

General Specifications

**1952-57 Kaiser Darrin Sports Car

Model Name	Model Designation	Wheel Base	Engine Type	Bore & Stroke	Displacement	Compression	Max Brake HP @RPM	Max Torque @RPM	Normal Oil Press
Kaiser Darrin Sports Car	161	100"	F-Head 6 Note 1	3-1/8 X 3-1/2	161 Cubic Inches	7.60:1 Note 2	90 @ 4200	135 @ 2000	35
Darrin Sports Car	Darrin	100"	F-Head 6 Note 1	3-1/8 X 3-1/2	161 Cubic Inches	7.60:1 Note 2	90 @ 4200	135 @ 2000	35
Darrin Sports Car	Darrin Opt 1	100"	F-Head 6 Note 1	3-1/8 X 3-1/2	161 Cubic Inches	7.60:1 McCulloch Super- charger	130 @ 5200	n/a	35
Darrin Sports Car	Darrin Opt 2	100"	L-Head 6	3.125 X 4.375	161 Cubic Inches	7.0:1 Triple Carbs	120 @ 4500	n/a	35
Darrin Sports Car	Darrin Opt 3	100"	OHV-V8 Cadillac Eldorado	3-13/16 X 3-5/8	331 Cubic Inches	9.0:1 Dual Carbs	270 @ 4800	345 @ 3200	40

NOTE 1. The "F-Head" designation denotes the engine has the intake valve overhead and the exhaust valve in the block. This design provided the best breathing and led many racers to supercharge this engine for competition. The little F-Head engine was also blessed with a very rigid and tough bottom end and could easily withstand being supercharged. There were several reports of revving this engine over 7,000 rpm for extended periods with no failures.

NOTE 2. Willys produced two different 161 F-Head engines in 1951-55. The one used as the base engine in the Kaiser Darrin Sports Car was the higher compression engine with a compression ratio of 7.60:1 and produced 90 HP. The other low-compression (6.90:1) engine produced only 75 HP. Take care if you purchase a replacement engine or head for your Kaiser Darrin. Be sure to obtain the higher compression engine. There is no difference in their appearance.

**** SPECIAL NOTE:** Although the Kaiser Darrin is listed in most documents as a 1954 Model, it was actually produced from 1952 to 1957. The initial "Darrin's" were a Howard Darrin produced car and were manufactured in his Santa Monica, CA shop with no involvement by Kaiser-Frazer Corporation. Once Henry Kaiser decided to sell the car under the "Kaiser" name, the cars were produced by Willys Motors and promoted as the "Kaiser Darrin." Since the Kaiser-Willys Sales organization withheld the cars to only those dealers who would place a large order for the full-size Kaiser cars, many of the Kaiser Darrin's were left for months in the holding area awaiting sale. Many dealers wanted to obtain the little sports car for their showrooms but the order restrictions prevented them from obtaining one. After the stored Darrin's had deteriorated somewhat, Howard Darrin approached Kaiser-Willys and purchased the remaining stock, reportedly to be between 50 and 90 cars. Howard Darrin moved the cars to California and cleaned and refurbished them. He also changed several of the cars to the Cadillac Eldorado V-8 engine or a triple-carburetor L-head Henry-J 161 engine and modified others by adding a McCullough Supercharger from the full-size Kaiser. These cars were sold up through 1957 as a "Darrin" (See Catalog of American Cars by Kruse Publications.)