



British Sports Cars of the 1950s and '60s (Shire Library)

By James Taylor

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Nobody built sports cars like British manufacturers in the 1950s and 1960s. There was something very special about the combination of low-slung open two-seater bodywork with a spartan interior, a slick sporting gearchange and a rorty exhaust note. This was wind-in-the-hair motoring, and it was affordable by the average young man – at least, until he got married and had a family. The names of MG and Triumph stood proudly out from the rest, but there were many others as well. Austin-Healeys and Jaguars were grander and faster, but they still embodied that almost indefinable fun factor. Then there were the bit-part players, who did their best to secure a place in the affections of the sports car buying public.

British sports cars were hugely popular overseas, especially in the USA. And tellingly, when Japanese manufacturer Mazda wanted to make a sports car in 1989, it sought inspiration from these very classics of the 1950s and 1960s. Today, the Mazda MX-5 is the world's best-selling sports car.

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About the Author

James Taylor is a world authority on automobiles and has written The London Bus and Land Rover for Shire. He lives in Great Britain.

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