

AND THE WINNER IS...

We don't know yet and nor do they! Still, in a little while a very lucky person is going to take possession of a fabulous JBA Falcon, absolutely free! To coincide with this happy event, Kevin McGoverin takes a look at what they can expect to receive and gets jealous...again!



These are indeed busy and exciting times for the boys at JBA Engineering, hence the frequent visits to Wigan undertaken by yours truly. Having kindly consented to allow us the opportunity to give one of their fabulous Falcon Sports kits away in another of our simply wonderful, if

somewhat offbeat competitions, a return visit was a must. Besides, it always gives the boys a chance to hand the *Kit Car Pool Team* another damn good hiding. We really must practice more.

Indeed, the fame of JBA Engineering looks certain to spread even wider over the next twelve months, not just within the realms of the kit car world but beyond. Watch out

sometime in the new year for a new ITV drama series based around a fictitious motor company. Take a good, long look at the cars driven by the company directors. You will find it rather similar to the Falcon. That's because it is a Falcon. Central Television approached JBA a little while back, with a view to purchasing a whole batch of Falcon Sports to be used extensively in the pro-





gramme. JBA, already snowed under with orders for their products, saw the potential such massive media coverage would provide and so decided they could cope with the extra workload. The deal has now been struck and the first batch of cars is already in the Midlands. This is excellent news indeed, not only for JBA but for the whole of the industry in general, as public awareness of the exciting world of the kit car is sure to increase. We look forward to our first visit to the set of the new series, who knows, we might even get to be on the telly! Eat your heart out, Roger Melly! Excuse me, while I take a trip to the make up department. More foundation please, sweetie!

Looking even further into the future, it is clear that JBA are not prepared to simply rest on their laurels. Far from it, as during the afternoon proceedings subtle hints were dropped regarding the next company project. No names, no pack drill, but suffice to say that, when it emerges sometime in 1990, it will be a goodie.

Anyway, that is all for the future. What interests us at this moment is the present, and the JBA Falcon Sports. Even as you read this, we shall be sifting through the entries for our competition, choosing a lucky winner who will pick up a cool two grands worth of kit. True, the Falcon has been reviewed already in the pages of this esteemed publication but, for those of you who may have missed it, a brief resume follows.

The present Falcon Sports is in fact, an improved and slightly changed version of the original, being lower, wider and three inches shorter than its predecessor. These changes were undertaken to enable the Falcon to accept Cortina running gear. More GRP was used in certain areas of the car, most notably in the door areas but, perhaps the most notable change in the construction of the Falcon was the introduction of the central body unit, or CBU which formed the tub area. Whereas this section was previously provided in a series of panels, it is now a one piece unit with the front and rear bulkheads fitted, as are the floors. This had two notable effects, greatly improving the ease of build and, perhaps more notable enabling JBA to lower

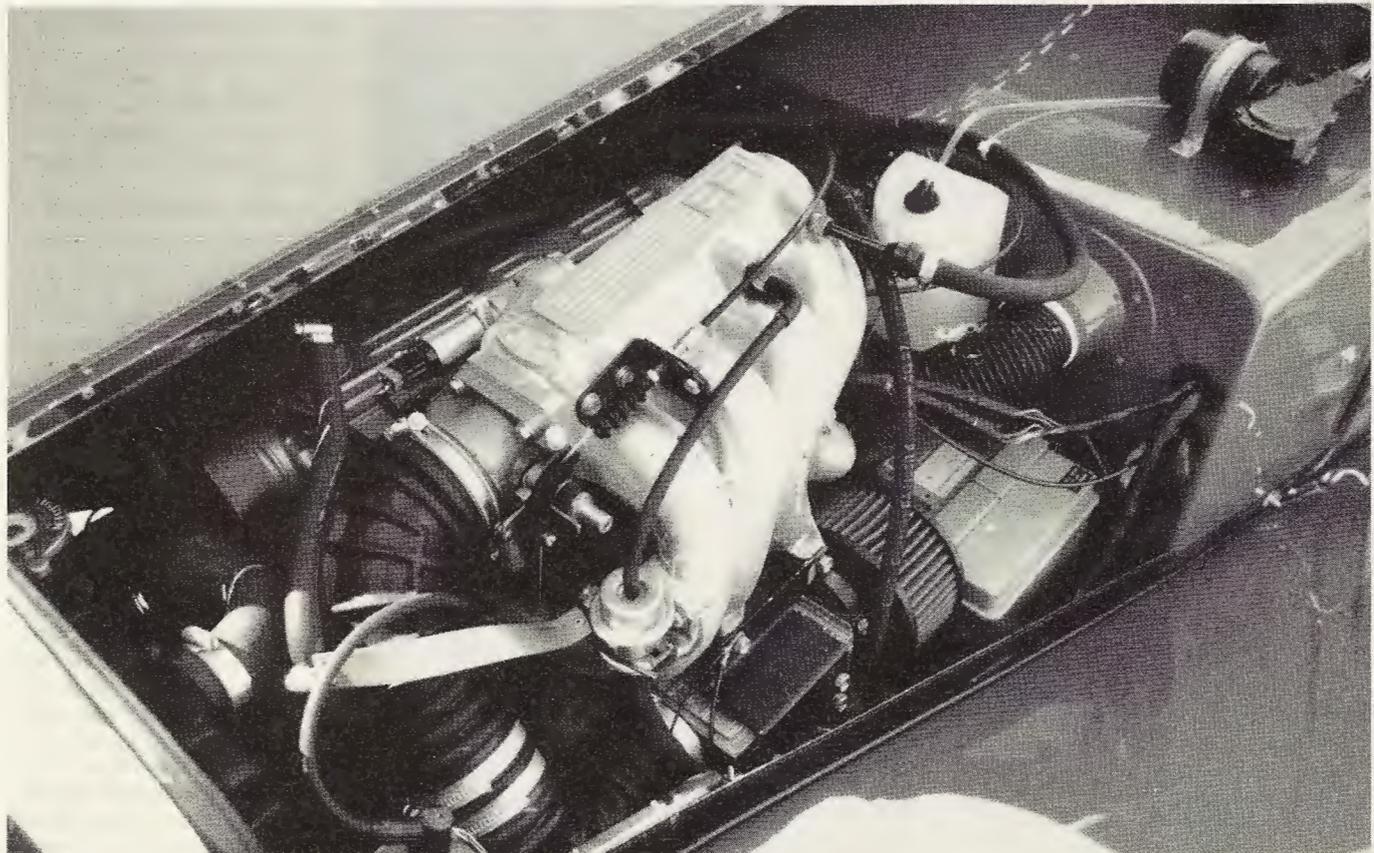
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the price of the kit while actually improving the quality. These changes certainly had the desired effect, as JBA report that sales have rocketed upwards since their introduction.

It is a super package and a superb vehicle and we have had the privilege of taking charge of the Falcon on more than one occasion. Is it practical? Well, we did drive it to

The Sierra 2 litre fuel injection power unit. This, allied to the five speed gearbox from the same car, gave an impressive performance.



Paris on the *Performance Car* Treasure Hunt. It was perfectly comfortable and we stayed dry as a bone, thanks to the excellent weather equipment. How much further do you want to go?

THE FINE ART OF....

This is why we do this! Strictly between you, me and the gatepost, there are times when it all gets to be a bit too much and you feel like chucking the whole lot in. Normally about once a month, two days before the production deadline of the monthly edition of this bloody magazine! However, it is days like the one spent in the company of the JBA Falcon Sports that make it all seem more than worthwhile.

The demonstrator has certainly seen a lot of action during the short while it has been in existence but, for all that the car looks just as pristine and fresh as it did the first day we were introduced.

The quality of the kit really is of the highest standard, the rear and side panels perfect in construction, as are the doors. These open to reveal a nice, wide aperture making entering the Falcon simplicity itself. This may strike some of you as a pretty silly thing to say but,

it is not always the case that opening the door makes getting into a car simple. There are times when, on trying to implant yourself into the cockpit of a car, you find yourself twisted into a shape somewhat resembling that of a demented disco music loving limbo dancer. Thankfully, not so with the JBA.

The bonnet comes in four sections, made from pre cut aluminium and includes all the louvres plus the concealed hinges. All these sections have either round or return edges, with not a ragged or rough border to be found anywhere. Opening the bonnet sections reveals an extremely spacious engine bay, which gives lots of engine options. The current incumbent of this area is a 2 litre fuel injection power unit, still leaving bags of room for any servicing or repair work with little or no fear of skinned and bruised knuckles.

The cockpit area of the car is quite spacious, with the interior trim of grey carpet with red piping matching the quality of the exterior. There is an area behind the seats which will easily accept a goodly amount of soft luggage and/or any tools required. This area also accepts the hood when it is folded down. This day was definitely one for being open

to the elements, so it was hood down, sunglasses on and time to hit the road to Wigan Pier and beyond.

Once in the car and settled into the comfortable and supportive Richfield seats, the door closes behind you with a reassuring solid clunk. Finding a comfortable driving position is achieved very quickly and, once properly ensconced in the car you begin to fully appreciate just how roomy the cockpit area of the JBA Falcon Sports is, with plenty of leg room for both driver and passenger. There is also more than ample space for the right elbow when the hands are on the steering wheel. Surveying the polished walnut dash reveals all the full range of instruments, including Smiths voltmeter and fuel gauge alongside the Tudor oil pressure gauge, speedo and tachometer easy to sight with all the Cortina stalks and switchgear being well to hand.

Before being ready to move off, one takes a look down the long, sleek bonnet. Although as previously mentioned the car is 3 inches shorter than its predecessor, it actually appears longer, due to the lower ride height. This really does have the appearance of the classic British touring car. Once familiar with the surroundings, it was time to move off, one turn of the key fires the engine first time, and gently pull away.

Very soon after leaving the JBA base, you discover what a smooth ride the Falcon gives, as the road leading from the industrial estate to the main thoroughfare must give milk float pilots nightmares. It is very bumpy indeed, but the car handles the severe undulations in the surface admirably, with no shakes to be felt or rattling heard anywhere. In fact, the journey is incredibly and surprisingly quiet, as the two litre 130 bhp engine purrs softly along, while responding immediately to any increase in throttle pressure. This engine is allied to a Sierra five speed gearbox, the long travel of the clutch making movement up or down the gears smooth and easy. If one is going to be slightly picky, the clutch and brake could be moved a touch closer together, to give a little more room for the left foot when unemployed. By no means a big problem and certainly not deserving of minus points. In fact, this car has such an easy

going, relaxed feel it is impossible for you not to feel the same. That is not to say it will not crack along at impressive pace, it certainly does but, why rush an enjoyable experience as this? Just saunter along at around 3000 revs, safe in the knowledge that there is plenty more in reserve.

Despite the low ride height and rakish feel of the car, it is still very easy to place on the road, with the rearview and wing mirrors steady and providing all the information needed about events around the car, keeping neck swivelling antics down to a minimum. The use of the well located, Cortina rear axle, in conjunction with 100 plus wheels, gives the Falcon a prodigious amount of grip in the dry, although the very 'all front and little behind' nature of the car advises a touch more caution when conditions are wet and slippery.

The steering matched the performance of the other aspects of the drive, bags of feel through the wheel and instant reaction to any minor change in attitude of the wheel. Once acclimatised to the car, most of the steering work can be carried out in a relaxed, one handed fashion, such confidence is exuded by the Cortina rack and pinion steering set up. As mentioned before, the JBA Falcon Sports is stylish to look at, it is equally stylish to drive. You can chuck it around if that is your wont, but really, you should never rush style. Again, as previously mentioned, the general quality of the ride is excellent, a lot of work obviously being put into this aspect of the car and the spring rates set just about right.

Despite it being a fine spring day, there was a fair bit of wind around and one normally expects this to be exaggerated in an open top vehicle, therefore producing what we term as SEE, or streaming eye effect. Goggles needed? Not so today, with the wind and side screens offering more than adequate protection from any buffeting. We have our own method of judging how good wind protection is in an open top car. If it is fitted with a cassette player and you can hear it, the protection from the wind is a high mark area. I can report that the dulcet tones of the Jimmy Young programme were loud and clear. I'm not happy to report that, you understand, because if I could have found



The interior of the latest Falcon to flee the nest. More spacious than its predecessor, beautifully trimmed and finished with the stylish Richfield seats.

were the JBA boys had hidden the system I would have switched the sodding thing off. I later discovered it was in the glove compartment. Next time, I'll know! I think I would have preferred deafening engine noise or, for that matter, a dentist's drill. I think Dave Ashley set me up, so revenge will be taken at a later date. However, I digress and not even this could spoil the enjoyment of driving the car. The boys and girls at Central TV are going to enjoy playing with the Falcon Sports, and so should you. We are often accused of being slightly over complementary with our reviews of cars but, why spend hours looking for faults or searching for criticisms when none really exist? This is a fine kit and, when built you will have a car of which you can be proud and one which can be used no matter the weather. Great stuff!

KIT BITS

So, have you won? If you are the lucky person and reading this to discover just what has fallen in to your fortunate mitts, congratulations, you jammy devil! If, however, you

are like ourselves and planning a visit to the bank to grovel before the man with the cash, do not despair. The JBA Falcon Sports has to be one of the most competitively priced kits currently on the market. The basic kit will cost you £1642.85 + vat, for which you receive the chassis jig drilled and bushed to accept all major mechanical parts, on which the central body unit with floors and bulkhead fitted is located, aluminium bonnet panels including louvred side panels, aluminium lower front side panels, aluminium rear side panels, rear panels and front tray, doors and hinges, front and rear wings, stainless steel windscreen frame and a comprehensive build up manual. The comprehensive list of extras includes a choice of either double duck or mohair hood, hood frame, sliding window frame, mild steel unchromed bumpers, mild steel unchromed radiator grille, headlamp shells and rear lamp casings.

For more information contact **JBA Engineering Ltd., Unit 56b Bradley Hall Trading Estate, Bradley Lane, Standish Nr. Wigan, Greater Manchester. Tel 0257 424549.**