

# Sporting Proposition

The limited-production **Turner Sports Mk 1** proved its mettle on the street and on the track

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID LACHANCE

Postwar Britain was filled with enthusiasts eager to get back to the fun of racing after the dark days of the war. Combining well-developed powertrains from major manufacturers with bodywork and chassis of their own design, part of a tradition that was sparked by the cheap and cheerful Austin Seven of the 1930s, these independent builders created a multitude of affordable, nimble sports cars with character.

By the late 1950s, what had been a movement had become a boom. Colin Chapman had gone from building trials specials to the series-production

Lotus Seven; in Bexhill-on-Sea, Frank Nichols was producing BMC- and Coventry Climax-powered Elva Couriers; Fairthorpe Cars, founded by Air Vice Marshal Donald Bennett, was relying on Climax and Triumph engines for its Electron sports racer.

Most of these hand-built cars showed their lack of development, and few of their builders—Lotus, Elva and Fairthorpe among them—survived their teething pains to stick around for more than a couple of years, and produce more than a handful of cars. Turner Sports Cars was one of those exceptions, too, arriving on the scene earlier

than most, and winning a strong following that kept the company humming for more than a decade.

Jack Turner was probably more qualified than most to produce a successful sports car. Born in the Welsh market town of Abergavenny in 1916, he began apprenticing with an engineering firm at the age of 15. He went to work for Gloster Aircraft, the company that built the Hawker Hurricane, one of the heroes of the Battle of Britain, as well as the Gloster Meteor, the Allies' only operational jet fighter during World War II.

