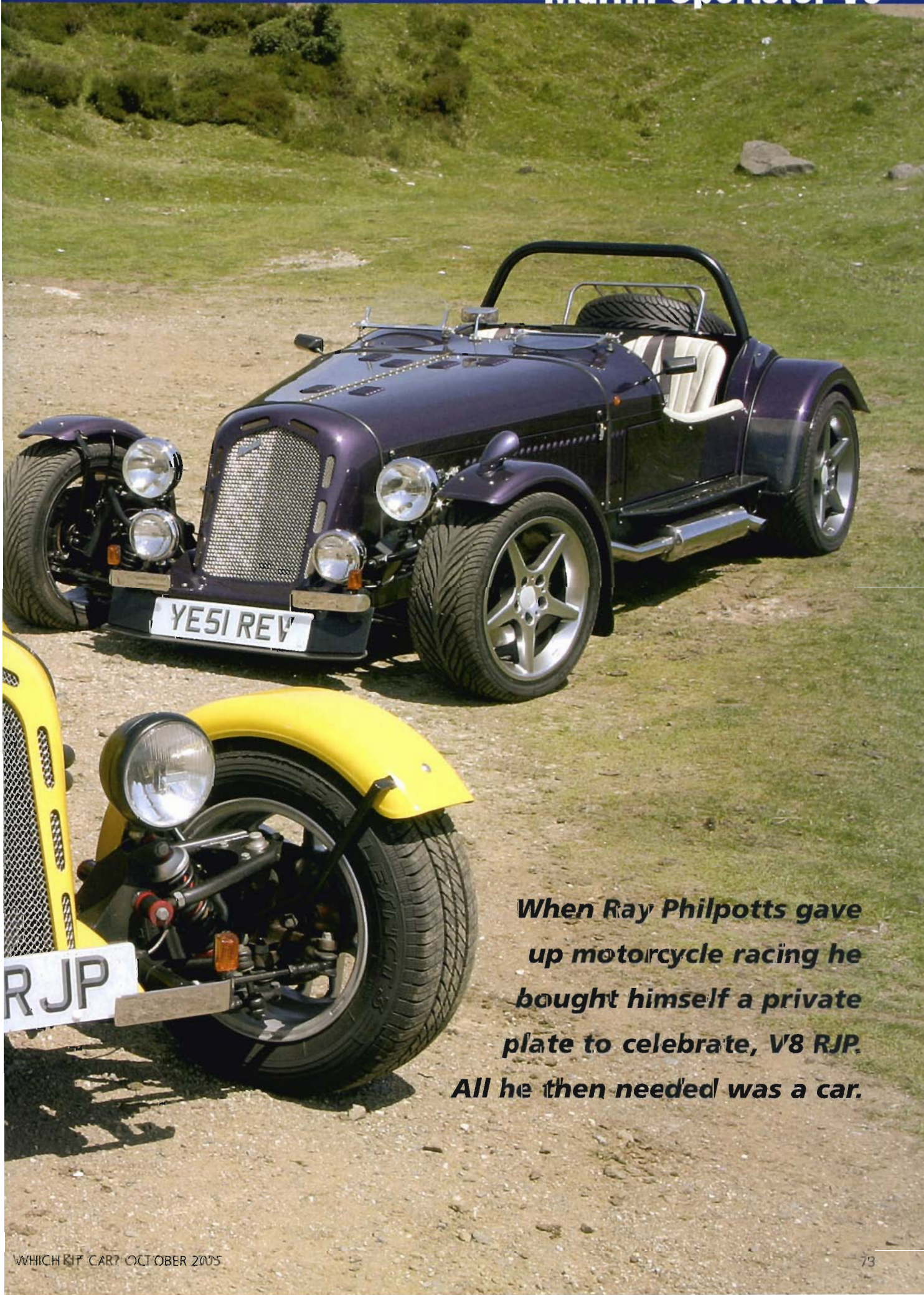


reader's car

V8 *Fighter*

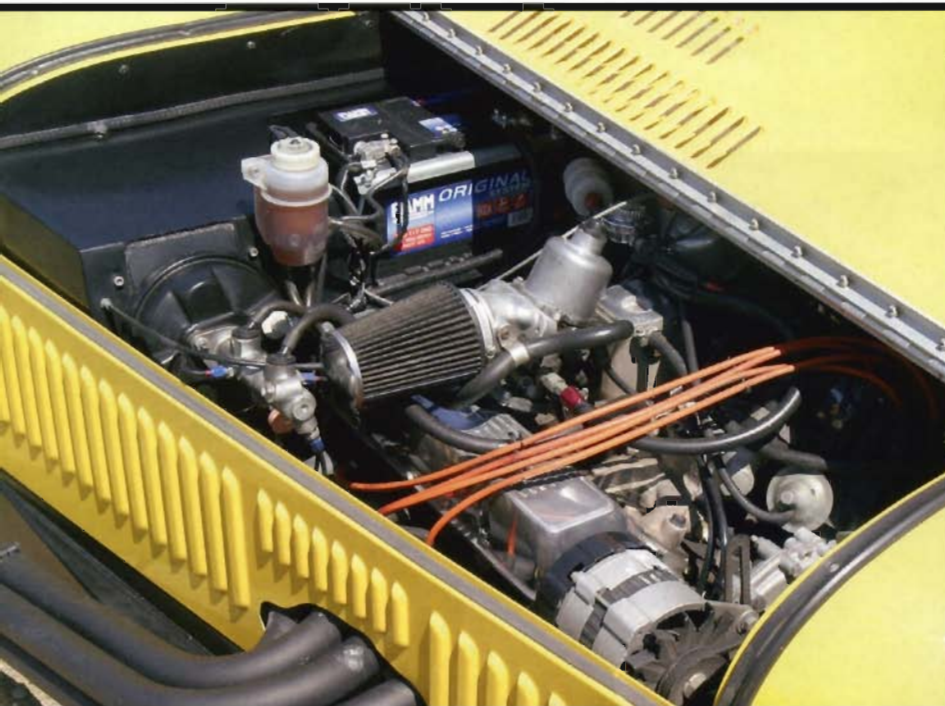


Marlin Sportster V8



When Ray Philpotts gave up motorcycle racing he bought himself a private plate to celebrate, V8 RJP. All he then needed was a car.

reader's car



Standard Rover V8 was bought new – a lucky find! SU carbs keep things simple; Seats are comfortable, but not in keeping.



Sportster's owner Ray Philpotts.

The years finally caught up with Ray Philpotts when he reached his half century and decided that a lifetime of motorcycle and sidecar racing should perhaps come to a halt. He'd competed at various levels in the sport, finishing with a high powered Kawasaki 1100cc flyer on which he and his sidekick competed at club level in the UK and on the continent. But at fifty, Ray felt it might be time to hang up his race overalls and helmet and do something more sensible... like build a V8-powered sports car!

Ray celebrated his decision by buying a private number plate, V8 RJP, which in turn meant that anything he bought would have to be V8 powered. He'd never built a kit car before and knew almost nothing about the scene, but Westfield Sportscars was just around the corner from him and seemed like a logical starting point.

The Midlands manufacturer was certainly impressive and he was soon out

having a test drive. But that's where the sheen wore thin. He wasn't keen on the feel of the car and struggled to get comfortable. When the company appeared to question his decision to fit a V8 in the car, he knew it was time to move on.

It was a friend who suggested he might



Marlin Sportster V8



Optional full windscreen allows full weather gear to be fitted (though it's only been used twice) and also folds flat.

consider a Marlin. Ray wasn't overly taken by the company's more traditional Cabrio and he wasn't too convinced by the photographs he saw of the Sportster, but he thought it was worth a visit.

The first thing that struck him was how much better the Sportster looked 'in the

flesh'. Its stripped-back look retained a classic feel while also being reminiscent of the Lotus Seven-inspired roadsters he'd initially considered. When Ray was looking for a new car it was in 2000 and Marlin hadn't yet developed the BMW-based chassis which now forms the mainstay of

the business. Instead, he was taken out in an unusual Vauxhall V6-engined Sportster with the original Ford based suspension.

He was completely bowled over by the performance and overall integrity of the package. The ride was excellent, there was generous space in the cockpit and one look

