

G.S.M. DELTA

[I]t is some time now since pictures of the South African Dart car were first published, and at the time one regarded it as a distant novelty. Last Friday, however, G.S.M. Cars Ltd. of London Road Garage, Malling, Kent, announced that they are to manufacture this car in England as the G.S.M. Delta (picture below).

The basis of the car is a ladder frame constructed of 3 1/2-in.-dia. steel tubes, to which are moulded the floor and sills of the body. Front suspension is independent, a transverse leaf spring forming the upper link while an anti-roll bar is incorporated in the lower wishbone. The front hub carries pivots on ball joints, and damping is by telescopic shock absorbers. The rear axle is Ford 100E, preferred to the 105E unit because of its wider track; it is located by rearward-facing parallel radius arms and an A bracket, while coil spring-damper units form the suspension medium.

In the standard car, the Ford 105E engine is in virtually normal tune, performance claims of 0-60 m.p.h. in 16 seconds and 90 m.p.h. maximum perhaps being justified by the low weight of

1,290lb and the good, clean body shape.

Two further stages of tune are available, Stage I consisting of special manifolds, twin S.U. carburettors and increased compression ratio. This gives 55 b.h.p. at 5,500 r.p.m. in comparison with 39 b.h.p. at 5,000 r.p.m. with the standard model. The Stage II engine has oversize valves, special valve springs, a long-lift camshaft, four Amal or two twin-choke Weber carburettors, and a tuned exhaust manifold. Compression ratio is 11 to 1. A racing clutch and close-ratio gears transmit the extra power, for which figures are not yet available.

Enthusiasts for the Ford 105E will be encouraged to hear that kits to modify their engines to the above degrees of tune will be available, an interesting point being that each item is individually priced, permitting the modification to be made on a true instalment system.

Basic price is £838 10s with purchase tax of £350 10s. Total price in Great Britain is £1,189, including hardtop, soft-top and a tonneau cover, heater and demisters, Michelin tyres, choice of seats and hide upholstery. The competition model in kit form costs £1,055.



soon became the car to beat in 1000cc races around the UK and on the continent. 'It was the first 1000cc sportscar to get under 60secs cover around the short Brands circuit.



132mph 'before the centre main-bearing cap broke, which prevented us from getting the 1000cc record.'

In 1960 Van Niekerk went back to the UK as the 'local market was saturated for the Dart. We had already, by that stage, produced around 30 cars. So I entered into a venture with John Scott and started work on the Dart - known as the Delta since the name Dart had been registered by a bicycle firm who did not want to sell the trademark - at Winsor Garage in West Malling near Maidstone.'

By this stage, Meissner had left GSM to start on his own at Dart Service Station 'as he was more into the mechanical side and wanted to do his own thing, though he still helped out with the cars.'

'The deal I had with Scott was that I would take a chassis and inner body across to the UK, get the bits from Ford, put it together, race it at Brands Hatch and win - all in ten days - and he would pay for it. I managed to do all that, though I did not sleep much,' reflected Van Niekerk.

With Bob behind the wheel, the Delta

'We also won at Silverstone, Oulton Park, Aintree [where the car is pictured left on the grid in 1960] and elsewhere. We finished second and 14th overall in the Clermont-Ferrand Six-Hour in France, beaten by the Dyna-Panhard which had more torque and could outdrag us up the hill, which was unfortunately where the start-finish was located.' It was a tough battle: 'My hands were raw after the Clermont-Ferrand race, the result of 4,000 gearchanges and 2,800 corners in six hours.'

The Delta team also went to the Jabeke Highway in Belgium for the speed-trials, where the car reached