Wheels Road Tests and Analyses the

COMFORT-FIRST *HUNTER*

The new Hunter is a fully equipped, medium sized saloon which is a genuine six-seater.

THE new moderately-priced Hunter has a host of "extra" fittings included for the purchase price. Twin matched foglamps, a heater, and windscreen washers are standard equipment. Less obvious to the eye is a complete set of good quality tools.

The big extra is that the Hunter is a moderately priced luxury car. It is a fitting addition to the traditional British preserve of family cars.

Comfort has been uppermost in the manufacture's minds. It is a medium sized saloon but has good accommodation for six adults. The front and rear floors are as flat as is possible and the seats are deep and wide. There is plenty of room for stretching arms and legs, particularly for the centre passengers when carrying three abreast on the seats. Rear accommodation is not cramped when the front seat is brought right back.

Passenger convenience has been well thought out. There are ashtrays front and rear; the front windows wind down fully and the rear ones to within a fraction of an inch of the sill. The front and rear seat squabs have pull down armrests and there are combined armrests and door pulls on each door. The floor is carpeted throughout. Access, either to the front or rear, is untroubled through fully-opening doors.

The interior finish has a high standard. Body trim and upholstery are genuine leather and are cut in a manner which reflects sound and careful workmanship.

Minor points such as the positioning of door handles and window winders have been well thought out. The interior light is strong enough for easy map or address reading and is placed to show the floors.

The exterior looks as though it has been painstakingly picked over for minor blemishes and even sharply angled places such as around hood pillars and the rain gutter have been carefully buffed. The standard of duco is higher than usual nowadays.

Several pleasantly contrasting interior and exterior colour schemes are available. The test car was a pale irridescent green and had red upholstery, trim, and carpets. The leather was set off with a black grain.

Although relatively small, the Singer company has a reputation for original work which is reflected in the Hunter.

The body has several fibreglass panels which is a swing away from current practice which still favours all-steel bodies. They are the result of the company's pioneering work in plastic bodies, one of which was produced experimentally for the 4AD tourer.

In the Hunter the use of plastic has been confined to unstressed panels and to those of only a small area. These are the bonnet and side valences.

The factory claims that the use of plastic here reduces engine noise because of absorption and a reduced tendency to resonation.

Other advantages for its use over and around

the engine is its insulating properties. Today the under-bonnet of most cars is packed with fibreglass or is sprayed with insulating compound to stop engine heat dulling and changing the colour of the duco.

Touch and sight do not readily tell that these panels on the Hunter are different from the rest. They look identical with the steel ones except for a faint stipple when seen at some angles. Their blending is further helped by chrome trim strips.

Apart from this point the Hunter's construction follows conventional practice. It has a rugged box-section frame which carries, apart from the plastic panels, an all-steel body. The front suspension is by coil and wishbones and the rear is by semi-elliptic leaf springs. All springs are dampened by telescopic shock absorbers.

The exterior has the now almost universal coming-and-going look but avoids too symmetrical a silhouette. The nose still retains a radiator shell; the rear is curved down and does not look boxy. The mudguards run full length and are merged into the body. Such styling allows full use of space and explains the Hunter's generous accommodation.

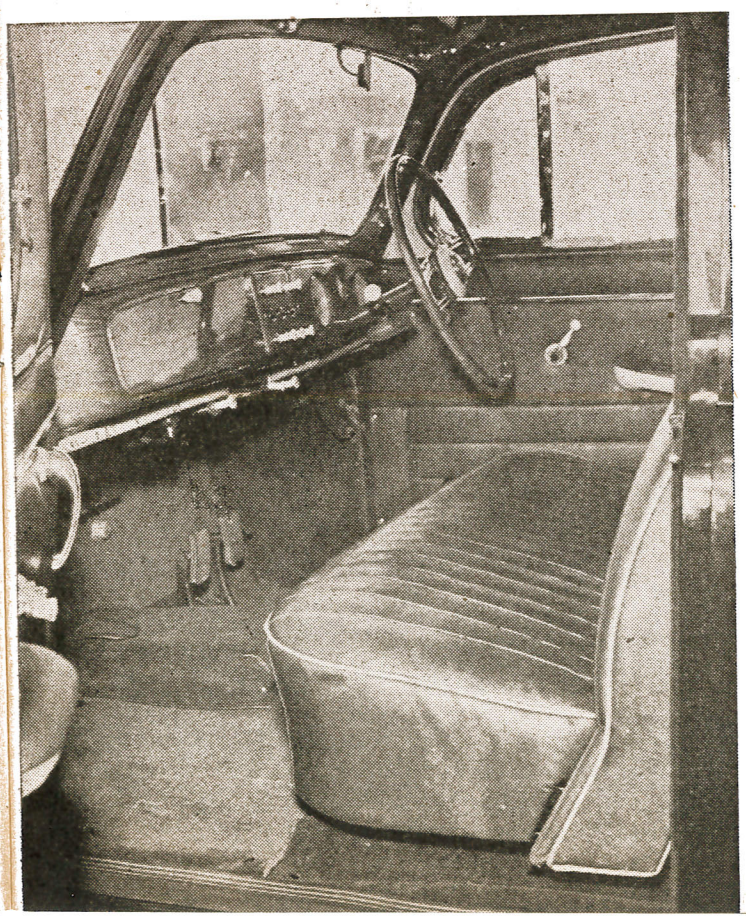
The Hunter has a wide and spacious boot which is more than big enough to accommodate a family's luggage. It has a flat floor and there are no awkward side angles to reduce the room.

A refined point is a sliding tool tray which is placed high up out of the way of luggage. Each tool has an individual place in a wool liner.

The spare wheel is carried in a separate compartment under the boot floor, and the floor must be lifted slightly when removing it.

The under bonnet is particularly spacious allowing easy maintenance of regular points. The heater fan is also placed under the bonnet and is inaudible inside the car.

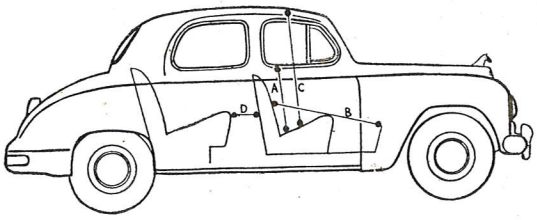
Three can comfortably sit across the Hunter's generous seats. The centre passenger at the front has practically a flat floor. The impression of the front and rear is a neat, careful finish.



SPECIFICATIONS

MAKE:
Singer Hunter, 4-door, 6-passenger saloon. Our test car from Dominion Motors, William Street, Sydney.

PRICE AND AVAILABILITY:
£1,288 (incl. Sales Tax); four weeks.



DIMENSIONS:
Front seat: Total width, 4' 3"; cushion depth, 1' 7"; squab height ("A") 1' 9"; height over seat ("C") 3' 4½"; pedals to squab ("B") 2' 8½"/3' 2"; steering wheel to squab, 1'0"/1'5½"; cushion from floor, 1'0"; seat adjustment, 5½".
Rear seat: Total width, 4' 6"; cushion depth, 1' 8"; squab height, 1' 10½"; height over seat, 3' 3"; distance between seats ("D") 6"/11½", cushion from floor, 1' 1".
Doors: Front, 2' 7½" x 4' 1" (avg.); rear, 2' 3½" x 4' 1" (avg.).
Boot: 5' 1" x 1' 10" x 1' 1" (avg. free space); spare wheel carried under floor.
Overall: Wheelbase, 8' 11½"; track: front 4' 2½", rear 4' 3"; length, 14' 9"; width, 5' 3"; height, 5' 4"; clearance, 7"; dry weight, 22¾ cwt.

ENGINE:
4-cyl. ohv., 73 x 89.4 mm., capacity 1,497 c.c., comp. ratio 7 to 1, 48 bhp at 4,200 rpm, 1.85 bhp/sq. in. piston area. Single Solex carburettor with oil bath air cleaner. Radiator 15 pt., sump 7½ pt., fuel tank 10 gal.

TRANSMISSION:
8" diameter single dry-plate clutch; 4-speed gearbox with synchromesh on top three ratios operated by steering column shift lever; open propeller shaft; hypoid bevel final drive, ratio 5.125 to 1. Overall ratios: 5.125, 6.94, 10.75, 1st and rev. 17.02. Top gear mph: 15.25 at 1,000 rpm; 65 at 2,500 ft/min. piston speed.

CHASSIS AND BODY:
Box-section frame with separate all-steel body.

BRAKES:
4-wheel hydraulic with 2-l.s. at front; mechanical linkage to rear wheels from facia mounted hand lever. Friction lining area 122.5 sq. in; ratios: 109 sq. in. per unladen ton; 93 sq. in. per laden ton.

SUSPENSION:
I.F.S. by coils and wishbones, rear by semi-elliptic leaf; telescopic and piston dampers.

ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT:
12-volt ignition, 51 amp. hour battery, 36/42-watt l.h.d. headlamps, flashing light trafficators, dual horns, dual wipers, automatic courtesy lamps, dual fog lamps.

STEERING:
Burman ball and peg; 3 turns from lock to lock: turning circle, 33 ft.

WHEELS AND TYRES:
Pressed steel disc; tyre size 5.50-16; recommended pressures, 24 lb. front and rear.

PERFORMANCE

TOP SPEED:

Average of test runs ..... 68¼ mph
Fastest one way ..... 70 mph

MAXIMUM SPEEDS ON GEARS:

1st, 25 mph; 2nd, 39½ mph; 3rd, 61 mph.
Recommended shift points: 1st, 20 mph; 2nd, 35 mph; 3rd, 55 mph.

MAXIMUM ENGINE PERFORMANCE:

46¾ bhp at 3,930 rpm; equivalent top gear speed, 60 mph, 74 lb/ft. torque at 2,620 rpm; equivalent top gear speer, 37 mph.

ACCELERATION:

Standing ¼-mile: Average of test runs, 24.15 sec.; fastest one way, 24.0 sec.
Acceleration through gears: 0-10 mph, 1.0 sec.; 0-20 mph, 3.4 sec.; 0-30 mph, 7.1 sec.; 0-40 mph, 12.5 sec.; 0-50 mph, 19.5 sec.; 0-60 mph, 29.0 sec.; 0-70 mph, 49.0 sec.
Top gear acceleration: 10-30 mph, 12.3 sec.; 20-40 mph, 11.4 sec.; 30-50 mph, 11.4 sec.
Acceleration in gears: *2nd*, 20-30 mph, 3.1 sec.; *3rd*, 20-30 mph, 3.7 sec.; 20-40 mph. 7.6 sec.; 20-50 mph, 13.6 sec.; 20-60 mph, 24.0 sec. *Top*, 20-30 mph, 5.2 sec.;20-40 mph, 11.4 sec.; 20-50 mph, 16.6 sec.; 20-60 mph, 26.2 sec.; 20-70 mph, 43.2 sec.

BEST HILL CLIMBING:

Top: 1 in 13.1 at constant 38 mph.
3rd: 1 in 8.9 at constant 32 mph.
2nd: 1 in 6.2 at constant 24 mph.
1st: 1 in 5.0 at constant 18 mph.

BRAKING:

Footbrake at 30 mph in neutral, 37ft.
Handbrake at 30 mph in neutral, 83 ft.
Fade, nil.

SPEEDO CALIBRATION:

10 mph (indicated) — 10.9 mph (actual); 20 mph—20.4 mph; 30 mph—29.2 mph; 40 mph—38.5 mph; 50 mph—47.5 mph; 60 mph—56.5 mph; 70 mph—65 mph.

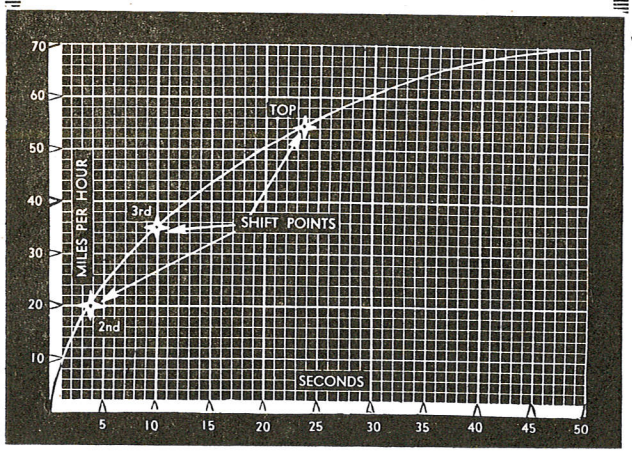
TEST WEIGHT:

Driver, assistant, full tank, and gear: 27¾ cwt.
Distribution: Front, 14¾ cwt.; rear, 13 cwt.

FUEL CONSUMPTION:

Hard driving, 25.0 mpg; normal highway cruising, 32.7 mpg.

Acceleration is well up to the medium-sized car class with a useful range of speed on all gears. Top gear is particularly flexible and will accelerate the car from speeds as low as 10 m.p.h. It pulls best around 45 mph.



The engine is one of the few single-overhead camshaft models in production today. The camshaft contours have been modified from the earlier model and the factory claim quieter operation and a slightly wider torque range.

This is achieved in practice. The engine has a silky smoothness throughout its range and is free from the vibration periods which are fairly common in four-cylinder engines. It's quiet right up to maximum r.p.m.

Moderate bore and stroke dimensions give a low piston speed right up to the car's top speed and assure a long, wear-free engine life. The test car's top speed was 70 m.p.h.; at this speed piston speed was 2,690 ft. per minute. Normal running speeds would be well under the 2,500 ft. per minute figure which is accepted as the maximum for continuous operation of production car engines.

The gearbox, controlled from the steering column, is also quiet and has a remarkably fast synchromesh. Gears can be rammed home with no regard of engine or road speeds without apparently abusing the gearbox. Gear take-up during the acceleration runs was instantaneous.

Although fast, somewhat more force than usual was needed to push the lever into place. Prolonged use on the road could easily free up this stiffness.

The lever has a short travel to the gear positions and also across the gate from the 1st/2nd. to the 3rd/top positions.

The ratios are spaced for flexible everyday use. Second gear can be engaged once the car is moving. The Hunter can be started in 2nd gear on level ground providing the driver accepts a small amount of transmission shake.

Second is also useful in traffic as it can be used from crawling speeds up to a comfortable 30 m.p.h.

Third gear may be used in traffic from speeds as low as 10 m.p.h. and has good response throughout its range up to 55 m.p.h. It is a good overtaking gear when used at low speeds and a good climbing gear in hilly country.

Top gear can be user for pottering around at low speeds and has good response for overtaking above 25 m.p.h. It is flexible enough to carry the Hunter over highway hills without dropping speed when the car is cruising above 40 m.p.h.

The clutch take-up on the test car was light enough to make city driving easy. There was no trace of transmission shake when creeping in either first or reverse gears. It stood up well to the hard test work and stayed free from slip.

The footbrake is also light and commendably efficient. It stopped the car in 37 feet from 30 m.p.h. in neutral and showed no sign of fade or pedal loss with prolonged use. The handbrake matched its performance by stopping the car in 83 feet. It is rated as a good emergency brake and although placed under the facia to the right of the steering wheel, it is quick to reach and has good leverage.

The result of the careful thought given to the Hunter's finish and flexibility is that it is a particularly easy car to drive.

The driver's seating position is generous. The front seat can be adjusted through a wide range with a small cranking lever which gives positive seat locking at any point.

The steering wheel is well raked and can be gripped without reaching. It is light, even when park-

ing, and steering feel, which is free from road shocks, is retained throughout the car's speed.

It is positive with three turns from lock to lock. The turning circle is 33 feet and allows the Hunter to be turned in a suburban street in one sweep.

We felt the armrest on the driver's door hinders arm use when manoeuvring the car in a tight space and we would like to see it repositioned.

Driver visibility forward and upward is good but as with most saloons the right hand windscreen pillar cuts down side vision. The large rear window gives good visibility when reversing.

The foot controls have comfortably large pedals and are spaced wide enough apart to prevent fumbling or searching. There is plenty of room off the pedals for resting the clutch foot on long trips.

A good high seating position and a full-width view of the bonnet and mudguards gives one confidence and allows close judgment in dense traffic.

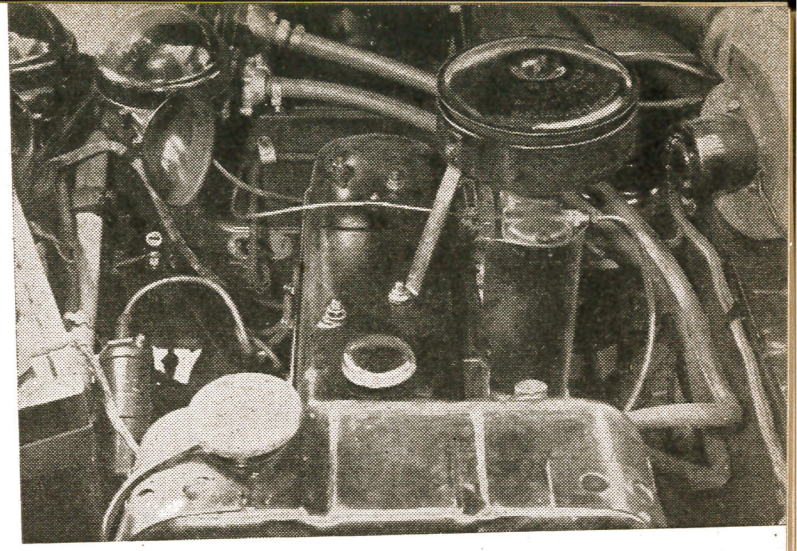
The instrument panel, which is forward of the steering wheel, can be read quickly. The instruments are in two circular clusters separated by a smaller circular clock. One cluster contains gauges for oil pressure, water temperature, and fuel level; the other contains the speedometer which registers both trip and total mileages.

Minor controls are centrally placed on the facia and are within easy hand distance. The engine is started by a push-button.

The passenger's glovebox, which has a wide lid and roomy interior, is within arm's distance and handy for small articles. The additional glove pocket in the driver's door makes sure that odds and ends are always at hand.

On the open road we found that the car could maintain speed even under atrocious conditions. During the road test it was driven in heavy rain over many miles of rough, gutter-crossed tracks, but its suspension readily absorbed all the bumps and kept the car free from slides even in difficult, slippery going.

The windscreen wipers were appreciated during this part of the test. Although not self-parking, they clear the windscreen and give the driver practically uninterrupted vision.



The Hunter's wide engine compartment allows ready access to regular maintenance points. A good feature is the oil-bath air-cleaner; another is the under-bonnet heater fan, which is inaudible inside the car.

The windscreen washers, which operate for approximately fifty seconds, helpfully sluiced mud splashes off the windscreen so easily the test staff wondered why they were not more widely used on other cars.

The Hunter's ability to stand up to rough roads combined with one of the best dust seals of any car we have tested make it a car to be seriously considered for country work. Its reasonable petrol consumption will also be a factor. It averaged 28.9 m.p.g. throughout the very hard test; on moderate driving this figure climbed to 32.7 m.p.g.

The Hunter's general handling inclined to a noticable, although not strong, oversteer on dry bitumen. It is very stable in a straight line and hangs on to a corner well past the limit of many other saloons.

There is little roll and tyre howl is low. Its cornering ability is good enough to allow even the most cautious drivers to achieve high average speeds.

Power to weight is moderate at 34½ b.h.p. per laden ton but top gear acceleration is good. The difference between the various ranges 10-30 m.p.h., 20-40 m.p.h., and 30-50 m.p.h. is small enough to assure good highway performance.

Those interested in higher performance can get the Hunter fitted with the factory twin-carburettor kit. It raises engine power to 58 b.h.p. and the power to weight ratio to 42 b.h.p. per laden ton. The kit should increase top speed by 5 to 10 m.p.h. and reduce the standing quarter mile time by some seconds. Top gear performance would be much improved. A Hunter fitted with twin carburettors would cost approximately £29 (including Sales Tax) more than the standard car.

The Hunter's headlamps are the Lucas 36/42-watt left-hand dipping type. Their high beam is suitable for night speeds up to 70 m.p.h. and they have sufficient spread to show shoulders on winding roads.

They clearly light the left-hand shoulder when dipped and do not trouble drivers in oncoming cars.

A useful fitting are the twin, matched, fog-lamps. They are the Lucas shallow-backed type designed for fitting to modern cars. On the test car they gave a satisfactory spread.

There is enough space to satisfy everyone in the Hunter's boot . . . and it is unobstructed, too. The tool tray is at the top of the compartment; the floor lifts when removing the spare wheel.