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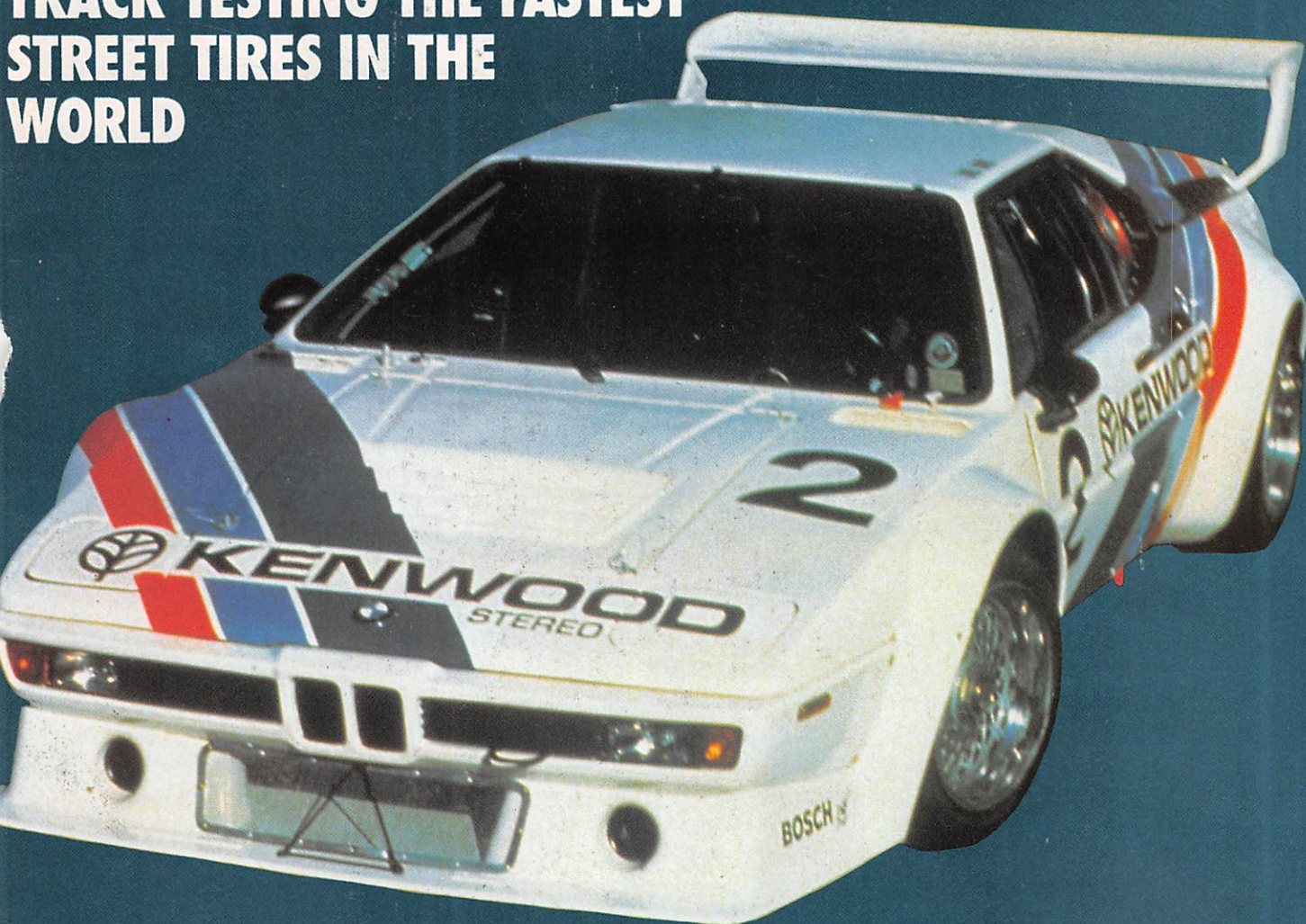
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## The **MAXTON** Rollerskate

Distinctively styled, the Maxton Rollerskate has been designed around the dependable, readily available Mazda rotary engine which offers strong and exhilarating performance.

Superior handling characteristics are provided by "no compromise" engineering, resulting in a unique chassis that is balanced and agile.

### **SPECIFICATIONS:**

Specially engineered and tuned space-frame chassis designed for the Mazda rotary engine

- Mazda 5-speed gearbox rear axle
- Rack and pinion steering
- Double wishbone front suspension with Ford uprights and ventilated disc brakes
- Wide track with low center of gravity
- Four point competition-grade seat belts
- Full instrumentation with analog gauges
- Fiberglass body work, "clamshell" hood

• 90" wheelbase, 142.5" overall length, 41.5" to top of structural overhead crossmember, 64" overall width, 55.75" rear track, 54.25" front track.

*Initial reservations have been placed for first production cars.  
Please contact Maxton for pricing and ordering information, as well as delivery schedule.*

**MAXTON**  
MAXTON COMPONENTS, LTD.

3774 South Lipan Street  
Englewood, Colorado 80110  
U.S.A.

Telephone: 303 / 781-1945  
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Specifications subject to change without notice.

**M**ore than likely, you've seen the ads for the Maxton Rollerskate car on the pages of this magazine. You've probably also asked, "is this car for real?"

Well, this writer recently had the opportunity to visit Maxton headquarters and drive this interesting piece of enthusiast machinery; I came back with the answer to that question, plus a whole lot more.

The Maxton Rollerskate is the brainchild of Denver businessman Bob Sutherland and racer-turned-car-builder Dan Ripley. This new car boasts a specially engineered and tuned space-frame chassis designed for the Mazda rotary engine, independent suspension, full instrumentation, and a wide, low fiberglass body.

The car is manufactured at Maxton Components, Inc., in Englewood, Colorado. At the Maxton facilities, I was introduced to a prototype car which had already logged many punishing miles. After a lengthy discussion with Dan Ripley, I climbed behind the wheel of the Rollerskate—literally. One must actually climb into this car because there are no doors, just cutouts in the side.



Like so many other features of the Rollerskate's design, looks and convenience have taken a back seat to performance handling and structural integrity.

Anyone who has owned a British sports car, like a Sprite, a Midget or a Spitfire, will immediately feel at home in the Rollerskate's small and Spartan, but comfortable, cockpit. There are also a few similarities in the Maxton's specifications:

|                 | MAXTON          | "BUGEYE" SPRITE |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Wheelbase:      | 90 in.          | 80 in.          |
| Overall length: | 142.5 in.       | 137 in.         |
| Track, F/R:     | 54.25/55.75 in. | 45.75/48.75 in. |
| Weight:         | 1700 lb.        | 1500 lb.        |
| Tires:          | 205/60VR-13     | 5.20/13         |

However, once underway, you quickly decide that the Rollerskate is more like the Sprite, Midget or Spitfire that you wished for back then. First, the car has an extremely rigid feel with absolutely no cowl shake or rattle. This firm feel comes from the high-quality fiberglass body fitted over a super-strong welded square-tube-frame chassis that weighs about 200 pounds.

The next indication that this is no ancient British sports car comes when you push the throttle and the engine comes alive. The Maxton carries a 160 horsepower, smooth-running rotary engine from the Mazda RX-7 under its clamshell hood. Power is transmitted to the rear wheels via a "snick-snick" five-speed transmission that also has been borrowed from the RX-7. Zero to sixty MPH times are just over six seconds, and top speed is 125+ MPH.

With tweaking it is possible to get up to 200 hp from the RX-7 engine, so the possibilities are awesome. I believe the car can use the additional power quite effectively.



**The MAXTON Rollerskate**

But the real surprise comes when the road becomes twisty. This is where the car earned the name "Rollerskate". Ben Vanderlinden of SCCA Spec Racer and Shelby Can-Am fame engineered the car, placing the engine aft of the front axle to obtain a desirable 47/53 front-to-rear weight distribution.

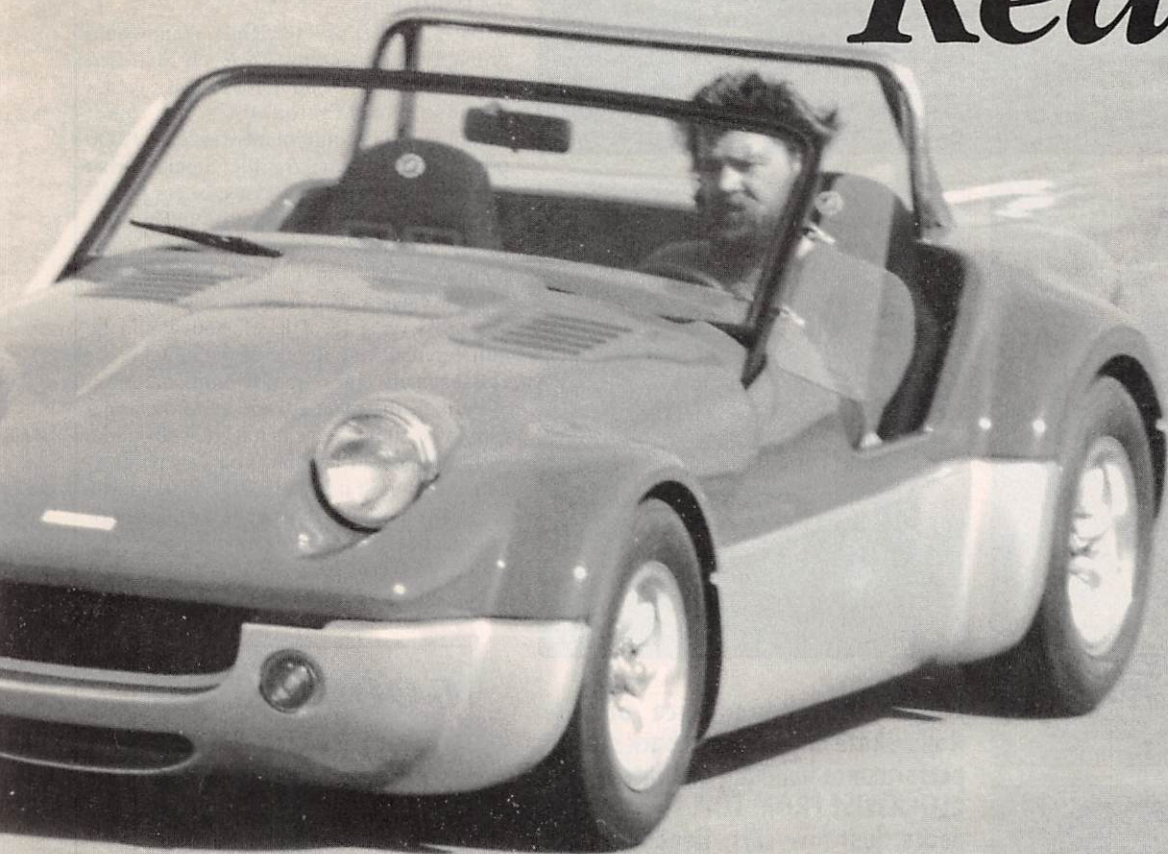
The specifications for the steering and suspension appear pretty mundane on paper, but the design works very well. The independent front suspension uses uprights from the Ford Mustang II combined with Maxton's own fabricated upper and lower A-arms. The rack and pinion steering also comes from the Mustang II, but has been converted from power to manual operation.

Up front, there are ventilated disc brakes that also come from the Mustang II. Mazda's



# Concept Becomes Reality

STORY BY BILL SIURU • PHOTOS COURTESY MAXTON



## The Maxton Rollerskate Is Born of Enthusiasts, For Enthusiasts

finned drums are retained in the rear, as is the live rear end. The car is shod with rather wide 205/60VR-13 tires.

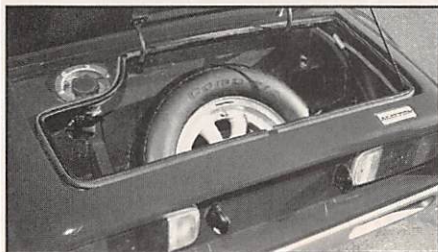
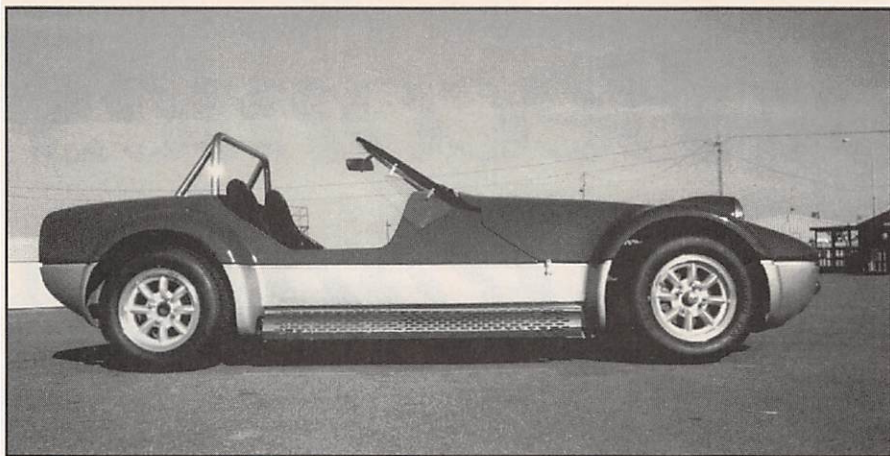
Dan Ripley is quick to point out that the Maxton Rollerskate not a kit car, but a “component” car. This approach was dictated by the stringent emission and crash testing requirements car manufacturers must meet in order to sell their cars in the U.S. Ripley has gone as far towards putting together a complete car as he could without becoming a full-fledged manufacturer; this allows him to remain exempt from meeting those emission and crash testing requirements. Nevertheless, the car’s \$19,995 price tag includes \$2000 for product liability insurance coverage which is, unfortunately, needed in today’s sue-happy society.

For your \$19,995 the Rollerskate is delivered in a crate almost fully assembled. This includes most of the body mounted on the chassis with wiring harness, steering, suspension, fuel lines and most of the drivetrain installed. You have to find, buy and install the Mazda engine, plus install the the full set of analog instruments, seats, competition-type four-point seatbelts, gearbox, some bodywork, windshield, rollbar and carpets which come in the crate. There is even a specially designed exhaust for the Mazda rotary that makes some nice sounds. Ripley says anyone handy with a wrench can put the car together over a weekend and have it ready for painting; even so, Maxton has been making constant improvements aimed at making assembly even easier.

Like earlier sports cars, the Maxton suffers in the creature comfort department. First, the car is designed for “wind-in-your-face” open air driving. There are no top or side curtains, though Ripley says an “emergency” top is in the works. A tonneau cover and decent heater make things a bit more bearable in cold weather. If you plan a long-range trip, you will limited to a toothbrush and change of underwear since storage capacity is nil.

The fit and finish, while not as good as, say, a Miata, are definitely better than that of earlier British iron—and infinitely better than that of most “kit” cars.

All Maxton Rollerskates are hand built. Dan Ripley says his present production capacity is four cars per month. So far, half a



Looks and convenience on the Rollerskate have taken a back seat to performance handling and integrity. **CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** There are no doors, just low sills; Headlights are "bugeye" design; Body features wide flares, integrated roll bar; Luggage space is limited; Interior has lightweight seats, competition-type four-point harnesses.



dozen Rollerskates have already been purchased; Ripley says he receives frequent inquiries about the car.

The Maxton Rollerskate can be registered in the U.S. as an owner-built kit car. Ripley says the car meets tailpipe emissions standards, but may not be street legal in all areas because it lacks a catalytic converter, etc. This may change, since Ripley is currently working with Corkey Bell of Cartech to develop full emission control equipment for the Rollerskate.

For off-street use, the Rollerskate would probably be classed in SCCA's B Modified or CMC's Mod A autocross class. That's because the Maxton does not meet homologation requirements (at least 1,000 produced per year) for the Stock, Street Prepared or Prepared classes, or for Modified production class competition. Unfortunately, the Rollerskate would not be competitive, at least on a national level, in its present classes. But it would be a blast to autocross on a local level, and would be quite competitive in one of the new kit-car classes many clubs are now implementing.

Perhaps the main advantage to owning a Maxton Rollerskate is that it's a well-made, well-engineered car that you can point to and say, "I built it myself." The fact that it's actually enjoyable to drive is an added bonus one doesn't usually get with a so-called "kit" car. **▲**

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