

# SS120

FINCH RESTORATIONS HAS TESTED ITS BRAND NEW SELF-DESIGNED AND BUILT S.S.-INSPIRED XK ENGINED TWO SEATER.

PICS - FINCH RESTORATIONS



The styling is very attractive and smaller than any S.S. production model ever built.



WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY BEEN following the evolution of the SS120 project at Finch Restorations. Finch is a boutique restoration, customisation and bespoke vehicle business in the picturesque Adelaide Hills.

Finch's first SS120 car, an open-top two-seater, has recently commenced testing and engineering at Goolwa aerodrome south of Adelaide, and will soon be performing endurance road-tests before being delivered to its excited Queensland owner.

Finch Restorations was first established by Ray Finch in 1965. In the 1990s, Ray took on a personal challenge to build a replica of an S.S. Jaguar 100 - the iconic Jaguar considered to be one of the most aesthetically pleasing cars of the 1930s. His S.S. Jaguar 100 replicas garnered acclaim for their high level of authenticity. He won an Australian Concours d'Elegance with his first S.S. Jaguar 100 replica, and even received a congratulatory letter from the head of the Ford Motor Company, Edsel Ford III. The Ford Motor Company was then the owner of Jaguar.

Ray Finch retired in 1999, and the Finch Restorations business is now owned by Peter Roberts, a Naval Architect, who for 35 years was previously working on luxury motor yachts, submarines, destroyers and patrol boats.

Peter has built the business into an

01 The period looking interior is supplemented by a massive amount of polished veneer and modern but traditional instruments. The finish and detail is exceptional.

02 Inspired by the S.S. Jaguar 100.

03 Crafted delightfully but not overly embellished.

04 Looking good then - it got better



01

artisan workforce of two dozen with old-school skills in metal and timber coachbuilding, panel-beating, spray-painting, mechanical systems, engine-building, auto-electrical, carburettor repairs, dyno-tuning, interior design and specialist parts procurement.

"What really sets us apart from other car restorers is our ability to project manage complete vehicle restorations, and the ability to design and engineer bespoke cars", said Peter Roberts.

"Before initiating our SS120 project, we undertook deep research into the S.S. Jaguar 100. We harvested a fascinating back-story of the prototypes being developed by Sir William Lyons, the founder of Swallow Sidecars, S.S. Cars and Jaguar. These prototypes included a car nicknamed the baby Jaguar, built for Lady Greta Lyons.

"S.S. Cars also delivered several S.S. Jaguar 100 driving chassis to third party coachbuilders, including the famed Ukrainian-French coachbuilder Jacques Saoutchik. Our research also found references suggesting common design influences between the S.S. Jaguar 100 Coupé prototype, the Mercedes 540K Autobahnkruiser and the Bugatti Type 57 Atlantique." Peter's research had by this time yielded a stylish catalogue of exquisitely styled 1930s vehicles. Post-War, William Lyons designed and created the exquisite Jaguar XK120. The XK120 was developed by shortening and narrowing the Jaguar MkV chassis that was then going into production.

01 A quick stop during the initial drive to make minor tweaks.

02 The lines are extremely pleasing with hints of the S.S. Saloon and S.S. Jaguar 100 beautifully blended.

03 The classic 4.2 litre XK engine is fitted to a specially modified Jaguar chassis.



04

Surprising for a brand new model, nothing was needed in the way of major up-grades.



02



05



03

The very first drive of this new car was staged at Goolwa airport.



06

The XK120 was being developed primarily as the vehicle to launch Jaguar's newly designed XK engine - a very attractive and sophisticated engine for its time.

"What if, we thought, we used the 1930s prototyping cues from Sir William Lyons as well as drawing inspiration from Jacques Saoutchik and these other 1930s classics?"

Inspired by the S.S. Jaguar 100 Coupé, the XK120, the Autobahnkruiser, the Bugatti Atlantic and Jacques Saoutchik bodies, Finch conceptualised their own design - a hard-top Coupé. Peter and his team then developed a range of different configurations including the variant of the SS120 just completed and tested at Goolwa aerodrome.

The testing team included independent Light Vehicle Engineering Signatory veteran, Doug Potts, Finch's Mechanical Workshop Supervisor, Shane Reynolds and Finch's Project Officer, Molly Spalding a rally race-driver.

After his first test-driving session, Doug said: "The car is a dream to drive. Often cars look magnificent, but the driving of them disappoints - too slow, too much power, too little power, too heavy, poor visibility, difficult controls, too unresponsive, too hair trigger in responsiveness.

"For me, the SS120 matched appearance with driving sensation. The sensation I held in hope - 'the dream' - was the sensation I realised immediately at this first drive."

01 The SS120 is a very attractive new car inspired by S.S. and Jaguar classic looks - bumpers are yet to be fitted.

02 Molly Spalding at the wheel for the first time came away most impressed.

03 It is difficult to know which is the best viewing angle for the car, but the profile belies the fact it is a new design.