



**CITROËN CLASSIC OWNERS'
CLUB OF AUSTRALIA**
Australia's National Citroën Car Club

FRONT DRIVE

*Australia's National Magazine
for Citroën Owners and Enthusiasts*



*December 2021/January 2022 Vol 45 No 4
Citroën ZX: 30th Anniversary 1991-2021*

Postal Address

CITROËN CLASSIC OWNERS'
CLUB of AUSTRALIA Inc.

The address of the Club and this magazine is:

PO Box 52, Balwyn, Victoria, 3103.

The Club's website is:

www.citroenclassic.org.au

Citroën Classic Owners' Club of Australia Inc. is a member of the Association of Motoring Clubs.

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of CCOCA or its Committee. Neither CCOCA nor its Committee can accept any responsibility for any mechanical advice printed in, or adopted from this publication.

The Club cannot accept any responsibility for, or involvement in, any business relationship that may occur between an advertiser and a member of the Club.

Life Members

The committee awards life membership to Club members in recognition of their contribution to, and support of, the Club. Life memberships have been awarded to:

Sue Bryant	2017
Brian Wade	2017
Rob Little	2012
Ted Cross	2012
Peter Boyle	2003
Jack Weaver	1991
Nance Clark	1984

Citroëning

Club Permit applications to VicRoads must be accompanied by a RWC [pre-1949 cars can be inspected by a Club Safety Officer], ownership validation and VicRoads forms endorsed by

the Club including financial validation.

New Permit holders must supply the Club with approved photos, club permit number and expiry date.

While Club permit renewals

can done via the post CCOCA encourages you to do this via the internet and email. It is faster, simpler and safer than the post. Payment can also be completed via your VicRoads on-line account.

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Membership

Annual Membership is \$35 and printed editions of 'Front Drive' are posted to Australian addresses for an additional \$45 per year.

Meetings

Club meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of every month [except December] at 7:30pm. The venue is the Frog Hollow Reserve Rooms, Fordham Ave., Camberwell.

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Deadline

The deadline for the next edition of 'Front Drive' is Wednesday, 19 January, and for 'démarréur' it is Monday, 20 December.

Contributors

Contributors to this edition of 'Front Drive' include Gavin Braithwaite-Smith, Alan Brown, Mark Hermsen, Paul Horrell, Julian Mackie, Marcel Ningen and Camille Pinel

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Cover Image

The cover image is from a Citroën UK brochure from October, 1992. The brochure was designed by Vernon Oakley Design Pty Ltd, but the photographer is not credited. This cover has been designed using resources from Freepik.com

SPARE PARTS & TOOLS

Contact Lance Wearne.
Phone: 0424 054 724 [if you do phone, please do so at a reasonable hour] or spareparts@citroenclassic.org.au

CLUB SHOP

Club Shop is presently not operating. For further information please contact the Club's President.

OTHER CLUBS

Vic www.citcarclubvic.org.au
NSW www.citroencarclub.org.au
QLD www.citroenclubqld.org
SA www.clubcitroensa.com
WA www.citroenwa.org.au
Tas www.citroentas.org

Ed Sed

Welcome to the first of a number of Anniversary editions of our magazines. This one we just scraped in as 2021 is the 30th birthday of the ZX. There by the skin of my teeth!

The club is fortunate enough to share magazines with a number of other Citroën [and indeed non-Citroën] clubs internationally. The benefit for you is that we occasionally re-print articles of interest from these magazines in our pages. But I am pleased to report that this is not a one-way street.

Just this week I was contacted by Graham Tulett, a CCOCA member from New Zealand. He was very pleased to tell me that his article from 'Front Drive' Vol 45, No 3 is to be re-printed by the New Zealand Club. The UK Citroën Club has expressed interest in re-printing the article about Citroën in Vietnam from the same edition.



In addition, 'L'Auto' magazine from South Australia is going to re-print the article about TJ Richards from 'démarrreur' Vol 2, No 3.

But back to this edition.

Real events, both for the Club and other motoring organizations, are getting back on the road. The first of these will be the return of our joint Christmas BBQ with CCCV and another BBQ in January for Australia Day. As with all Club events you must be double vaccinated to attend [we will be QR coding attendees on arrival] and you need to register your interest in attending via the club's website.

Coming editions will have more great events.

In planning for the replacement of the BX Citroën knew its direct replacement was going to need to be larger. The competitors from Renault, Ford and the rest were all growing in size. So, two models were going to be needed ~ not just one. Clearly the gap between the AX and the forthcoming Xantia was going to be too large. Welcome the ZX.

While it is easy to criticise the loss of hydropneumatic suspension, and various other typically Citroënesque attributes that went hand-in-hand with its arrival, the press response was generally favourable.

Continued on page 6

Prez Sez

Welcome to the latest edition of 'Front Drive'.

We are rushing ahead to the conclusion of another year. I have just counted how many weeks to Christmas and realise I am not anywhere near ready. I might have time to fit in a crash diet before the festive season hits, and I will add on a few more kilos.

Please have a look at the club calendar and see if you can join us for our Christmas BBQ ~ places are filling fast, so I suggest that you book very soon if you plan to come and avoid disappointment. Currently for all our events, bookings need to be made in advance so that we can be Covid Safe for all people who attend. Sadly, you cannot just turn up on the day and expect to be accepted. We also have the January ~ Australia Day BBQ ~ much the same format and a great opportunity to catch up with old friends from both clubs. I hope to see you there.

Recently I have been contemplating the sale of a few of my treasures. These will come onto the market over the next twelve months. I bought my first car when I was about 17 years old, and I have been actively buying cars that have interested me ever since ~ almost always Citroëns.

I have decided for me it is all about saving an interesting model and it is not about their value or desirability. I am guilty of reminiscing about cars I have sold ~ oh I wish I had kept that Austin 7, or I wish I had kept that Porsche 911 [I should have kept this one, going on current prices].

I am happy with all the old Citroëns I have currently but recognise that life needs to keep moving on. I like to live in the present time ~ rarely in the past or too far into the future. I know I have said this before ~ but this time I really mean it.

I was born into a car family, and my father had his own car business during my teen years. In those days usually your father or mother taught you how to drive. My Dad did this for me and my first driving lessons were in a convertible Morris Minor. I was a nervous learner, and I was very keen to have my

Continued on page 6



Ed Sed

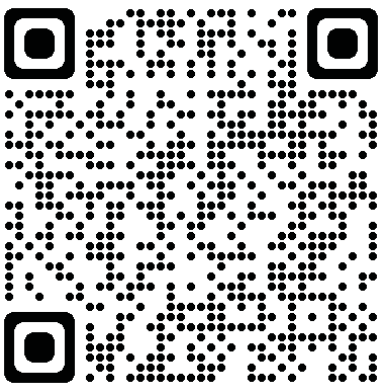
Continued from page 4

Even [a rather young] Jeremy Clarkson commented that 'the accolade is reserved for the suspension. The ride is as close to faultless as you can get, but this does nothing to hurt the handling.' You can view Clarkson's full 'Top Gear' review by following the link using the QR code.

We also have, from our friends in the Netherlands, an article about French driving schools.

There's Ad Lib library news from Max about a newly published book on the CX which will soon be in the library.

Enjoy!
Leigh F Miles ~ Editor.



Prez Sez

Continued from page 5

own licence. This unfortunately meant I was a bit anxious as the big day arrived. Fortunately, I passed my test successfully on the actual day of my 18th birthday.

The test was in the morning, and after passing my licence we returned home for lunch. After our family lunch I said, 'Now I need to go to work for the rest of the day'. My mother was horrified ~ you are not going to drive yourself are you she exclaimed ~ why not take the bus? Needless to say I ignored her and drove away with great delight with my licence firmly in my wallet.

Please read on and enjoy this edition.
Ted Cross ~ President

A-Tractions

Please note: To book or RSVP for a CCOCA organised event you must now register on line at the club's website. Do not contact the organiser to register your attendance. Given restrictions can impact events at short notice, please check the Club's website for the latest information regarding any listed event.

Note:

In order to attend any CCOCA organised, or advertised event, you must be fully vaccinated against Covid-19, or be able to present a valid Government-authorized exemption.

A-Tractions

• December

A Very CCOCA Christmas BBQ/Picnic

WHEN: Sunday, 12 December
TIME: 12:00 to 4:00pm
WHERE: Frog Hollow Reserve, Fordham Ave., Camberwell

COST: Free
BOOKING: Essential by Monday, 6 December

BRING: Tables, chairs, cutlery, glassware, nibbles and drinks
PROVIDED: Lunch will be provided. See below

MORE INFO: Lee Dennes, 0438 286 181
l.dennes@bigpond.net.au

Everyone will be provided with a pre-dished-up plate of food consisting of cooked BBQ meats [or suitable alternatives] and salads. An ice-cream will be provided for dessert.

YOU MUST BE DOUBLE VACCINATED TO ATTEND AND THERE WILL BE A QR CODE



CHECK-IN ON THE DAY.
DO NOT CALL LEE TO REGISTER! You must register/book via the CCOCA website <https://citroenclassic.org.au>

• January, 2022 Monthly Meeting: Australia Day BBQ



WHEN: Wednesday, 26 January

TIME: From 12:00

BRING: Rugs, chairs, tables, food drinks etc for a picnic or barbeque.

WHERE: Frog Hollow Reserve, Fordham Ave., Camberwell

COST: Free

BOOKING: Not required

MORE INFO: Lee Dennes, 0438 286 181

l.dennes@bigpond.net.au

Let's do what Aussies do best.



Image: www.countryandtownhouse.co.uk

A-Tractions

Gather as friends and have lots of fun while we barbeque our favourite snag and celebrate living in this great and diverse country.

DO NOT CALL LEE TO REGISTER! You must register/book via the CCOCA website <https://citroenclassic.org.au>

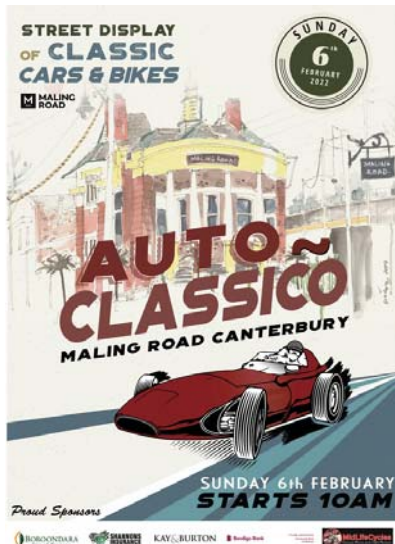
• February

Maling Rd Auto-Classico

WHEN: Sunday, 6 February
 TIME: From 10:00am
 WHERE: Maling Rd., Canterbury
 COST: Free to roam
 BOOKINGS: Not required
 MORE INFO: Peter Barclay,
 Event Manager,
 0417 338 438

<https://malingroad.com.au/events/maling-road-auto-classico-2021/>

Maling Road Autoclassico will



be held on Sunday 6 February 2022 within the Maling Road shopping precinct with over 200+ classic and modern exotics cars on display.

Event organisers have secured some great cars and clubs, and expanded the event to cover a broader range of classic and modern cars from multiple marques.

The event will continue to focus on displaying classic, historic, and modern exotics consistent with the unique characteristics of the event.

We will also celebrate the 'small car' by featuring some iconic small cars ~ Speedsters, Fiats, Mini, Citroën 2CV, Porsche 356, VW plus a few unusual cars in a central display.

For added interest we will have a variety of 'movie cars', tractors and bikes. The event with support of the Italian Auto Icons and their sponsors will ensure a comprehensive mix of Italian beauties in a dedicated section. Free to the public, roaming entertainment, food, cafes, sponsors marquees as well as retail stores being opened for a fun day.

RACV British & European Motoring Show

WHEN: Sunday, 20 February
 TIME: Gate opens 10:00am
 WHERE: Yarra Glen Racecourse, Armstrong Avenue, Yarra Glen



Sunday 20th February 2022

Yarra Glen Racecourse Armstrong Grove, Yarra Glen
 COST: \$15 per display car
 BOOKING: Not required
 BRING: All you need for a day out: chair, sun-screen, picnic, refreshments
 MORE INFO: www.aomc.asn.au/britishandEuropean2022

The RACV Classic Showcase is organised by the MG Car Club and features the best of British and European vehicles.

Entry costs \$15 per display car, which covers all occupants, and will be collected at the gate. Adult spectators not arriving in a display car will be charged \$8 to enter [\$5 with a RACV card]. Children enter free.

Food and refreshments will be available. There will be music, children's entertainment and trade stalls

In addition to the general display there is a Car of the Show Award which will be made from pre-entered competitors only. Car of the Show entrants will be parked in a special display area.

Admittance to the venue will be within strict compliance with the Government's Covid legislation effective at the date of the show.

Monthly Meeting

WHEN: Wednesday, 23 February
 TIME: 7:30pm
 WHERE: Frog Hollow Reserve, Fordham Ave., Camberwell
 COST: Free
 BOOKINGS: Not required
 MORE INFO: Lee Dennes, 0438 286 181
l.dennes@bigpond.net.au

Early Warning

• April
 Combined All Citroën Concours d'Elegance
 WHEN: Sunday, 24 April

PROOF OF VACCINATION REQUIRED FOR ALL 'LIVE' EVENTS

Ad Lib

Hello book lovers and book borrowers.

There has not been a lot of borrowing but those who have are enthusiastic.

Now that we can see a bit of light at the proverbial end of the covid tunnel [albeit a dim 15watt bulb] there is more than a glimmer of hope that we may yet see in 2022 at least a return to General meetings at our clubrooms. This is where borrowing books is most active. I am going to enjoy bringing carton loads along to tempt the reader.

There are no new books [or older ones not yet in the library] that are under scrutiny, other than I see for the present a continuing review of new titles [or one with a language revamp... see Book Review later in this edition] that may tempt a member to purchase for their own edification. I am continuing to increase my 'collection' of Citroën titles or those allied.

These new titles are all about mainly French trucks, road working machinery, autobuses etc. the editor will post these titles for you to quench your thirst for the unusual. 'Les Camions de chez nous en couleur', 'Les Camions de chez nous', 'Les Vehicules du Service public de chez nous' and 'Autobus de chez nous'. Riveting stuff if you are as nerdy about all things French as I am. I was hoping to

see a lot of Citroën models but they are in the minority but still very captivating.

I put a call out for any member to let me know if there is a title that you would like to borrow or one that you think should be in the library to further enrich our collection. I look forward to your response.

The other new book from Citrovisie has a rather unusual subject of two models I have not heard of before.

Surprisingly they weren't the subject of Leigh Miles' general knowledge quiz the other night.

These two models in some respect are lost in the 'what the heck was that car' category.

'Never heard of them.'

Well folks, they are at least Citroëns and apparently the last of the Michelin company's design trend before they sold out Citroën to the wet blanket mob aka Peugeot.

They are called the Citroën Axel and Citroën Oltcit.

Rara avis indeed.

They were a total flop and a financial disaster.

Notwithstanding the rarity of these two models, a book has been written about them... in French unfortunately.

The book is available from Citrovisie if you have a desire to delve into a relatively unknown [for me anyway] niche in Citroën's car making history.

Max Lewis ~ Librarian

Citroën CX: Aerodynamic Elegance

Hello readers and library users,

This book is written by Michael Buurma whose two previous tomes on the CX were firstly in Dutch, then French and now English.

I now fully engage with the preface by Henri-Jacques Citroën.

An auspicious beginning to yet another splendid publication from Citrovisie.

The cover has a different picture of this

wonderfully exotic shape which as you all know was the replacement for the DS which had had its day.

The DS/ID may have had its time in the spotlight as far as the manufacturer was concerned but its greater reputation came with the future as it was recognised as an immediately collectable car.

Nothing, absolutely nothing would equal this model, no matter what came after and that is what in my humble opinion saw the rise and rise and rise of the DS/ID in enthusiasts hands.

Nonetheless Citroën saw in its new model the CX an iteration of the DS/ID but clothed in

a different dress with the technology of its time.

The book continues as with the others in a landscape format with a hard cover in the modern style.

The book starts off with the origin of the CX and what interesting reading that makes [more scrutinising the many and varied pictures rather than translating the words] as the author explores and relates the goings on at Citroën when this car first came up as hopefully a worthy successor to the DS.

This section is as full of illustrations as you would want and mostly in colour.

Presentation of

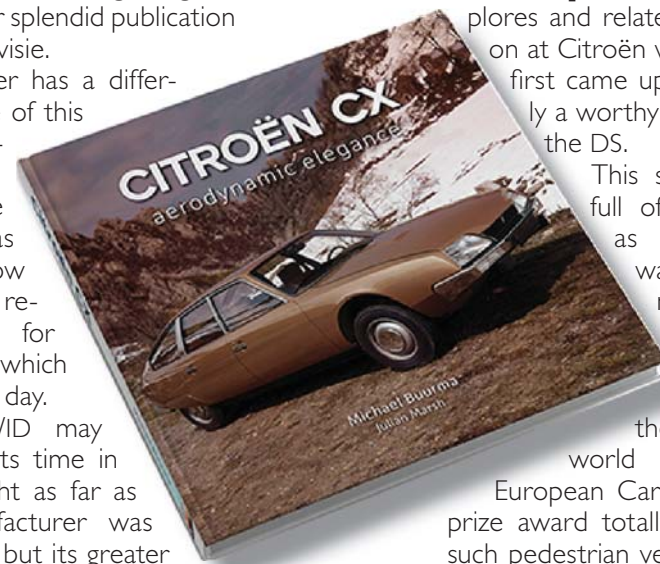
the car to the

world gained the

European Car of the Year prize award totally outclassing such pedestrian vehicles as the VW Golf and the Audi 50. Additional awards followed praising the style...the CX did very well on its introduction. All this is nicely noted in the book.

The very model name CX is as you know is used to define the aerodynamic slipperiness of a car as it slices its way through the air.

Just one look at the overall design and style of our beauty



and you can see that the appellation is as about as correct a description as you could possibly get.

I think the CX still holds a very credible Cx figure against whatever opposition could struggle to come up with to equal or better even after nearly 50

years has passed.

The rest of the book is then divided into each year that the car was manufactured.

What I most love and admire with the CX is the sheer simplicity and beauty of the bodywork lines [a characteristic unique to Citroën] especially with that

rear wheel valance carried over from the GS.

Perfection.

As with its sibling GS the clean lines continued with the model for many years until heavy plastic this, that and the other gave the shape something of a Botox look.

Yes folks, I have washed out my mouth and will take any criticism that you may wish to throw at me!!

OK, back to the book... each year is a detailed exposure of all that went on in each years' changes.

The book is not yet in the library as we are now pretty particular with purchase of new

titles.

Personally I am going to opt for a signed copy as you can as well if you so wish.

The editor especially, and me to a lesser extent, have a good relationship with the publisher and should you decide to purchase this book for your own library, Leigh or I will be only too happy to expedite a copy for you.

The book is due next month.

Should the feedback after this review indicates a desire to have a copy for borrowing, then we will consider purchasing one for the library.

Max Lewis ~ Librarian



Presentation to the press. Unusually for a European publication the launch report on the CX that appeared in 'Wheels' magazine, written by Peter Robinson even appears with its headline 'Instant Car of the Year'.

The book includes achingly beautiful images, many of which have not been published previously and others, such as this image of a CX dashboard, which your editor [at least] has not seen previously.



Save the Date!

Combined All Citroën Concours d'Elegance

When: Sunday, 24 April



2021 Member Survey

In July the club offered members the opportunity, for the first time in several years, to reveal the types of cars they own, and to provide suggestions on how CCOCA can better support members in various aspects of caring for their classics. May I offer a big 'thank you' to all those members who responded to the survey.

Unsurprisingly, not all members participated. To complete the picture of car ownership, we have extracted additional data from a variety of other sources, and we think we have a good estimate of the numbers of each type of Citroën owned by members. Of course, the numbers are always changing, as people buy and sell cars, and as members join and leave the club.

Although a smaller number of members answered the second part of the survey, we gained some insights into what members would like the club to provide to help the committee with plans for the future.

A summary of the information provided by members is available on the club web site. See <https://citroenclassic.org.au/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Car-survey-report-Rev1.pdf>

Key Conclusions

What were the key conclusions from the survey?

The term 'classic' is not locked in time. Although Tractions are still the model most commonly owned by members, they now make up less than 40% of cars on the list. If one looks at the number of Tractions actually seen on the road, the figure is even less than that. And this is in a club which started out just over 40 years ago with a focus on Tractions. Although Tractions will always be one of the iconic models owned by members, we can expect to see an increasing proportion of later models in the overall number as time moves on. Models such as the D-Series, GS and the CX, modern cars in the 1970s, are regarded as classics and are being sought by enthusiasts. There is no doubt that the 2CV is regarded as a classic Citroën, and production of that model only ceased in 1990. In CCO-



CA we have a contingent of members with pre-WW2 rear wheel drive Citroëns, and they clearly are classics. Along with older Citroëns, almost 10% of the Citroëns owned by members are modern cars, used for everyday transport. We would never discourage members from owning a current model Citroën, which will probably be a classic in a few years' time!

Therefore, as a classic owner's club, our image needs to stay fashionably behind the times, but not locked into an era. The club's logo reflects our roots in the Traction Avant. But to maintain our vitality we also need to ensure that potential members, and indeed car-enthusiasts in general, recognise that we support a far wider range of classic models than 'just' Tractions. Countering that is the realisation that we are not 'competitors' with other Citroën clubs whose members, as a whole, are more interested in newer models. We think the way the club presents itself is an opportunity that merits consideration.

Information & Knowledge

If there was one word that summarises what many members are looking for it is 'information.' This can be broken into several categories:

- who to talk with when they have a problem,
- where to find information, and

2021 Member Survey

- where to get things done.

It is clear that some members find it difficult to know who to ask in the club when they have a problem with their car. We need to find a better way to easily connect people with others who can assist them. After all, what is a club for if we can't do that? So we will be looking for ways to recognize the technical expertise which some members have, and do a better job of making it available to others.

One of the potential hurdles is the requirement, in this day and age, to respect and protect people's privacy. Some members have no difficulty letting others know how to get in touch with them, while others do not want their contact details revealed. It is something we will have to work through.

Tech on the Web

Our club web site is a source

of a lot of technical information. It is clear from the survey and from data recorded each month on web site usage that some members are unaware that information such as copies of various manuals, and technical articles written by members, are readily available at the click of a few buttons.

We have taken steps to improve members' knowledge of what is on the site, and how to access it, with our recent monthly meeting hosted by Bruce Stringer. Keep you eyes peeled for more of these in coming months.

This technical information on the website can be printed as and when required: so if all a member needs is a couple of pages to take out to the garage when doing a job, that can easily be done. Failing that, original copies of manuals are available

for loan via the club library.

We know from membership data that the average age of members is 'older' and that some members are uncomfortable using computers. We can't change the fact that computers are here to stay, and they do offer huge advantages over paper-based communications.

Therefore we aim to make the navigation around our club web site as simple as we can possibly make it. If anyone is bamboozled by the web site, please feel free to call a committee member and they will help you with it. Names and contact details are in the first couple of pages of every edition of 'Front Drive' and 'démarrreur'.

Social Media

We also have members who are completely happy using computers. To add to the ways members can communicate directly with each other, we are investigating adding Facebook and Instagram to our web site.

These systems are not exclusively for younger people. There are plenty of grandparents who use them to keep in touch with their grandchildren, for example. There is a bit of work to do on this, and we will update you as things develop.

Some members expressed disappointment that Aussie Frogs will be closing down early in 2022. Bulletin boards have advantages over Facebook, but they also need administration, ie volunteers to manage them. It is a job that requires constant attention to make sure no abusive or defamatory content gets out.

We doubt that we have enough demand for such a bulletin board within the club, or enough volunteers to administer it. We think we can solve the problems of members helping fellow members by other means, at the moment.

Professional Services

One of the common requests



2021 Member Survey

was for information on where to find services such as a capable auto electrician, a friendly mechanic, a good panel beater, etc. We are looking at collating members' contributions on such things and adding them to a new section on the web site. We will not be endorsing! As the saying goes, 'one man's meat is another man's poison'.

However, we will accumulate a list of service providers who members say they have found useful. From there on it is up to you whether you like them or not! But we think having a list of service providers to give members a start on finding help is better than not having one. This isn't just about Citroën mechanics. We are talking about radiator repairers, carburettor specialists, sellers of Lucas electrical spares, machining services, and all the other specialists we need to help with our cars.

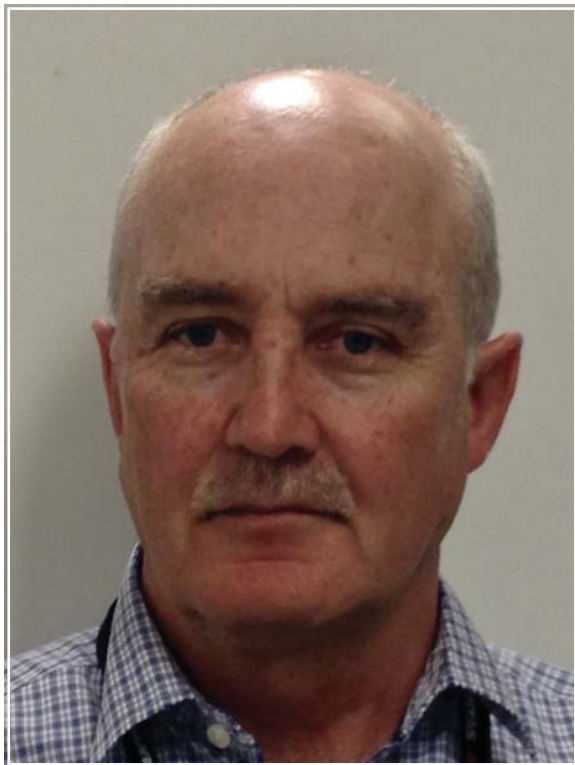
The value of this will only be as good as the amount of information contributed by members. The Jowett Club has information like this on their web site, so for a look at what is possible, go to <https://jowett.org.au/services/>
CCOCA Spares

CCOCA's Spare Parts service specializes almost exclusively in Traction spares. Universally, Lance Wearne received thanks and praise for the work he puts in on behalf of members. When

one looks at the amount of work Lance puts into this one can't help but feel grateful and impressed.

With an increasing number of other models being owned by members, there seems there could be an opportunity to help members by expanding this service. The obvious model to focus on is 2CV, where we have more than 100 cars in the club. After that, the numbers of each model are smaller, and the spares situation is more complex, so we don't think we can add much value for other mod-

Lance Warne,
the Club's Traction spare parts guru.



els, other than facilitating communications between members.

Lance has his hands full dealing with Traction spares, so anything we do with 2CV spares would need to be handled by someone else. Ideally this person would live in Melbourne, given that majority of 2CVs in the club are located there. Current thinking is to keep a core range of commonly used 2CV spares in a revamped version of Club Shop, and then focus on freight consolidation as a way of reducing the price of spares

by the time they arrive at the member's door.

This is not dissimilar to what is happening with Traction spares, where we are finding more and more that parts are having to be purchased from Europe, rather than supplied from existing stock held by the club.

Provided members are not in a rush, we think we can accumulate orders for 2CV parts and arrange larger shipment sizes at lower freight prices from European suppliers. I'm sure many of us have baulked at the €40, or more, charged for a tiny part to be sent from Europe. If that same part was included in a larger parcel, the freight cost would be much less. The cost of freight for a particular part is hard to guarantee, because it depends on what else is in the parcel. We think we can provide parts to members after all costs are taken into account, at prices better than commercial operators are able to do.

Even if we do implement such a service, members still have the option to purchase parts themselves directly from their preferred supplier. We will update you as things develop on this.

Special Tools

The subject of tools owned by the club and available for members to borrow generated some interesting points of view.

Clearly we need to publi-



2021 Member Survey

cise what the club owns. Lance holds these tools, which are exclusively for Tractions, and we have had feedback that after 40 years of use some of them are not in great condition. We are looking at replacing tools which have been damaged and at holding additional tools in Melbourne, to reduce freight cost for members.

We are also prepared to consider owning special tools for other models, subject to cost and likely demand. There were a number of comments about the need to hold a deposit against damage through misuse. Until now the club's preference has been not to do this.

State Chapters & Club Structure

There were a couple of comments about having interstate chapters, and one suggestion about recombining with the Citroën Car Club of Victoria. We have looked at interstate chapters several times and they require pretty much a complete club set-up, including election of responsible officers resident in that state.

The main benefit for such a chapter would be avoiding the need for a CCOCA member to also be a member of a local club to get concessional registration or a club permit plate [depending on the words used in that

state]. However, the costs of setting up the interstate chapter, and the relatively small number of people prepared to be office bearers, let alone take on some of the statutory responsibilities that go with it, means we are not convinced that it is a path we want to pursue.

Having said that, we have reasonably large clusters of members in a few places, such as Tasmania and the Sunshine Coast, and we will look at organizing social events for those members to get together.

As a national club, with 40% of our members living in states other than Victoria, we don't think amalgamating with CCCV offers any benefit to members. The present practice of sharing some local events with CCCV seems to work well, and we see no reason not to continue working like that.

There were many other suggestions which were gratefully received, but space prevents them from being addressed here. Most of the changes which the committee is working on implementing rely on members contributing to make them successful. Please have a think about what you can offer to make the club better for all of us.

Ian Macdermott

Driving School

It was 1995 and together with a friend I went to the ICCCR in Clermont-Ferrand. After this 3-day event, we would go to the mountains for two more weeks of camping and headed towards Cham-

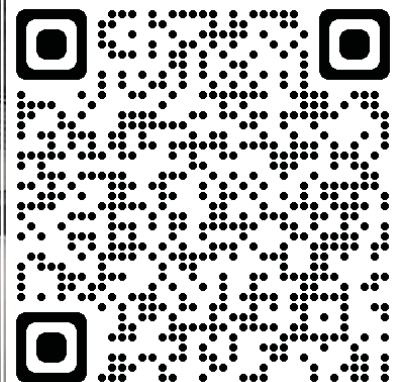
bery. On the way there, we had to do some shopping somewhere and my eye fell on the local driving school. At that time, I was still working at the CBR and was curious how this was done in France. [CBR is the Centraal Bureau Rijvaardigheidsbewijzen



£1 off your first Drivotrainer lesson

Just cut the coupon out and bring it now to Drivotrainer! There are free demonstrations on Wednesday at 7.30 p.m. and Saturday at 3.00 p.m., showing you exactly how the unique Drivotrainer system works. Remember, Drivotrainer's the sensible way to learn to drive - indoor tuition to teach you car control - then out in one of our modern dual controlled cars.

Bring the coupon today! - and save £1
Drivotrainer: 169 Huntingdon St., Nottingham Tel: 50227/8



Driving School



4

Les professeurs étant tenus d'avoir la correction la plus parfaite et une absolue patience.

VERSIGNY

sera très reconnaissant des réclamations ou observations que les élèves pourraient lui faire à ce sujet.

VERSIGNY
87, Av. de la Grande-Armée
162, Avenue Malakoff
Téléphone : PASSY 00-40
3 lignes groupées sous ce numéro
Succursale : 153, Bvd de la Villette

Il est souvent difficile de se rendre compte si tel ou tel service doit comporter l'attribution d'un pourboire, et dans l'affirmative, de quelle importance.

Afin de faire disparaître tout doute à cet égard, nous informons notre aimable clientèle que, d'accord avec le Syndicat Professionnel Français de l'Automobile (Moniteurs) il est d'usage d'attribuer une gratification de 5 Frs par Leçon.

La Direction.

Les rendez-vous ci-inclis sont réservés à
Madame Braut
sur voiture H.C.V. Professeur Robert

5

6

1	leçon	Mardi 4/4/39 18 ^h 30
2	leçon	Jeu. 6/4/39 - 18 ^h 30
3	leçon	Mardi 11/4/39 - 18 ^h 30
4	leçon	Mardi 19/4 - 18 ^h 30
5	leçon	Vendredi 11/4 18 ^h 30
6	leçon	Mardi 19/4 - 18 ^h
7	leçon	Vendredi 21/4 18 ^h
8	leçon	Jeu. 27/4 - 18 ^h
9	leçon	Vendredi 5 mai 18 ^h
10	leçon	Mardi 8 mai 18 ^h 30

Il est souvent difficile de se rendre compte si tel ou tel service doit comporter l'attribution d'un pourboire, et dans l'affirmative, de quelle importance.

Afin de faire disparaître tout doute à cet égard, nous informons notre aimable clientèle que, d'accord avec le Syndicat Professionnel Français de l'Automobile (Moniteurs) il est d'usage d'attribuer une gratification de 5 Frs par Leçon.

La Direction.

~ the Dutch motor registration and licencing authority]. There was also a kind of oversized toy car behind the window and I was curious what it was for.

The owner told me that this had been his father's car and that driving lessons were given in this way, before the car was actually driven on the road. I had never seen that before. According to him it was an American system in which a film was shown and the students had to change gears and accelerate at the right moment. A central device then registered how well you had done. Drivotrainer was the name of the system.

On YouTube you can find movies of it by using the QR code below, but here are some pictures [Images 1 and 2] as well.

The system was also used elsewhere as the newspaper advertisement from the UK shows. [Image 3] Ed.

In the end, his father did not buy this system, because he thought the movies were too American and it was quite expensive. He did buy one simulator car because it was open and had all the pedals, gauges and gearshift. That was nice to practice inside with novice drivers, where there was a good view of the operations. They themselves had also taught Citroëns, but especially the later ones, like the Ami. In the 50s and 60s it

was the Renaults and Simcas that were mainly used, according to him. Tractions steered too heavily and were becoming outdated.

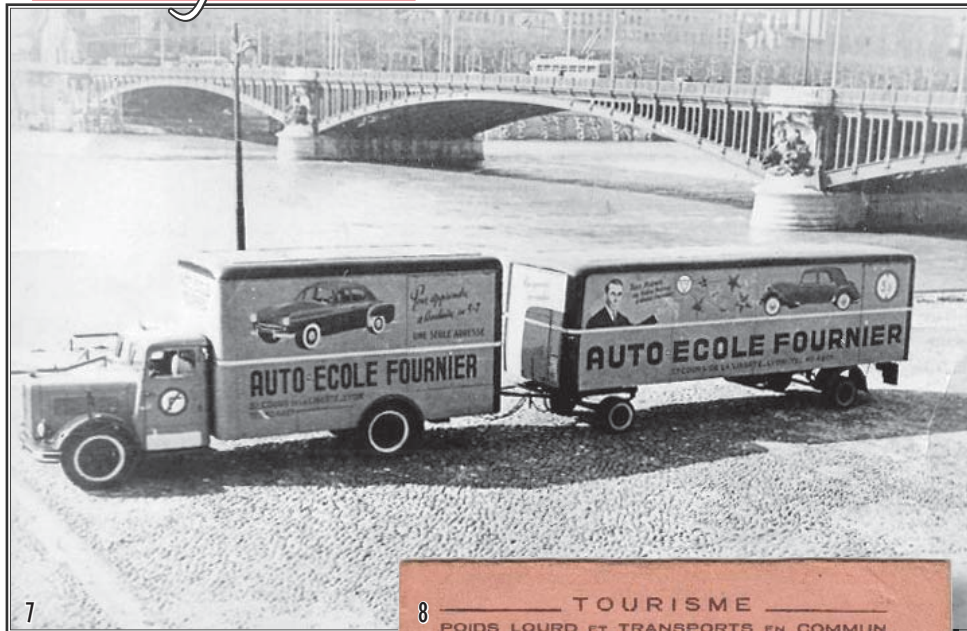
Further searches yielded some advertising cards [bushards], on which also the Trac-tion was shown as a lesson car. Judging by the models, it was somewhere in the fifties [Image 4]

From just before the war I once found a lesson card from Versigny [Images 5 and 6], just north of Paris. Madame Braut was taught by instructor Robert in an IICV. She received her first driving lesson on April 4, 1939 we see on the back. Notice the card pasted under the lesson card that says 'It is often difficult to realize whether a particular service involves the awarding of a tip, and if so, of what amount. In order to remove any doubt in this regard, we inform our valued customers that in agreement with the French professional automobile association, it is customary to award a tip of 5 francs per lesson' [equivalent to about €2.50].

Apparently, a driving instructor had to rely partly on the tip that came from the customers.

Driving school Fournier went even further. They had the lesson cars painted life-size as advertisements on a truck [Image 7]. Too bad I didn't find some better pictures of this. Auto

Driving School



7

Ecole 'ABC' from Paris was even more Citroën-friendly. On their buvard they indicated that they taught in a Citroën Traction and the latest models [Image 8]. Unfortunately no year so we don't know which models those were.

We pulled an April Fool's joke at the CBR in the mid-1990s, with the introduction of the vintage car license [category '0'].

Driving an old car is very different from driving a modern one. Before that, you had to take additional driving lessons at special driving schools with oldtimers, after getting the regular driver's license, before you could drive for an O[ld-timer] license. My Traction was photographed as a driving lesson car.



8

Unfortunately, I could not find the article about it.

As you can see, you cannot learn early enough to drive a Traction [Images 9 and 10]. The second of these is me, by the way in August 1984. It would take another two years before I got my driver's license and bought my first Traction. This article was written by Marcel Ningen for 'Traxion'



9



10

magazine, the journal of 'Traction Avant Nederland' and appeared in July 2021. It is reproduced with the permission of the Club and was translated by your Editor with the aid of www.DeepL.com/Translator [free version]. Do you have Citroën driving lesson memories? Why not share them with members through the page of the magazine, as Ted Cross has done. You can get in touch with the Editor via email at editor@citroenclassic.org.au

Cit-In 2022: Cowra, NSW

CIT-IN 2020 — COWRA, NSW



WHEN: Friday, 25 to Monday,
28 March 2022

WHERE: Cowra, NSW

COST: Per person
Prior to 10 Nov '21 \$280
11 Nov to 15 Jan '22 \$295
16 Jan to 18 Feb \$320
5 to 12yo \$175
Under 5 Free

BOOKINGS: Essential

BRING: Everything for a long-weekend away

WEBSITE: <http://citroencarclub.org.au/cit-in/cit-in.html>

Information

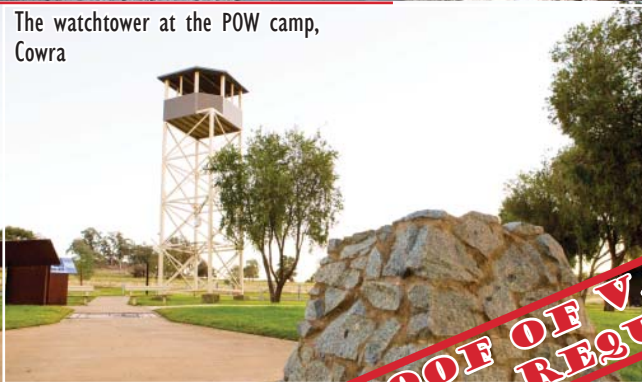
With the Covid-19 pandemic in full swing at the time, the 2020 CIT-IN had to be postponed. After consultation with the various state Presidents, the CIT-IN originally planned for Cowra during Easter 2020 has now been rescheduled for late March 2022.

This will allow time for financial and psychological recovery with a better environment as regards weather and accommodation. It will be held during the last weekend of daylight saving [NOT Easter] from Friday, 25 March 2022 until 28 March

The entrance to the Japanese War Cemetery, Cowra



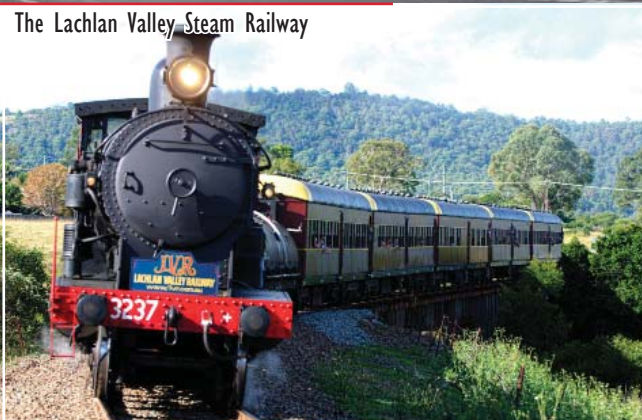
The watchtower at the POW camp, Cowra



The Gooloogong Hotel



The Lachlan Valley Steam Railway



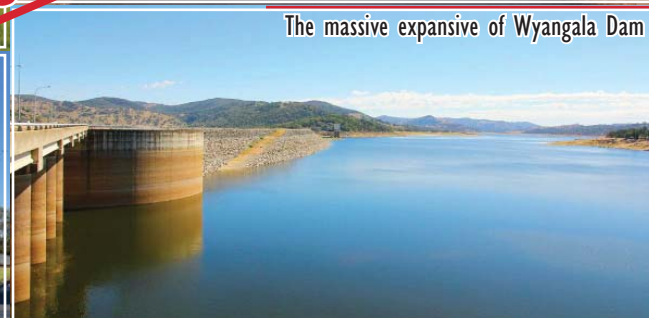
The Age of Fishes Museum



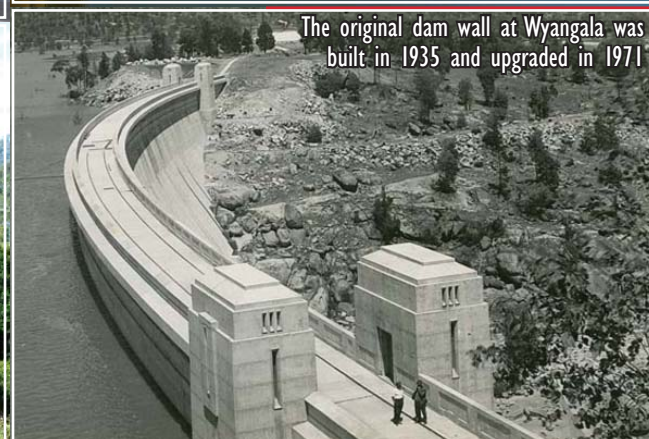
The historic main street of Canowindra



The massive expansive of Wyangala Dam



The original dam wall at Wyangala was built in 1935 and upgraded in 1971



2022.

As Club President I urge everyone to come to Cowra as planned, only this time it will be an earlier weekend in 2022. I hope to see you at the upcoming bigger and better CIT-IN at Cowra.

Bruce Elsegood.

President ~ Citroën Car Club of New South Wales, Inc.

Itinerary

- Friday, 25 March 2022
Afternoon: Check In then proceed to meet and greet.
Evening: A light supper will be served at the meeting venue.
- Saturday, 26 March 2022
Morning: Show and Shine at the meeting venue.
Afternoon: Tourist activities including sightseeing of the town and local region.
Evening: Informal dinner and social get-together at the venue.
- Sunday, 27 March 2022
Morning: Observation Run to a place of local interest with included picnic lunch.
Afternoon: Tourist activities including sightseeing of the town and local region.
Evening: Formal dinner at the venue with speeches and prize giving.
- Monday, 28 March 2022
Morning: Farewell Breakfast at the venue then departure.

Registration

Registration for CIT-IN 2022 is

Cit-In 2022: Cowra, NSW

now available and the form can be downloaded from the CCCNSW website.

<http://citroencarclub.org.au/cit-in/cit-in.html#register>

General Refund Policy

If you have registered and paid, but are unable to attend CIT-IN due to unforeseen circumstances, the Citroën Car Club of NSW Inc will refund your registration fee in part according to the following scale:

Before 1 Dec '21	100%
Until 1 Feb '22	50%
Until 10 Mar '22	25%
After 10 Mar '22	Nil

Covid-19 Refund Policy

In the event that CIT-IN Cowra 2022 is required to be cancelled by any government order due to COVID or other medical emergency, we confirm that 'Should the event have to be cancelled due to formal Government restrictions on medical or other grounds, we will refund the full registration payment made, less any non-recoverable deposits/payments made to venues and suppliers to the event.'

We are unable to estimate how much might be retained, as while we have tried to ensure that we as a club are protected from losses due to cancellation, our arrangements with suppliers have various cut-off dates for termination where there may be some loss [as a result of

non-recoverable expenditures already made by suppliers] depending on the time between the ruling to cancel and scheduled start date of the event. As a guide, the retention on the last deferral due to COVID in 2020 was \$25 per registrant.

As highlighted on the actual registration form, the CCCNSW [Inc] reserves the right to vary COVID management practices and guidelines to respond to health advice plus government supplier policies leading up to and during CIT-IN. We will continually monitor the requirements leading up to the event, and notify all registrants appropriately and in a timely manner as our policies on this develop.

As previously stated in the original invitation to register for CIT-IN @ Cowra 2022 outlining all of the terms and conditions which was part of the registration package. Please assure all of your members who are considering registering for CIT-IN that we are taking all steps available to us to ensure that members do not lose money as a result of the restriction due to COVID.

Accommodation

- The recommendation is to book early to avoid missing out due to occupancy rates at the Easter break.
- Please contact your chosen accommodation directly, rather than going through a booking agent.

- You will need to pre-book your accommodation to enable Registration.

Necessities

- Camp Chairs will be required if you intend sitting whilst having your picnic lunch at the destination of the Observa-

tion Run.

- Alcohol will be required to be bought from home or purchased on Saturday shopping in Cowra. Woolworths and Aldi have local bottle shops.
- A First Aid kit in the car would be advisable.

Pre Cit-In 2022 Tour

HELEN'S HAPPY HOLIDAY OR
TEDDIE'S TERRIFIC TOUR OR
DAVE'S DIRTY DEEDS DONE
DIRT CHEAP

WHEN: Saturday, 19 to Friday,
25 March 2022

FROM: Melbourne, Vic

TO: Cowra, NSW

COST: Nil

BOOKINGS: Essential

BRING: Everything for a week
away

CONTACT:

Ted Cross 0400 592 208 [M]

president@citroenclassic.org.au

Helen Cross 0419 356 963 [M]

03 9819 2208 [H]

crossfam@ozemail.com.au

We are planning a pre-CIT-IN touring trip to Cowra in New South Wales ~ leading up to CIT-IN 2022.

For those folks who would like to have a bit of fun and enjoyment before CIT-IN 2022, we are inviting you to join us on 'Helen's Happy Holiday/Ted-

die's Terrific Tour / Dave's Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap', to be held over 7 days and 6 nights.

We are starting out from Melbourne and finishing up at Cowra.

Each day is planned to be doing some interesting things and seeing new places, as well as cementing friendships over shared morning tea and lunch each day, pre-dinner drinks, and dinners each evening.

There is no actual cost involved to be part of the group, but some extra excursions along the way will attract a modest amount of money.

Interstate people from all states [as well as Victoria] are most welcome to join us.

We are suggesting accommodation, but you are welcome to arrange your own accommodation elsewhere ~ your choice.

We are mainly staying in caravan parks with cabins.

You will need to book your

Pre Cit-In 2022 Tour

own accommodation ~ I have let places know that people may ring to book ~ *please mention* that you are part of the Citroën car group.

At the time of writing, accommodation was available at the suggested venues.

We *strongly* suggest that you book it ASAP.

We are hoping for/planning a BBQ dinner in Canberra, I will need firm numbers for this evening.

For the second evening in Canberra we may be going for a restaurant meal ~ details to

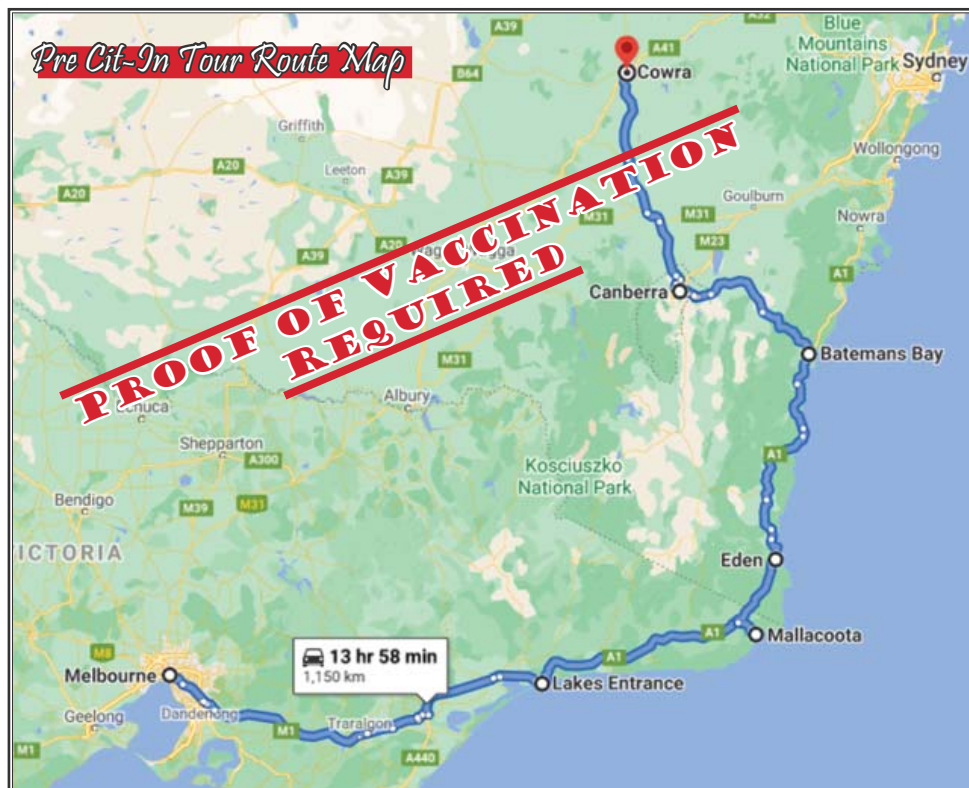
come down the track.

If you are interested in being part of the tour group, please contact the organising crew ASAP!

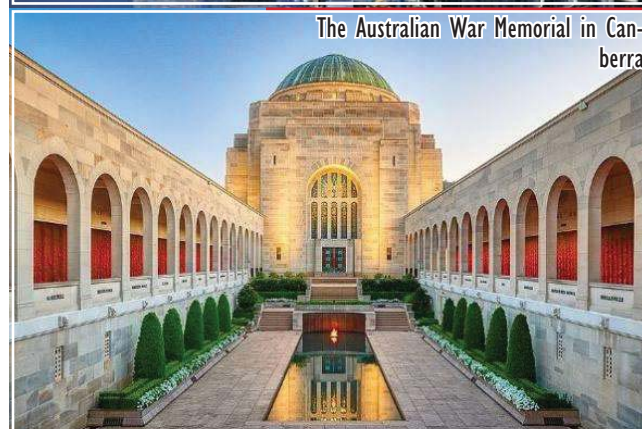
ITINERARY

nb: Distances are approximate and may not reflect the actual route of the trip..

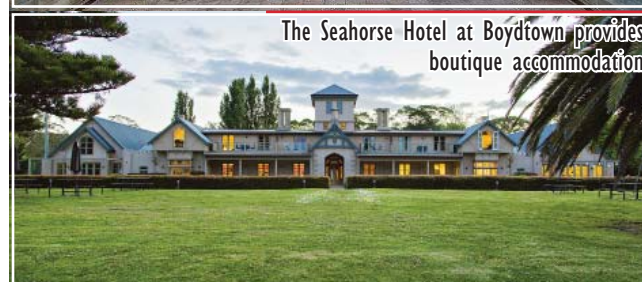
- Day 1 Saturday, 19 March
Melbourne to Lakes Entrance 320km
- Accommodation Echo Beach Tourist Park. [03] 5155 2238, www.echobeachpark.com
Contact: Cherie or Leigh
- DAY 2 Sunday, 20 March



Eden is great centre for the fishing industry



The Australian War Memorial in Canberra



The Seahorse Hotel at Boydtown provides boutique accommodation



Sunset over the wharf at Batemans Bay

Lakes Entrance to Mallacoota 200km

- Accommodation Shady Gully Caravan Park. [03] 5158 0362, www.mallacootacaravanpark.com/ Contact: Kyle
- Day 3 Monday, 21 March
Mallacoota to Eden 85km
- Accommodation Eden Gateway Holiday Park. [02] 6496 1798, www.edengateway.com.au Contact: Lynne
- Day 4 Tuesday, 22 March
Eden to Bateman's Bay 200km
- Accommodation Clyde View Holiday Park. [02] 4472 4224, www.clydeview.com.au Contact: Jill
- Days 5 Wednesday, 23 March
Bateman's Bay to Canberra 150km
- Accommodation [2nights] Tradies Quality Hotel, Dickson, ACT. [02] 6247 4744, www.qualityhoteldickson.com.au Contact: Savannah or Alivio Tourist Park, 20 Kunzea Street, O'Connor, ACT. [02] 6247 5466, <http://aliviogroup.com.au/> Contact: Sam
- Day 6 Thursday, 24 March
In Canberra
- Day 7 Friday 25 March
Canberra to Cowra 200km
We should arrive early after lunch, ready for the start of Citin 2020.

If you are interested in being part of the tour, please contact the organising crew ASAP.

A Day with Edna May the GSA

Two Meetings in Mouchamps

PART 2: PHILLIPE

Here in Rural Vendée, between Nantes and La Rochelle, we put the clocks back by an hour yesterday evening. The Indian Summer of 2021 appears to have ended, with much-needed rain dripping gently from the gold and crimson leaves of the vigne vierge outside the office window. This morning, a skein of brant geese passed over autumnal oaks and ashes, above the ga-

rage which protects GSA Edna May from the worst of the storms to come.

This is the last leg of the brants' migration from the Arctic tundra to the Atlantic coast. By now they will have arrived at the winter feeding grounds on the Île de Ré, or perhaps have formed part of the colony that will gorge itself on sea-lettuce along the beach which stretches from the estuary of Le Petit Lay, past the erstwhile 1920s summer house of Georges Clemenceau, to the oysterbeds of La Guitière.

The geese arrive each year just after the swallows leave; our story today begins with a time-hop back to the summer, and with the swallows from Part One of this tale...

Regular readers will recall that I met in Mouchamps, in June this year, a gentleman cyclist who had worked in the Citroën factory in Rennes.

Loïc's story can be found here: <https://citroenclassic.org.au/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Volume-45-No-3.pdf>

As Loïc left Mouchamps on

that early summer day, I noticed the procession of swallows which had punctuated our conversation on the pilgrim bench. I suspected they were in fact house martins, and were collecting mud from the river below the Romanesque church.

I needed more photos for an earlier Front Drive story, and I decided to follow the industrious birds, to find out where they were building their nests. I could not have imagined that the second encounter of the day would lead to a treasure-trove of discoveries, with a journey back to 1929, and a very curious Citroën link...

It was all down to the birds, then.

The house martins were swooping back-and-forth over the roof of Le Canotier. Like most village restaurants here, it relies partly on the regular trade with tradesmen and other workers from the light industries of the Vendéen hinterland. It was too early yet for the terrasse and the dining room to be occupied; those familiar with rural French life will know that pause-déjeuner restaurant hours are fairly inflexible: avant midi, trop tôt; après 14 heures, trop tard.

The church had chimed 11 as I'd shared croissants with Loïc. A single chime now confirmed 11:15

I took a half-hidden street

**Chrysanthemums
in Mouchamps,
Toussaint/All
Saints' Day 2021.
Charles de Gaulle
portrait in back-
ground, taken
during his visit
12 May 1946**

Couleurs automnales, Château des Roches Baritauds, near Mouchamps



A Day with Edna May the GSA

which led unassumingly from the square, and which passes behind Le Canotier. Two workmen were atop scaffold, chipping brutalist 1950s cement rendering to reveal a centuries-old stone wall. The House Martins swooped past them, then banked to the right into a south-facing courtyard.

« Passez, monsieur » shouted one of the workmen, then « Ah, c'est toi Alan!, je ne t'avais pas reconnu! »

Romuald had done some work on our roof last year, and he now had his customary half-

smoked Gitane sans filtre beneath his moustache. In reality, maçons who smoke during working hours these days, especially ones who still partake of tabac brun instead of the globalised Virginia stuff, are a rarity. It was serendipitous then, that Romuald should be there as the sun peeked through the clouds, if only to add a gallic undertone to a story destined for the antipodes. He had the hardened look of a Vendéen maçon who was anticipating lunch on the other side of the wall. In 47 minutes' time.

Ten paces further, I was in front of the courtyard gates. I realised right away that this was no ordinary courtyard; the iron gates were works of art, and were in the form of a three-metre wide graceful butterfly.

At the back of the sunlit space, the mystery of the House Martins was revealed: they had found the perfect nesting site beneath the painted eaves of the immaculately-maintained façade.

« Bonjour Monsieur, vous recherchez quelqu'un ? »

Came a clear and steady call from the shadows behind the white Citroën Berlingo...

« Non, pas vraiment Monsieur, j'étais curieux de voir les nids des hirondelles! »

The owner of the house laughed, and walked out into the sunshine.

« Hirondelles de fenêtre, en latin Delichon Urbicum. They nest near to people, unlike their hironnelle rustique cousins! Philippe. Enchanté »

Philippe holds out a friendly hand, and we break social distancing etiquette with a handshake.

« Alan. Enchanté aussi. Do they nest here every year, Philippe ? »

« Yes indeed. Ever since we renovated this house in 1960. And before, in the ancient house where I was born, two streets away on the road to L'Oie, I think that they have been visitors there since at least the sixteenth century »

Philippe sees Moquette Miniature, the model 2CV, in my left hand, which is also holding my smartphone.

« I saw you earlier, Alan, taking pictures of your model Deux-Chevaux in the square. You are photographeur ? »

« Pas vraiment, Philippe, un simple amateur. And I have the real 2CV at home. Her name is Moquette. But today I came here in my GS. I am preparing an article about Georges Clemenceau for an Australian Citroën magazine, and I need some photos... »

« Amateur de Citroën alors! Et l'Australie! Très...exotique! » He laughs again.

Philippe is stockily built and smartly dressed and I am sur-

prised when he tells me later that he was born in 1936; he looks a decade younger than his 85 years. I will learn later that he was chief of the local fire brigade, which perhaps explains his officer-like bearing.

« And Clemenceau! Vous aimez aussi l'histoire locale Alan ? »

« Of course, Philippe. Some years ago I worked with a local historian in Mouchamps about the history of this valley, about the linen-weavers and the vines. And about the Clemenceau burial site at Le Colombier, na-



Philippe Gauducheau, Mouchamps June 2021. Ami de Moquette!



The Mouchamps town council plants a tree for each child in the commune during the year following their birth

A Day with Edna May the GSA

turellement. Perhaps you knew my ami historien ? The late Marcel Guintard ? »

Philippe's smile broadens.

« But of course! Marcel! Bien sûr! We were at school together. Born the same year as me. He is sadly missed you know. We did not share the same politics, but with Marcel, friendship was always more important than political leanings... »

Then he adds:

« Alan, I must leave in a moment, Françoise, my wife and I will eat with some friends at midi in Les Herbiers. Can you

come to see us next week and I will share with you some stories which I am sure you and your amis des antipodes will find... interesting »

We watch another hirondelle de fenêtre arrival, then Philippe adds:

« My father, who made the gates of this house, was called Constant Gauducheau. He was an artist, a journalist, a photographer, a poet... He was also secretary of the Mairie, the town hall. He died in 1996. If you can come here on the 18th, I will show you some items from the collection he left to me, to my sister and to my elder brother... »

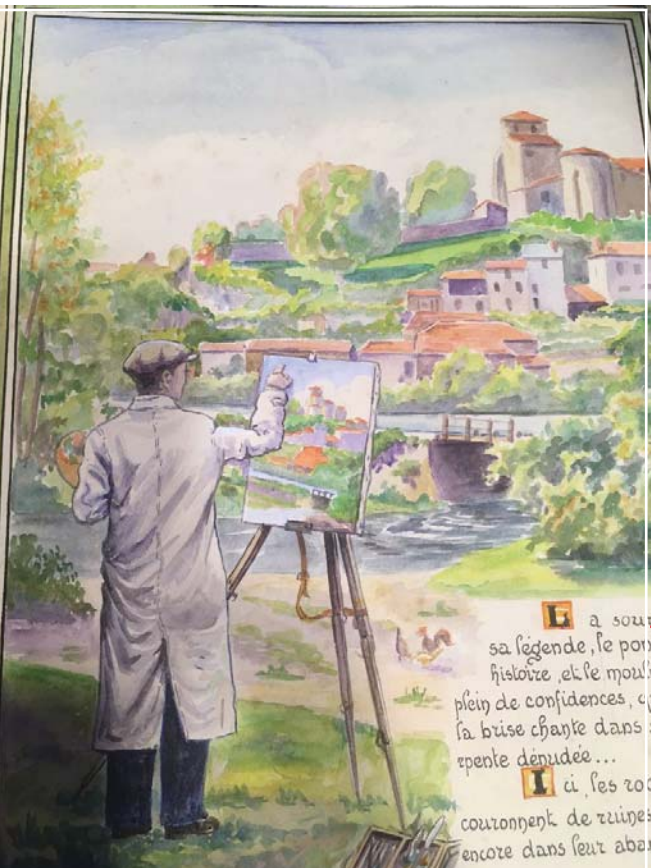
Philippe pauses, then says, soberly

« My brother Jules was three years older than me. He took holy orders and became a teacher. Then later he was the financial officer in a religious order near Montaigu. He died two months ago from Covid 19... Jules was the seventh victim of the maladie in their community »

We stand quietly for some moments.

I express condolences, and we arrange to meet on the follow-

© Portrait of an artist as a young man. Constant Gauducheau, circa 1950. Church of Mouchamps in the background. Reproduced by special permission of the Gauducheau family to CCOCA.



ing Friday, which I notice, when I note the date in my pocket diary, will be the 18th of June.

« Une date particulière! » exclaims Philippe, as he bids me farewell for now.

The sun now casts short midsummer shadows as I walk downhill, between La Poste and La Mairie, to the street along which Loïc had cycled a few minutes earlier, I look over once more to the Monument aux Morts, and to the banner showing Le Général de Gaulle in the village in 1946.

Yes indeed; le dix-huit juin.

To French citizens with any sense of history, the 18th of June of course means Charles de Gaulle and... La BBC in 1940.

A flight of three hirondelles de fenêtre send chirrupping calls towards the Mairie steps as they wheel left, down towards the soft mud of the banks of Le Petit Lay. I know that before I reach GSA Edna May and La Boulangerie, that they will be back with beakfuls of construction material, banking and weaving through the mise-en-appétit aromas of rural French cuisine emanating from the kitchen windows of Le Canotier.

I glance behind me, and see Romuald climbing down from the scaffold for one last Gitane before lunch.

Stay tuned, amis Citroënistes antipodéens, for the col-

ourful concluding part of Two Meetings in Mouchamps, when we will share glimpses into the family photo albums of Constant Gauducheau, as well as a Citroën-themed surprise from Mouchamps in the 1950s...

And where we will discover an unexpected link, dating back to 1936, to a little-known variation on the theme of... La Traction Avant.

Alan Brown 31st October 2021

Alan Brown, October 2021.

LINKS:

For those of you who might

Monuments aux Morts, Mouchamps.



A Day with Edna May the GSA

like a little more of Alan, here are some links to some blogs of his which relate to this article.

- 2CVs, bad poetry, Clemenceau and brant geese here: <http://mogettela2cvcoquette.blogspot.com/2021/01/brande-et-brant-geese-part-one.html>
- More of same here: <http://mogettela2cvcoquette.blogspot.com/2021/01/brande-et-brant-geese-part-two.html>
- Clemenceau, vintage road signs and how not to spell his name, here: <http://mogettela2cvcoquette.blogspot.com/2021/01/clemenceau-typo.html>
- Alan also gave us a link to a blog of his from 2010 of the subject of swifts, swallows and house martins. I have taken the liberty of reproducing that article below.

Hirondelles et Martinets, Paille sur Bouse

One swallow maketh not a summer.

'Il y a hirondelles des fenêtres et hirondelles des cheminées, Alan', says Norbert, in the tone of 'L'Expert'.

Norbert has a ruddy complexion, and has chain-smoked Gitanes sans filtre since de Gaulle pulled out of Algeria. He attempts to mask the odour of tabac brun by using liberal splashes of eau de cologne,

which makes it worse. This deodorizing strategy is known colloquially here as paille sur bouse. See note below.

You'd have to admire his bravery as a smoker: until his retraite at 57 years and six months from the Clinique in Nantes, he had regular reminders of the Gitane effect, because he worked in the radiography department.

'Oui. Effectivement. Deux types d'hirondelles. Ecoute-moi bien et je t'explique ça...'

Norbert L'Expert lights up, and informs me at length, in a tone which teeters between patronization and pédagogie, of the differences between the two.

Having spent seven years on various local government committees with Norbert, and not wishing to brusque his sensibilities, I know that I must settle down behind a sympathetic smile for a 15-minute/2 Gitane cours magistral about the differences and similarities between swallows and house-martins.

I listen, nodding sympathetically, and wait for a lull in the monologue to wind him up by saying that the Normands really stuffed things up linguistically back in 1066 by calling swallows 'Martin-y' [probably because of the Y-shaped forked tail, interjects N].

In the modern French, un Martinet is... a swift.

'Oui, les gens sont toujours



confus par la différence entre les hirondelles et les martinets. Mais ce sont deux espèces complètement différentes...'

You, dear reader, don't have to listen to Norbert: just look at the pic of those long, boomerang wings and you'll recognize swifts every time from now on.

Lexique. 'Paille sur Bouse' A good name for a village? Comme Stratford sur Avon ou Bourton sur l'Eau?

Pas vraiment.

La paille; c'est ça:

La bouse; non, ce n'est pas l'alcool.

C'est le caca des vaches.

[Now that's what I call a blog. I can even smell it. Ed]

Left to right: 1] *Hirondo rustica*/Common Swallow/*Hirondelle des cheminées*. 2] *Delichon Urbicum*/*Hirondelle des fenêtres*/*House Martin*

3] *Apus Apus*/*Martinet Ramoneur*/*Swift*. Trivia Language note; *Apus* from Greek for 'no feet'. *Ramoneur*=chimney sweep. So now you can really confuse them with *hirondelle des cheminées*.



Autumn colours in Mouchamps; GSA Edna May keeps her Vert Tamaris all year... with matching Jersey cloth, carpets, trim... even the headlining on this very early French model. Edna May could well be the earliest surviving GSA...

History of the ZX



The ZX sat above the AX and below the BX in Citroën's range. It lacked the cute factor of the former and the technology of the later and had to share the space with the XM.

30 Years of Understated Brilliance

The Citroën ZX was on a hiding to nothing. It arrived in 1991, thrust into a market vacated by Citroën in 1986. The exceptional GS presented tough boots for the Citroën ZX to fill.

On the face of it, the ZX was the least interesting Citroën in the range. Designed to slot into the gap between the AX and BX, the Citroën ZX also shared showroom space with the XM. This was Citroën's middle-weight fighter. Squaring up to the Ford Escort, Vauxhall Astra and Volkswagen Golf.

To the victor go the spoils of

a segment representing a third of the total European market in 1990. In Britain, around 635,000 Escort and Escort wannabes were sold in 1990 ~ around a third of the market. You can hardly blame Citroën for playing it relatively safe.

Four cars dominated the segment in the UK: Ford Escort/Orion [31%], Vauxhall Astra [16%], Rover 200 [10%] and Volkswagen Golf [8%].

In Citroën's domestic market, the Renault 19 and the dated Peugeot 309 accounted for 50% of sales in the Escort segment. The potential for the ZX was huge.

From A to Z, via B and X

The car that debuted in France on 16 March 1991, and

in export markets from 15 May, was the result of an investment programme totalling F5.8 billion. Testing began on 14 May 1990, under the codename 'Matthias'. He was the patron saint of passive rear-steer. Probably.

Citroën went to great lengths to develop a clear understanding of the target market. The result was a new approach to marketing, Citroën called it 'The Collection', which divided the market into four, creating a model for each group. Shunning convention, Citroën ditched the range hierarchy and presented each model as a distinct flavour.

Boy's Own

There were four options on the ZX menu: Reflex, Avantage, Aura and Volcane. The top lines

from the press material reveal everything about the target audiences:

- Reflex: 'This is a young, often female public which wants modern styling, cheerful, attractive and dynamic looks, a roomy and practical interior, and a lively engine.'
- Avantage: 'This dominant class of customer is that of the classic family with children.'
- Aura: 'This older, mainly male customer particularly looks for a more luxurious family car but also values his individual pleasure.'
- Volcane: 'Usually young, this kind of customer is extremely active and comes from a higher social group.' Using the patented 'Yorkie'

History of the ZX

method, the Citroën ZX Reflex was for girls. The Avantage and Aura were for men. Which left the ZX Volcane for the yuppie who had survived the 1980s with his wallet and the bridge of his nose intact.

'With the Reflex and the Volcane the Citroën ZX will satisfy customers driven primarily by image and appearance considerations, whilst with the Avantage and Aura, the Citroën ZX will appeal to buyers who are primarily motivated by practical and functional considerations,' said Pierre Boisjoly, managing director of Citroën UK.

The claim that Citroën had ditched the range hierarchy was, in part, a bit of marketing nonsense. A quick look at the price and respective spec of each model confirms that the Reflex was the entry-level ZX. At launch, it cost £8,680, while the Avantage would set you

back £9,710. The Aura weighed in at £11,140, leaving the Volcane as the priciest Citroën ZX [£12,670].

The Reflex, Flex, Flex, Flex, Flex, Flex

The table confirms the key selling points of each Citroën ZX at launch.

There were four petrol engines, although the 1.1-litre unit wasn't offered in the UK. This left the Reflex and Avantage to be powered by a 1.4-litre carburettor engine [fuel injection was to follow]. The Aura used the same 1.6-litre engine as the Peugeot 205 GTI, while the Volcane used a 1.9-litre unit based on the engine found in the Citroën BX GTi, Peugeot 309 GTi and 205 GTi.

Only the Volcane could hit 97kph/60mph in under 10 seconds, completing the meaningless sprint in 7.8 seconds. All versions could hit speeds in excess

REFLEX	AVANTAGE	AURA	VOLCANE
	Changes from Reflex	Changes from Avantage	Changes from Aura
Height adjustable steering wheel	Sliding, split rear seat	Electric front windows	Power steering
Height adjustable front belts	Wide side mouldings	Electric passenger mirror	Alloy wheels
Colour co-ordinated bumpers	Tachometer	Two-tone bumpers	Height adjustable driver's seat with side support adjustment
Coachline	Rear wash/wipe	Remote control central locking	Body coloured bumpers, mirrors and side mouldings
Pinstriping on upholstery, dashboard and door panels	Rear head restraints	Driver's seat lumbar adjustment	



While the Volcane and the later 16V versions were the flagships of the range the Furio combined the go-faster looks of the former, without the insurance price tag. Described in this article as the 'junior hot hatch for younger viewers'. Image: www.autoevolution.com

of 160kph/100mph, with the Volcane running out of steam at 204kph/127mph. Citroën didn't have a great pedigree in the hot hatch segment, although the success of the Citroën ZX Rallye Raid sprinkled some motorsport dust over the range. Not that the regular ZX would pass a DNA test when linking it to the 1991 Paris-Dakar winner.

Initial reviews were extremely positive. Once beyond the complaints that it wasn't a 'real

Citroën', road testers were full of praise for the ZX. In reviewing the car for Top Gear, a young Jeremy Clarkson, still speaking 'BBC English', was hugely complimentary.

'Probably the best chassis you can get in a small car,' he gushed, before praising Citroën for producing 'one of the best interiors they've ever done.' He labelled the suspension 'faultless.' Still want that complex Hydropneumatic suspension? The majority of buyers in this market didn't.

Friends Reunited

Writing for 'Car' magazine, Brett Fraser called the styling 'a bit of a let-down', claiming that it looked like a cross between a Renault 21, Fiat Tipo and a Yugo Sana. As if that's a bad thing...

History of the ZX



The Citroën zx Volcane td was a diesel hot hatch before the diesel hot hatch was a thing. Image: www.classicand-sportscar.com

He named the ZX Aura as the pick of the range, arguing that it offered most of the benefits of the Volcane, albeit without the 'excellent' seats and go-faster addenda of the sporty model. As an introduction to the world of junior hot hatches, a ZX Aura 1.6i is up there with the Ford Focus 1.6 Zetec.

Colin Goodwin ran a Citroën ZX Reflex 1.4 for six months. A rarity among motoring journalists, Goodwin said he was 'the only chap in the office not to have a passion for Citroëns'. This left him free to deliver an

objective opinion of the Citroën ZX, which makes his review even more credible.

In his final report, Goodwin said: 'I always found it a pleasure to get back into the ZX, no matter what I'd driven in its absence. Even after a few days charging around in mid-engined thrusters I was glad to be reunited with the Citroën.'

'And before you suggest I have a torch shone in my ear, to check whether anyone is at home, I'd like to point out that it's very nice to not have to worry too much about radar traps and driving bans, while still enjoying a car with a spirited chassis and sweet engine.'

A sentence in the final paragraph was even more revealing:



The criminally underrated and oft-forgotten ZX 16V was a credible alternative to the Golf GTi.

'There's still no car in the ZX's class that can beat it for ride and handling'.

Bringing Up the Rear

Key to this was the suspension. Macpherson struts at the front, with the Volcane enjoying a stiffer set-up. Semi-independent suspension with trailing arms at the back. All versions benefited from Citroën's passive rear-wheel steering. The rear axle design allowed the rear wheels to steer slightly in the same direction as the front wheels.

Corner hard, and you'll feel the rear of the ZX following the front like a dog chasing a tail. ZX drivers, particularly those behind the wheel of a sporty variant, could enjoy/endure some classic

lift-off oversteer moments.

Only the most partisan of ZX fans would describe the car as beautiful. A touch of elegance in profile, neat at the front, with a mildly dumpy back end, perhaps? Bertone co-designed the Citroën ZX with chief designer Art Blakeslee and his staff. He also designed the Citroën Xsara, which replaced the ZX in 1997.

The three-door ZX arrived in 1992 to inject the range with some much-needed flair. In profile, the three-door looks good, if not better, than its contemporary rivals. The kink in the shoulder line at the B-pillar is a particular highlight, while the wheelarch extensions of the ZX 16V give the car some added muscle.

History of the ZX



The Kinks

On the inside, the Citroën ZX felt as robust as the Volkswagen Golf and a league above the Ford Escort. Citroën worked hard to make even the entry-level model feel special, garnishing the upholstery, dashboard and door panels of the Reflex with coloured pinstripes. It was far from poverty-spec.

Unfortunately, the Reflex missed out on the sliding rear bench. This allowed the seats to slide backwards or forwards, giving the ZX owner the choice of maximum rear legroom or a larger boot. The seats could even be reclined from vertical to 30-degrees.

A new heating and ventila-

tion system was hardly headline news, but the three-zone configuration was an underrated feature. Using the right setting, the air entering the cabin could be split into a hot zone at foot level, a tepid zone along the side windows to prevent misting, and a cool upper face-level zone.

The security-coded stereo radio/cassette was unique to the Citroën ZX and featured a flap to prevent dust from entering the cassette section. In a victory for common sense [and cost saving], the driver's door mirror featured manual adjustment, while the passenger side could be adjusted via a button next to the ignition lock.

Other neat details included a



Image: www.favcars.com

rear washer jet housed in the rear spoiler to prevent freezing, the chance to close the windows and sunroof after the ignition had been turned off, and a wiper blade that parked on a heated section of the rear window to ensure rapid release in a frost

A Fukang Four-Door ZX?

None of this was going to appease Citroën purists. Many viewed the ZX as an affront to the history of the French firm. A car not fit to wear the badge. An example of where it all went wrong for the company famous for the Traction Avant, 2CV, DS, SM, CX and GS.

The opposing view is that the Citroën ZX was the right car at the right time. Citroën built

nearly 1.9 million GS units over a 16-year period. Around 1.45 million DS and ID cars in 20 years. Total production of the Citroën ZX topped 2.1 million in a shorter period of time. A loyal, enthusiastic but relatively small audience is great, but in order to survive, manufacturers need to sell volume cars in huge numbers. Just ask Saab.

The ZX even spawned a four-door saloon variant for the Chinese market. Stick that in your Fukang purist pipe and smoke it.

Following the introduction of new engines, a facelift and practical ZX estate arrived in the mid 90s ~ the latter remains a common sight on the roads of France. It also wasn't long before Citroën unleashed a se-

History of the ZX

ries of special editions. Pzazz, Flash, Neon, Dimension, Elation, Temptation and, bizarrely, the Memphis, to name just a few. The latter was promoted alongside an Elvis impersonator. You just couldn't help falling in love with it...

In truth, the special editions were little more than understudies to the stars of the ZX range. The Citroën ZX Volcane TD was a diesel hot hatch before the diesel hot hatch was a thing. The criminally underrated and oft-forgotten ZX 16V was a credible alternative to the Golf GTi. And the ZX Furio was a junior hot hatch for younger viewers.

Into the Abyss

The Citroën ZX's spiral into the abyss was swift and sudden. Ushered out of the door without fanfare, values dropped like a stone, with many owners choosing to use and abuse the cars like cheap runabouts. Electrical and trim issues were left unfixed, so it wasn't long before many examples became uneconomical to repair. Without the love of Citroën purists, the ZX was doomed from the moment it was replaced by the Xsara.

Speak to an owner of a good Citroën ZX and he'll regale you with stories of total reliability, low running costs and superb ride comfort. Owners of tatty and neglected cars will be less

enthusiastic, but the negatives are far outweighed by the positives. Non-turbocharged diesel versions were sluggish, but boy they were cheap to run.

A three-door is likely to be the most troublesome. Recalling his days at Carweek, Hilton Holloway said that the magazine received 'lots of complaints about the Spanish-built three-door ZX'. Good luck finding a three-door ZX in 2021.

The last French Car Critical list update revealed a total of 842 examples on the road and a further 2,046 listed as SORN. Perhaps more telling is the fact that it's rare to see Citroën ZX

for sale on Auto Trader, Car & Classic or eBay.

Citroën ZX: Understated and Underrated

It's great to see that the ZX is listed on the Practical Classics price guide. The mag values the car between £250 for a rough one to £2,000 for a concours example. There's always a good selection of cars for sale on Leboncoin. Good examples of

the Volcane and 16V fetch good money in France.

The Citroën ZX is unlikely to get the recognition it deserves in its 30th anniversary year. It may not have been fashionable. It might not be a Citroën in the purist sense. And it was upstaged by the platform-sharing and achingly attractive Peugeot 306. The ZX just lacked a little... Pzazz.

The counter argument is that the Citroën ZX was good enough to outclass its contemporary rivals. Short of eccentricity and technological innovation, but capable, credible and relevant. That's the brilliance of

the Citroën ZX. An understated and underrated gem. Buy one before it's too late.

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While the ZX estate offered almost 1.7m of load space [with the rear seat folded] that sail board is never going to fit... no matter how he struggles with it. Image: www.autoevolution.com



While Gavin, the author, describes the Peugeot 306 as 'achingly attractive', your Editor takes the view that it is attractive, but very derivative of the 205. Image: www.car-info.com



Hatchback Convention

Citroën has joined the fiercely-fought family hatchback fray with its conventional ZX. But does it compare with established rivals from Rover, Ford, Renault and Fiat?

The perfect car has yet to be invented. Each new model [with a few notable exceptions] advances the art a stage closer to that elusive perfection, with ever-higher standards making it

continually harder for manufacturers to improve their products over rival offerings. But even the most impressive newcomers can usually be relied on to fall short in one or another crucial area. Their designers are only human, after all.

The competition is probably fiercer in the medium hatchback sector than in any other. And there are rich pickings for the manufacturer that gets its

new car absolutely right. So, while the smart Rover 200-Series has remained our most-admired family car for the way it brings a taste of the upper-crust to the mainstream market, it is under constant attack from rivals eager to play on its [few] weaknesses.

Now, the redoubtable Rover has an all-new adversary ~ one from a manufacturer absent from the Escort-sized fam-

ily hatchback sector for the past eight years. Citroën has a lot at stake with its new ZX, for success in this sector is the key to the company's long-term profitability. This is why the newcomer is the least avant-garde, most conventional Citroën for over half a century, the better to attract buyers from other marques who might be put off by up-front unconventionality.

So there's no hydropneumatic suspension, no dare-to-be-different styling, not even a single-spoke steering wheel. Instead the four ZX models are clothed in a smooth, sober suit but their Citroën identity remains distinctive. The nose and the shapes of the wheel arches have strong overtones of the bigger BX, and the front is similar to that of the range-topping XM.

In a bold and welcome move, those four versions are known not by meaningless initials but by names. Least expensive is the cheerful Reflex [a sort of ZX Popular], dearest is the bespoiled Volcane [a sort of ZX GTi]. In between come the Avantage, with the base model's 1.4-litre engine but lots of equipment, and the Aura with yet more goodies and a 1.6-litre motor. It's the Avantage, keenly priced at just £9,700, that we test here.

Its engine delivers a useful 56.0kW/75bhp and, like all



Hatchback Convention

FIAT TIPO 1.6 DGT SX

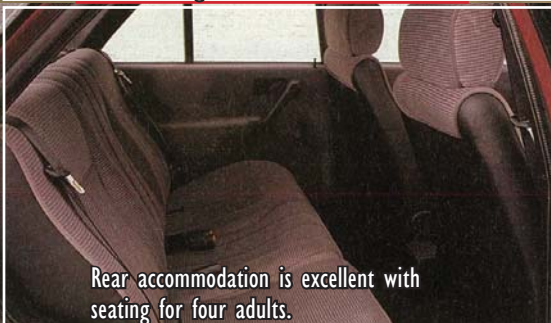
£10,810



Tipo scores highly on versatility but dynamics are good, too.



Solid-state instruments are not favoured; switchgear fiddly.



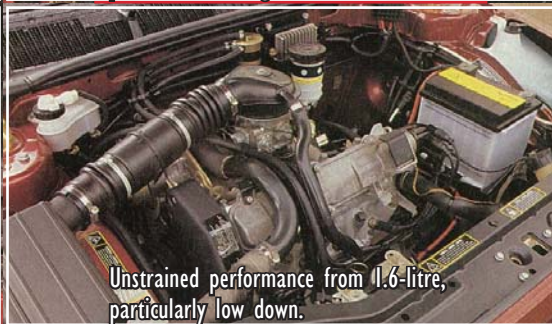
Rear accommodation is excellent with seating for four adults.



Despite seat height adjustment, driving position is too high.



Boot is deep and square; seat back and base split 60/40.



Unstrained performance from 1.6-litre, particularly low down.

ZXs, the Avantage features a clever rear suspension which allows the rear wheels to steer a small amount in the same direction as the front wheels when the car rounds a bend. This is a passive system, in that the wheel movement results from controlled distortion of the sus-

pension arms' mounting bushes under cornering forces rather than powered movement of a mechanical linkage.

The ZX's other talking point is its adjustable rear seat, fitted to all versions bar the Reflex. It allows you to alter the compromise between rear pas-

FORD ESCORT 1.4 LX

£10,125



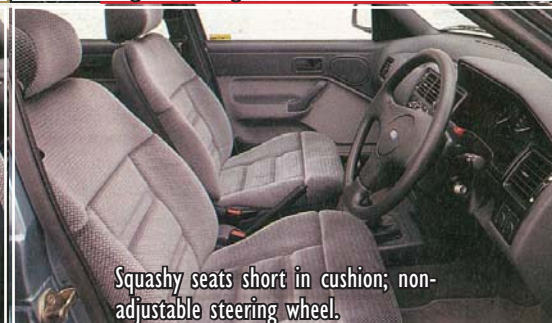
On the road, Escort is outclassed by other four in most respects.



Strong point is clear dials and solid, logical switchgear.



Rear legroom lost to big boot, interior trim looks cheap.



Squashy seats short in cushion; non-adjustable steering wheel.



Boot is large but suspension intrudes; seat back splits 60/40.



Recesses on inside of hatch keep hands clean when closing.

senger space and luggage capacity, but the idea is not without its snags. However, you won't find anything quite like it in the Citroën's rivals. We've selected four of them for this test, covering most of the European opposition except the Volkswagen Golf and the Vauxhall Astra,

both of which are to be replaced by the end of the year. Peugeot's 309 is an absentee, too; its replacement will use the same floorpan as the new ZX.

This, then, is how the rivals line up. Renault's 19 GTS-X sports colourful trim, an electric sunroof and a racy steering

Hatchback Convention

RENAULT 19 GTS-X

£9,365

ROVER 214 S

£10,212



Renault has agile and responsive chassis; ride is firm but good.



Switchgear is sensible, wheel excellent; fascia top too shiny.



Rover's handling is surefooted but ride can be caught out.



Excellent driving environment, quality fascia and switchgear.



Interior is gloomy and lacking in rear accommodation.



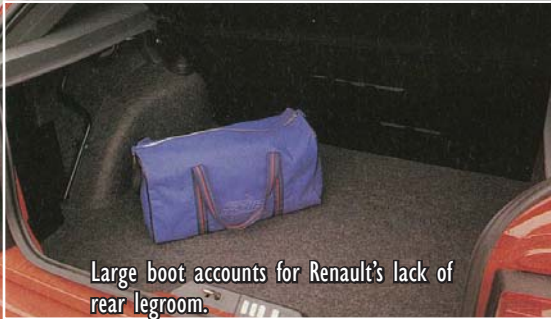
Good driving position from height-adjustable seat; gaudy fabric.



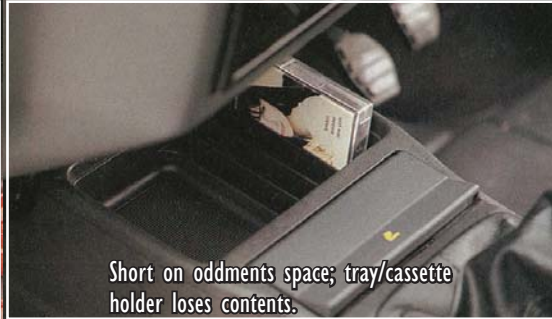
Roomy rear will seat three adults; seatbelts tuck neatly away.



Seats very supportive; low dashboard offers clear view forward.



Large boot accounts for Renault's lack of rear legroom.



Short on oddments space; tray/cassette holder loses contents.



Deep boot spoilt by intruding suspension; seatback only splits.



Ventilation includes integrated side window demisters.

wheel to distance it from the lowlier GTS, yet still undercuts the other four cars with a price of just £9,365. Ford's Escort 1.4 LX is a lot more expensive at £10,125 but, like the ZX, is laden with goodies: after half a year's sales, does it now have the charisma so lacking at its launch?

Rover's 200 range has been extended downwards with the arrival of the single-cam, carburettor-fed 214 S, which loses the dark grey lower side panels of, and 19bhp, to the 16-valve 214 Si. It's also £460 cheaper, costing £10,212 in five-door form ~ though given the paucity

of standard equipment, you'd hardly call the Rover a bargain. Our final contender is Fiat's Tipo, tested here in £10,810 1.6 DGT SX form with lashings of goodies. We'd hoped to test a simple 1.4 DGT at £9,477, or even the 1.6 version at a still-competitive £9,987, but neither

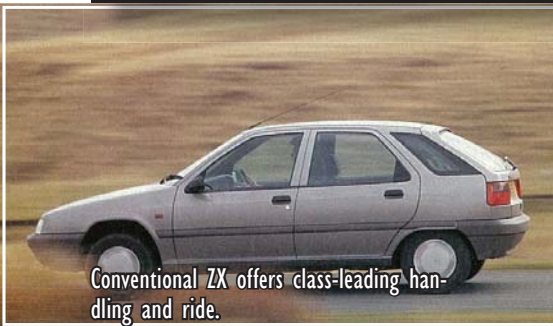
was available in time for our test.

PERFORMANCE AND ECONOMY					
Citroën	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Fiat	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Renault	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Rover	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Ford	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗

Hatchback Convention

CITROËN ZX AVANTAGE

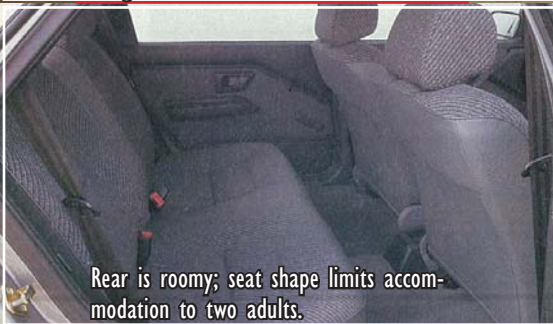
£9,700 [APPROX]



Conventional ZX offers class-leading handling and ride.



Switchgear is logical and fascia uncluttered; unique stereo.



Rear is roomy; seat shape limits accommodation to two adults.



Driver's seat generally good but spoilt by flat cushion.



Boot space can be enlarged by quirky sliding seat arrangement.



Rear seat adjusts fore/aft; split seatback moves on ratchet.

Here's a promising start for Citroën's newcomer. Not only does it feel the liveliest on the road and backs this up with on-paper figures very close to the bigger-engined Tipo's, but it also proves the most frugal on fuel. We've always liked the 1.4-litre TU engine, which

in slightly higher-powered form propels the likes of the AX GT and Peugeot 205 XS to such good effect, and its effervescent character remains intact in the ZX. The engine pulls strongly from low speeds, yet it spins smoothly and doesn't protest if you work it hard through the

gears.

The same is true of the Fiat, though its engine does have the advantage of a couple of hundred extra cubic centimetres of cylinder capacity. This helps make it the most relaxed performer of the five cars, with notably the best pull from low engine speeds, but the test car did suffer from a spate of flat spots and hesitations on part-throttle. As we've not encountered this on any other 1.6-litre Tipo, we'll accept that this was a fault peculiar to the test car.

If bald figures told all, the Renault would outscore both the ZX and the Tipo despite its curiously low gear ratios. But it is spoilt by a stodgy, dead throttle response which means you have to squeeze the pedal hard before anything useful happens. It's a shame, because the Renault is fast, lively, smooth and willing once you've learnt how to bring the best out of it.

Until you do, you'd swear the Rover was livelier. For it makes up for its relatively leisurely pace with a crisp throttle response at medium speeds and above, plus fine mechanical smoothness and more urgency in the higher gears than you might expect. Lacklustre pull at low speeds remains its weak point, however, just as it is in the similarly-engined Metros.

With these four cars the Es-

cort cannot compete. In isolation its engine feels quite gutsy, and provided you don't venture beyond 4500rpm or so you could almost believe it's acceptable. But whereas its rivals relish a workout, the Ford plays the wimp once it's asked to take some exercise. At high revs its engine loses all pretence of refinement and emits a fearful din which is not just heard, but felt ~ through the seat, the pedals, the gear lever, everywhere. Nor, in truth, is its low-down pull much good, for it trails even the Rover here.

Driving the other four cars briskly is fun; in the Escort it's an unrewarding chore. None of the cars is particularly quiet at speed, but at least the top four performers make a reasonably pleasant noise [albeit rather tinny in the Citroën's case]. Nor can the Ford redeem itself at the petrol pumps, for it's the thirstiest of the quintet. And its gearchange completes a dismal dynamic picture, thanks to a springy, sharp-edged action which loses its way in the ill-defined gearchange gate much too easily. All of the other cars shift gears sweetly, but the lightest, fastest 'change is in the Citroën.

A small plus point for the Ford is its automatic choke. However, the other cars' manual devices are easy to use.

Hatchback Convention

HANDLING AND RIDE					
Citroën	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fiat	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Renault	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Rover	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Ford	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗

Impressive as the Citroën's performance is, it's the handling, roadholding, ride and steering that truly set it apart from the rest. In fact the ZX is so good in these respects that at times we were left wondering as to whether there is any more room for improvement. Certainly there is no car currently on the market for under £14,000 that so successfully combines such tight, incisive handling with the beautifully compliant ride served up by the ZX.

This is highlighted when swapping from a car like the Escort back to the Citroën. Drive the Ford over a poorly made road and you soon know about it, with bangs and thumps from the suspension and seats relaying every little pock-mark that the car comes across. But drive the ZX over the same road and it's as if a miracle has taken place. Other than the odd rumble and gentle thump over the really nasty stuff, the Citroën smooths away the ruts as well as the Escort doesn't. The Tipo is next best with the Renault close behind, both cars managing to keep their occupants rea-

sonably distanced from whatever surprises the tarmac may have in store.

Disappointing is the Rover which, in this high standard of company, surprisingly fails on occasions to keep poorer road surfaces at bay. Its suspension is less tolerant of ruts and cracks and this results in a firmer, less comfortable ride than is on offer in either of the two French cars or the Italian.

The Rover does, however, go around corners very well. Throw it into a bend and the 214 S is never anything but surefooted and faithful, always behaving exactly as you think and hope it might do. Eventually it will understeer but generally the level of grip is far beyond what the typical 214 S owner expects. It's all the better, once on the move, for not having power steering, though at parking speeds you may wish you'd forked out the extra money.

There is no such dilemma with the Tipo which, in DGT SX guise, boasts power steering as standard. And what an excellent system it is. Sharp and precise, it has just enough weight behind it not to feel detached on the move but all the assistance you need when wiggling in and out of a tight spot in the local high street. Point the Tipo through an awkward sequence of bends and, like the Rover, it is a true and faithful friend except

that it goes about its business with slightly more gusto. It's an entertaining car, the Tipo, with sharp responses and a communicative chassis.

But this is surpassed by the Renault, which has handling nearly as responsive as that of the beautifully agile ZX. Its steering, though not light, is pin-sharp, it rolls little, even when cornering hard, and the feedback through the seats and wheel rim are second to none. Underneath the GTS-X's relatively humble clothes is the same basic chassis used by the superb 16V R19, and it's not that far from the surface.

About the Escort there is little new to say. The 1.4 LX has gained an anti-roll bar since we last gave it the full workout but other than reducing the copious amount of roll which the previous car suffered from, the story remains much the same. Though the Ford can be persuaded to go round corners fairly quickly, it does so with such a lack of finesse, such woodenness, that it is virtually impossible to do this well. You end up taking bends in a series of untidy lurches, relying solely on the reasonable amount of grip on offer from the tyres. It's sad, this, because there was a time when driving an Escort could be fun.

If the Ford's brakes were good it would make up at least some ground but even here the

Escort fails to offer the driver anything other than a means of stopping the car. Feel through the pedal is non-existent and the first couple of inches of pedal travel feel mushy. Compared with the sharp, responsive brakes of the Citroën and Rover, or even those of the Fiat and Renault which are entirely acceptable, they leave a lot to be desired.

BEHIND THE WHEEL					
Citroën	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Rover	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Renault	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Ford	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Fiat	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗

None of these cars is perfect here, but the Citroën comes close. Its two main minus points ~ the rather flat cushion of the otherwise supportive, well-shaped seat, and curiously angled electric window switches whose directional function is far from obvious ~ are outweighed by the essential rightness elsewhere.

Its switchgear is situated logically either side of the instrument panel, whose instruments maintain one, small, vestige of Citroën tradition: they are lit whenever the ignition is on. And within the clean, uncluttered lines of the fascia is a unique-to-ZX stereo radio/cassette player of a size that won't fit anything else. That should deter would-be larcenists, especially

Hatchback Convention

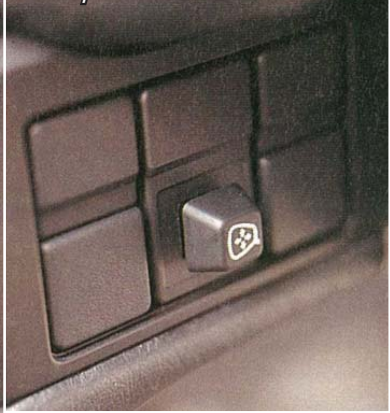


Cover partly conceals ZX's specially developed Blaupunkt stereo radio/cassette

as it's security-coded, too. A hinged flap covers the top half of the radio's front panel, leaving the most-used functions visible. Should the system's sound quality not please, a standard-size unit can be fitted via a special adaptor. However, the Blaupunkt-sourced system's sound should satisfy most ears.

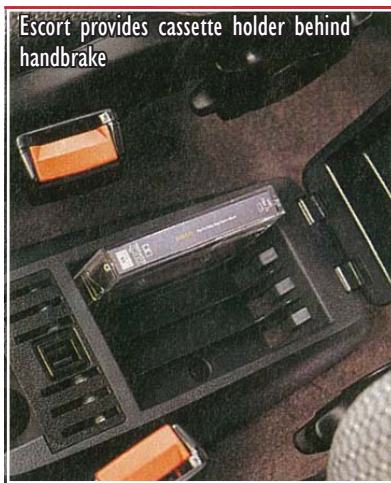
As with all the cars except

ZX offside mirror electric, nearside adjusts manually



the Escort, the steering wheel is adjustable for height. It's a good wheel to hold, too, with a thick, padded rim ~ and two spokes! And, thanks in part to a commanding driving position, it's easy to see out of the ZX. The shallow rear window looks as though it might restrict rear vision, but in practice there's no problem. And although it can't sweep as far into the corners of the windscreen as a pair of conventional wipers, the ZX's single windscreen wiper doesn't miss important areas.

We've always praised the Rover's driving environment, and the 214 S changes little. There's an unusually clear view forward over a very low dashboard, and you sit on an up-market-feeling seat in a driving position which suits most people well. The Rover's cabin is the lightest and airiest of all, but



Escort provides cassette holder behind handbrake

we're not so keen on the minor switchgear mounted below the instruments where it is partly obscured by the steering wheel.

A rather gloomy ambience, and bad reflections in the windscreen from the top of the facia, stack up against the Renault. Otherwise it's good news for the driver. It has a very comfortable seat [helped by the optional height and lumbar adjustment], a fine driving position and a racy, good-to-hold steering wheel. The switchgear is convenient, too, and rearward vision is better than you'd expect from a car with such thick rear pillars.

That non-adjustable steering wheel helps lose the Ford a point here, for the wheel's position doesn't suit everyone. Nor is the squasy seat as supportive as it could be. But with its well laid-out facia, neat instruments [which now include a rev counter], an effective RDS radio and a clear and commanding view out through a large glass area the Ford compensates well for its shortcomings.

Most flawed here is the Tipo. You sit too high, even with the seat-height adjustment [specific to the SX] at its lowest. The solid-state instruments ~ a digital speedometer with bar graphs for the other gauges ~ are less efficient at imparting information than conventional designs, and the wiper stalk

is overly-complicated to use. The wiper operation is poor, too: at the standard speed, they sweep quickly in one direction and then pause infuriatingly before returning. Meanwhile the screen gets ever wetter.

All five cars have satisfactory heaters. The Rover's advantage of an independent fresh-air supply to the facia vents is offset by the wind noise they transmit, but it is the only car with a recirculation setting to exclude traffic fumes while warming the cabin.

ACCOMMODATION

Fiat	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Citroën	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Rover	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Ford	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Renault	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗

The debate in this section centred around the Citroën's new-fangled rear-seat arrangement. The seat slides forward to give an extra foot of boot space at the expense of rear legroom. The idea is a good one, but it has two major failings. First, it is too fussy. A tin flap [which is bound to get lost or broken] covers the space created below the seat when it is moved forward and two fabric flaps have to be fitted to the top of the rear seat back to hide boot contents. Second, and the bigger problem, is that the rear seat does not fold fully. While the seat back splits 60/40 and

Hatchback Convention



Renault uses blue body trim to brighten up 19's appearance.
Removable rear seat gives Renault massive load space
Tipo driver's seat has fore/aft and height adjustment
Citroën trademark is use of single wind-screen wiper

each section folds down on a ratchet, they lie on the seat base and create a raised loading platform, thus limiting the luggage area. The boot is shallow but wide and long and has no bare metal surfaces, but an oddly placed wheel brace could scratch shifting luggage.

Citroën's newcomer is a lot bigger inside than it looks and offers generous passenger accommodation with ample headroom and legroom. Unfortunately, a protruding mound in the centre of the rear seat cushion limits the rear accommodation to two adults.

The Tipo excels in this sec-

tion. Its boxy shape is practical and versatile, giving masses of room inside for people and luggage. The split/fold rear seat base and back can seat three adults comfortably or any combination of people and luggage. A height-adjustable driver's seat and steering wheel are an added bonus, but front headroom is poor for tall drivers. The boot is reasonably deep and square with a low sill for easy loading.

A deep windscreen and low fascia make the Rover feel a little enclosed in the front footwells, but the rear is very roomy and will seat three. The steering wheel is adjustable but the

seat has fore/aft adjustment only. The seat back splits but the base does not, which means you cannot carry a rear passenger and extend the luggage room to maximum advantage. However, with the seat folded, the loading area is flat and large. The boot is deep but the rear suspension intrudes.

Ford's wide bodyshell makes the Escort spacious in the front, with good legroom and headroom. But Ford missed a trick and has lost rear headroom by not curving the roof-lining up at the back as has been done with the rest of the group. Rear legroom is merely adequate and a high chassis tunnel limits the rear seat to two adults. The rear seat back splits but the base folds forward in one piece. The boot is long, but rear suspension turrets jut into the space and a sloping rear window restricts height.

The Renault is the least commodious of the group, especially in the back, and its sombre interior does it no favours. But one advantage is the facility to remove the rear seat entirely and create a huge luggage space in the back. The boot is large, which explains the lack of rear legroom.

On oddments space the Escort is the clear winner, with an assortment of useful fascia recesses, good-size door pockets and deep fascia shelf. The Rover

come's in second with its rubber fascia mat and coin box, but use of the door pockets is restricted by the overhanging door mouldings. The Citroën has small, streamlined door pockets which won't even hold a full-size road atlas. It has a recess below the radio but this narrows as it goes back, limiting its use. The smooth fascia top will not hold anything. Tipo and Renault are both very short of oddments space with narrow door bins and shallow trays forward of the gearlever.

QUALITY AND EQUIPMENT

Citroën	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rover	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Ford	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Fiat	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Renault	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗

No, the Citroën isn't as well made as the Rover, but it comes the closest out of these cars and offers a lot more standard equipment. For example, where the ZX has electric windows, an electric sunroof, remote central locking and an electric passenger door mirror [manual on the driver's side], the 214 S can muster nothing. Such niceties aren't even available from the options list on the entry-level Rover, and this earns it a black mark.

If the ZX isn't quite as well-crafted as the 214 it is down to minor details, such as the tactile feeling of solidity you get when operating the column stalks or

Hatchback Convention

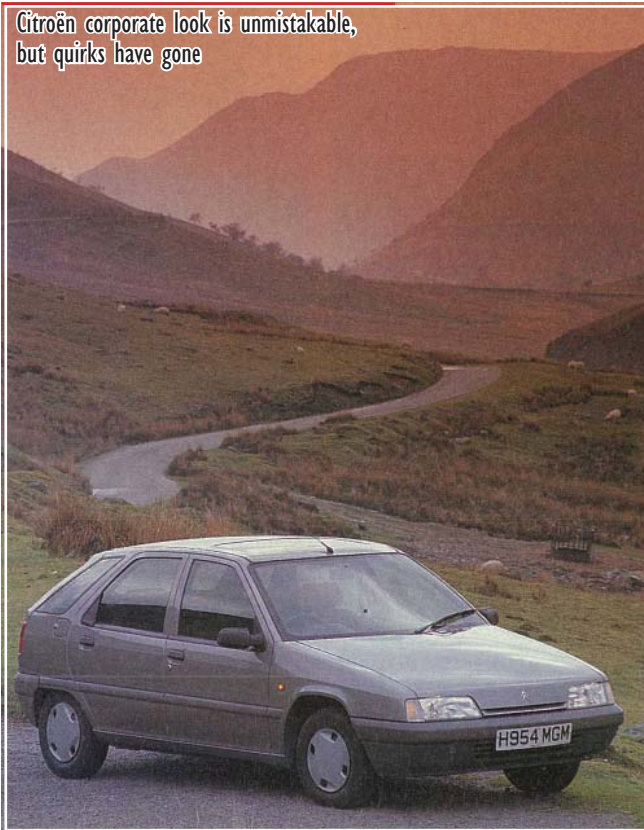
pulling on a door handle. But in the main, the ZX is very well put together. Inside and out, it feels a whole lot classier and built to a higher standard than its bigger, more expensive BX cousin. In fact, it feels far closer to the XM from this point of view.

Both the Rover and the Citroën get stereo radio/cassettes as standard but the difference in quality of the systems is important. The ZX's stereo was specifically developed by Blaupunkt to suit the car and it shows in both ease of use and quality. The Rover, on the other hand, makes do with a Philips item which is adequate but no more.

The Rover and Citroën are head and shoulders above the others in this section, though the Ford is also a well-made car. Its trouble is that it doesn't feel this way. The plastics used for the majority of the interior feel cheap and flimsy, even if they aren't, and the seat covers are of a similarly unappealing texture. What the Ford is not lacking is standard equipment. With its electric front windows and door mirrors, central locking, alarm and RDS stereo radio/cassette, the Escort LX isn't exactly wanting for goodies.

Nor is the Tipo. But the Fiat isn't quite as well built as the Ford, hence we place it below. It's not a poorly constructed car

Citroën corporate look is unmistakable, but quirks have gone



in the way that Fiats used to be, but it does not approach the outstanding quality of build of the Rover and Citroën. In terms of standard goodies the Tipo ~ in expensive SX guise ~ is best of the lot, but this fails to make up for the fact that it feels cheap and tinny inside compared with the Rover or Citroën.

The Renault comes a poor last here. It's not poorly built but feels cheap and dingy inside, owing mainly to its dark, uninspiring plastic fascia. The seat

covers are almost too gaudy and the switchgear lacks solidity. The Renault isn't particularly well specified in GTS-X guise ~ an electric sunroof [but no electric windows], adjustable steering wheel and a stereo radio/cassette are about it ~ though the optional electrics pack, which adds central locking and electric windows for an extra £385, seems worthwhile.

SERVICING AND COSTS

Citroën	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Rover	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Renault	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Fiat	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Ford	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗

Though the ZX is still an unknown quantity as far as long-term servicing and reliability are concerned, there is no reason to assume that it will be any different from any other 1.4-litre Citroën. And our experience is that these are about as cheap to keep on the road as they come.

Purely in terms of labour charges, according to Citroën the ZX Avantage will cost around £150 during the first 30,000 miles, which is cheap. Assuming that nothing extraordinary goes wrong and, in theory, only the standard parts need replacing, the ZX should cost less than £300 to maintain during the first three years, which is significantly cheaper than the rest of the group. On

top of this, the Citroën has excellent fuel economy, low insurance costs and, according to our expert, is likely to hold its value well on the secondhand market.

Of the rest, the Rover should be the next simplest [and cheapest] to own and run. Thanks to the design of the K-Series engine, maintenance costs should be low ~ around £400 during the first three years ~ but it's also the second cheapest to insure and holds its value well as a used car.

Choosing between the Renault, Ford and Fiat is tricky as they all appear to cost a similar amount. The Ford should be cheaper than it is to service but, with eight hours of regular service work required over the first three years [that's nearly three hours more than the Citroën and Rover], it can't possibly hope to compete. It's also expensive to buy in the first place and isn't particularly frugal on fuel.

The Renault is the next most expensive in the service bay with 7.5 hours of work needed. But it makes up for this by being exceptionally good value to purchase in the first place. The Fiat is less expensive to service [costing around £460 during the first 30,000 miles] but it is more expensive than the others to insure and doesn't hold its value well.

Hatchback Convention

DEPRECIATION

Rover	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Citroën	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Ford	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Renault	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Fiat	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗

Citroën's AX and XM values have been disappointments compared with the early success of the BX models. But now no used Citroëns are depreciation beaters. The ZX may well be the car to change this, however, and its all-round competence should ensure low early depreciation. Whether public acceptance will be strong enough to displace the Rover 214 as the lowest depreciator in its class is doubtful.

The Rover will lose only around 30% of its value in the first 12 months, so the Citroën has a tough job on its hands. The Rover 'image' is in a different league from its competitors and this alone will keep its value secure. Novelty value may ensure that the first used examples of the ZX 1.4 will make high prices, but initial depreciation will probably settle down somewhere between 30 and 35% with long-term prospects being dependent on reliability and durability.

Citroën will probably be delighted if this level of early depreciation can be maintained, if only because it will comfortably better the figures of the

new Escort. Currently the Ford is losing around 40% in its first year, but the strength of Escort lies in its longterm saleability. In five years it will be the equal of any in the group.

Renault's 19 has little image and used ones are slow starters. Oversupply has also been a problem and many H-plate cars are unsold in the trade. This erratic performance ensures that early depreciation is no better than average at around 40% +, and age will do nothing for their values. The Tipo, once more, suffers because it is a Fiat and there is still a widespread mistrust of used Italian cars in the UK. This negative image and reputation is the prime cause of its 48% first-year depreciation, and this gets progressively worse.

SECURITY

Ford	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Rover	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Renault	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Fiat	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Citroën	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

The Citroën may be class-leading in several areas in this test, but security isn't one of them. To say our tame thief was stupefied by the ease with which he gained entry to the ZX would be an understatement.

The bald facts are these: three seconds to break in via the door, five seconds to undo

PERFORMANCE

	CITROËN	ROVER	FIAT	RENAULT	FORD
MAX IN TOP [KPH]	167	159	171	172	159
IN 4TH	167	159	169	158	163
MAX IN 3RD/2ND/1ST	130/92/48	138/90/52	143/92/53	116/74/40	140/95/58
50-110 THROUGH GEARS	13.4	14.3	12.4	12.2	14.6
0-50	3.7	3.9	3.6	3.7	4.2
0-65	6.0	6.4	5.5	5.9	6.7
0-80	8.4	9.1	8.1	8.5	9.6
0-100	12.4	13.4	11.3	11.8	13.6
0-110	17.1	18.2	16.0	15.9	18.8
IN GEARS 3RD/4TH/5TH					
50-80	6.7/9.5/15.0	7.2/9.7/13.5	5.5/8.7/11.9	6.7/9.6/13.2	8.3/13.4/20.7
65-100	7.2/10.4/14.8	7.5/9.7/13.9	6.3/8.7/13.1	6.8/10.2/13.1	8.3/13.3/21.6
80-110	8.5/13.3/15.8	9.0/10.9/15.2	7.7/9.5/14.4	7.4/11.4/15.0	9.5/14.0/23.3
RPM/SPEEDO AT 110KPH IN TOP	3,400/122	3,600/119	3,400/121	3,000/116	3,300/121

the bonnet catch. The one redeeming factor is the anti-theft radio/cassette unit. Because it's purpose-designed, it won't fit any other car, and is worthless to a car thief.

That's not to say the remaining cars in this group are much better. The Renault and Fiat resisted our thief for about five seconds, the Rover slightly longer. Perhaps more disappointing is that Rover seems to be making few efforts to improve the

situation.

Top, then, is the Ford. As we've said before, the alarm can be by-passed simply, but at least it does provide a line of defence and will deter the more casual thief. Although our security expert knew of modifications that were being made to the Escort to make it more secure, these weren't featured on our test car.

Ratings and Verdict

Only once before has a Rover

RATINGS AND VERDICT

	CITROËN	ROVER	FIAT	RENAULT	FORD
PERFORMANCE & ECONOMY	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
HANDLING AND RIDE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
BEHIND THE WHEEL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
ACCOMMODATION	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
QUALITY AND EQUIPMENT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
SERVICE AND COSTS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
DEPRECIATION	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
SECURITY	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
VERDICT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗

Hatchback Convention

200 failed to win a What Car? group test. That was when the 216 GTi 16V didn't topple the 16V Volkswagen Golf GTi. So, having had its own way for the best part of two years, has the Rover 200 now lost its crown as best family car?

Much as it hurts us, the answer is yes. While the 214 S is a very fine car, it is true that there's now a better contender in the highly competitive family hatchback market. And though certain die-hard fans of the Citroën marque will complain about the company selling its soul to the realities of a large-volume European market, the majority of us can rest assured that the new ZX is, for now, the best car in its class. Whether it will remain so after the new Golf and Astra hit the showrooms is a judgment we'll await with interest.

The greatest Rover shortcoming has to be its price. At £10,212 it is expensive. And when you consider that it lacks the Citroën's electric front windows, electric mirror adjustment, sunroof and central locking ~ items that would take the Rover to well over £11,000 if they were even available [which none is on the entry-level S version] ~ it looks exceptionally expensive, so much so that the in-built quality, the refined performance and overall classiness of the package are no long-

er enough to compensate. The Citroën is almost as well built, more fun to drive, much better specified and significantly cheaper. Even at the same money as the ZX, the Rover would have a contest of titan proportions on its hands.

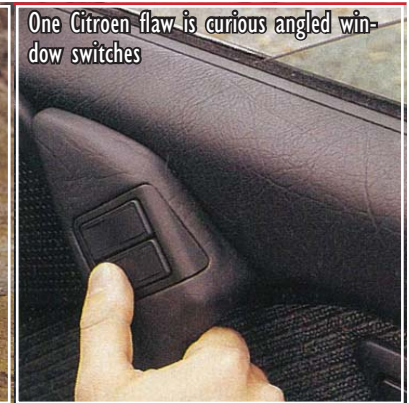
Of the others, the Tipo is clearly the next best. In fact it's so good, not just in terms of value but on aspects like driver appeal, accommodation, specification and style, that we were at odds whether to place it ahead of the Rover. It loses out by a small head in the end, however, because of its unsatisfactory driving position and, more importantly, the fact that in three years' time it will be worth significantly less than either the Rover or the Citroën.

The Renault we like, the Ford we don't: it's as simple as that. Why? Because the R19 is a car which, in spite of its cheap-looking interior and almost complete lack of 'image', is fun to drive. The Ford is the exact opposite. It is also much too expensive for what it offers, especially alongside the Renault which at £9,365 looks exceptional value for money.

Neither of these offers what the Citroën has, however, which is simple desirability. Other than its gimmicky rear seat mechanism [absent on the cheaper Reflex], the ZX has no real flaw to speak of. On top of this it's



Overflowing with driver appeal, ZX is a very desirable car



One Citroën flaw is curious angled window switches

overflowing with driver appeal. In the current market, and until we see those replacements for the Astra and Golf, it is the nearest thing yet to the perfect family hatchback.

Reader Report Back

We always ask our readers to rate the cars in order of preference before they drive them, then compare this with their rating once they have driven our test grouping.

But this time there was a problem: where to place an unknown quantity the Citroën ZX?

All three of our testers ~ Tony Franklin, Sarah Welch-Hawksby and Simon Dellow ~ had extensive knowledge of the other cars on test.

Tony owns a Fiat Tipo 1.6, which he acquired used with 19,500km on a the clock. 'Apart from a few things that were wrong when I bought it, which were put right straight away, it's been a model of reliability,' he says.

Sarah drives a Vauxhall Astra CD 1.8 as a company car. She had the choice of several models but after extensive comparative drives, plumped for the Astra. 'It feels solid,' she says. 'And as for power steering, I don't know where I'd be without it.'

Our final tester was Simon Dellow, who drives a company-supplied Rover 214 SLi. 'I had thought of going for a bigger car ~ like a BX ~ but in the end I went for the quality feel of the Rover and I haven't been disappointed,' he declares. 'I have had two holed radiators, though, caused by stones being flung up through the front grille.'

So, given our readers' own buying choices, how did they rate the cars before the driving exercise? Tony's list read like this: **1** Fiat; **2** Renault; **3** Rover; **4** Ford; **5** Citroën. The Citroën came last simply because until Tony saw the car, he felt unable to comment. For Sarah, the list went like this: **1** Rov-

Hatchback Convention

HOW THE CARS COMPARE					
	CITROËN ZX AVANTAGE £9,700	FIAT TIPO 1.6 DGT SX £10,810	FORD ESCORT 1.4 LX 5DR £10,125	RENAULT 19 GTS-X 5DR £9,365	ROVER 214 S 5DR £10,212
EQUIPMENT & OPTIONS					
Power Steering	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Central locking	✓	✓	✓		£256
Electric windows [F/R]	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓/✗	£385 elec. pack	✗/✗
Adjustable mirrors	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Anti-lock brakes	✗	✗	£511	✗	£762
Sound system	s.rad/cass	s.rad/cass	s.rad/cass	s.rad/cass	s.rad/cass
Alloy wheels	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Split/fold rear seats	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Heated windscreen	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Sunroof	elec	elec	man	elec	£298 [man]
Adj. steering column	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Adj. seat height/tilt	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Adj. lumbar support	✗	✗	✗	£120 ergonomic pack	✗
Auto transmission	✗	£849	✗	£635	✗
Air conditioning	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Exhaust catalyser	✗	✗	£562	£350	£256
SPARE PARTS PRICES, WARRANTY					
Front brake pads	£34	£47	£38	£23	£51
Windscreen	£94	£145	£56	£93	£84
Rear silencer	£72	£47	£38	£54	£87
Rear lamp lens	£29	£27	£23	£32	£49
Warranty [months/km]	12/UL	12/UL	12/UL	12/UL	12/UL
Anti-rust [Yrs]	6	6	6	6	6
Paint [Yrs]	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
What Car? pence/km	n/a	18.2	18.5	17.8	20.1
DIMENSIONS					
Length/wheelbase [cm]	406/254	396/254	404/252	417/254	422/255
Width, inc mirrors [cm]	188	185	188	185	193
Height [cm]	140	145	135	142	140
Headroom [F/R, cm]	89/84	94/91	94/91	91/89	91/89
Legroom [F/R, cm]	84-104/64-84	84-107/61-81	84-102/66-84	84-102/64-84	81-104/66-81
Rear shoulder room [cm]	142	145	137	132	140
Boot capacity [L]	343	340	396	396	340
Boot depth/width/height [cm]	71/124/48	64/107/48	74/94/51	74/124/48	94/137/46
Boot load height [cm]	66	64	69	71	61
Turning circle [cm/lock turns]	10.5/4.2	10.3/3.7	9.6/4.6	10.4/3.8	10.2/4.0
Kerb/towing weight [kg]	945/1,000	970/1,097	1,057/1,198	942/797	1,030/868

er; **2** Ford; **3** Renault; **4** Fiat; **5** Citroën. And Simon's read like this: **1** Rover; **2** Fiat; **3** Citroën; **4** Ford; **5** Renault. Interestingly, all thought the ZX was going to be tinny and plasticky ~ like the AX. But they were prepared to be disproved.

Sarah Welch-Hawksby

1 CITROËN 2 ROVER 3 FORD
4 RENAULT 5 FIAT

That crucial question we always ask ~ would you buy this car? ~ produced an affirmative from Sarah regarding the Citroën. 'It's the closest anything has come to beating my Astra,' she explained. 'It doesn't beat it because with its small engine its not fast enough. But the instant low-down response is excellent, making it really nippy around town. I think it's quite stylish with a good quality interior. I thought touches like the pull-out roller sun blind to protect rear passengers from the sun particularly neat. However, Sarah felt that the gearchange was clumsy and the brakes too fierce. 'I think that the oddments space is limited, too.'

Limitations of another kind let down the Rover. 'It's so basic,' commented Sarah, 'and the interior in this colour scheme looks very Honda-like. It's good to drive, you feel comfortable behind the wheel, and it goes where you point it. But the Escort's interior is so much better executed.'

And it's the Escort that Sarah placed third. 'It's nothing special to look at and the interior looks monochrome with all that grey trim - dated, too. But what impressed me was the detail design. I liked the glove compartment with its built-in tray and pen holder and the easy-to-use cassette holder. Also I felt very comfortable behind the wheel, which was just as well because the engine is sluggish with poor low-down pulling power, the steering's too heavy and the ride is bumpy, especially on the motorway. In addition the brakes are soft.'

There were few words of praise for the Renault, which Sarah considered 'tarty and tatty', both inside and out. She disliked the Tipo even more. 'I wouldn't have it if you gave it to me! The driving position is a disaster. The seat is so high it meant my head was stuck in the roof lining!'

Tony Franklin

1 CITROËN & FIAT 3 ROVER
4 RENAULT 5 FIAT

Tony opted for a split decision, undoubtedly wooed by the ZX's ride quality and interior finish but, at the same time, unable to relinquish the feeling of sheer brio that comes from driving the Tipo.

'I thought the ZX's ride excellent, it was amazingly quiet. The build quality is superb ~ as good as the Renault is plastic. It's the attention to detail that

Hatchback Convention

impresses me in every aspect of the ZX's design. Take the upper suspension mounting in the engine bay. Someone's thought really long and hard about exactly where it should be located. On the downside, though, is the performance. This car needs a bigger engine.'

Which, of course, is precisely what the Tipo offers. 'The Fiat's my choice for pure drivability. It's a driver's car, but the interior is not as refined as the Citroën. I think the build of the Tipo is good and the quality of internal fittings high, despite a creak from the rear, with plenty of oddments storage space to stuff things into. But it's the responsive engine and excellent ~ typically Italian ~ roadholding

and grip I like.'

So third place for the Rover, a fact Tony put down to a combination of poor specification and high price. 'This is the first time that I've driven a Rover,' he explained. 'Its engine is very good: responsive when pushed and smooth until running at high speed. The roadholding instils high levels of confidence, too, but that fussy trim in such an appalling colour scheme really lets it down in my estimation.'

Tony finally placed the Renault above the Escort, commenting that it wasn't quite as cheap and cheerful as the Ford and also that it was the far better car to drive. 'I don't like the positioning of the electric window switches,' he continued,

'and the quality of the plastic finish is simply awful.' As for the Escort Tony criticised its harsh and noisy engine, the 'twitlchy' handling under hard braking as well as the bouncy ride. 'It's not as good as the previous Escort,' he concluded. 'It's too basic with acres of plastic inside, although the actual instrumentation is well laid out and easy to read. But to be honest it's not the car for me.'

Simon Dellow

1 CITROËN 2 ROVER 3 FIAT
4 FORD 5 RENAULT

Like Tony, Simon found his final decision difficult, this time split between the Citroën and the Rover. 'They're both very good cars,' said Simon, 'but the Rover has to lose out because of its poor levels of equipment.'

So first place to the ZX, which Simon praised for its excellent ride, good quality interior and for being the most comfortable to drive. 'The quality is vastly improved over the BX,' he noted. 'And that adjustable rear seat seems a good idea in theory ~ but what's it really for? I have to say I'm not sure about its value at all.'

Into second place, then, went the Rover. 'It's a good car, but its poor equipment specification swings the decision in favour of the ZX,' said Simon. 'All the other cars have central locking and electric windows. It really is

a pain not to have the central locking facility on the Rover.'

The Tipo came third, earning Simon's praise for its styling, handling and good power steering system, although he felt the engine's performance was not as punchy as he had expected. 'It's a great car to drive,' he said, 'but I hate those digital instruments and the poor driving position.'

Fourth came the Ford, its unrefined engine and gearbox gaining it minus points. 'I thought the quality control was a bit lacking on this car. The Escort had a wobbly driver's seat and the worst road and wind noise out of this group of cars. Apart from the gearbox, though, it is user friendly:

Despite the Renault's performance [which Simon rated as particularly strong] and its good handling and boot and passenger space, he considered the interior styling to be a complete turn-off. 'It's diabolical,' he said. 'An unpleasant combination of cheap plastics and gawdy seat covers.'

Simon liked Renault's punchy performance, but hated Jazzy Interior That was enough for Simon to place the Renault 19 last. This article first appeared in 'What Car?' magazine in July, 1991. The photographer was Julian Mackie but the author was not credited. It is taken from the Editor's archive.



The Citroën ZX prefers to negotiate. It owes its composure to what our engineers call programmed rear-wheel steering.

This gives the car poise and sure-footedness. It sticks to the road like the larmac itself.

The steering is precise and direct, allowing the ZX to sweep through bends with panache, finesse, élan and many other French words besides.

Meanwhile, the driver experiences a profoundly comfortable ride and a feeling of complete control.

enough to create a feeling of instability, especially when lacking a series of bends.

Having studied the phenomenon,

Citroën's engineers decided to put an end to it. So they set about re-designing the conventional rear axle and suspension.

The result is a car that re-directs those same forces, causing the rear wheels to be steered the same way as their comrades at the front. A matter of three degrees maximum, but enough to provide far greater stability.

Neatly, the problem became its own solution. This thoughtful piece of design is not, we should add, reserved for the top of the range.

It's built into every Citroën ZX model, be it a three or five door hatchback, or an estate. Petrol, diesel or turbo-diesel.

Nor does it call for extra cost. Prices start at just £8,545* for a 1.4i or 1.9 diesel.

If you'd like further information on the ZX range, call 0800 282 282.

However, like any simple pleasure, the ZX and its programmed rear-wheel steering have to be experienced first hand to be fully appreciated.

We therefore invite you to visit your local Citroën dealer and take a test drive. One with plenty of twists and turns.

As you'll soon discover, when you drive a ZX any bend is straightforward.

CITROËN ZX

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*EXcludes VAT and dealer fees. Prices include delivery, licence, registration, first year tax and insurance. Dealer price may vary. © Citroën 1991. All rights reserved.

Not Quite a Sleeping Volcano

Citroën ZX Volcane [1991]
Not Quite a Sleeping Volcano

In the Citroën genealogy, the ZX remains one of the most ignored models. This is due to its common style and its vocation as an all-purpose car. A godsend for the enlightened amateurs, who can offer themselves, with the Volcane, a thrill at a lower price.

What Citroën is less regarded today than the ZX? Still offered by the thousand on the second hand market, it is one of those 'everyday drivers' that provide daily service without glory or caprice. Launched at the

READ WHILE LISTENING TOO...

Scorpions, 'Winds of Change'... It's unlikely that Klaus Meine's band thought of the ZX for this hit, which rather refers to the fall of the Berlin Wall, with that memorable whistled intro. But, let's admit it, it fits perfectly with the new and claimed classicism of a Citroën as full of qualities as devoid of fantasy. Except when the road becomes winding, because of the 'self-steering' axle, but that's not to our displeasure!



beginning of the 1990s, it ignored all the particularities of the Chevrons to blend into the mould of the European compact car that was good in every way. In the eyes of its designers, it had to be capable of seducing owners of the Ford Escort, the Volkswagen Golf or even the Renault 19. A pure product of the era of Jacques Calvet, the CEO of PSA, who was hostile to anything eccentric or 'outré'.

The ZX picks up speed without seeming to. The rider soon finds himself at a reprehensible pace.

In terms of interior style, the Citroëns of the early 1990s are the antithesis of those of the 1980s. Functionality and simplicity of use are the only credo on board.

The very idea of a compact Citroën was almost incongruous: the manufacturer had left the field open to its competitors for more than ten years, conceding a gaping hole between the Visa and the GSA and then BX wagons. An unacceptable gap for the marketing

Not Quite a Sleeping Volcano



The Volcane version has the original, very conspicuous exhaust tailpipe.

experts who were beginning to invade the decision-making bodies of the French group. The culture of the brand had to give way to the imperatives of the market, and there was no longer any question of sparing the inveterate Citroënists. Unlike the BX, which had successfully combined industrial constraints, commercial success and respect for heritage, the ZX abandoned the hydropneumatic suspension, the single-spoke steering wheel and the offbeat style. The only thing that remained was the very inefficient single-sided windscreen wiper, which was not exclusive to the ZX.

Good-Looking

Proof that marketing had been given free rein, one of the only



innovations of the ZX was commercial. Instead of using cabalistic acronyms such as RD, TE or TZD to designate its trim and equipment levels, it invented single-engine 'collections' corresponding to customer profiles defined in the laboratory by re-

searchers and experts... The entry-level Reflex was intended 'for young people and women', the Avantage 'for families with children', the Aura 'for mature men looking for luxurious comfort, equipment and good taste' and finally the Volcane 'for ac-

Looking Forward

Next issue of 'Front Drive'... We celebrate 40 years of the BX. Launched with the advertising line 'Loves Driving, Hates Garages' was the BX really the start of a new era for Citroën?



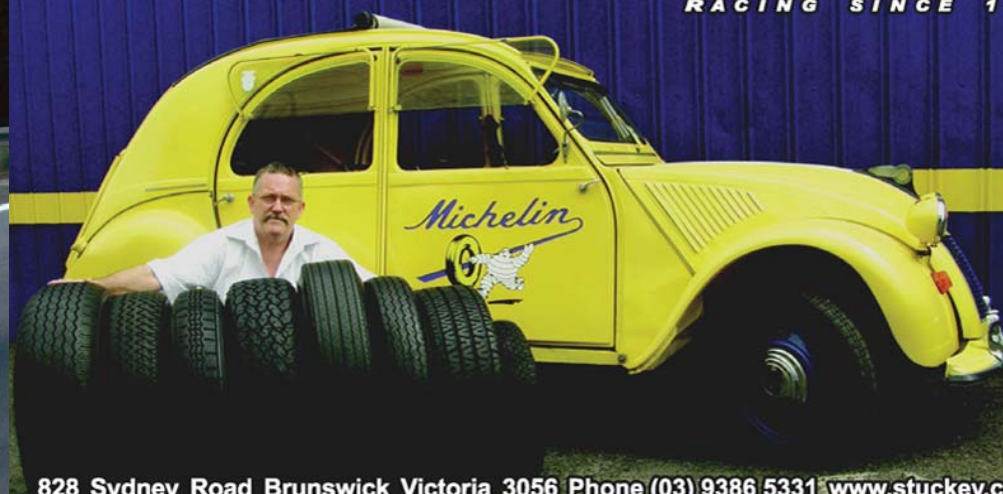
If you own a Citroën BX, why not make a contribution and send it to Leigh Miles at editor@citroenclassic.org.au by Wednesday, January 19. Got a picture that merits sharing? Send it as well.

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Not Quite a Sleeping Volcano



Centre: The photo shows the rare sporty attributes of the Volcane: red piping, fog lights and 14-inch alloy wheels.

Bottom: The ZX was the last to adopt the single-arm windscreen wiper, a 'Citroën-ism' who's passing nobody regretted.



1] The full instrumentation is a special feature of the Volcane. The fuel gauge is as fancy as on the other models in the range.

2] The interior of the ZX is much better finished than the AX and BX, and is more resistant to the years and miles.

3] The [French] Volcane did not have the right to a sliding rear seat, one of the rare original features of the ZX in its category. uk delivery Volcane did benefit from the sliding rear seat.

4] What would the Volcane be without its red piping? These will soon be used on other models in the ZX range.

5] Common point with the BX phase 2, this liquid crystal clock is typical of the era.

tive customers of a high social level, attracted by foreign vehicles'.

For the most powerful ZX, it was already taboo to speak of sportiness, or even worse, of GTi spirit. However, it inherited a glorious engine: the famous 97.0kW/130bhp XU of the Peugeot 205 and BX GTi. Unfortunately, this unit was already outdated at the launch compared with the '16 valves' of the competition. It was soon to be replaced by the 91.0kW/122bhp catalysed version, then by the 2-litre with 91.8kW/123bhp, not to mention the 68.6kW/92bhp diesel available from 1993. A succession of engines that did not contribute to the glory of the model, which was very quickly eclipsed by the 16V with 115.6/155 and 124.6kW/167bhp.

Not Quite a Sleeping Volcano

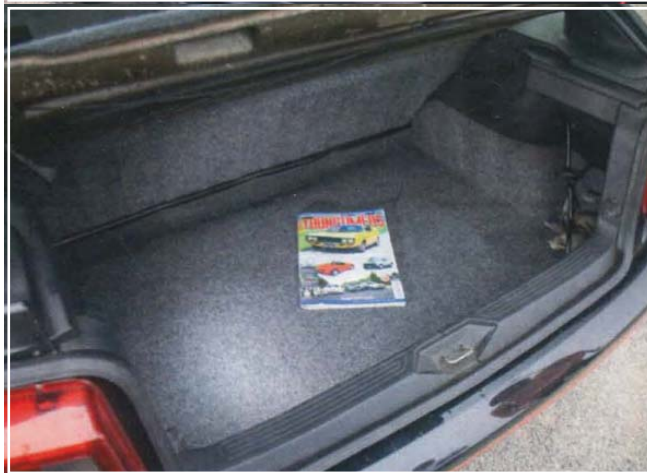
This specific upholstery of the first Volcane only remained for the first three years. It is as much to say that it is impossible to find today.

324 litres of volume for a length of just over 4 metres: values that would make a modern city-car dream.

Our star of the day is indeed equipped with the original 1.9-litre with 97.0kW/130hp and for good reason: it rolled off the production line in July 1991, only a few months after the launch of the model. It even has the Onyx black colour of the original press photos. Twenty-five years later, the contrast with the red piping around the body is still very much in effect. In the absence of unbridled sportiness, this ZX shows, dare we say it, a certain elegance, enhanced by its pretty 14-inch aluminium wheels. However, apart from the piping, the specificities of the Volcane are the chrome exhaust, the non-tinted spoiler, the standard fog lamps and some specific badges.

More GT than GTi

Inside, it's dull. The monolithic design of the dashboard is as bland as a slice of white bread. The red piping save the day and shows, along with the three-spoke steering wheel, that this is a model with a sporting temperament. The seats are a little more appealing: adjustable in all directions, they show a sense of ergonomics that we are not



used to from French manufacturers. The upholstery, with its multicoloured weave typical of the 1990s, could almost give Mercedes fabrics lessons in robustness. This is because the ZX, like the contemporary Xantia, belongs to the era when French manufacturers thought in terms of quality. On the very nice 186,000km car that Benoit presents to us, the plastics still

appear to be new, yes they do!

A reassuring glance at the complete instrumentation, with oil pressure and temperature, and it's time to let this good old XU 1.9-litre run wild. Surprisingly,

its exhaust note is not at all what we expect it to be. It's deeper, less liberated, more bourgeois, and in

no way reminiscent of the rumble of a 205 GTi. The first accelerations are vigorous but not transcendent: it must be said that the five-speed transmission is rather long. The XU shows its usual character: rather supple, it

Fast, comfortable and consistent, the ZX Volcane reveals a completely different character when pushed to its limits.

gives the best of itself around 4,000rpm but doesn't particularly enjoy the high revs. The ZX picks up speed without seeming to touch it. Deceived by the comfort of the suspension

and the relative discretion of the engine, the pilot soon finds himself at

a reprehensible pace. The first corner will not discourage him. With its fairly direct steering, the ZX turns flat without drama or much roll. And the first braking; effective and biting, finishes reassuring.

All in all, the Vol-



Not Quite a Sleeping Volcano



to
come
and titillate it.

It's up to you to awaken the volcano that lies dormant in her!

Buying Guide

cane is an excellent GT, but can it still be called a sports car? The answer lies in the fact that the famous self-steering rear axle is unexpectedly lively, which you find yourself taming and then provoking. The rear suspension is unexpectedly lively, and you are surprised to find yourself taming it and then provoking it, a type of oversteer traction that is more easily associated with Peugeot than with Citroën. It doesn't matter, because the pleasure is there!

Homogeneous and well-behaved, the Volcane knows how to heat up the fire when necessary. A trait that it only reveals to those who have the audacity

The Citroën ZX arrived on the market in March 1991 and inaugurated a philosophy of 'collections': Reflex, Avantage, Aura and Volcane. The latter represents the sporty top of the range and is fitted with the tried and tested XU 1,905cc 97.0kW/130bhp block borrowed from the 205 GTi. Price: F111,100. Standard equipment includes power steering, electric front windows, remote control central locking, alloy wheels, radio pre-equipment and fog lights. Leather, air conditioning and sunroof

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Not Quite a Sleeping Volcano

The XU motor from the 205 GTi was transplanted to the ZX at its launch. It was only available for a few months in a non-catalysed version. If you're looking for one, aim high!



are optional. In March 1992, a selective catalytic converter was fitted, reducing power to 91.0kW/122bhp, and the automatic gearbox option was introduced. In July 1992, the XU 1.9-litre block was replaced by the 2.0i with 91.8kW/123bhp catalytic converter, except on the automatic. The coupé went on sale in September 1992. Price: F114,300 [F118,200 for the saloon]. In July 1993, with metallic paintwork as a free option, the Volcane Diesel was launched with the 1.9D turbo XUD 68.6kW/92bhp. In July 1994, ZX phase 2 with ribbed bonnet, new radiator grille, new steering wheel and slightly revised interior. Immobiliser fitted as standard in July 1995. In September 1996, headrests in the rear. Production of the ZX Vol-

cane ceases in July 1997.

At the Bottom of the Abyss

The inflation that affects so many 'Youngtimers' has spared the ZX, which is undoubtedly one of the cheapest cars available second-hand. It is not uncommon to find Volcanoes that are still decent at less than €1,500, with models in competition condition with low mileage selling for barely €1,000 more. Note that diesel versions are more common than petrol ones.

Express Check-up

The ZX Volcane is a reliable car with proven engines and a fairly solid design. Unfortunately, it may have suffered from the ravages of disrespectful use. Poorly repaired impact marks, lack of history or irregular tyre wear should make you wary.

BENOIT LE GUILCHER: 'A SHARED PLEASURE'

It was on the advice of his father, owner of two beautiful CXs, 25-year-old Benoit acquired this ZX Volcane. Since then, it has made him happy, but also his girlfriend and his brother, Florian. 'My first car was a red AX Miami, which I have always regretted selling. So two years ago I started looking



for an AX GT, but I couldn't find a good one. Then I came across the ad for this ZX Volcane, which my father advised me to try. I fell in love with it immediately! The car was a second hand car with 172,000km. It belonged to older people but it came with no history. I checked everything, but in the end I only changed the brake pads and a cardan shaft that was cracking. To get a good feel for it, I went to test it on the track. I was surprised by the nervousness of its engine... and its behaviour! Since then, I had it repainted in its original colour because the paint was tarnished and a door was caved in. It's a fun car for gatherings. I use it mainly at weekends for private use and I share this pleasure with the whole family! I would like to thank my father for having passed on this passion to me, as well as my brothers and my girlfriend for living it with me.

The bodywork is fairly well protected against rust and the interior ages as well as it looks grim. On the other hand, the power windows often appear anaemic and the window seals are rarely in good condition on coupes. As for the rest, the XU four-cylinder's reputation is well established. If the heating times and oil change intervals have been respected, it can exceed 250,000km without any major sign of weakness. It still has its little faults, such as the valve stem seals and its sometimes weak coil, with the traditional related idling problems.

Unsurprisingly, as this is a PSA model from the 1990s, attention must also be paid to the running gear. The bearings of the self-steering rear axle wear

Not Quite a Sleeping Volcano

out quickly, which can lead to its destruction if the problem is not caught in time. Fortunately, specialised companies have mastered the art of reconditioning them, but it is not free. The front wishbones and cardan shafts are also known to be weak. As far as parts are concerned, everything is still available, except for the specific elements of the Volcane, ie essentially the exterior and interior fittings.

Classic Maintenance

Every year or 10,000km, engine oil change; every 20,000km or two years, change of spark plugs and air filter; every 40,000km, fuel filter and brake fluid [or every year for the latter]; every 50,000km or five years, replacement of timing belt and accessory belts [preventive period, Citroën recommends 80,000km], as well as gearbox oil change

Our Good Addresses

CLUBS AND FORUMS

- ZX passion: www.zxpassion.com

MAINTENANCE AND PARTS

- DTarenov [for the rear ax-

les of PSA models]: www.dtarenov.com

- Citroën network
- A LITTLE READING
- Citroën ZX Petrol and Diesel, Technical Review no 109.I, Editions ETAI
 - Citroën sports cars, Rogé Rémond, Editions ETAI
 - Workshop manual available on www.bibliauto.fr

5 REASONS TO BE TEMPTED

- Mechanical reliability
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- Sporty at a low price
- Real comfort

5 REASONS TO THINK TWICE

- Image to rebuild
- Bland style
- Rare in good condition
- In the shadow of the 16v version
- Weak rear axle

This article originally appeared in the French magazine 'Youngtimer' with text and photos by Camille Pinel. It is taken from the Editor's collection and was translated by him with the use of www.DeepL.com/Translator [free version].

How Far Have We Come?

At its 1991 launch the ZX with high levels of praise: even Jeremy Clarkson, never one to mince words, described the ride as being 'as close to faultless as you can get but this does nothing to hurt the handling'.

But that did not stop Paul Horrell from 'Car' from pondering whether the automotive industry in general, and Citroën in particular, had actually made great strides in the 20 years since 1971 and the appearance of the GS.

So, he got together with his mate, Richard Bremner, and their shared-ownership GS X3 to check the facts.

Here's what they found...

The most comfortable small car in the world, people said. Others went further: the best small car of all [well, that or the Alfaud]. Certainly the Citroën GS in its early years was the most aerodynamic the most



How Far Have We Come?



technically advanced, the purest in design and the most distinctive. But that was all a terribly long time ago. Now, after an interregnum of six years since the last GSAs, Citroën is back with the ZX, a new car to sit in size and price between the AX and BX, embodying what is, for the company, new thinking.

The ZX, in direct contrast to the GS, is calculatedly conventional. It's a rather dull-looking five-door hatch powered by a four-cylinder transverse in-line water-cooled engine, its front wheels driven via an end-on gearbox, suspended on steel-sprung MacPherson struts, and its rear axle on trailing arms. Brakes are servo-assisted, using discs and drums on this basic 1,360cc Reflex model. So what's new? Chiefly, a rear sub-frame mounted on bushes that deform in a shrewdly designed way during high sideways load, causing the rear wheels to turn slightly in the same direction as the front pair to improve cornering stability. It's worth boasting about, and it works, but it's not unique. Also, some ZX models ~ but not this one ~ have a sliding and reclining rear seat, novel for a European car.

The GS has a four-door fast-back body of remarkable aerodynamic efficiency, and a longitudinally mounted air/oil-cooled flat-four ahead of the front wheels. Front suspension

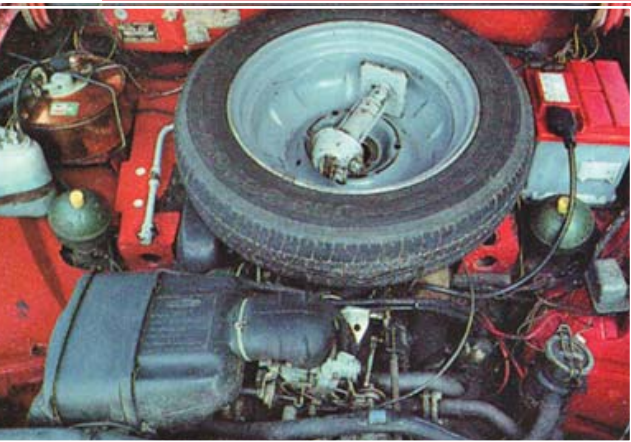
is by double wishbones, rear by trailing arms, with interconnected self-levelling hydropneumatic springing/damping units at each corner. The high-pressure hydraulics also power the all-disc brakes, inboard at the front. There are more surprises: the steering axis passes exactly through the tyres' contact patches so that the car continues in a straight line after a front tyre blow-out, there is a remarkable degree of anti-dive provided by the suspension geometry, and the rear brakes are pressurised by the rear suspension fluid so that their action is proportional to the car's load.

The GS tested here isn't quite like they were two decades ago. The GS first came with engines of 1,015cc and 1,222cc, designed with an eye to French taxation rather than performance. They were astonishingly high-revving, short-legged cars. This GS is the later X3 model introduced in 1978, its engine expanded to 1,299cc in an attempt to help the 48kW engine's torque and economy. It's still short-gearred: 25kph per 1,000rpm in top [fourth] means a 5,500rpm motorway cruise is possible but deafening. But, apart from the bigger engine, the revised rear lamps and the ghastly seat trim, the X3 is as the GS was at the outset.

This car is owned half-and-half by me and deputy editor



How Far Have We Come?



Richard Bremner, and we did not set out looking for an X3 ~ we just wanted to buy a well-preserved GS of almost any description before they all rotted away.

Start up, and you know you're in something unconventional. It is not just the absence of water temperature gauge that points to the cooling method: there being no sound-absorbing liquid jacket, this is one loud engine. But it is a nice sound, remarkably like a pair of 2CVs or, if you prefer [and I do], two-thirds of a 911. Horizontally opposed engines, all of them, have a lovely soft-edged sound that rises in pitch and volume higher up the rev range while avoiding any harshness. They sound as though they will never break.

The ZX's engine, though a deal quieter in the middle ranges, is not so nice to use as it turns rough when you push it, so you adopt a different tech-



nique when trying to get along briskly, using higher gears [you have five to choose from] and lower crank speeds. Performance of the two cars is very similar, the ZX's greater torque of 115nM against 98nM being offset by slightly longer gearing, while both cars weigh 990kg.

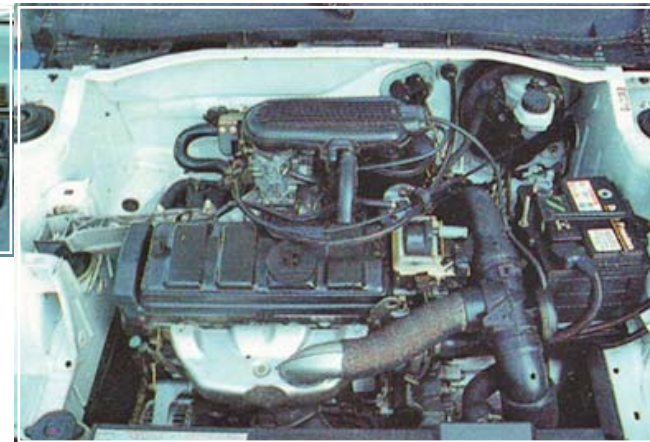
Its uncouth engine apart, the ZX is clearly ahead of the 1991 class standard for refinement. It cleaves the air quietly, even though its drag coefficient, at 0.32, certainly does not reflect two decades' progress from the GS's 0.34. Tyre noise is very well suppressed. There is no steering kickback or transmission shunt, and the gearshift has a light, clean-slicing action. It is an easy car to drive.

It is leagues ahead of the GS in refinement. The old car falls down badly here ~ by far its



biggest drawback on the road. Beyond 110kph, the wind whips up a cyclone roar, accompanied by bad tyre noise and a shriek from the gears, yet still the engine's voice is strident enough to be heard above the cacophony. The gearchange is light and quick, but has not had the rough edge taken out of its action, and there is enough backlash in the driveline to demand great circumspection from the driver coming on and off the throttle.

Two decades have seen ergonomics move forward, of course. The GS dash is a right mess, and badly made with it. But the car's driving position is fine, and slim pillars impart airiness and visibility. The ZX counters with easily found, illuminated switchgear and proper modern heating and ventilation, where the GS has a weak-willed

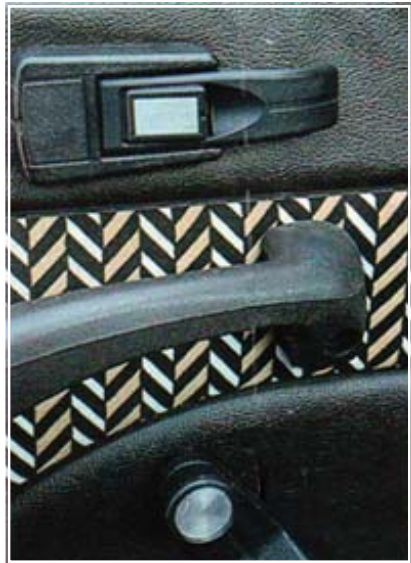


set-up directed by a scattered set of levers that sprout from roughly carved gashes in the frangible plastic fascia.

Citroën badly wants the ZX to appear well made, and it does. Although the company's claim that it is the best in its class represents a combination of innocent naivety and cynical marketing hype [the seat trim and dash are of cheapo materials], the fact is the fascia components all fit well, the heater dials turn smoothly, the glass is neatly semi-flush and the metal panels are thick and well fitting. More important, the fact that the body does not boom and crash over bumps is a great step forward for Citroën.

In the GS, you hear bumps, and feel them through the steering wheel. There is also some harshness over small, sharp bumps such as catseyes. But real lumps, undulations, pot-holes, cobbles and broken sur-

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faces are simply swallowed. No car today ~ up to limousine size ~ is so soft, and yet the GS seldom floats. To the owner of a backside accustomed to the jarring rides of modern small cars,

it is amazing. On top of which, the car is unaffected by load.

By modern standards, the ZX rides well. It is resilient, moving up and down but taking the edge off things well. There is none of the lurching and thumping a German car would serve up on lumpy French roads. Its big fault is an uncomfortable lateral rocking, brought about because the car, though softly sprung, is quite stiff in roll. Anti-roll bars are simply lateral springs, and undamped ones at that, so when one side of the ZX is disturbed the whole thing rocks. The GS, like the ZX, has anti-roll bars at each end, but they are far less influential.

Ride quality, though, is but one element in the sum of comfort. Both cars have soft, generous seats, good driving positions and adequate cabin room. The GS has better rear-seat headroom, the ZX the better legroom, though for back-seat roominess, it is shamed by the Fiat Tipo.

In packaging, the two Citroëns are remarkably similar. The ZX is 406cm overall, the GS five centimetres longer; the wheel-bases are the same, the heights similar, yet the GS has the bigger boot by 45% when the ZX's rear seat is up.

No progress there in 20 years. But surely all this softness in the GS must make it handle like an inebriated camel? Not a bit of it.

Sure, it rolls onto its door handles, but it clings on amazingly well with its round-shouldered tyres, understeering insistently at the limit.

There is excellent directional stability yet neat turn-in: the steering is very direct and accurate, though you pay a price in having to put up with kickback and a marked weighting-up in bends. The GS's big 15inch wheels help the ride and give a reasonably big contact patch from 145-section tyres.

The ZX rolls less, as it must in order properly to exploit modern lower-profile 165/70 13 tyres. Drive the ZX's contemporaries and you would call its steering light, quick and accurate, but after the GS's it feels a tad rubbery, which must be the pay-off for losing the kickback. Still, the ZX turns into bends eagerly enough, and then brings its self-steering axle into play by tracking around the arc with remarkable tenacity and even-handedness ~ tucking in only gently even when you throttle right back ~ and gripping very strongly. Its two-stage cornering action feels odd at first, but you soon learn to like it ~ a real Citroën characteristic, you might say.

The ZX does not have real Citroën brakes; the GS does, and is the better for it. On almost no pedal travel, the GS discs have sharply honed initial



bite, great power and perfect progression, aided by the car's remarkable resistance to front-end dive. Their high-pressure hydraulics can also be cheaply adapted to ABS, and have been

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on the BX and XM. The ZX's stoppers work well enough but feel spongy beside conventional opposition's and especially so beside the GS's.

So just what does Citroën have to show for 20 years' developments? To look at, drive or sit in the two cars here, you would be hard put to find much beyond the refinement angle. But look at the costs.

The GS's 8.8 to 10.5L/100km is not too clever when you would be doing nearer 7 in the ZX, and an early GS's 5,000km service interval would horrify a 1991 owner. A GS would need 30-odd hours' servicing in its first 100,000km whereas this ZX gets by on 5.5hours plus oil-changes. You would swear maintenance was not given a second thought when they designed the GS ~ the distributor is so badly sited you need to remove it to check the points yet the BX proves that with modern design, electronic ignition and today's lubricants, the care of a hydropneumatic car need not be a problem.

The GS is reliable if cared for, and mechanically durable, but in damp, salty Britain its body disappears like April snow. The ZX is carefully designed to eliminate rust-traps, and 75% of its steel is galvanised or electroplated. It should last well and when it is done for, its constituent parts will be labelled for recycling.

The ZX is strong, having a very rigid floor and three hoops over the cabin for stiffness and rollover protection. It is claimed to be safe in 55kph frontal impacts where the law demands 50kph, and to deal with offset crashes, too, for which there is no legislation. The GS is not bad in its crash resistance, but the ZX is better. Yet in primary safety, the ability to avoid the crunch, the GS lags little.

'I can't imagine,' said someone from Citroën at the ZX's launch, 'that anyone who drives our car will have anything to complain about.' Well I, for one, will grumble. However good the ZX may be [and it is very good], it is not a car to hold your interest. As far as Citroën is concerned, it is hardly a car at all. It is a product, an appliance, carefully tailored to existing consumer demand in market segment M1. The buyers know what they like, and Citroën has inferred that they like only what they know. So the ZX is just what they know, a little better all round, but no different. It is, in short, a marginally improved competitor to Bland X.

Citroën makes cars to make money, and we cannot blame it. There is only sense in building something different if it can be economically made and abundantly sold. The danger the ZX faces is its perilously short potential lifespan: before long

there will be a new Golf, a new Astra, a new 309, several new Japanese, and any or all of these could well better the ZX, leaving Citroën floundering for a replacement.

The GS, by being different, has qualities that have not been bettered in 20years, and perhaps never will be. Its faults are evident and manifold: it is unrefined to drive and, though reliable, is extravagant in its demands for fuel, care and attention. But all of these could surely be cured by modern design and engineering, without abandoning hydropneumatic

systems, adventurous styling and sophisticated [though not necessarily complex ~ the GS is not complex] engineering. The very thought of it all makes the ZX seem like a wasted opportunity.

Paul Horrell

Ed: This was one of four articles in this issue comparing 1991 models with their predecessors from twenty years previously. The other comparisons were Jaguar XJS with E-Type, Audi 100 with NSU Ro80 and Alfa 33 4WD with Alfasud. The overall conclusions will appear in a future edition.

Chit Chat Tuesday

WHEN: 1st Tuesday
7 December
4 January, '22
1 February
TIME: 10:00am
WHERE: Laneway Espresso
Café, Dromana
COST: Cheap Eats
BOOKING: Not required
CONTACT: Warwick Spinaze
0407 016 719.

Laneway Espresso Café
next door to the Dromana
Hotel, 167 Nepean Hwy,
Dromana. Easy to find, plenty
of parking, undercover seating
if the weather is wet. This
is a low key 'DIY' event for
like minded Citroën owners
to meet and chat.





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