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RACING

DECEMBER, 1969 40c

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NEWS

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A
H. FORMULA FORD —
THE AVAILABLE CARS

"SPEED WEEK" HONOURS
FOR NISSAN PROTOTYPES

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Peter Wherrett and Adrian Ryan examine motor racing's lusty new baby

EVEN more quickly than Formula Vee, Formula Ford is on the move. In N.S.W. and Victoria, particularly, there are enough cars either under construction or on the jigs to fill a full grid by the end of January. The new Formula is growing faster than any other class of racing ever introduced to this country and our prediction is that it will become the most popular Formula ever. Why?

Obviously there are a number of reasons, and probably none is more important than another. It is the combination of reasons that makes F.F. such an attractive proposition for the aspiring racing driver. The Formula is not cheap—but it is significantly cheaper than any other form of open wheeler racing with the exception of Formula Vee.



Note's wedge-shaped body style reflects new thinking from the Parramatta workshops—the car is good to look at and functional in design. LANCE RUTING

The Formula is not fast—but is faster than most touring car classes and certainly faster than Formula Vee. It is a good training ground—but it is no better than F.Vee or Clubman for example. Most importantly, it is a pure racing car formula and, as we have so often before said, everyone, at some time or another, wants to drive a real open-wheeler.

Formula Ford provides the opportunity just that much better than Formula Vee does. With such a combination of attractive features how could it ever fail? But there is one more important point which sets it above any other class. A well made Formula Ford chassis is convertible.

In time, with extra money saved and experience gained, the F.F. driver can progress through Formula Three and Formula Two without any major structural changes in his car. In some cases the makers are even claiming that a good 2-litre engine would not be beyond the capabilities of the F. Ford chassis.

In Sydney and Melbourne not only have the existing manufacturers turned quickly to the construction of F. Ford cars, but new makers have sprung up overnight.

At this time Melbourne is Australia's Formula Ford centre, with the activity there just edging out Sydney so we ask-

FLOURISHING

FORMULA



Bill Reynolds' Wren was the first car completed and therefore used by Ford for their publicity blurb. Conventional styling features, very small frontal area, no windscreen. PAUL HARRINGTON

ed our Melbourne Editor, Adrian Ryan, to check out the scene for us:

IN Victoria there are several manufacturers and quite a number of "backyarders" building FF cars. Most prolific is Bill Reynolds, who is turning out Wren cars as quickly as the orders come in. His first car has been delivered to Graeme North, of Shepparton, who raced a few years back in the ex-Lex Davison Cooper Irving.

The next two chassis are almost complete and will go to ex-Formula Junior driver, David Green, and former 1½-litre punter, Geoff Hood. Reynolds has three more chassis planned for production in the near future. His rolling chassis with your choice of tyres (up to normal road radials) is \$1900 plus tax, and he will sell any or all of the component parts which are all made on the premises.

BMW and Renault dealer, John Ould, and brother Alan have big plans for their Aztec FF. John has laid down one chassis and now has the engine and gearbox ready. The body, shown originally at the Motor Racing & Sports Car Show in Melbourne, was a one piece affair, but it will be in three pieces on the finished car. Ould will use the VW gearbox with Peter Holinger gears, but later hopes to develop their own version using a Renault set-up.

Alan, who worked for Brabham for 2½ years, prepared his car for the Tasman and helped at Indy this year, says that his design must be influenced by Brabham and Tauranac, but he has incorporated some of his own ideas as well.

He is sure that the most successful cars will be over the minimum weight limit. He is using 16g round tubing with ultra high strength nickle-bronze gas-fluxed welds. He has double tubed the chassis all round the driver, and says his chassis will take 1600 or even a 2-litre motor. The Aztec FF rolling chassis will sell for \$1995 plus tax, but this price includes full harness seat belts.

Garth Rhodes built a chassis for FF, but it was sold to a client who has a Hillman Imp motor to go into it. His next chassis is almost complete and he has the motor nearly ready as well. Garth is also putting a lot of strength into his design. Large 1½in. diam. 16g tubing forms the greater part, while square 1in. 16g is used in the engine bay. Suspension will be conventional 'A'-frame wishbones and adjustable coil-damper units. He has a very neat cylindrical (as opposed to wedge) shaped fibreglass body completed for this car. The body has a very small frontal area. It comes in four sections—nose cone, two side panels and engine cover. He



The Aztec comes from John Ould, with radical wedge treatment a'la Lotus 61, but remains distinctly original in concept. PETER D'ABBS



Elfin, Stillwell and Knight combined to be the first successful Formula Ford team with Sandown win. The Elfin is similar to other 600s, except for the wheels. PETER D'ABBS

will call his cars 'Avon', which comes from a very old family name and has nothing to do with tyres.

Brian Andrews worked with Tim Schenken in the U.K. for quite a while and his home-built chassis is similar to a Merlyn. I feel this will be one of the quickest cars on the scene, because Brian has had a lot of experience with FF. He will sell duplicates of his own cars, building them to order.

In South Australia the Elfin works are hurriedly producing their Elfin Ford based exactly on the existing 600 chassis. Again, the Elfin will be completely adaptable up to full Formula Two specifications. Initially they have laid down a batch of ten cars.

Elfin also produces an adaptation of the VW gearbox at very reasonable cost, but the first car, which went to Stillwells, was fitted with the Hewland box. As Garrie Cooper points out the Hewland is fitted with the FT200 crown wheel and pinion, which is used with engines up to 2.5-litres, so Ford 1600s should give it no trouble.

Elfin already has the distinction of winning the first Formula Ford race in Australia, with Richard Knight up, at Sandown.

Stillwells are opting for the Elfin chassis fitted with a Lucas motor and Hewland Mk 10 quick-change box. They will probably run a team of cars, but only one is being prepared at the moment. Stillwells intend to set up a complete FF engine department selling engines, like Lucas and Steele in England.

Plans are also under way for several 1100 and 1600 cars to be altered to suit the Formula. Murray Coombs has slipped a FF engine into his old Lynx chassis, while Werner Bekker is doing the same thing with the Lotus 18. Bekker will run for the Box Hill Auto Sales team, which sponsors Tony Stewart in Formula Vee.

Besides Stillwells there will be several other shops producing dyno tested FF engines. John Ould Motors will be doing some engines, and Jack Hunnam intends to have a full change-over service

available as soon as the Formula starts. Oulds have dry sump kits available and will market a lot of gear under the Aztec name. Likewise Garth Rhodes intends to do the same thing with Avon engines.

On the gearbox side, most will use the VW box and most using them will go for the innards to Peter Holinger out at Warrandyte. Peter's gears are renowned in Melbourne and he has one of the best (if not the best) gear-cutting machines in the State. As well as this he knows what is wanted and can produce it.

You bring your 40 h.p. VW case and \$300 to Peter, and he'll set you up with a quick-change four ratio set-up. Extra ratios are available in an infinite variety for around \$32 plus tax. He will also adapt a VW box with no quick change and one set of ratios for approx. \$200 plus tax. He is also making up quill shafts, output shafts and side plates to suit the VW box and can cut any gears you want for any other box.

Aztec (Oulds) are also thinking of importing the Renault FF conversion kits but have no price structure yet. They will use Holinger's gears in their first car.

Generally you'll find that most engineering shops with a motor racing flavour will make any part required by the home builder. Best bet at present is Bill Reynolds in St. Kilda. Bill has built up a supply of parts and components for his Wren cars and these are all available for resale.

There is a controversy re tyres. One faction wants road tyres, as in the UK, but there is a strong move towards racing tyres. I was a road tyre man myself until I spoke with Alan Ould. Alan feels that a training formula should not be restricted by the tyres, as a driver will not learn to drive if there is a limit this way.

Cost is not a real problem as the size is governed by the rim width allowed, and a really top imported radial is as expensive as some racing tyres. Also, in UK, the top FF boys are buffing off most of the rubber on their radials and using them for one meeting only. Bang goes the cheaper cost of radials.

The Watch Committee, set up to start the FF Register and presided over by Paul Harrington from the LCCA, will be making recommendations re tyres in the near future. Paul has been the greatest instigator of FF ever since he landed here.

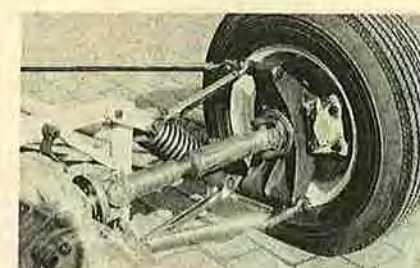
So, there it is! FF is here and going. Ford is right behind it and have moved heaven and earth to remedy the lack of

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FORMULA FORD cont.

Ford motors. Right at the moment, though. I wouldn't like the chances of a private motorist who is waiting for a replacement motor for his 1600 Cortina—unless he joins the Formula Ford Register!

Copies of the Register are available from the Light Car Club of Australia, 46 Queens Rd., Melbourne, or from Ray Kennedy at Ford Motor Company, Broadmeadows, Vic.

For the benefit of those wishing to contact those I have mentioned, here are their addresses.

Peter Holinger, 25 Bradley's Rd., Warrandyte.

John Ould Motors, 837 High St., Armadale.

Bill Reynolds, 76 Carlisle Street, St. Kilda.

N. A. Rhodes & Son, 302 Victoria St., Richmond.

B. S. Stilwell & Co., Cotham Rd., Kew.

Jack Hunnam Motors, 25 Wren Rd., Moorabbin.

SydneySide

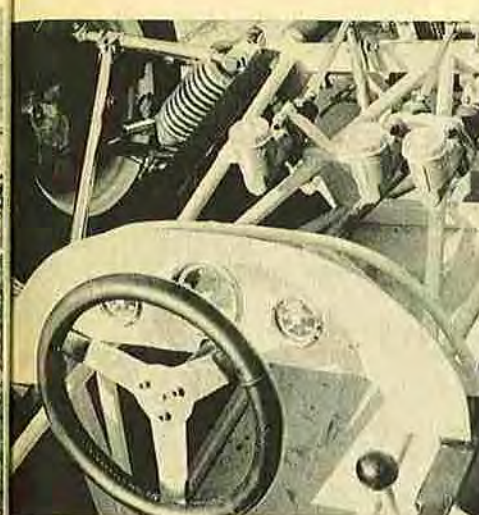
There are seven known Formula Ford chassis in varying stages of completion around Sydney. Darrel Adams, who has previously concentrated his efforts in the Formula Vee field, and who has never before built a racing car, has completed his first unit which will be driven by Vee exponent Peter Finlay and himself.



Square tubing, neat and comfortable cockpit design, high standard of overall finish highlight the P4a from Bowin.

The car features nothing radical in the way of design, but was intended to be a standard interpretation of an existing theme. He has other firm enquiries, but is not yet building a second car and probably won't until his first has proven itself.

At Bowin Designs, John Joyce has two firm orders and one car completed. The first was built for Bob Beasley and will be run with full backing from Wright-Ford Motors. The second has been ordered by Rural Motors at Orange



Bill Reynolds uses round tube, slightly less decorative interior. Both cars are highly functional in the pure racing car sense.

for newcomer, Ian McClintock, who, when he appears with the F.F., will be having his first ever motor race.

Guy Buckingham at Nota is having his busiest period since Formula Vee began, and is building a car for Alan Vincent and John Tuxford, with others to come. Vincent moves up from the ranks of 'Brick' drivers and Tuxford has enjoyed considerable success over the past four years with his Lotus 7 Clubman.

When this story was put down, Bob Britton of Rennmax was too busy with bigger equipment to have given Formula Ford much of a thought and was more inclined towards Formula Three anyway. He is not yet building a car, but you can bet there will be a Rennmax around not too long into 1970.

Another Vee builder to go over to Fords is John Grant, who names his

cars after Grant's Standfast Scotch Whisky. Although he has built relatively few Formula Vee cars, those that do compete are among the best in the country and his engineering standards are reflected in the magnificence of his chassis. His Formula Fords will be among the best and the first two off will go to Aub and Neil Revell, both very strong in the Vee class since its inception.

Engine preparation in Sydney is being left pretty much to the individual, although John Leffler is doing the Vincent engine and has indicated that he is keen to do more. The bulk of the gearboxes will be VW with Holinger conversions, although obviously there will be a few who can afford Hewlands and certainly the Bowins will have them.

The tyre controversy rages in Sydney as well, but it appears certain that the class will be running radials for at least the first year. Unless they change to racing tyres in England we should stay with radials here because of the distinct possibility of a 'little Tasman' for F.Ford cars. If our regs differ we have no hope. As we surely have already proved often enough with other Formulae!

All we need now are races—and not races where Formula Ford cars are lumped in with other categories and made to look foolish. This happened with Formula Vee and look how long it took them to win themselves back into public favour. The promoters should wait until there is a full field and run the cars only against each other, but I'll bet they don't.

The Sydney addresses of Formula Ford constructors are as follows:

Adams Automotive, 4 Salisbury Rd., Asquith.

Bowin Designs, 18 Consul Road, Brookvale.

Nota Engineering, 40 Smith Street, Parramatta.

Penshurst Motors, 598 Forest Rd., Penshurst.

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