



*ISO RIVOLTA sedan with handsome Bertone body made its world debut at The Show. Like other Isos, it is Chevrolet powered.*



*MURENA 429 GT, from Italy, also made its world premier. Ford engine and running gear are used. Price in the U.S.: \$14,750.*



# BIGGEST AUTO SHOW ON EARTH...OR IS IT?

BY DEAN BATCHELOR

benefit of the product, creating a new display each year if not for each show, and just generally doing things as well as possible—which costs money. Both Peugeot and VW are faced with car designs that are not all that new, so they use other means of attracting potential customers; Peugeot had Dick Teague's beautiful 1913 Bebe Peugeot on display and the Volkswagen exhibit included a "science seminar."

Actual costs are hard to get but one distributor of imported cars paid \$15,000 for show space and an additional \$49,000 for the "dressing," including \$20,000 for the actual display (platforms, backdrops, etc.), \$6,000 for special paint jobs on some of the cars exhibited, \$3,500 for personnel (overtime, per diem, expense accounts, etc.), \$13,500 for literature handed out and about \$200 to replace stolen or damaged components. Most of the balance went for the actual moving in and setting up the exhibit.

Literature alone can be a staggering problem in both money and storage space. Bruce McWilliams, Vice President of British Leyland Motors, Inc., said they distributed 200,000 pieces of literature for Triumph and 70,500 for Rover, and gave out 65,000 Triumph buttons and 10,000 Rover buttons during the nine days of the show.

It is significant too, that the large production manufacturers leave their cars unlocked for all comers to sit in, bounce, kick, prod, pry, pound or whatever, accepting the inevitable loss of small parts and the possibility of vandalism. In this respect, the New York Show is neither the best nor the worst. The consensus of those interviewed gave these honors to Boston and Chicago in that order, with Los An-

geles, Detroit and New York somewhere in-between.

Both Railton of VoA and McWilliams of Rover/Triumph agree that it is important to them for potential buyers to inspect the cars as thoroughly as they want to, and McWilliams spends a great deal of his time at the show to talk directly to the future customers for his product, and to present owners who may have questions or gripes. Many improvements in Triumph cars have come as a direct result of auto show confrontations with current owners who had complaints.

Unlike the quantity manufacturers, the limited production people are quite stuffy about who gets into their cars, and in some cases, who carts home their literature. Rolls-Royce is always displayed behind barricades and after talking to a salesman across the rope (assuming you can get his attention, which I found difficult), if he thinks you look the part, you are invited inside for a closer look. You still aren't inside the car, mind you. That comes after still more conversation.

Obviously, the small manufacturer has more to lose, relatively, and can ill afford the loss of vital pieces of his cars. He also has a smaller budget for the show, so literature is hidden and given out to those who look interested, and reasonably capable of using it.

The seemingly haphazard arrangement of show exhibitors (Rolls-Royce between Renault and Peugeot, Iso next to Pontiac, Saab next to BMW and Chrysler, etc.) is actually a very deliberate plan by the show management. Gerry Martin, manager of the show, who has produced enough auto