## Did you know that one of Italy's great designers had a hand in the eventual Alpine styling

The Sunbeam Alpine was unveiled before the world's press in July '59 at Cannes in the South of France. The engineer who was to supervise all future developments of the model was Alec Caine. In order to improve the Alpine, one of his desires was to increase the driver's limited leg-room but the Rootes design department was not convinced that a problem existed and Alec Caine decided to continue his research independently.

As Rootes representative he was to attend the Turin salon of October 1959 and while in Italy showed an Alpine to the coach builders Touring of Milan. Touring were able to lower the pedals an inch or so and back in England this modification was adopted on the Series II Alpine introduced in October 1960. At the end of 1960, it became apparent that Touring were often involved in modifying Alpines for customers of the local Rootes agent in Milan and the Rootes design department was particularly interested in the way Touring had increased the Alpine's limited boot capacity. Alec Caine was sent back to Italy with an Alpine so that Touring could modify it and the result was a boot with the spare wheel mounted forward against the rear of the passenger space and the large floor mounted fuel tank replaced by two smaller tanks, one in each wing. Touring hadn't stopped there though, they had also chopped the rear wings, fitted a wooden dashboard and a wood rimmed steering wheel! Alec returned to Coventry with the modified Alpine and the design department agreed to work on the design, trying to improve all Touring's modifications, such as the fuel filler arrangements for the twin tanks which were very primitive. The result was that the Series III Alpine offered a much larger boot yet with increased fuel capacity and a Grand Touring model would be introduced with a wooden dashboard and wood rimmed steering wheel. The new wing shape however would be held back until the Series IV was ready In 1964.

## Raymond Loewy effect on the shape of our Sunbeams

Lord Rootes often looked to the US for guidance on car manufacturing as he was convinced that they knew how to make a success of such enterprises.
He also employed the Raymond Loewy design studios quite extensively to help with the design of Sunbeam cars.
The following pictures clearly show the influence of the Loewy designs on the Sunbeams

The following pictures show the strong influence of Kenneth Howes as a result of his work at Raymond Loewy on Studebakers and later at Ford of Detroit on the various Sunbeam models





**Series I Rapier with side scallops and rear roof line like the 1954 Studebaker Commander**









**Series II – V  Rapiers  with grill, rear roof line and fins like the Studebaker Hawks**






**Sunbeam Alpine with the 1955 Ford Thunderbird**