

er when he wrote to Russell at the Turner Sports Register to buy a copy of the club's calendar, and ended up sending Russell a photo of the car. "He knew the car. He said, 'This is the best Turner you could have bought,'" Roy says. "I believe it is." "I tried to make it as correct as I possibly could," Jay says. "We always used to joke that there were no two Turners alike, although that wasn't really the truth." He finished the car in 1999, and it passed through one, or possibly two, more owners before arriving at the dealer.

The Turner is rare enough in the U.S. that Roy has never seen another; in fact, he's made out a little brochure to hand out at car shows, to answer the questions most commonly asked about the car.

Still, he generously offered me a turn behind the wheel of his treasure. Comparisons with the Sprite/Midget twins are apt; the short wheelbase makes for a relatively short cockpit, and footroom is at a premium, with all pedals located to the left of the steering column. The twin-carb, A-Series four starts on the button and idles sweetly. First gear on the "smooth case" BMC gearbox is unsynchronized, but the four-speed has a pleasant, direct action, and progress feels brisk, if not fast. Fifty-two horsepower doesn't sound like much, and it's not, but at least the fiberglass body keeps the curb weight to a feathery 1,175 pounds. It's 200 pounds less than a Spridget, and it feels it.

It's not only lighter than its rival, but

lower, as well. Roy's car rides on the optional 13-inch wire wheels, just like the three Mk 1s the factory built for privateers to run in the Sebring 4 Hours in 1960, rather than the standard-issue 15-inch wheels, giving it a purposeful stance and a 4-inch ground clearance. Roadholding was the car's forte, and in our limited test drive, the chassis is indeed well-behaved.

Whether the original builders or Jay's skills are the reason, the Turner feels tight, and exhibits no squeaks or rattles. Steering is sharp, as you might expect, and the brakes are reassuringly powerful. The Turner has an alternate rear axle ratio that, reportedly, makes it capable of a 94 MPH top speed—but "not with Peg in it," Roy laughs.

Turner built about 160 Mk 1s, followed by 150 Mk 2s and 90 Mk 3s—both of which had very little BMC content—before production ended and the company was dissolved in 1966; there were also 10 tantalizing examples of a Ford Kent-powered 2+2 GT. A combination of factors led to the closing, primarily the failure of a California client to pay for eight cars that Turner delivered—a big blow to such a small company—and a serious health problem that landed Jack Turner in the hospital.

Jack Turner passed away in March 2011, living long enough to see his creations enjoy a renaissance in vintage race events around the world. Cars like Roy's rare Mk 1 aside, the race track is still the most likely place to go if you hope to catch a glimpse of a Turner. 🌐

What to Pay

1960 Turner Sports Mk 1

Low	\$16,200
Average	\$21,000
High	\$36,800

Club Scene

Turner Register

Russell Filby (Registrar)
10 Wyatts Close
Nailsea, BS48 2JH
North Somerset
United Kingdom
www.turnersportscars.co.uk

Pros & Cons

Pros

Pretty, well-balanced design

Mechanical parts are readily available

A wonderful piece of British sports car history

Cons

Unmodified road cars are hard to find

Creature comforts are extremely limited

Pedal arrangement is a challenge

