

1961 COOPER 'MONACO' T-61M - BUICK®

1961

Team Owner – Peter Berry

Driver – Bruce McLaren

1962-1963 Team Cunningham

Team Owner – Briggs Cunningham

Team Driver – Walt Hansgen

Team Mechanic – Alfred Momo

Current Owner/Driver – Jeffrey Heller, Berkeley CA



THE CAR

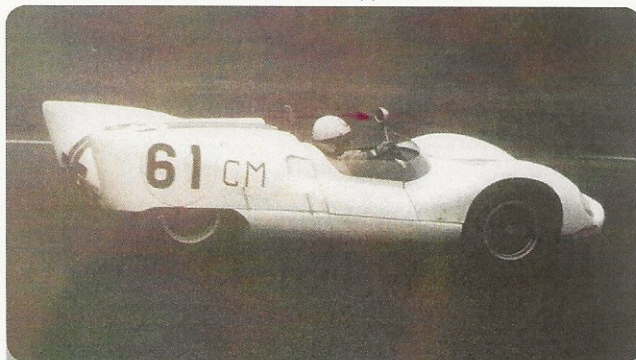
Built by the Cooper Car Company in Surbiton, England, the firm was famous for pushing the rear-engine revolution in racing, starting with their 500cc racers, moving into various Formulas and becoming World Champion Constructors in 1959 and 1960 with cars driven by World Champion Sir Jack Brabham.



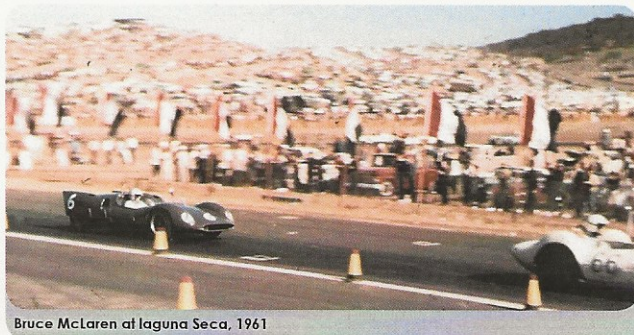
Walt Hansgen at Laguna Seca, 1962

In late 1958, Coopers unveiled the next generation of rear-engine sports racer, named the "Monaco" in honor of their Grand Prix (F-1) victory in Monte Carlo that year. With no driveshaft running between the seats, the car was a barely widened Grand Prix machine, sharing much of the same suspension, steering and running gear. Choice of motors, however, were strictly up to the private owners.

This car was the Third chassis produced as the Mark III Version of the Monaco –with some changes to the chassis and suspension from previous versions. These cars also received new bodywork that included the two rear Cadillac-style 'fins' that were thought to appeal to American buyers. At this time, Coopers also changed their nomenclature for chassis numbering and the Mark III became the Type 61M.

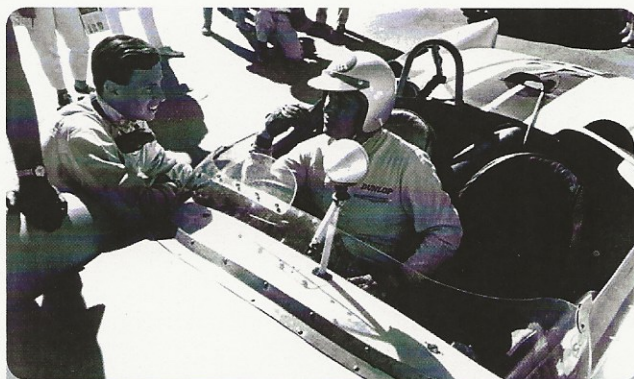


Walt Hansgen winning the Watkins Glen Grand Prix, 1962



Bruce McLaren at Laguna Seca, 1961

This chassis (CM/3/61) was originally built up for U.K. driver Peter Berry, but he withdrew the order. Cooper's Grand Prix driver, Bruce McLaren had driven for Team Cunningham in the 1960 West Coast races and thought that a properly prepared 'Monaco' could really be competitive. He convinced Peter Berry not only to take up the order but also finance his American adventure. (The other two CM Mark IIIs were driven by Jack Brabham and Roger Penske.)



Walt Hansgen chatting with Jim Clarke, LA Times Grand Prix, 1962

McLaren's choice of motor was the Coventry-Climax 2.7 Litre FPF unit that had, in fact, been used to power Cooper's entry in the 1961 Indianapolis 500! The car was tested briefly at Silverstone in September and got under the record sports car time set by Stirling Moss in a Lotus 19.