



now raced in vintage events by Ray Knight, shown here as a passenger while Wolfgang Porsche takes a lap of Laguna Seca.

Below: Light and low, the Type 540 America Roadster was the Factory's version of Sauter's Roadster and they could be seen at racetracks all over their namesake country. Seen here at Moffett field in August 1953, John von Neumann's special America Roadster was a one-off of an already rare car. Jack McAfee drove it to a win in the under 1.5 liter race. Von Neumann had serious intentions for this car, thus it came with no door handles, large air holes in front for brake cooling, minimal trim and other deviations from the America norm. The brake ducts were made of old license plates and the racing number was applied with bottled shoe polish.

## The America Roadster

The fourth, and the first legitimate "Speedster" produced by the factory—as the others were one-off "home-made" examples—was the America Roadster built in the summer of 1952. About a dozen cars were built by the factory with aluminum bodies, and at least one of steel. It had a flat wind-screen which was removable so that a racing aero screen could be fitted. Stripped for racing, the car weighed in at 1,412 pounds. All America Roadsters were fitted with the new type 528, 1500 cc engine. It had a two piece case, roller crankshaft, hot cam, Solex 40 PIBC carbs, and produced 70 h.p.

One of the first America Roadsters was purchased by Briggs Cunningham. Another car went to John von Neumann, driven by an up-and-coming West Coast racer named Jack McAfee. Bob Dodge, one of the founders of the California Sports Car Club also campaigned an America Roadster in 1953. In the States, the America Roadster won a considerable number of races and good positions in others. Only one America Roadster ran in Germany, in the hands of Kurt Zeller.



In the Spring of 1951, the wish for an open two-seater with a more sporting character was realized. Two German racers, Heinrich Sauter and Hans Klenk, were convinced the 356 Gmünd coupes were too slow. They wanted a roadster which would be lighter, lower, and therefore faster. After drawing up sketches of just such a car, Sauter and Klenk purchased a chassis from Porsche—#10359, designated to be a 1300 Cabriolet—and brought it to Klenk's small body shop just outside Stuttgart. In the 1950s, Porsche had a special relationship with their clients, as shown in this case. The car was designed and completed in close cooperation and with significant help from Porsche's technical staff. It had Porsche running gear, engine and parts. Sauter wanted the doors to open from the front to allow quicker entrance and exit from the car at checkpoints during rallies. This "Sauter-Roadster" could be considered the second Porsche roadster built after the prototype 1948 356-001.

It had a "souped-up" 1500 cc VW engine that produced 52 h.p. It took six months to complete, and the steel-bodied roadster ended up weighing nearly 1,325 pounds. This can be considered the "missing-link" between Porsche's first roadster in 1948, and the Type 540 America Roadster which Porsche would produce in the summer of 1952.

The Sauter roadster's first race was during the Eifelrennen at the Nurburgring in the spring of 1951. Sauter posted the second fastest practice time, but dropped out of the race with engine trouble. In August, the car participated in the Liege-Rome-Liege race with Sauter/Rath but did not finish. Later in '51, the factory bought the car from Sauter, and it was re-sold in 1952 to

Opposite: Caught in the early morning mist of the Monterey peninsula, Dean Watts' GS/GT Speedster has spent the night topless. Owners realized that leaks were almost assured around every edge of the windshield, top and side curtains, so there wasn't much point in raising the roof unless the weather got really inclement.

Right: On June 7th, 1959 at Laguna Seca, four Speedsters dice for position in an SCCA F Production race. Charles Adams leads Robert Herda, Ted Conrad and Ronnie Bucknum. The Speedster had just been phased out of production by this time, but they would fill the grids of SCCA races for years to come.



Cheryl Dunkel's 1958 Carrera GS/GT Speedster is a highly-developed version of Porsche's simple sport roadster. With a four-cam engine and many aluminum panels, it was a true dual-purpose machine for cruising and competition.

