



I'll admit I wasn't exactly looking forward to driving the Westfield XI, a kit car modeled after the 1957 Lotus Eleven racer. But a funny thing happened—I came to understand why people actually buy/build these things. It's called low-speed, skinny-tire-slidin' good fun.

Not that it's exactly a stringback driving-glove picnic on the way to buying one. Besides the \$20,000 or so to purchase the British-built Westfield kit (main parts of which are the chassis, body, interior and exhaust), you'll still need to find/purchase/refurbish a donor Austin-Healey Sprite or MG Midget, which aren't exactly lying around like Honda Accords. And if a

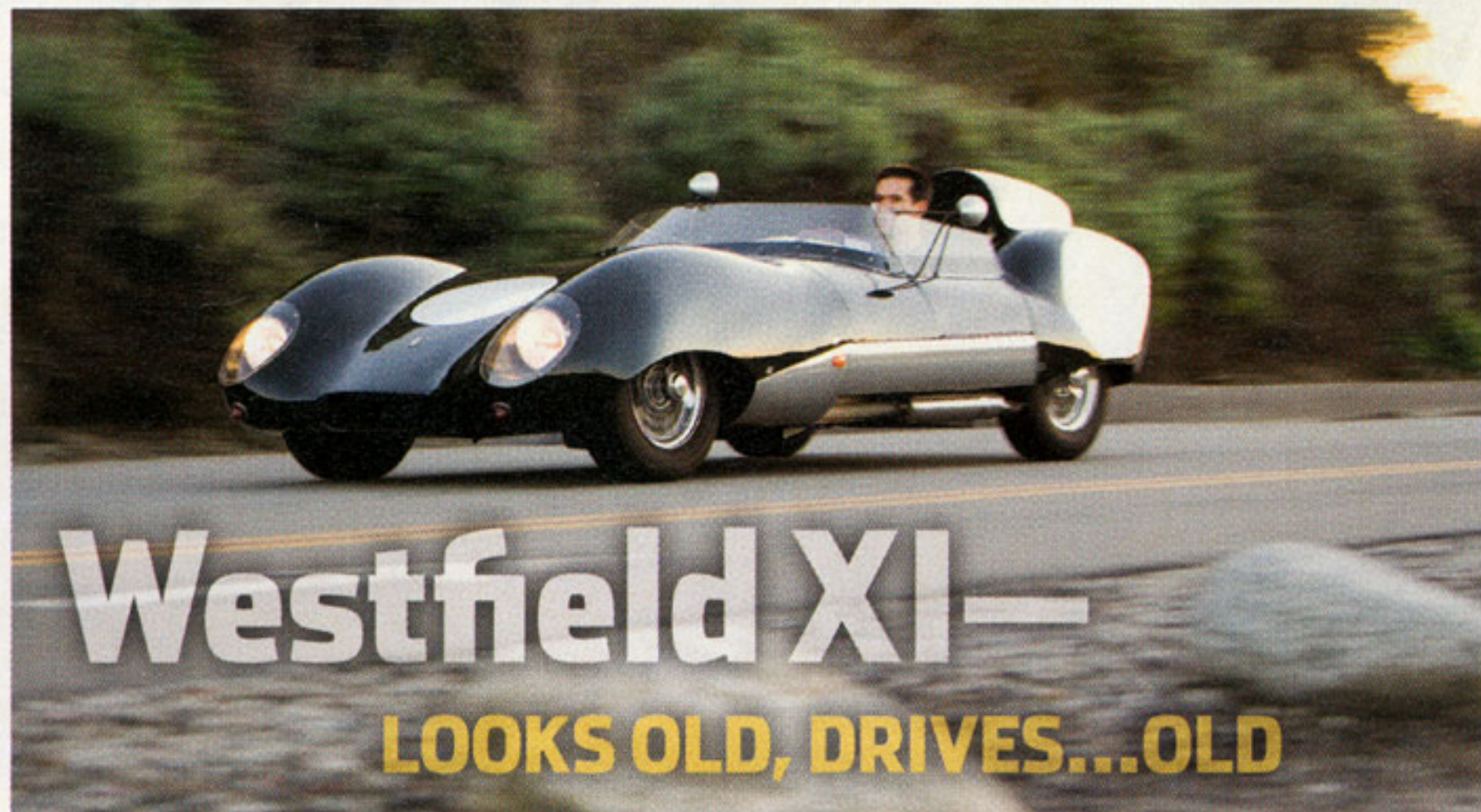


PHOTO BY CHRIS CANTLE

## Westfield XI— LOOKS OLD, DRIVES...OLD

shop does all the work for you, the total cost could exceed \$45,000.

The car we drove, U.S. Westfield distributor Tom McClintock's personal car, had a slightly tweaked motor (bored to 1330 cc from

the original 1275) that still makes a less-than-startling 75 bhp. Good thing the Westfield weighs only about 1200 lb. Sixty mph arrives in 8.8 sec., though the *blat!* from the side-exit exhaust makes it sound like it's go-

ing a lot faster. Luckily, the optional 5-speed Ford gearbox makes shifting a delight. The XI's light weight and relatively quick-acting non-power-assist steering also helped it achieve a reasonable 65.6-mph slalom time,

along with an impressive skidpad of 0.92g, considering the skinny 165/80R-13 tires it wears. But the tiny front disc/rear drums endowed the Westfield with the worst brake numbers in recent memory: 175 ft. from 60 mph and 335 ft. from 80. You could literally feel the brakes fading when stopping from 80.

Still, there's something about this "old world" Westfield. True, the rear suspension is so non-compliant that if it weren't for the 4-point harnesses you'd get thrown clear out of the car over large bumps. But every time you slide the tail through a turn, without fear of the car ever overpowering you, it's just pure, innocent, old-school fun.—MM