

# Latest model Heron about to hit the road

Sportscar enthusiasts throughout New Zealand are familiar with the Heron — a fibreglass sportscar designed and produced by Rotorua man Ross Baker.

And in the near future, the enthusiasts will have something new to look over in the form of the latest model Heron M.J.2+2.

Mr Baker, who has specialised in fibreglass for over 20 years, told the Review he had been thinking about a new and improved Heron design for about five years. Now he's six months down the track on the new model.

Most of the differences between the original Heron and the new design are under the hood. But the M.J.2+2 does have room for two extra small seats in the rear.

Instead of Skoda running gear, as was used exclusively on the M.J. 1, this latest model will have a Ford Telstar engine.

Available in a 1600cc or 2.2 litre option, the new engine also comes with a carburettor option, fuel injection or turbocharger. There are choices too with the gearbox, which has four-speed, five-speed and automatic options.

In addition, the new Heron features a Telstar dash and seats as well as pedal assembly, gear linkage and heating and ventilation systems.

Ross Baker says he chose the Ford running gear because the Telstar engine comes with a subframe and is easy to install onto the Heron chassis.

And with the new car

producing 180bhp in this form, it has got plenty of go. Though if it's power you're after, you will be pleased to know the new model may also be powered by a Rover V8 engine.

The first Heron M.J.2+2 is expected to be out on the streets mid year. But this doesn't mean that Mr Baker is left twiddling his thumbs waiting for things to happen. His business is responsible for many more developments on the fibreglass market.

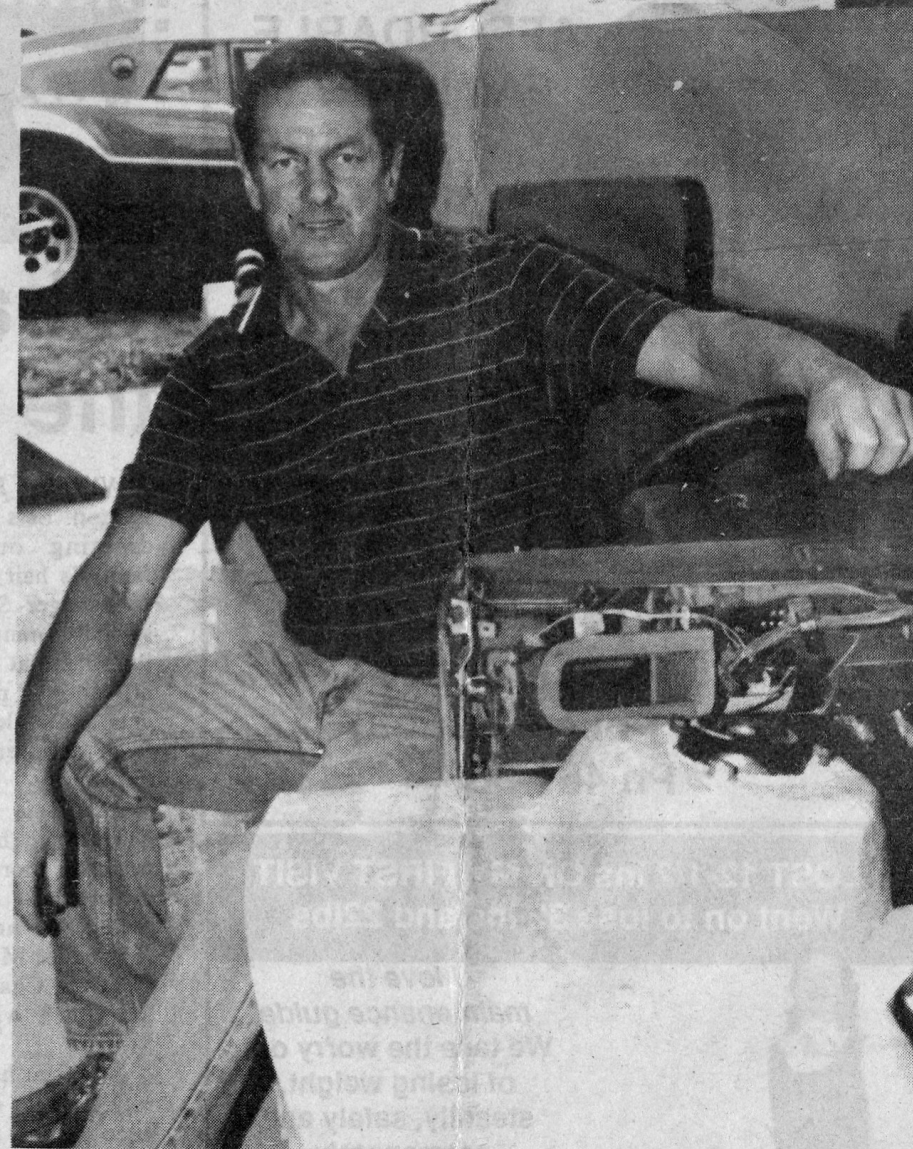
In addition to the original Heron production run, Ross also designs, develops and makes prototypes of golf carts, industrial trucks, go-carts, car display equipment and invalid cars.

Another invention from the Baker stable

has been orchard spraying equipment. Called the Spraymaster, this four-wheel-drive and four-wheel-steered vehicle is capable of carrying a spray load of 3000 litres. Airconditioned and pressurised, this vehicle is being used in orchards throughout the North Island.

Another of Mr Baker's designs was an electric car for a paraplegic kiwifruit orchardist from Te Puke. This vehicle not only takes the disabled man's wheelchair but also, with the use of one lever, can be driven throughout the orchard for tasks like crop spraying.

Leisure parks have also benefitted from the ingenious designs of Ross Baker. Rainbows End in Auckland and a park in Australia both run the Mirage racing cars he designed.



Ross Baker...about to launch the latest model Heron.

## Interesting year