



1949 Kurtis Sports Car

Frank Kurtis got his start in the early 1920s when he worked in a body shop that created customized cars for Hollywood's stars. It was there that Kurtis learned his metal crafting, worked with, and was influenced by the up-and-coming car designer Harley Earl (think GM and Corvette).

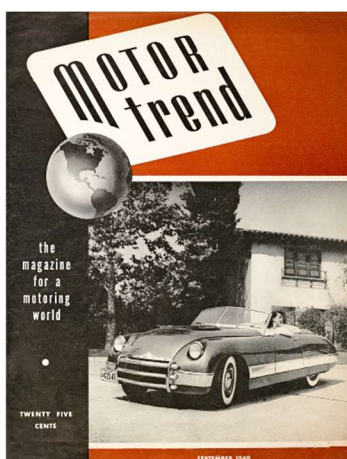
Kurtis-Kraft, Inc. was founded in the late 1930s. The company made most of its money churning out hundreds of oval-track midgets, plus racers for the famed Indy 500. In fact, Kurtis's cars won five of the six the Indy 500s held from 1950 to 1955.

In addition to his love for racing, Frank had a vision for an American Sports Car. He had built a few 2-seater cars for customers and himself that were well received. This led Kurtis to develop plans for his sports car, of which only 36 built were built in 1949 and 1950.

While working on plans to build the Kurtis Sports Car, Frank Kurtis suggested his friend, Robert (Pete) Petersen, young publisher of the new *Hot Rod* magazine, also publish a magazine that covered new vehicles. Petersen took the advice and *Motor Trend* was born with the Kurtis Sports Car gracing its very first cover (September 1949).

Unfortunately, the Kurtis Sports Car was not a profitable endeavor and in 1950 the business was sold to Earl "Madman" Muntz for \$200,000. Muntz took the Kurtis Sports Car, made some modifications, such as an extended wheelbase for rear seating, and repackaged it as the Muntz Road Jet.

This 1949 Kurtis Sports Car is #22 of 36. This two-seat, 2300-pound aluminum-body roadster was built on a Ford chassis. It may look small, but it carries a 239 ci Lincoln Flathead V8 engine (100 hp) with an aluminum dual-carb intake that makes this car a speed demon. Sported with a Lincoln Hydra-matic transmission and a Carson top, this dark blue/white roadster is an eye catcher.



*On loan courtesy of the Richard H. Driehaus Automobile Collection
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