

1958 Austin Metropolitan Mark III

Conceived by the Nash Motor Company in the USA, the Metropolitan was one of the first american-designed cars to be produced in the UK. Fisher & Ludlow manufactured the bodies whilst the Austin Motor Company (then part of BMC) produced the engines and other parts and were also responsible for final assembly. Production commenced in 1953 and finished in 1961 by which time a total of 104,368 (source *Motorbase*) cars had come off the assembly line.



The Metropolitan, as it was most commonly known in the UK, was available in hardtop or convertible form and, understandably, the latter was the most popular choice in the combined North American market. All models came with several standard features which included a map light, electric windscreen wiper, cigar lighter, column gear change and a rear-mounted spare tyre with cover. Upholstery trimmed with leather was used to promote the car's luxury image. Whitewall tyres were offered as an optional extra. The distinctive two-tone finish also proved very popular.

The vast majority of Metropolitans, from the initial 1200cc Mark I version through to the later Mark IV models with 1500cc engines, were sold in the USA and Canada where they went through a series of model names (e.g. Nash, Hudson, Rambler or Metropolitan). They were widely marketed by Nash throughout the production period with promotional material referring to "America's entirely new kind of car" (1955), "Luxury in Miniature" (1959), and "crafted for personal transportation" (1960).

The Mark III in the BK Museum was acquired at an auction in Norwich in 2007 and an extensive restoration project, which included sourcing the majority of parts from the USA, was completed in 2009.