

# RESTORING A COUPÉ

Source: Olivier de Serres in *Javel*

A fixed-head coupé, sound in mind and body doesn't present any more problems than a saloon to restore. However, although more solid than the drop-head coupé, it hasn't the same rigidity as the saloon at all, as the rear end has a slight overhang. It is better then to be very wary at the level of the lower body members. It isn't a waste of time to open them up so as to weld in a stiffener, as well as to verify the condition of the soldering on the rear part of the blister. But when an enthusiast decides to attack the restoration of a sadly neglected fixed-head coupé the situation is very different. Collectors have sometimes discovered wrecks slowly decomposing in the nettles, sometimes just the body-work lacking all its organs. What to do? The situation isn't desperate, there are two solutions. The first consists of rebuilding the car bit by bit, scrap of sheet-metal by scrap of sheet-metal. Unfortunately the body in question can be so eaten away by corrosion that the work is impossible.

In this case there is the second solution, which consists of reconstructing a car with the aid of basic materials drawn from a saloon. Here, and it isn't always the most simple solution, it is indispensable to obtain a saloon of the same type as the fixed-

head coupé, which must be dismantled, though many details vary from year to year at the level of the sheet-metal work and the body-shell rigidity lines.

Afterwards we proceed as in the diagram

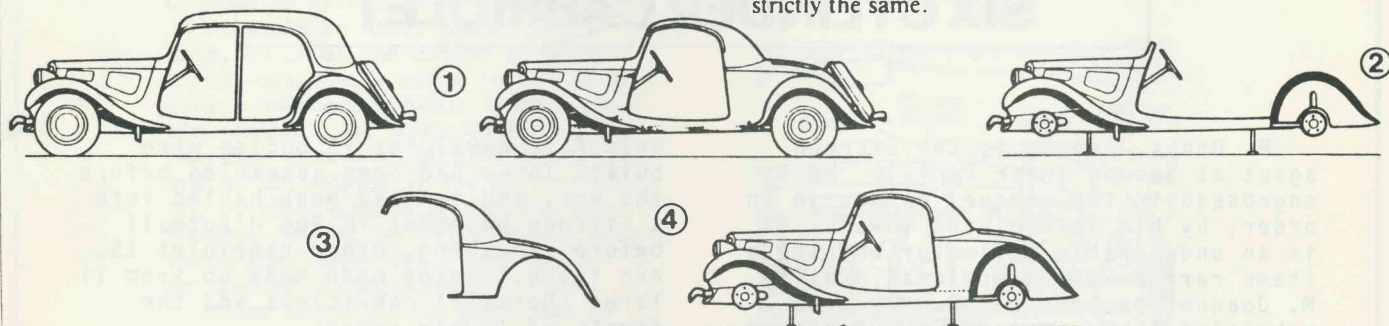
1) Prepare the two vehicles by dismantling all the main elements: doors, wings, wheels, etc.

2) Cut the saloon at half the height of the windscreen pillars, cut the base of the center pillar and clear the rear around the wheel-arch and at the level of the skirting.

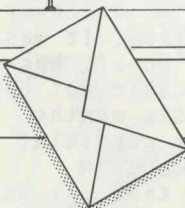
3) After having very carefully taken the dimensions and clearances of the trunnions previously prepared, cut the body-shell of the fixed-head coupé at the same level as the windscreen pillars, then the rear panel from the door just to the wing, then from the wheel-arch and along the skirting.

4) It only leaves the problem of welding the two parts together! But be careful: in theory this operation appears childish, but it is in reality a delicate job which requires a great deal of care and most of all good welding experience.

The rest of the restoration doesn't present any particular problems in relation to the saloons, since the body elements at the front, wings and the mechanical parts are strictly the same.



## LETTERS



Dear Bill,

I was most intrigued to receive your very interesting letter which found me on January 10th. All credit to our postal service, as I've had about three (or is it four) changes of address since my letter of 1978.

Incidentally, thanks for the copy of *Front Drive* - very good reading (love those T-shirt designs). I can't believe it's as long ago as 1978 that I wrote to Kym - give him my regards if you're still in contact.

I like the sound of your Family 9 - virtually or probably extinct in this country. Which reminds me, I had a very vivid dream just recently that Alan, my younger brother and I were in Rotorua when we saw drive by, of all things, a lime green coloured

Family 9. Not having ever seen such a beast at close quarters, we set off on foot to get a closer look, but of course we never did find it and the dream faded. A couple of days later, I got your letter with mention of your Family 9! I don't usually place much credence on such matters, but it was a rather strange coincidence, I thought.

I will try and get a bit more information and photos together for you in the not too distant future - I have quite a good collection of Citroen information and memorabilia stored hither and yon. I will endeavour to obtain the old photo albums and negatives and pick out what's most appropriate for your needs.

I cannot tell you a lot more about my own roadster, as I covered it pretty