

Mr. M. MacGregor (left) and Mr. N. Hillis with the Belfast-made car chassis.

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BELFAST - BUILT CARS FOR U.S.

Design impresses Los Angeles businessman

(By our motoring correspondent)

Just over a year ago two Belfast motoring enthusiasts began the construction of a sports car to their own design. When finished, the car attracted the attention of an American dealer and competition motorist, who came over to Belfast recently to see it. He was so impressed that he contracted the Belfastmen to construct the cars for sale on the American market.

On show in New York

The first of these cars in chassis form, considerably modified from the prototype, is now being exported to the United States. It will be placed on show in New York and afterwards will go to the American dealer at Los Angeles.

Before the chassis was sent for crating last night I was invited by the designers to inspect it.

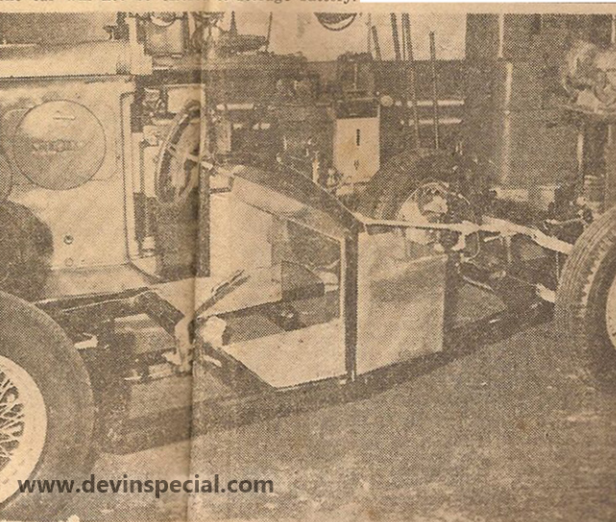
It is by far the most exciting attempt yet made to construct cars in Ireland. The chassis is designed for a car which will be capable of speeds of around 170 m.p.h. and bears comparison with the best of specialist producer anywhere in Europe.

The chassis is of tubular construction, extremely light in weight and equipped with independent front suspension and De Dion rear suspension. Disc brakes are fitted to all four wheels, the rear brakes being mounted in-board just beside the differential gear-housing.

Glass fibre body

Designed to accommodate the

The car will not be offered to storage battery.



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Another view of the Belfast car chassis.

duces approximately 300 h.p. and can be tuned for even more power, the new car will be fitted with a glass fibre two-seater body. It will be known in America as the "Devinshire Corvette," a happy combination which incorporates the association of the American businessman who uses "Devin" as his trade mark and also that of one of the Belfastmen responsible for the design, Mr. N. H. Hillis, managing director of the Devonshire Hemstitching Company, Belfast.

Associated with Mr. Hillis in the project is his brother, Mr. James Hillis, and Mr. Malcolm MacGregor. Mr. Noel Hillis and Mr. MacGregor are well known in the motoring competition field, Mr. Hillis being the winner of the first post-war motor race in Ulster at Ballyclare in 1946.

Mr. N. Hillis told me last night that no reference to those associated with the car would be complete without the inclusion of Mr. J. M'Dowell, Belfast, who had spent many hours constructing the actual designs produced. He also said that they had received great assistance from Belfast engineering concerns and from accessory manufacturers.

Completed in U.S.

The arrangement for the marketing of the car is that chassis will be built in Belfast and shipped direct to America. There the engine will be installed, the body fitted and the complete car offered to the American public.

While it is to be regarded as a car with a very definite sporting performance, it is also suitable for normal road use. While only one chassis is now being sent to America, orders have been received for seven more, and I am informed that it is hoped, by early next year, that production will be at the rate of one per week. A new company will be formed to organise production.

It is also hoped that arrangements may be made for the production, in Ulster, of the plastic body shells and, possibly, the completely furnished coachwork. The American businessman has asked for a car completely equipped and fitted with seat covers of Irish linen.