SEVEN YEARS OLD, STILL YEARS AHEAD

MEET THE PARISIENNE

A wander through the land of button brakes, and air-oil feet, the country of Michelin X and the time of timelessness . . .

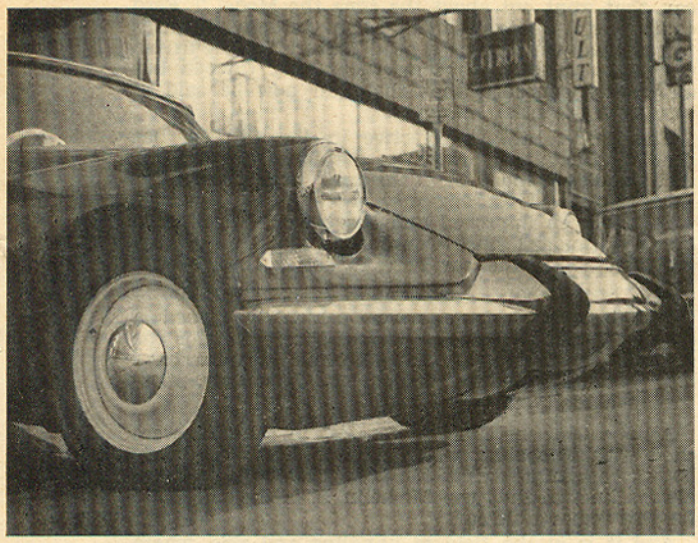
By PETER HALL

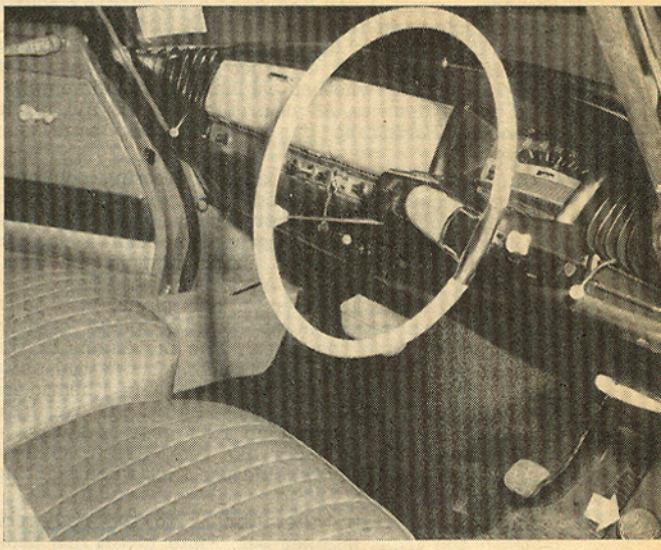
ALTHOUGH the average motorist today can only be grateful that he buys and drives in an era of intense motoring competition, he is justified in complaining that it is also an age of increasing standardisation. Primarily in body design — also in the remoter areas of engineering — it becomes more and more difficult every year to distinguish between competitive makes.

You have things like "Thunderbird" rooflines, nose-down bonnets, steeply slanted General-Motors type windscreens and squared-off boots being adopted by every Tom, Dick and Harry who makes cars — even when his arch-rival was the first to think of the particular gimmick. Fortunately, however, for those car lovers who still care for individuality, there remain a few makers — mostly the smaller ones — who do not seem to worry about following current mass fashions.

Possibly the best known and, certainly, one of the most successful of these smaller makers who resist the magnetism of fashion is France's Citroen. Citroens have been coming to Australia virtually since motor cars were first sold here. Indeed, Citroen has more than its share of the early motoring legends. But, until very recently, the Citroens sold here have been fully imported and — especially since the war— relatively expensive.

In 1961, the small but aggressive Melbourne assembling firm of Continental and General Distributors Pty Ltd finally convinced the very aloof Frenchmen at Citroen's head office in France that the time had come to start assembly operations in Australia. Continental and General were able to point to another French make — Peugeot — and the German NSU as examples of what an excellent assembly job they could do. The resulting car was the ID19 model, a



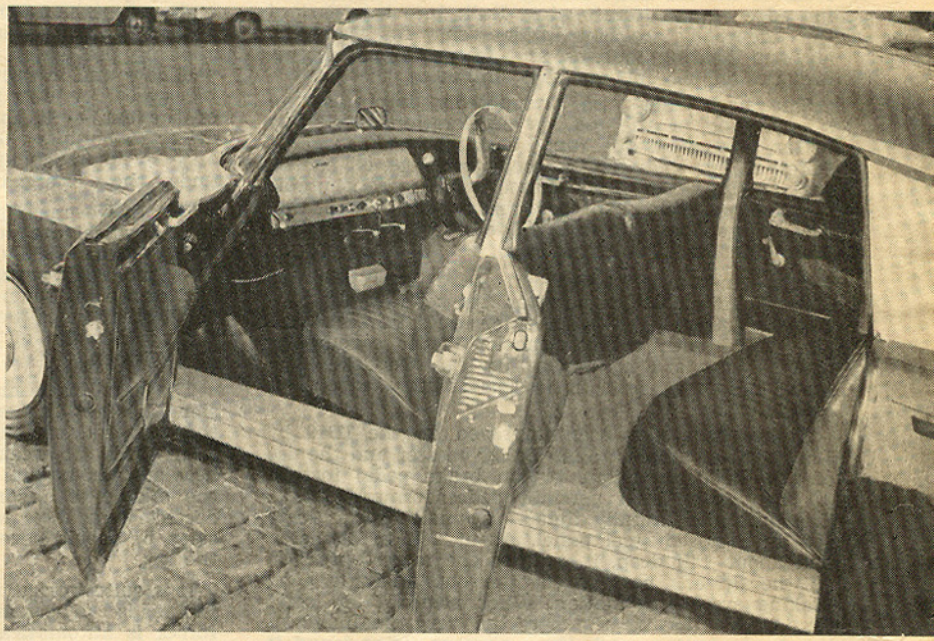


ABOVE: Please don't feed the sharks: the 1963½ version of the most advanced car in the world is identified by new air flowed nose.

TOP RIGHT: "'Ow do you say eet; that leetle button, eet is so small eet will never stop us een time." But it does, Jacques, and remarkably rapidly.

RIGHT: No window frames — deep box-section door sills, acres of room; the Citroen is a large car internally and the window frameless doors open wide.

LEFT: Vaguely like a baby pelican waiting to be fed, the Citroen with bonnet up offers good accessibility. That engine bay is a little cluttered, of course.



WHEELS FULL ROAD TEST

simplified version of the rightly famous, but rather complicated, Goddess.

Nobody is quite sure how it came about, but the Australian-assembled ID19 quickly became known as the *Parisienne*. It was a good name, for it immediately established the ID19 for what it was — a thoroughly French car, and as distinct and up-to-date as the fashions of Paris.

Citroen must have been well-pleased with Continental and General's original work for last year they made another concession by allowing Australia to make several modifications to the car being assembled and sold here.

The changes are not many, and together they do not change the basic character of the car at all. But they are all thoroughly worthwhile, and seem to justify the price rise of £100 that came with them. To anyone who has attempted to drive any Citroen for the last 30 years, the most important change is, without question, a new gearchange mechanism.

Before the Goddess models arrived in the mid-1950s, the famous Light 15 and Big Six Citroens were afflicted with a vague and ill-placed gear lever that jutted from the centre of the dashboard. The Goddess itself was no problem — it was completely automatic with a single lever above the steering wheel starting the car, setting the automatic transmission and just about doing almost everything else but scratch your head. The standard transmission ID19, however, was a different proposition. Its four-speed gearbox was controlled by a lever mounted on the left of the steering column that featured a change pattern that quite defies intelligible description.

It also quite defied intelligible driving. You had much more chance of getting quickly through a 1000-acre labyrinth than of sorting out the old Citroen's

gearbox — even if you had done a six-month's course at the factory on the techniques of changing Citroen gears. If you never drove one of the older Citroens, you may wonder why we labor the point. If you did you will wonder whether we have not underemphasised the difficulties. At all events, the new Australian assembled *Parisienne* has a delightfully sane gear change.

Unfortunately it is still on the steering column—another decade or two and someone might realise that the floor is a far better place, especially in a car like this — but the mechanism itself is smooth and positive. The gate pattern is now in the usual straightforward system of most four-speed cars; first and second gears together in one plane, and third and top in a separate but parallel plane a little further away from the wheel. The movement of the lever between ratios is commendably short and quite rapid changes are possible. The gears themselves have very high ratios, culminating in an overdrive top. Lack of synchromesh on first gear is always a pity, but more so in a car like the Citroen, so high geared that one always should use first when starting from rest.

Another important alteration is to the bodywork beneath the front bumper bar. More metal has been added and it is carefully curved to make the whole front of the car knife through the air, like the leading edge of an aircraft wing. Built into this part of the underbody are new intake vents for the fresh air and heating systems and to provide a cooling draught on the inboard disc brakes at the front.

The new front also undoubtedly improves the streamlining of the car, as acceleration is slightly better throughout the range and top speed is about 5 mph higher than for the previous model. Of course, part of the better performance must be attributable to an extra 6 bhp. This has been gained by lifting the compression ratio from 7.5 to 1 to 8.5 to 1 and by improving the exhaust system.

The Australian assemblers have retained the earlier ID19's Solex carburettor, but keen owners prepared to make an advance order could have the engine fitted with the twin-choke Weber carburettor that is standard equipment on the Goddess — a model no longer brought to this country, except on special order.

Brakes have also been improved on the ID19 by the fitting of an Australian power booster and the use of the Goddess' unique button brake pedal instead of the conventional pendant pedal formerly fitted. The button is literally that — a small rubber dome set on a raised steel panel. About 2 in in diameter and about ¾ in deep, it requires the merest pressure on the driver's part to set the outstandingly good braking system in motion. When some of our staff first began driving the car, the very smallness of this brake button made them nervous. They found it hard to believe that such a tiny brake "pedal" could be sensitive enough to make smooth stops in traffic, particularly as it was known to be coupled to a strong power booster.

We were quite wrong. After only one or two applications one learned the "feel" of the button and later required much less movement of the foot than the conventional type. Full marks to Citroen on this one. Full marks to the rest of the braking system, too.

It was impossible to criticise the action of the brakes. The big discs at front, combined with drums at the back and the power booster coped well with every demand made on them. There was no fade, and the brakes always pulled up the car smoothly, rapidly and in a straight line, even from very high speeds.

Another small change will horrify purists, but the only reaction from the rest of the motoring world will be only to wonder why on earth the change was not made years ago. The change? The Citroen now has an automatic advance-retard mechanism on the ignition system. Right up to this year all Citroens have had a manual control on the dashboard for control of ignition settings. On just about every other car, that went out about the time the Model T Ford came to end of its production run. Actually Citroen's old manual control was a good feature for the driver who knew exactly what he was about. Citroen has apparently conceded that that can now be said of very few potential owners.

The heater, always effective in the Citroen, has been modified to increase its output of warmed air and to direct more of it to back seat passengers. Dashboard controls are now more clearly marked, trim has been improved and the overall finish, good by any standard since Continental and General began assembling the car here, is better than ever.

One other change came as a surprise, mainly, I think, because I have never personally owned a Citroen. I discovered that part of the reason for the £100 lift in price was that Michelin X tyres have now become standard equipment. Previously, Australian-made tyres were fitted.

All the Citroens supplied for test in the past were shod with Michelins, which showed that the distributors recognised what all keen Citroen men have always known, that the Michelin X is the only tyre for this remarkable car.

And it is in the field of handling and ride, where differences in tyre design can be critical, that the Citroen ID19 is most remarkable. The hydro-pneumatic suspension, unchanged in this model, was as good as ever in ironing out the worst of roads, in allowing the driver to traverse ridiculous roads and paddocks and in providing an excellent built-in jacking system. A lever under the dashboard on the left of the car — it should be on the right, near the driver — permits the pilot to vary the ground clearance by as much as 6 in, allowing the lowest point under the car a maximum clearance of over 12 in.

The hydro-pneumatic units on each independently sprung wheel are controlled by a central oil pump which automatically compensates for variations in load and road surface. Although the springs grunt and sigh a bit when the car is moving off from rest, at all other times the ride is smooth to a point beyond the appreciation of most men who have never been in a Citroen.

The handling is magnificent, thanks to the suspension, the fact that each wheel is at an extremity of the body and, of course, the front wheel drive. Unless a driver is too weak in the wrists to cope with the heavier-than-normal steering or gets frightened in the middle of a corner he has taken too fast and doesn't know how to cope with exaggerated understeer, he should never be able to get into trouble with the car.

It is quite intriguing to drive the car hard on winding roads. The transfer of weight under cornering forces is automatically compensated by the hydro-pneumatic suspension, and, listening carefully, one can hear the faint sighing of the system as it adjusts itself, as though a little weary of the exuberance of the driver in causing it to work so hard.

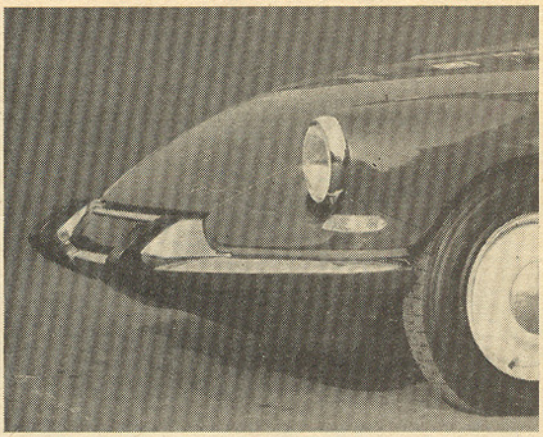
It is a fascinating suspensory system. One of our staff members took great delight in placing a fairly heavy passenger in the front seat, parking the car in a crowded city street, and then both dismounting together. The car would sigh heavily and gently settle itself to an unladen level. The reaction of passers-by was quite something. The car was obviously sighing heavily as though glad to be rid of the heavy passenger.

Appearance is a matter of personal taste. Certainly, the latest Citroen ID19 — or Parisienne, call it what you will — is an outstanding individual with comfort, performance and road manners to put it in a class of its own among roomy sedan cars.

Citroen owners have long been very faithful to the breed, and are fond of telling marvellous stories about the habits of the car. After a few days on test with the latest of these Frenchmen it is not really hard to understand their enthusiasm.

wheels ROAD TEST

TECHNICAL DETAILS OF THE CITROEN ID 19



SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE:

Cylinders	4, in line
Bore and stroke	78 x 100 mm
Cubic capacity	1911 cc
Compression ratio	8.5 to 1
Valves	overhead
Carburettor	Solex downdraught
Power at rpm	75 bhp at 4500 rpm
Maximum torque	101 ft/lb at 3000 rpm
Piston Speed at max. bhp	2960 ft/min

TRANSMISSION:

Gearing	22.3 mph per 1000 rpm
Type	manual, synchromesh on top three
Gear lever location	steering column
Ratios, overall	
First	13.79 to 1
Second	7.35 to 1
Third	4.77 to 1
Top	3.31 to 1
Final drive	3.89 to 1

SUSPENSION:

Front } Hydro-pneumatic independent suspension
Rear } on all wheels, centrally controlled

STEERING:

Type	rack and pinion
Ratio	NA
Turns, 1 to 1	4
Circle	39 ft 6 in

BRAKES:

Type	Servo assisted hydraulic, discs front, drums rear.
Swept or rubbed area	NA

DIMENSIONS:

Wheelbase	10 ft 3 in
Track, front	4 ft 11 in
Track, rear	4 ft 3 in
Length	15 ft 9 in
Width	5 ft 10½ in
Height (normal)	4 ft 11⅞ in
Fuel tank capacity	14 gallons

TYRES:

Size	165 x 400 mm
Make on test car	Michelin X

WEIGHT:

Kerb (with fuel and water)	22.3 cwt

GROUND CLEARANCE:

Unladen (normal)	6¼ in

PERFORMANCE

TOP SPEED:

Fastest run	93.2 mph
Average of all runs	87.9 mph

MAXIMUM SPEED IN GEARS:

First	31 mph
Second	56 mph
Third	83 mph
Top	93.2 mph

ACCELERATION:

Standing quarter mile:	
Fastest run	21.3 secs
Average of all runs	21.5 secs
0 to 30 mph	5.3 secs
0 to 40 mph	9.0 secs
0 to 50 mph	12.7 secs
0 to 60 mph	19.9 secs
0 to 70 mph	28.7 secs
0 to 80 mph	41.4 secs
20 to 40 mph	19.9 secs
30 to 50 mph	16.6 secs
40 to 60 mph	17.6 secs

GO-TO-WHOA:

0-60-0 mph	23.3 secs

SPEEDO ERROR:

Indicated	Actual
30 mph	28.4 mph
40 mph	38.2 mph
50 mph	47.6 mph
60 mph	58.9 mph
70 mph	68.2 mph
80 mph	NA
90 mph	NA

FUEL CONSUMPTION:

Overall for test	21.6 mpg
Normal cruising	23-30 mpg
Fuel used on test	super grade

TEST CONDITIONS:

Surface	dry, smooth bitumen
Weather	mild, light winds

PRICE:

Including tax	£1698