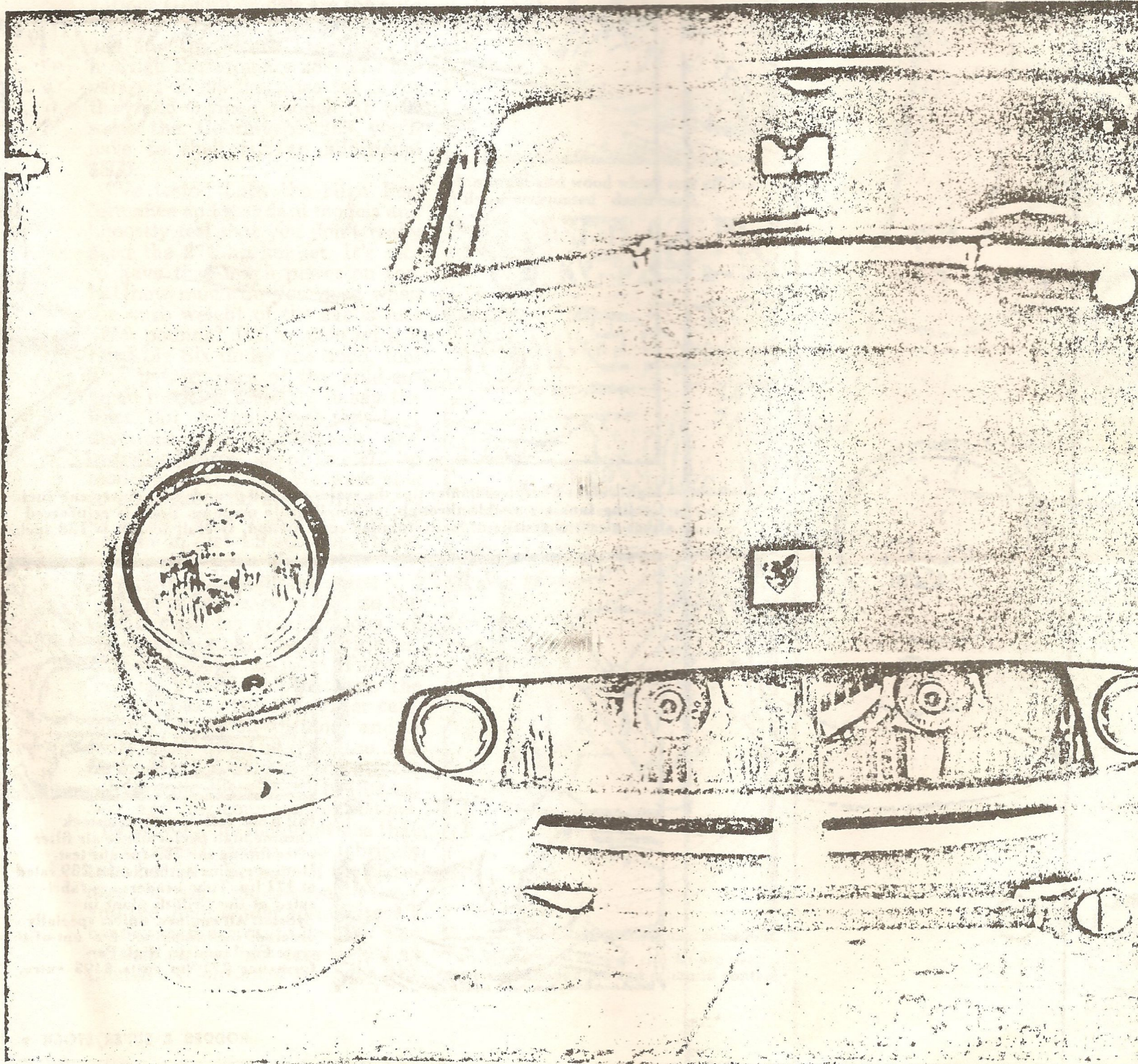
RODDER AND
SUPER/STOCK



ROAD
TEST

WHEN BILL KOLB at Larsen Ford Sales in White Plains called and asked if we would be interested in taking a spin in a new production model that goes from 0 to 60 mph in 5 seconds, out corners a Cobra and costs less than \$4000, we thought he flipped his bonnet. We knew of no production Ford that would stand up to those qualifications, and we were reasonably sure that Carl Larsen hadn't expanded his operation to handle foreign machinery. We just couldn't figure it out!

When we arrived at Larsen Ford we were greeted by Smilin' Bill Kolb who handed us a set of keys

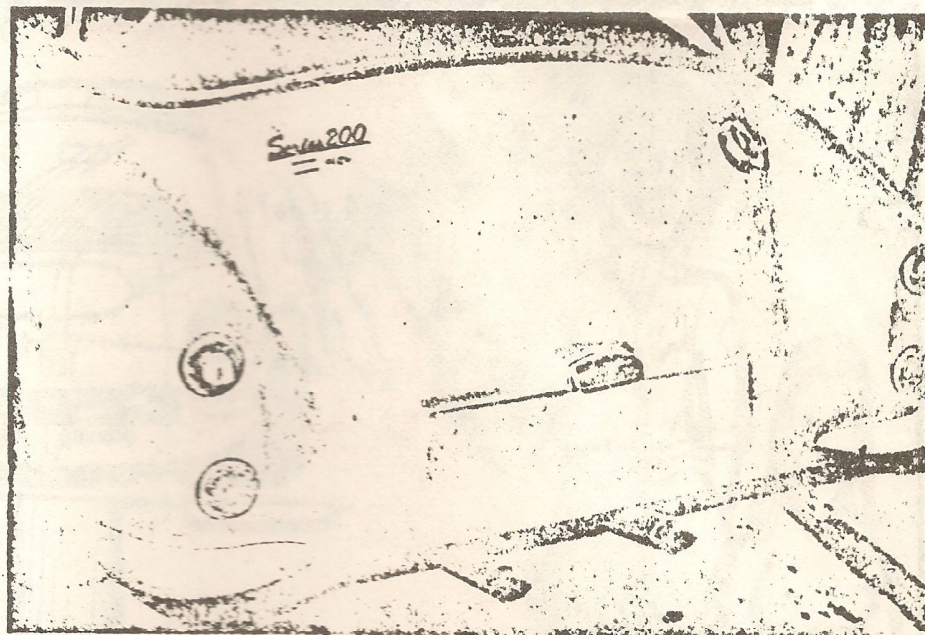
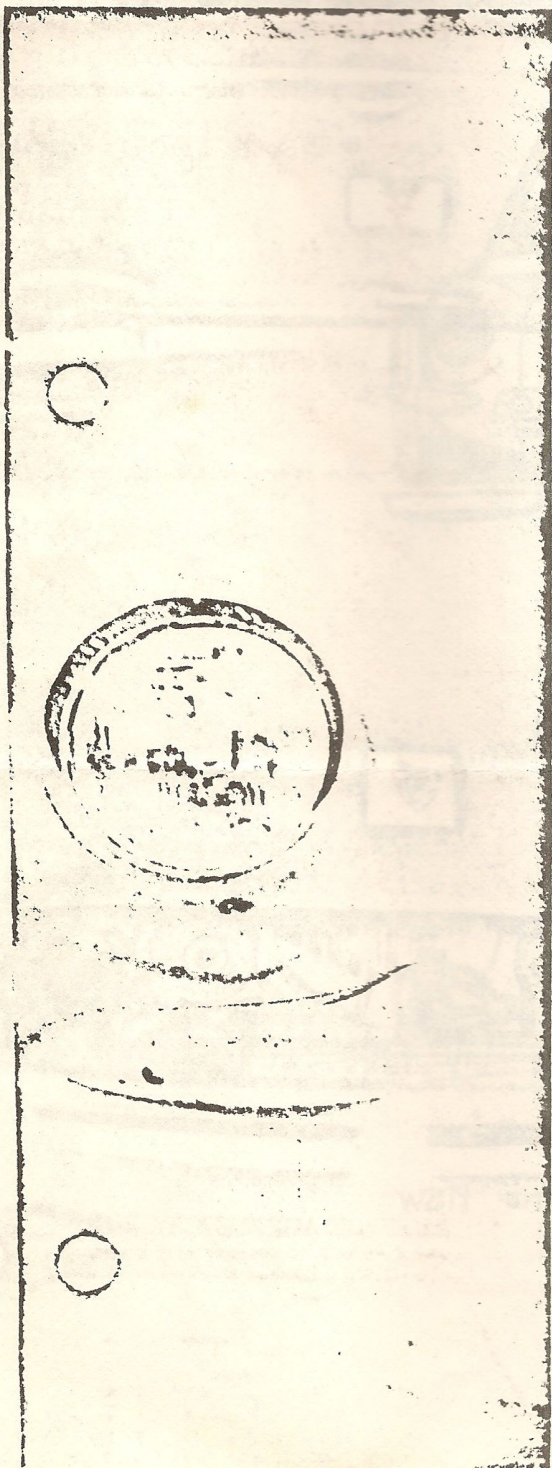


and introduced us to a miniature version of a Ferrari. Known as the Griffith 200, this hybrid fiberglass coupe is powered by no less than a Ford 289 engine backed up by a matching all-synchro four-speed transmission. We had seen photos of the car, but never had the pleasure of seeing one in person. After eye-balling this lightweight hauler, we shoe-horned ourselves into the comfortable buckets, buckled up, donned our Bell helmets and cranked the proven Ford powerplant over. The 4727cc mill, rated at approximately 200 hp, roared to life and then settled down to a mild idle speed of 500-600 rpm.

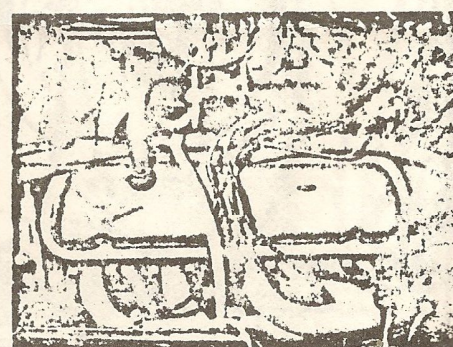
Before going into our performance report, it's only fair that you should know exactly what this car is, where it's built, and its vital statistics. The Griffith is the pet project of Jack Griffith, an ex-Ford dealer who now heads his own company located in Syosset, New York. Jack started fooling with drag and sports car racing machines late in 1963 when Ford introduced the Falcon Sprint and a whole line of high performance models. Jack built up a few fully-instrumented disc-braked Falcons with tri-power mills and wire wheels, but the market was too limited for a car of that nature.

At that time he saw a potential in the small Ford 289 mills, especially in the field of swapping. He experimented with an English-built TVR coupe and found that with a few modifications it could be converted to handle the small Ford powerplant. His first conversions were very successful, so he gave up his dealership and opened up an ultra-modern sub-assembly plant (Griffith Motor Company) in Syosset.

Jack imports the basic TVR coupes and mates them with factory-fresh Ford 289 engines and four-speed transmissions. His technicians widen the front member



Lightweight fiberglass hauler tips the scales at 1450 pounds sans driver and fuel. Cooling fans are visible through the small grille opening. Body is reinforced fiber-glass; chassis is of multi-tubular construction. Overall length is 138 inches.



Bill Kolb, left, installs the stock chrome high performance air filter after tuning the 289 for our test. Hottest engine option is the 289 rated at 271 hp. Tube headers are fabricated at the Griffith plant in Syosset. All engines, unless specially ordered for dragging, are out-of-the-crate Ford models. High Performance 271 hp costs \$495 extra.

GRIFFITH AU-GO-GO

beef the suspension, make the necessary mounts and exhaust modifications, add heavier universals and tack on Griffith name plates. The engines used in the various Griffith models are the mild 200 hp, hydraulic lifter, two-barrel 289 and the record breaking 271 hp High Performance 289. The advertised \$3995 list price tag is for the mild-engined model. If you want the Cobra-type 289 you'll have to shell out an additional \$500.

We tested both the High Performance and standard models and honestly feel that you don't really need the 271 hp honker. It's nice to have that much power on tap, but how much do you need when the curb weight of the car is just 1450 pounds? It'll scream with a Ford big Six under the hood, too! The performance of the mild-engined model is startling to say the least, but the one word that best describes the acceleration and overall performance of the 271 hp model is UNREAL! We were able to push the mild model from 0 to 60 in less than 6 seconds and the hot one in just 4.9 seconds. It was just about impossible to time it to 30 mph from a standing start!

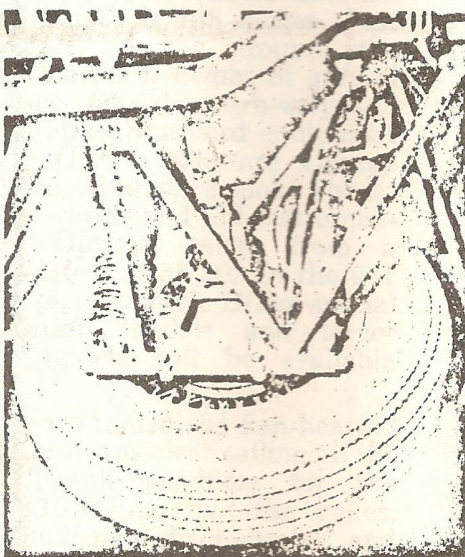
It's not necessary to go into the Griffith's engine specifications, as the same engines power Fairlanes, Comets, Mustangs and Falcons. The main difference between the two engines is the solid lifter cam, high compression pistons, and a four-barrel carb, used in the 271 hp model. The mild version utilizes a hydraulic lifter cam, two-barrel carb and low compression pistons. The only engine modifications that Jack Griffith makes is to fabricate tube headers. Because of the closeness of the multi-tubular rails and the inner fender aprons, Jack's header men are quite limited. The headers on our test cars looked as though (Continued on page 54)



Aluminum and wood wheel sets off the fully-instrumented dashboard.

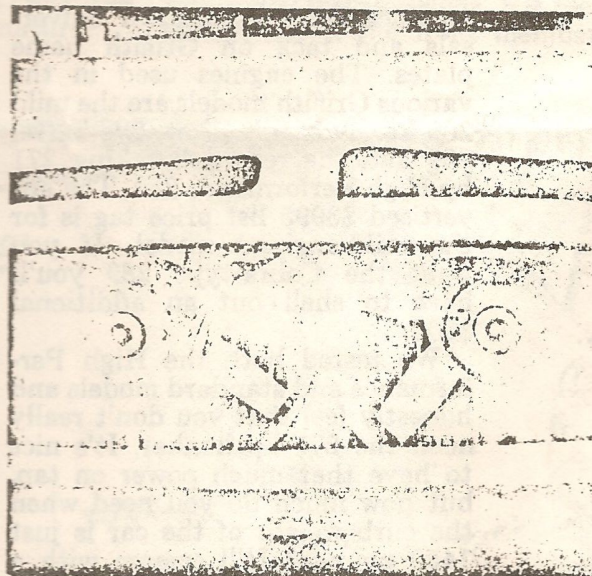


Undercarriage is a complicated maze of tubing. Duals utilize a single muffler.

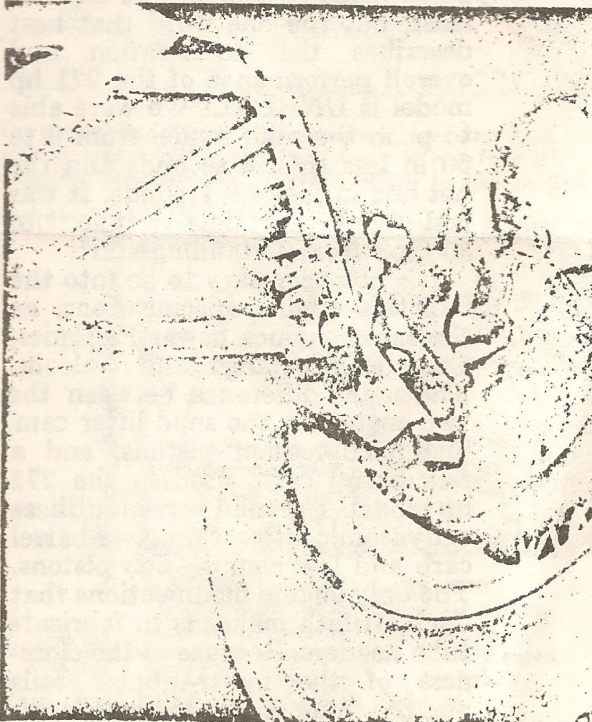


Two Woodhead-Monroe shocks are used per wheel for jounce and rebound control.

Ford 289 is a real snug fit between the tube rails. Headers should be of larger diameter stock.



Dual electric fans, mounted in compact shrouds, keep the engine cool under all conditions.



Girling 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch disc brakes are used up front, while 9-inch drums bring up the rear.

GRIFFITH, continued

They were relics from the days of the Ford V8 60. We had the exact same diameter headers in our MG Special back when it was equipped with a Ford 60!

In order to keep the mill at reasonable running temperatures, dual electric fans are mounted in front of the radiator. These fans bring in cool air, which under normal conditions would never get there.

Besides excelling in sheer acceleration and top end, the Griffith handles like no other machine. We were almost able to do figure eight's around a couple of LTD's parked in Larsen's lot! When you slip into the nicely contoured real bucket seats, you immediately get the feeling that you're behind the controls of a full-bore racing machine. The wheel is a 15-inch, three-spoke wood-rimmed job and the instrumentation is rather complete. Tach and speedo are mounted out in the open and the short, stubby Ford shift lever is mounted in the center divider which doubles as an arm rest. A fly-off sporty car handbrake mounts to the right of the shift lever. Because of the split level pedal setup, heel-toe driving is almost impossible.

After a few sissy laps around Bill's makeshift road course, we got up enough courage to dice it up a bit. In no time at all we mastered the four wheel independent suspension and made like Jim Hall in the corners. The ultra-quick rack and pinion steering is downright hairy until you understand its shortcomings. At any speed over 40-50 mph, the steering gear picks up vibrations and passes them to the driver via the competition wheel. At 110-120 mph it's almost impossible to hold the wheel steady. We were advised that this was an early model and that this malfunction had been corrected on later models. The steering, however, is ultra-precise and the car goes exactly where you point it. No corner is too tight for this little stormer.

The basic independent suspension, as designed by an English firm (Grantur, Limited) incorporates a multi-tubular steel chassis with coil springs all around and unequal length wishbones. Woodhead-Monroe tube shocks are used two per wheel to tame the harsh ride. All the little small-diameter tubes are tied into a neat, sturdy skeleton.

The car handles extremely well and once you learn the "shift and drift" technique you can tromp most any car on the road. The body is of reinforced fiberglass



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construction and the windows are roll-ups. A 16-gallon fuel tank, located at the rear (kept as full as possible for better handling) makes use of a quick-release filler.

When you study the overall specifications of the Griffith you can understand why the car handles and goes so well. The wheelbase is just 85½ inches and the overall length is 138 inches. Just 48 inches off the ground, the Griffith boasts 6 inches of ground clearance and a dry curb-weight of 1450 pounds. Standard equipment on the Griffith 200 are Dunlop 185x15 speed tires, 72-spoke knock-off wire wheels and full instrumentation. Options range from a heater-defroster at \$62 to the 271 hp package at \$500. Other special competition models and larger street models will be available shortly.

Once we tamed the lion-hearted sportster it was clear sailing all the way. Thank goodness for the Girling 10¾-inch front disc brakes, the 9-inch rear drum brakes and the extremely flexible four-speed transmission. Without these little goodies for support, we would have had some job trying to tame Bill Kolb's little toy. The overall finish of the car is nothing to write home

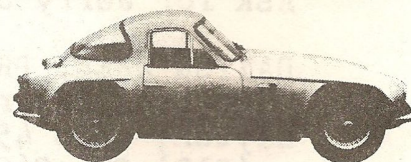
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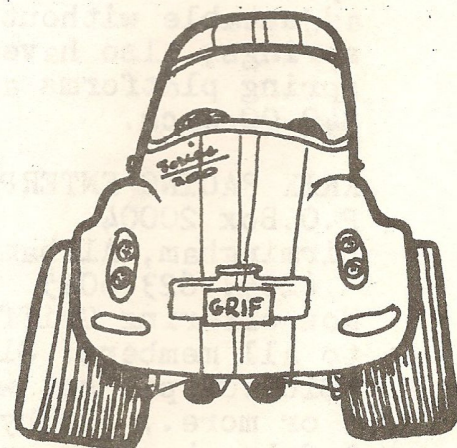
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it is resubmitted. If you want to
sell or purchase any item, send
your ad to Griffith Club of America
Bushy Hill Road, Deep River, Conn.
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part is either sold or located.

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