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The Creative Workshop Sport Speciale: American Etceterini

John Lowe

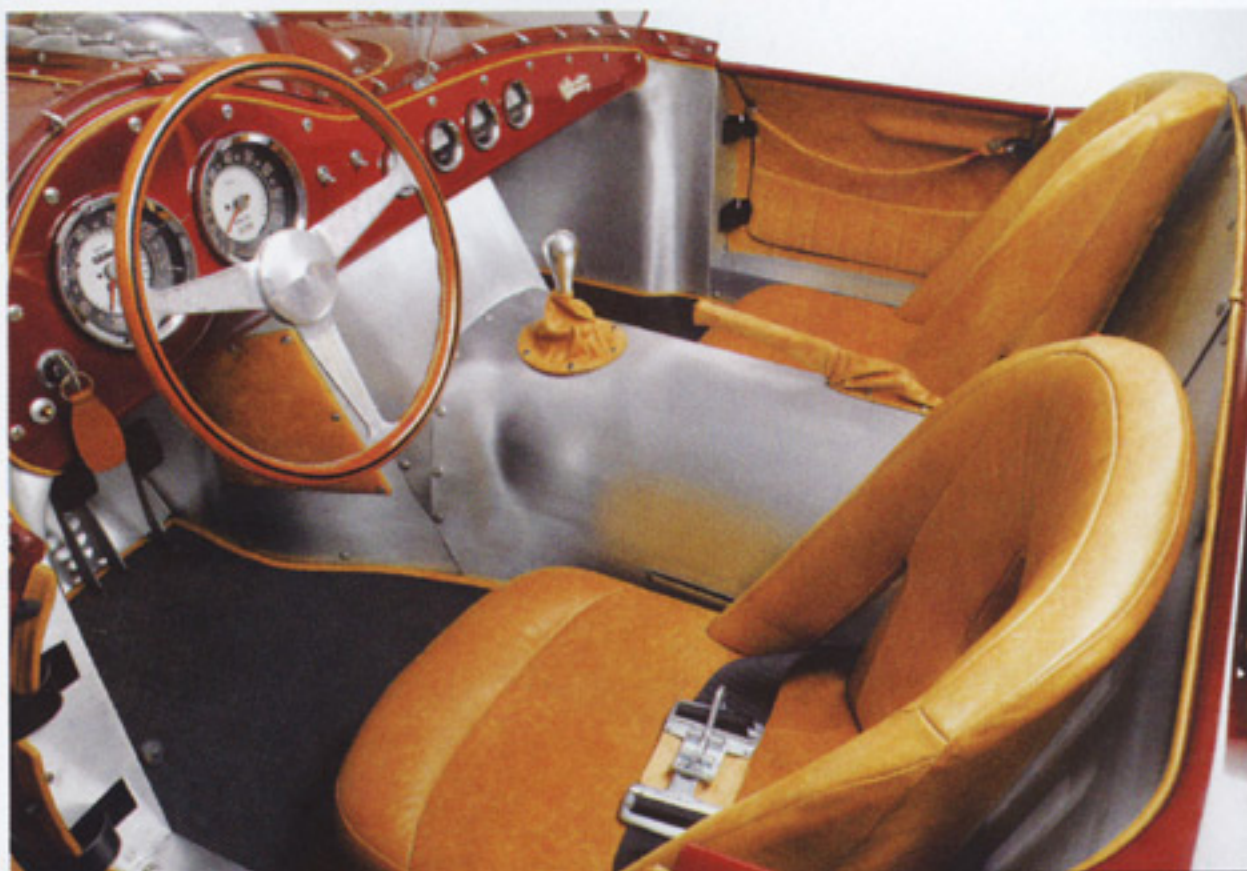
At first glance, **The Creative Workshop's Sport Speciale Roadster** reminds you of something you're fairly certain you've seen before, you just can't quite put your finger on it. Hauntingly familiar as if from some black and white photograph, you might be inclined to believe you've wandered upon an obscure and exotic relic from the fifties or sixties. And then you look under the hood, and all bets are off.

Located two blocks off of U.S. Highway 1 in Dania Beach, Florida, **The Creative Workshop** is a custom automotive construction and restoration facility specializing in what is known as *Converted Restoration*, or the blending of modern automotive technology and performance with classic car looks. The results are one-of-a-kind automotive art works built to exceed even the most discriminating collectors' desires, while at the same time incorporating 21st century performance and reliability.

Co-owned by Jason and Kim Wenig, The Creative Workshop is comprised of twelve restorative technicians, one parts specialist, and an office manager whose collective efforts have produced the company's first-ever in-house "drawing board-to-street" design and manufacture project. The resulting automobile, the **Sport Speciale Roadster**, is an instant Classic.

Already renowned the world over as expert restorers of *Etceterini*, designing and building the Sport Speciale Roadster was a natural, if not predictable, progression for The Creative Workshop. For the Wenig's and their staff, these cars are their company's passion.

"As coachbuilders, we take ourselves back to when cars were built by visionaries and artists, focused singularly on making their mark in the history books by building something that was faster and more artistic than anything that had come before. Our efforts over the past year have been singularly focused on creating a one-of-a-kind 'dream machine' for the ultimate collector who wants a sports car truly unlike any other."



From the hand-trimmed and stitched custom leathers lining the interior to the expertly applied mirror finishes coating the vehicle's skin, no effort or expense was spared to create an automobile which would sit proudly with the most coveted roadsters ever built.

The artisans at The Creative Workshop are equal opportunity perfectionists having also restored Mustangs, Camaros, Rolls Royces, Mercedes and more. The company's website even displays authentic restorations of a vintage popcorn wagon, a station wagon, and pick-up trucks of yesteryear displayed alongside the Etceterini of clients the world over.

"We are who we are," Jason proclaims, **"and we take our cues from traditional styles. We've learned the methods of the best master coach builders in order to perform true restorations of these beautiful cars, from the automobile's build to exact color matching."**

Commissioned by collectors Mr. & Mrs. Barry and Lynn Smith of Scottsdale, The Creative Workshop began the 7,000 hour process of designing and building a racer from scratch which would satisfy its owners' desires: an automobile that would look perfectly at ease in a 1959 racecar paddock alongside its now legendary rivals yet possessing the technological advantages of an ultra-modern racecar.



The customers got everything they bargained for, and then some. The Sport Speciale Roadster has a behemoth 5.97L V-12 BMW engine capable of generating 480 foot-pounds of torque and 450 horsepower. The 2,230 pound Sport Speciale can accelerate from 0-60 in 3.6 seconds and has a theoretical top speed of 251 miles per hour! For comparison purposes, the Ferrari from which



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the Sport Speciale draws its inspiration, the 1960 TR60, posted 0-60 times of 5.8 seconds. They never would have seen it coming, back in the day.

Breathing through a modernized, in-house design of an Hilborn-style Electromotive fuel injection system, this classic couples its monstrous BMW engine with a six-speed modified BMW synchro-mesh transmission, fully adjustable, independent, dual wish-bone front suspension, and Jaguar-style independent rear-end incorporated with a NASCAR-inspired anti-sway device.

Not your grandfather's roadster, The Sport Speciale was designed and built to dominate asphalt at the turn of a key. A custom-designed braking package can bring this racer to a safe stop. With Brembo racing disc brakes and calipers in the front, a Wilwood branded set in the rear, and Vredestein racing radial tires all around, the Sport Speciale can speed through corners with a gentle glide of the steering wheel.

Fabricated completely on-site utilizing traditional Carrozzeria building techniques, The Creative Workshop designed and hand-built the Sport Speciale's chrome-moly "Birdcage" style tubular steel chassis and added to the party a hand-formed, "Superleggera" style aluminum body. These period authentic "borrowed" concepts allow the Sport Speciale the rigidity to take full advantage of present day high performance components assembled, while at the same time attest to the vehicle's true heritage.

Perfecting their skills through award winning restorations of some of the world's most sought-after automobiles including a 1954 Stanguellini Bialbero, a 1953 Motto-bodied MG, and a 1970 Ferrari Daytona Spyder, The Creative Workshop incorporated fine touches to the Sport Speciale. From the hand-trimmed and stitched custom leathers lining the interior to the expertly applied mirror finishes coating the exterior, no effort or expense was spared to create an automobile which would sit proudly with the most coveted roadsters ever built.

Period-correct appointments from their original sources champion The Sport Speciale Roadster including Veglia instruments, an original Nardi steering wheel, anti-fog Marcal racing lighting, Magneti Marelli switches, and even authentic Borrani wheels cast from the original molds at the modern Borrani factory in Milano, Italy.

A task as ambitious as building The Sport Speciale is not without risk. In trying to incorporate the very best qualities of automobiles separated by many generational leaps in technology, The Creative Workshop's crew continuously had to create a perfect balance. Too much of one element at the expense of the other and the car would lose its appeal. Rather, and to the delight of the new owners, The Sport Speciale Roadster is everything it was conceived to be.

With its own singular set of qualities and a character unlike anything to come before it, race car or otherwise, there is simply nothing else like The Sport Speciale Roadster on American roads. Indeed, there's only one.