

Letter from Switzerland

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Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Die Schweiz = Suisse = Svizzera = Switzerland : offizielle Reisezeitschrift der Schweiz. Verkehrszentrale, der Schweizerischen Bundesbahnen, Privatbahnen ... [et al.]**

Band (Jahr): **41 (1968)**

Heft 5

PDF erstellt am: **03.07.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-776588>

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LETTER FROM SWITZERLAND

EUGENE V. EPSTEIN

In olden days, especially in springtime, a young man's fancy used to turn to thoughts of love. This was plain and simple fact, and everybody knew it. There is no less love today, but it appears to be of a different variety. "It's darned nice to have a girl friend," we overheard one young gentleman saying recently, "but what good is a girl if you haven't got a car?"

Oddly enough, it is also in spring that our fancy turns to thoughts of automobiles. This is no coincidence, either. For in the spring, we young males—all of us who can get away with it—don our plumage in the form of shiny paint and gleaming chrome and set out in quest of whatever nature has in store for us.

It simply does not befit the male of the species to droop around the place in dull browns and grays. Look at the ducks. Look at the rest of the animal kingdom. We are the mallards of the genus *homo sapiens*, and instead of flying and saying "quack-quack", we drive wildly about the neighborhood, disturbing the peace and saying "honk-honk". Perhaps a comparison with geese might have been more apt.

I do not subscribe to the theory that the current automobile madness is a continuation of childhood, and that all we're really doing is playing, just as our children play with their miniature cars. No—and I must repeat this: the automobile urge is strongest in the springtime, and don't forget it. That's my theory, and it's the result of lots of study, most of it based on my own reactions.

The trouble with cars is that the kind we'd really like to have are generally expensive. The mallard duck can sport his plumage at no immediate cost to himself. This is because the animal kingdom is backward, and there's not an animal anywhere in this world—with the exception of man—who has learned to appreciate the benefits of good old hard cash. So, anyway, the mallard can show off for nothing—including the built-in horn—and he probably attains his goal more often than his human counterparts. There are, however, few tests available to prove this last assumption.

We know that automobiles are rather expensive. We also know that many automobiles are inexpensive—only *some* are expensive. Then why is it that we crave the expensive ones? I know the answer to that question, too: because we want to be different from the next fellow. After all, anybody can purchase a cheap car, but there are few of us who can afford an *Albee-Rodeo Super-12 Spitfive!* In fact, since I can't anyway, that leaves only two such dream cars in all of Switzerland, one purple, the other orange (with racing stripes).

Now what's so special about special cars (forgetting the price, of course)? Let's discuss the Albee-Rodeo Super-12 Spitfive. This is what it has, according to the firm's latest six-color prospectus:

Chassis: Super spot-welded 4-mm hot-spun extruded steel throughout, with a modicum of nickel-plated gum alloy in all trouble areas, including an undercoating of spearmint, corrosion-resistant and rust-free. Twenty-four nuggets protect the driver and his passenger from undue shock, while cracklocks assure a trouble-free and rattle-free undercarriage. Available in 14 and 18 carats, with 12-cm undulating spread.

Engine: Nine cylinders, each 5.2673 liters, direct firing line and squad, dual injection twin carburetors, super-start air-oil-water-petrol mixture. Double cam-

shaft, self-lubricating windscreen washer, sealed head and feet, 24-inch eccentric off-center beaming rods, thremthrow silversteel stainless bearings throughout, 23.5-inch push, 6.3-inch pull, 19-inch throw under normal operating conditions.

Interior:

Ebony GT (Go-Tee) instrument panel and fittings, hand-fashioned in Tahiti. Innumerable instruments, including tachometer, schwarzometer and eatermeter. Eight-step intruding, floor-mounted sports shift stick with ivory handle hand-carved in Bulgaria. Four-stage stereo horn, adjustable from pianissimo to fortissimo, which plays first five notes of Japanese national anthem (provided as an optional extra on most models). Seats are reclining, sliding, leaning type with dielectric constant control within easy reach. Bamboo and bean-sprout steering wheel destroys itself, for added safety, upon slightest exterior impact. Realistic holes on metal spokes of steering wheel create a racy feeling which is carried through the entire elegant interior of all models. Velvet upholstery, with Rhodesian tufting and special smashing, hand-spun and tufted in Columbus, Ohio. **Safety features:** platinum ignition key to turn off the engine under emergency conditions; radio transmitter which automatically sends an SOS signal to the next police station if car is stolen or turns over; built-in Okinawan silk parachute for more effective braking at high speeds.

Miscellaneous:

The Albee-Rodeo Super-12 Spitfive has ample room in its splendid luggage compartment for 4320 cubic inches of baggage, placed either obversely, conversely or simply versely. This is the equivalent of one small suitcase. The engine compartment contains various items of equipment—chiefly the engine—with a special area near the fuel injection pump for one kit containing a screwdriver, a hammer and a pair of pliers. Special wheel discs give wheels the appearance of turning when they are stopped and of being stopped when they are turning. The Albee-Rodeo Super-12 Spitfive has been generously designed to accommodate two persons: the driver and his female companion.

Body & Finish:

Albee-Rodeo models 12-a, 12-b and B-12 have bodies designed and built by Giacomo Puccetti at the Carrosseria Prosciutto plant near Parma. They are deliverable in forty-five different colors, either mixed together or in various versions which can be discussed with any Albee representative.

General:

The Albee-Rodeo Super-12 Spitfive offers the discerning racing enthusiast all the pleasures of driving, without the displeasures of feeling inferior, unimportant and stupid. An Albee-Rodeo Spitfive driver is an Albee-Rodeo Spitfive driver, and it matters little which of the sixteen basic models he chooses—the less expensive (\$ 72,000) Royal Double-Dip or the mighty and magnificent (\$ 129,560, fully equipped) Astor Cougats-Tigerrag.