



Courier Times photo by Art Gentile

Neil Gillespie, president of Kar Kingdom in Middletown Township, displays the London Roadster.

New roadster has '40s image

Middletown dealer offers spiffy sports car

By Dave Chandler
Courier Times Business Editor

Kar Kingdom, a Middletown Township business, has become the exclusive area automobile dealer for the London Roadster, an American-made convertible that looks like a British sports car of the 1940s.

"A lot of new cars today all look alike," said Neil J. Gillespie, president of Kar Kingdom, which is located at Lincoln Highway and Route 213.

"But no one is going to confuse this car," he continued. "It's an original."

The London Roadster is Kar Kingdom's first line of new cars, Gillespie said. Up until now, the dealership only sold

used cars.

The top-of-the-line London Roadster model sells for \$16,985, Gillespie explained. "It really is a fun kind of car," he said.

The car is manufactured by London Motors Corp. of Dearborn, Mich.

"The company has been in business for 19 years," Gillespie said. "Up until now, the company sold directly to the public through ads in the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times.

"But now, they decided to increase their market share by establishing dealers."

Gillespie, a Levittown native and a graduate of Bishop Egan High School, said he found out

about the London Roadster in an advertisement in the Wall Street Journal.

"I called about getting a dealership," he said. "I flew out to Detroit and liked it. It's very similar to the early MGs (a British sports car) of the late 1940s and early 1950s.

"It's a very high-quality car. It's 78-percent hand made."

The London Roadster has a 1.8-liter, 4-cylinder engine. It has rack and pinion steering, disc brakes in the front and drum brakes in the rear, an independent four-wheel suspension, and a non-rust, fiberglass body on a steel frame.

A customer interested in buying a London Roadster must know how to drive a car

with manual transmission.

"It's modeled after the line of real sports cars, and they didn't come with an automatic shift," Gillespie said.

Kar Kingdom was started in 1980, Gillespie said. Its office building is located in the former Edge Hill School building, which was built in 1894 and used as a school until the 1940s.

After that, the building was used as a residence up until the time Kar Kingdom bought it.

In order to display the London Roadster, Gillespie built a showroom adjoining Kar Kingdom's office building. The dealership also recently built a service center to handle all of its cars.