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Can we interest you in a fake Rolex?

The Riley Mark XXII looks like a Daytona Prototype. But it's faster—and **half the price.**

eVERYTHING ABOUT the white missile rocketing around Monticello Motor Club screams Daytona Prototype racing car:

Tube-frame chassis. Meaty, low-profile slicks. High-downforce composite bodywork. Carbon-fiber dash studded with meticulously marked switches, buttons, and dials. Six-speed sequential transmission with straight-cut gears. Truculently tuned 6.2-liter V-8 mounted directly behind the driver. Even a cockpit-adjustable front antiroll bar.

But looks and performance notwithstanding, the car shares only two features with the purpose-built racers that have won seven consecutive Rolex 24s at Daytona—the Riley name and a pair of mirrors.

Unlike the prototype, the Riley Mark XXII was designed for track-day duty rather than professional motorsports. Nevertheless, principal architect Bob Riley—arguably the greatest American

The Riley Mark XXII slices through the greenery of the Catskills at Monticello Motor Club, with the serious front splitter and gargantuan rear wing providing oodles of downforce. The mid-mounted GM LS3 V-8 has been breathed on to put out 650 hp and produce a top speed near 190 mph.





2.5 Maximum lateral grip, in g's, that Riley claims the Mark XXII can attain. The Nissan GT-R manages a mere 1.05 g's.

from the nose to reduce cockpit heat. (Air-conditioning is optional.)

The base model, equipped with a General Motors LS3 V-8 tuned to produce 500 hp, goes for \$225,000. But for roughly \$50K, you can upgrade to a 650-horse version—or a BMW V-10—and a more robust gearbox. This translates to a car that's significantly more powerful and aerodynamically efficient than a race-bred prototype yet weighs only 25 additional pounds (2400 total), which is why it's theoretically able to turn faster lap times on some racetracks.

Climbing inside the fully optioned car that Riley brought to Monticello to wow investors and prospective customers is quite a challenge: the scissor doors and the broad doorsills necessitate contortions that make first-time drivers look like octogenarians attempting the limbo. But once you're planted in the race seat, the cockpit is a happy place, with a greenhouse tall enough to ward off claustrophobia and an A/C unit that's almost too effective.

The EMCO gearbox offers seemingly instantaneous shift-without-lift upshifts and auto-blip downshifts with the merest tug on the steering-wheel-mounted paddles. Midspeed acceleration is just short of brutal; that's a good thing. Top end, alas, is compromised during my stints because the car is electronically limited to 450 hp. But on the full-power setting, the Riley maxes out at nearly 180 mph at Monticello. (With a longer straightaway and taller gearing, 190 mph is possible.) On eighteen-inch Michelins, the Riley can achieve up to 2.5 g's in cornering loads, and the brakes—six-piston in the front and four-piston at the rear—are fierce enough to throw you against the harness. Rarely have I been more disappointed to see a checkered flag.

Interest in the car evaporated when the economy tanked in 2009, but Riley started taking orders again last fall. It sold four cars in the last nine months and hopes to crank out one a month going forward. Granted, a quarter of a million dollars isn't cheap for a toy. But buyers will be getting a car offering a smiles-to-miles quotient: that's tough to beat.

— Preston Lerner

race-car designer since Harry Miller—did his work so well that the non-street-legal car is faster than the DP on many race circuits, yet it costs half the price and is a relative breeze to maintain.

The opulent Monticello country-club racetrack—the natural habitat for the Riley—opened in 2009, when the track-day phenomenon was reaching critical mass. “We saw a hole in the market for a car that was fast and safe,” says Bill Riley, Bob's son and the president of Riley Technologies. “The handling goes when you make a street car go much faster, and guys didn't want to wreck their Porsches, Ferraris, and Lamborghinis. There were some fast track-day cars for sale, but most of them were open-topped, and a closed car offered more safety.”

The proven Riley DP showcased the right combination of speed and safety, but the price—\$500,000 without an engine—obviously made it a nonstarter. So the car was reviewed piece by piece to cut costs without compromising performance.

Off-the-shelf Chevy Corvette ZR1 steering racks and half shafts saved nearly \$33,000. Fiberglass/Kevlar bodywork replaced carbon fiber. The pushrod suspension was converted to control arms at the front and a five-link at the rear. The frame was extended to cradle the engine and gearbox instead of using them as stressed elements. At the same time, not being constrained by a rule book allowed Riley to make the car easier and more comfortable to drive. Cockpit-adjustable antilock brakes and traction control were added, and the radiator was moved away

The second race seat is optional, but the Motec data-acquisition system is standard. The red button on the steering wheel is the neutral lockout, which is used only when entering or leaving the pits. The red- and yellow-encircled knobs on the dashboard control the ABS and traction control settings.