



# FRONT DRIVE

Australia's National Magazine  
for Citroën Owners and Enthusiasts



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

October/November 2023 Vol 47 No 3  
Visa: The Car That Knew No Borders



## 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](http://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.

## 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.

## 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 be 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.

## Committee

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[03] 9819 2208 [H]

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Russell Wade 0401 859 704 [M]

## Cover Image

The cover image was downloaded from the Visamania Clube de Portugal's website. Various versions of the image are widely available.

## Deadline

The deadline for the next edition of 'démarrreur' is Sunday, 22 October and for 'Front Drive' it is Sunday, 19 November.

## Support

Membership Secretary ~

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[treasurer@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:treasurer@citroenclassic.org.au)

Asset Custodians ~ Ted Cross  
Max Lewis

AOMC Liaison Officers ~

Max Lewis 0458 993 771 [M]

Russell Wade [03] 9570 3486 [H]

Club Permit & Safety Officers ~

Ted Cross [03] 9819 2208 [H]

Philip Rogers [03] 5944 3091 [H]

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Club Shop ~ Vacant

[clubshop@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:clubshop@citroenclassic.org.au)

ICCCR Representative ~

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Facebook Administrator ~

Rita Robinson 0435 530 780 [M]

[facebook@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:facebook@citroenclassic.org.au)

## 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:

Arthur and Nance Clarke 1984

Jack Weaver 1991

Peter Boyle 2003

Ted Cross 2012

Rob Little 2012

Sue Bryant 2017

Brian Wade 2017

Leigh Miles 2022

Lance Wearne 2023

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## Contributors

Contributors to this edition of 'Front Drive' include Chris Bailey, Alan Brown, Maarten van der Eijnde, Greg Fienberg, Sebastian Forss, Okke Groot, Peter Lynch, Greg McBean, Rita Robinson and Martijn van Well.

## SPARE PARTS & TOOLS

Contact Max Lewis. Phone: 0458 993 771 [if you do phone, please do so at a reasonable hour] or [spareparts@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto: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](http://www.citcarclubvic.org.au)  
NSW [www.citroencarclub.org.au](http://www.citroencarclub.org.au)  
QLD [www.citroenclubqld.org](http://www.citroenclubqld.org)  
SA [www.clubcitroensa.com](http://www.clubcitroensa.com)  
WA [www.citroenwa.org.au](http://www.citroenwa.org.au)  
Tas [www.citroentas.org](http://www.citroentas.org)

You may recall from previous editions of our magazines, that in 1960 when the Ami was first launched it was hailed as the model which would 'save' Citroën by filling the yawing gap between the 2CV and the ID/DS range.

Exactly a decade later the headlines were almost the same when the GS hit the streets. Only this time, the car was filling the gap between the Ami and the ID/DS range. Actually it really was the same gap as the Ami 6 was 'just' a 2CV in a party frock. Same gap... new filler.

The GS did seriously put Citroën into the mid-size family market for the first time in the marque's history.

The next step was to fill the gap between the two-cylinder Ami 8 and more upmarket 1,015cc GS. Citroën delved into the parts bin and paired up the Ami's body with the GS's motor... and voila, the Ami Super.



With just over 44,000 examples sold the Ami Super could not be described as a success and by the end of the decade a more saleable car to fill that gap was needed.

At the end of the decade the Visa was launched. The headlines were almost the same. 'Citroën's Passport to Prosperity' screamed 'Motor' at the end of 1978. They further wrote 'The latest creation from Peugeot-Citroën's vast parts inventory, the Visa will be offered with a unique choice of engines to bridge the gap between the Dyane and GS and greatly strengthen Citroën's line-up for the Eighties. It's said that there's a supermarket in Paris... where Peugeot, Citroën engineers shop for the major assemblies they need. For there's a bewildering array of engines, transmissions, chassis, bodies and suspensions within Peugeot-Citroën and the permutations [are] endless.'

So as the 45th anniversary of the Visa's launch looms we share with you everything you never thought you wanted to know about the Visa.

Greg Feinberg is here to tell the story of his Visa Super X/Chrono. Actually, this car appears twice in this edition. First in Greg's ownership and second in an Australian compara-

Continued on page 6

This edition of Front Drive will give you a great insight into the heady years of the early 1970s when Citroën Automobiles changed forever ~ following the shot-gun marriage of Citroën and Peugeot in 1974, and for the PSA group to emerge from the ashes after the first fuel crisis in 1973.

Leigh will highlight the Citroën Visa in this edition, which had the rather unfortunate internal model code of VD, which stood for 'Voiture Diminuee'. This was a great first model from the new PSA company. It was a very versatile platform that had engines from 2 cylinders [34hp] up to 4 cylinders and 114 hp in GTi format. Helen and I rented a two-cylinder Visa in New Zealand for the 2018 Raid New Zealand ~ it was indeed a great Citroën to use, and equal to the 2CVs in the group.

Today we are seeing a new conversion from ICE engines towards hybrid-electric and full electric mainstream models in Europe. These will soon arrive into Australia. So, there is another big change coming for Citroën owners in Australia, fifty years after the OPEC crisis. This could be a good time [if you are like me and not interested in an electric car] to buy the possible last ICE model Citroëns before they disappear forever. The C5 X is highly re-

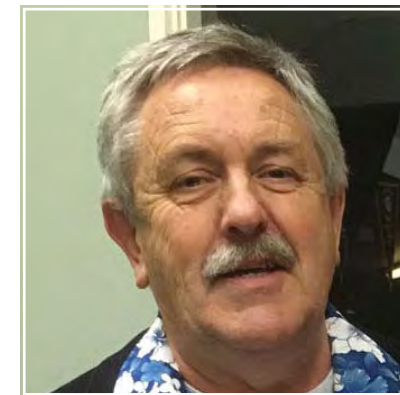
garded by most new owners, so there may yet be hope for us petrol-heads.

CCOCA has an enforced change coming up also, as our long-standing club rooms are to be demolished and a new complex will be built. This process could take two years, so we are looking for a new home ~ any suggestions are welcome. Our sister club CCCV has offered to share their location on a bi-monthly basis. Your committee will start the process to find a suitable new home. This may require a change of meeting night.

Meanwhile, the joint [CCCV and CCOCA] French Car Festival will be running on 22 October in Hawthorn, Victoria. See details elsewhere in the magazine. We need a strong turn out of members to support this event, so please try to come along and make it a success.

New model Citroëns will be

Continued on page 6



## Ed Sed

Continued from page 4

tive road test against the Ford Laser Sport.

Alan Brown recalls a Granny Smith apple-green Visa Club from his past and we look at 'every' variant of the Visa that was ever made... and a couple that never made past the prototype stage.

Chris Bailey is here with more Traction insights. That man's knowledge seems encyclopaedic!

Something for everyone? I hope so!

Enjoy,

Leigh F Miles ~ Editor

## Prez Sez

Continued from page 5

featured. We will need some helpers on the day, so any volunteers please contact me personally if you can help us ~ Many Hands Make Light Work! If you can help in any way on the day give Ted a ring on 0400 592 208 to discuss options.

It is a great pleasure to welcome a new advertiser to our pages. While Shannons Insurers focus on offering insurance for special cars they will also offer competitive rates on your daily driver. Why not give them a call when your next renewal arrives.

Regards to all  
Ted Cross ~ President

## A-Tractions

*Please note: To book or RSVP for a CCOCA organised event you must register on line at the club's website. Do not contact the organiser to register your attendance.*

*In line with Government guidelines CCOCA no longer requires proof of vaccination if you attend events arranged by CCOCA. The requirements of other organizations is not impacted by this decision.*

*The Club strongly recommends wearing a mask in areas where you cannot maintain social distancing.*

### • October

#### All French Car Festival

WHEN: Sunday, 22 October

TIME: From 09:00

WHERE: Patterson Reserve,  
484 Auburn Rd., Hawthorn.

COST: \$10per car

BRING: Everything for a day's picnic including table and chairs

MORE INFO: Ted Cross,

[president@citroenclassic.org.au](mailto:president@citroenclassic.org.au)

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

**ALL FRENCH BOOKING**

Your President and Committee invite you to join them for the French Car Festival hosted this year by CCOCA and CCCV.

Write the date into your diary

## French Car Festival

Sunday  
October 22  
2023

Patterson Reserve  
484 Auburn Road  
Hawthorn Vic 3122  
[northern gate near  
pedestrian crossing]

Gates open 9:00am  
Entry Fee \$10 per car



Large Displays of Cars

Concours for each  
Participating Club

Club T-shirts, Badges,  
Caps etc for sale

Coffee Van on site

BYO Picnic Lunch

and help us fly the flag for our club.

New Citroëns, new Peugeots and new Renaults will be a feature of the day.

Offers of assistance on the day will be gratefully received ~ ring Ted Cross on 0400 592 208 if you can help, even for a short time.

This is a BYO picnic lunch format and an excellent opportunity to catchup with old friends.

Please join us and help make this day a great success.

**October Monthly Meeting**

WHEN: Wednesday, 25 October



TIME:

19:30

WHERE: Frog Hollow Reserve  
Rooms, Fordham Ave.,  
Camberwell

COST: Free

BOOKINGS: Essential for catering by Monday, 23 October

BRING:

MORE INFO: Lee Dennes,  
[l.dennes@bigpond.net.au](mailto:l.dennes@bigpond.net.au)

DO NOT CALL LEE TO REGISTER! You must register/book



## A-Tractions

via the CCOCA website <https://citroenclassic.org.au>

### OCTOBER BOOKING

Bring along your photos from last weekend's All French Day and share your stories of the day!

### • November

#### 11th Gateway to Gippsland Rally

WHEN: Friday, 3 to Monday 6, November

TIME: From 16:00

WHERE: Warragul and district

COST: \$80per vehicle, plus \$142per person [under 12 \$69.50, excl Dinner Dance]

BOOKINGS: Essential

MORE INFO: Eric Bishop, 0409 452 170

[events@wgvrinc.com.au](mailto:events@wgvrinc.com.au)

DO NOT CALL ERIC TO REGISTER! You can download the booking form via the CCOCA website <https://citroenclassic.org.au>

### GIPPSLAND GATEWAY BOOKING

West Gippsland Vehicle Restorers Club Inc invites you to the 'Gateway to Gippsland Rally'. Melbourne Cup Weekend!

Join us and enjoy the 2023 event in your Veteran, Vintage, Classic or Post-Classic Vehicle.

- Friday, 3 November 16:00 to 19:00: Registration at

Masonic Hall Korumburra Rd. Warragul. Tea/coffee/snack food.

- Saturday, 4 November 08:30: Completion of Registration. Morning tea provided 09:30: Official opening of the Rally and scenic drive to Noojee. Lunch at the Noojee Pub. The evening will be free for participants to do as they wish.
- Sunday, 5 November 09:00: Morning tea/coffee at the Masonic Hall. 10:00: A briefing prior to the



Show and Shine event at the Masonic Hall.

12:30: Short run to visit and have lunch at the Holden Museum in Trafalgar. Alternatives include Old Gipps-town at Moe or Yarragon. 18:30 for 19:00: Pizza/Movie Night at the Masonic Hall.

- Monday, 6 November 09:30: Masonic Hall for morning tea/coffee. 10:00: Drive to the Bryant Park Hill Climb venue often described as the best Hill Climb track in Australia! Participants will be able to drive around the track for a bit of fun, but there will be NO RACING! Tea coffee and lunch will be available. Return to Warragul about 15:00, and you can make your own way back having a look around the area possibly including a stop off in Yarragon. 19:00: Dinner Dance at the Drouin Golf Club [Cash bar]. Tea/coffee provided. Dress Code: 'Dress for the era

of your car'. There will also be an Auction of Motoring Memorabilia. A bus will be provided to pick up/ drop off participants for this event from Warragul and Drouin ~ please advise whether you wish to take up this offer. Exact time and location will be confirmed at registration.

- Tuesday, 7 November 08:00 to 09:30: BIG BREKKY ~ Say farewell to all your mates.

### Yea Open Garden Weekend

WHEN: Friday, 10 to Sunday, 12 November

WHERE: Yea, Victoria

COST: Weekend pass to all gardens \$40pp

BOOKINGS: Essential

BRING: Everything for a weekend away

MORE INFO: Marg Towt, [marg.towt@bigpond.net.au](mailto:marg.towt@bigpond.net.au)

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





## A-Tractions



Alexandra Motel & Motor Inn,  
76 Downey Street Alexandra  
3714.

Friday 10 & Saturday 11 November. [03] 5772 2077 Bade or Cassie. Telephone book only. DO NOT book on line! This Motel will be held exclusively for our Citroën group until 10 October 2023. There are limited rooms, so book early! It is a 20 minute drive from Yea, and has local pubs and shops within a five minute walk.

### November Monthly Meeting

WHEN: Wednesday, 22 Nov'r  
TIME: 19:30

WHERE: Frog Hollow Reserve  
Rooms, Fordham Ave.,  
Camberwell

COST: Free

BOOKINGS: Essential for catering by Monday, 20 November

BRING:

MORE INFO: Lee Dennes,  
[l.dennes@bigpond.net.au](mailto:l.dennes@bigpond.net.au)

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

### NOVEMBER BOOKING

#### • December

### Combined CCOCA & CCCV Christmas Spit Roast

WHEN: Sunday, 10 December  
TIME: From 12:00

WHERE: Frog Hollow Reserve  
Rooms, Fordham Ave.,

### YEA WEEKEND BOOKING

The Yea Rotary Open Gardens is an annual event, which has been happening for the past 11 years. It showcases both town and country gardens found in the Yea and surrounding areas. Eight gardens are available to visit. Visitors to any garden will have the opportunity to speak to the garden owners, experience a wide range of individual and inspiring garden designs and enjoy the environs of Yea and its surrounds. Rotary volunteers man each of the gardens providing assistance and local information to visitors. In addition, the local Yea Garden Club holds its annual plant sale which has gained the reputation of providing many varied and unusual plants at very reasonable prices.

- Accommodation [2night stay]



Camberwell

COST: \$20 per person

BOOKINGS: Essential by Friday,  
1 December

BRING: Tables, chairs, glasses  
and refreshments

MORE INFO: Lee Dennes,

[l.dennes@bigpond.net.au](mailto:l.dennes@bigpond.net.au)

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

### CHRISTMAS ROAST BOOKING

This year your Club will be subsidising a spit roast lunch for you to enjoy at our end of year gathering.

There will be a selection of roast meats and salads including those Christmas favourites, honey glazed ham and free-range pork with crispy crackling. For dessert there will be plum pudding with brandy custard





## A-Tractions

along with other decadent festive dishes.

Special Dietary Requirements will be catered for. [See Registration Form].

Please note that the \$20pp price is for Club members and their immediate families. The price for others is \$40pp.

### Looking Ahead

#### • March 2024

#### *Pre Cit-In & Traction Avant 90th Birthday Run, Tasmania*

WHEN: Thursday, 14 to Friday,  
22 March 2024

WHERE: Anti-clockwise around  
Tasmania, ending in Devon-  
port, Tasmania

COST: TBC

BOOKINGS: Essential

MORE INFO: Grahame Vaughan  
0412 593 075

[vaughan.grahame@gmail.com](mailto:vaughan.grahame@gmail.com)

PREAMBLE [Please read carefully]  
An anticlockwise trip around  
interesting parts of Tassie over  
eight days finishing for the start  
of CIT-IN 2024 in Devonport.

The Tour is ideally suited to  
Traction and will celebrate the  
90th Birthday, so please drive  
yours! Naturally, other models  
all welcome.

Accommodation is TIGHT and  
will be first in best dressed, so  
book ASAP.

So get together with your  
friends and share IF POSSIBLE



as this will less expensive and  
will help with accommodation  
tightness.

Telephone or email the venues;  
if you look on their websites  
they may appear 'booked out'  
because space is being held for  
us.

You will need to Register with  
me to get updates [see later]

**Book and pay yourselves for all  
accommodation.**

Full details of the route, accom-  
modation options etc can be  
found in the last edition of the  
Club's magazine.

#### *Cit-In 2024: Devonport, Tasmania*

WHEN: Friday, 22 to  
Monday, 25 March 2024

WHERE: Devonport, Tasmania

COST: \$350pp [adults]

\$125 [children 5-12]

Free [children under 5]

BOOKINGS: Essential by Friday,  
9 February 2024

MORE INFO: Michael Barrett,  
President CCCT,  
0407 360 443

[mikesgarage123@outlook.com](mailto:mikesgarage123@outlook.com)

WEBSITE: [https://citroentas.org/  
cit-in-2024/](https://citroentas.org/cit-in-2024/)

CIT-IN 2024 SITE

#### *Bookings Now Open*

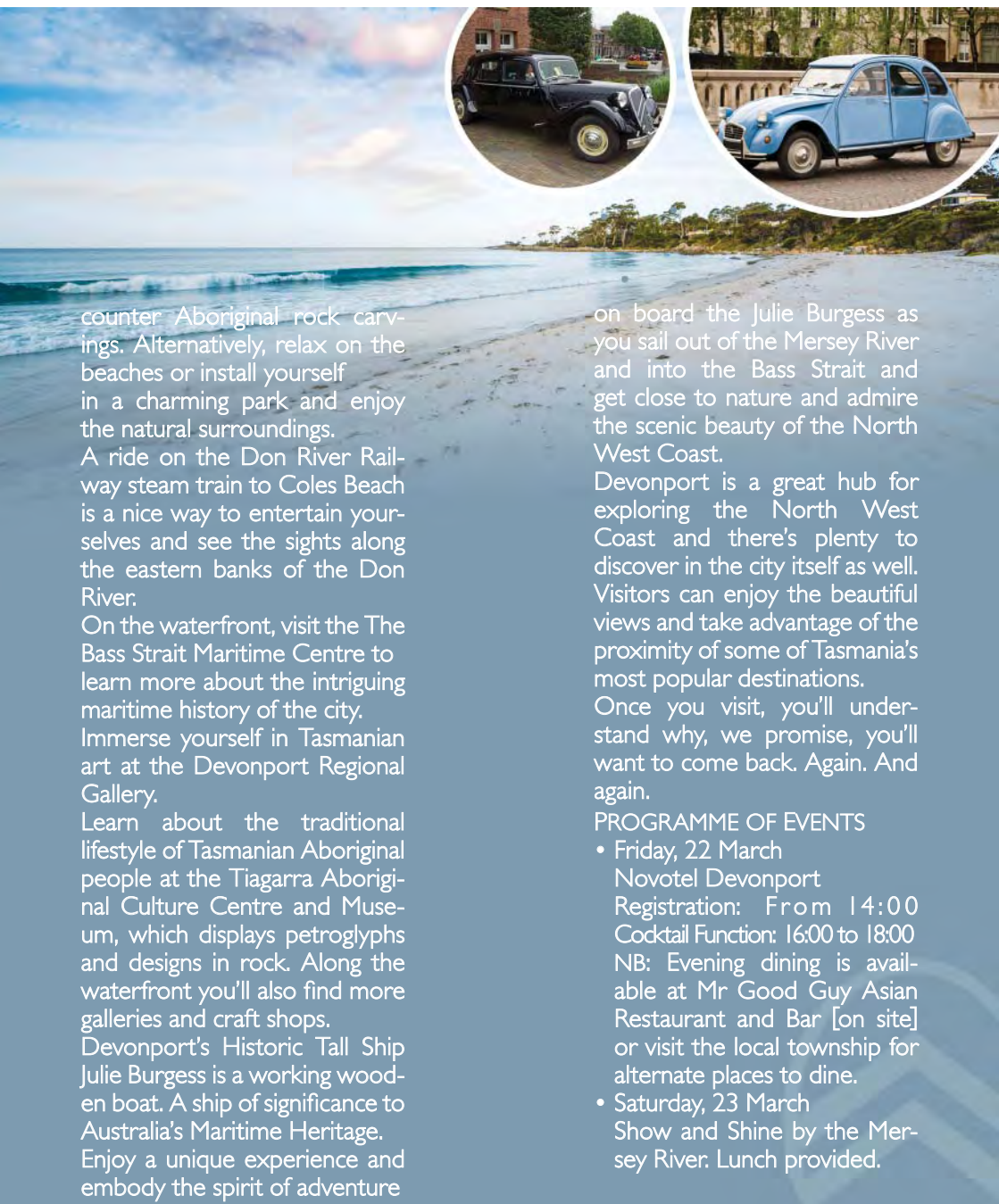
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pdf](https://citroentas.org/files/ccct3553284500530/document-library/registration-document-final-version-printable-2.pdf)

#### CIT-IN BOOKING FORM

Welcome to Tasmania, the  
host state for Cit-In 2024  
'Qur Little Secret'

Devonport is a city on Tasmania  
North West Coast, where the  
Mersey River meets Bass Strait.  
By strolling along the coastal  
trail to The Bluff one can en-





counter Aboriginal rock carvings. Alternatively, relax on the beaches or install yourself in a charming park and enjoy the natural surroundings.

A ride on the Don River Railway steam train to Coles Beach is a nice way to entertain yourselves and see the sights along the eastern banks of the Don River.

On the waterfront, visit the The Bass Strait Maritime Centre to learn more about the intriguing maritime history of the city. Immerse yourself in Tasmanian art at the Devonport Regional Gallery.

Learn about the traditional lifestyle of Tasmanian Aboriginal people at the Tiagarra Aboriginal Culture Centre and Museum, which displays petroglyphs and designs in rock. Along the waterfront you'll also find more galleries and craft shops.

Devonport's Historic Tall Ship Julie Burgess is a working wooden boat. A ship of significance to Australia's Maritime Heritage. Enjoy a unique experience and embody the spirit of adventure

on board the Julie Burgess as you sail out of the Mersey River and into the Bass Strait and get close to nature and admire the scenic beauty of the North West Coast.

Devonport is a great hub for exploring the North West Coast and there's plenty to discover in the city itself as well. Visitors can enjoy the beautiful views and take advantage of the proximity of some of Tasmania's most popular destinations.

Once you visit, you'll understand why, we promise, you'll want to come back. Again. And again.

#### PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

- Friday, 22 March  
Novotel Devonport  
Registration: From 14:00  
Cocktail Function: 16:00 to 18:00  
NB: Evening dining is available at Mr Good Guy Asian Restaurant and Bar [on site] or visit the local township for alternate places to dine.
- Saturday, 23 March  
Show and Shine by the Mersey River. Lunch provided.

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## A-Tractions

Free afternoon, to explore.  
Buffet Dinner ~ Paranple Centre.

- Sunday, 24 March

Choice of Wine and Food Trail Tours.

Observation Competition.

Formal Dinner and Presentations ~ Paranple Centre.

- Monday, 25 March

Farewell breakfast.

### REGISTRATION

On our website

[BOOKING FORM](#)

### CANCELLATION POLICY

The committee will make every endeavour to refund monies to people who submit a request. Each case will be considered individually.

### ACCOMMODATION

Novotel Devonport is Devonport's premium 4-star hotel boasting an unrivalled location in the heart of the city. With city, park and water views, it is perfectly positioned within easy reach of shops, restaurants and the Spirit of Tasmania terminal. Relaxed, family friendly and welcoming. Home to the Spirit of Tasmania and known for its reserves, cycling, walking tracks,

recreational facilities, beaches and rivers Devonport makes a great base for your holiday to Tasmania with ease of access to explore the North Coast and neighbouring towns.

- Novotel Devonport Contact details

2 Best St., corner of Rooke and Best Sts., Devonport, Tasmania, Australia 7310.

You can book your accommodation by going to [www.idem.events/r/citroen-car-club](http://www.idem.events/r/citroen-car-club) or follow the link below: [NOVOTEL BOOKING](#)

\* Securing accommodation is your responsibility

### ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION

A selection of alternative accommodation options, including motels, B and Bs and caravan parks, will be publicised on our Website [www.citroentas.org](http://www.citroentas.org) shortly.

REACH ONE'S DESTINATION. Come on board.

Spirit of Tasmania

[www.spiritoftasmania.com.au](http://www.spiritoftasmania.com.au)

\* Securing travel is your responsibility, sailing bookings are limited so don't miss out on this great adventure. Book now !!!!!



### Chit Chat Tuesday

WHEN: 1st Tuesday  
3 October  
7 November  
5 December  
TIME: 10:00  
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 H'way, Dromana. Easy to find, plenty of parking, under-cover seating if weather wet. This is a low key 'DIY' event for like minded Citroën owners to meet and chat.

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## Spare News

Hello all Traction and D owners and others.

This is my first column about Spare Parts and its workings since I put up my hand last April to look after it.

It was a sort of impulsive; putting up my hand and I blame it on the two glasses of Shiraz I had before the committee meeting that announced Lance Wearne, the incumbent was looking to retire after 10 years of looking after Spare Parts.

Yes, I can say that since April this year, I have been going at it hammer and tongs.

The items were trucked down to me here in Moonee Ponds and after a rummage around I could see that specific racking was required.

Not only that, but my workshop prior to the arrival of hundreds of items, as well needed a significant change.

This meant I was able to achieve two necessary actions



at once.

The term 'killing two birds with one stone' is an appalling thing to say as I have many types of our feathered beauties co-habiting at our property.

Sometimes you would think they own it.

Once the racks were more or less in order I sent out a call for those in the club to look at their over winter rummaging around with their beloved cars [mainly Traction of course] in their heated garages / workshops and believe it or not an avalanche of enquiries poured forth.

From a set of liners and pistons to just one wiper arm.

Most of the parts required had to come from our European [predominantly Holland] suppliers.

I soon established my choice of two good ones and have tried to give them an equal share.

Both Netherlanders have extensive parts listings, CAS is solely Traction and CTA is Traction, ID/DSs, H vans and Renault and Peugeot.

They are good to deal with and once I got into a rhythm all has been good.

With the absolutely fantastic assistance of Ian Macdermott we have spent some time [and more to come] looking at the inventory and seeing how we can improve it and the system associated with it.

As we move from one nook

and cranny to the next we are either appalled or amazed, sometimes both, where for example, we have just ONE over-size piston [0.8mm oversize] and no others.

Numerous piston rings with none of them standard... oh my goodness!!

Why... we can only guess but some of them look like they have been around for decades.

Anomalies abound and we are going to sort our way through these and once determined their history and status... we may either scrap them to the bin OR offer to our members at a heavily discounted price.

So folks... watch this space.

My experience with Traction parts prior to this calling was minimal to say the least and I struggle to sometimes needing to translate someone's 'have you got that thingamy that joins the whatsit under the douberrrie'. No worries says I, as I rush off to Ian for guidance.

You see folks, the Spare Parts lads prior to me are very long term Traction and/or ID/DS owners with a thorough understanding of things.

Me... no I am but a beginner and learning quickly with the invaluable help from Ian.

I am enjoying the position enormously as my career in sales has always been service orientated.

This never gelled very well

with my employers over the decades and I was always defending my ethos and not without multiple cranial bruising.

So folks, here I am at your beck and call and service will be the prime motivation.

I have had, and I am proud of this, a goodly number of members thank me for a quick turnaround.

My pleasure says I.

In saying this folks, once we have got the parts in the position that Ian and I are happy with, I will probably move on.

Ten years for me will bring me close to 87 years of age.

Imagine that.

Toodahoo

Max Lewis ~ Spare Parts Officer





## Recent Doings: Culinary Capers

Citroën enthusiasts with Masterchef aspirations got together in September to learn the art of making Chinese dumplings. This event was hosted by club members Rita and Mark Robinson at the Cheltenham Community Centre where a commercial kitchen and dining area provided ample space to polish our skills.

Dumplings are a traditional Chinese food which apparently date back to the efforts of a revered physician named Zhang Zhongjing. This was during the Eastern Han Dynasty around 1,800 years ago and the distinctive ear shape of the dumpling is said to guard against frostbite in cold climates. Numerous variations have since appeared with different fillings, pastry and methods of cooking.

Rita learned the art of dumpling making from her mother and was happy to pass on this Northern Chinese recipe as well as a few tricks of the trade to our budding chefs. We started out blending pork mince, parsley, coriander and generous amounts of garlic before secret herbs and spices were added.

The oval shaped dumpling pastry pieces were then sepa-

This page, top to bottom:  
The first task is to read the recipe.  
Then it is time to chop and mix the dumpling filling.



rated, a little filling included and each one pressed by hand into that distinctive ear shape. There is a lot of work producing them in large numbers but Rita explained that this is normally done by the extended family with everyone pitching in. Just as human ears vary in shape and effectiveness so did our dumpling versions.

Ours were then boiled in a huge pot while the dipping sauce was being created from sesame oil, soy sauce, chilli paste and more garlic.

Soon enough, it was time to enjoy the fruits of our labour and socialise, an activity at which CCOCA members always seem to excel. Thanks again to Rita and Mark for organizing this event and sharing this ancient art with us.

Peter Lynch

Photos by Rita Robinson and Peter Lynch.



## Citroën's Passport to Prosperity

The latest creation from Peugeot-Citroën's vast parts inventory, the Visa will be offered with a unique choice of

engines to bridge the gap between the Dyane and GS and greatly strengthen Citroën's line-up for the Eighties.

It's said that there's a super-

market in Paris, fully stocked but not open to the public. It's where Peugeot, Citroën [and perhaps now Chrysler] project engineers shop for the ma-

jor assemblies they need. For there's a bewildering array of engines, transmissions, chassis, bodies and suspensions within the Peugeot-Citroën group



At its launch there were two models in the UK. The 652cc twin-cylinder Club shown on this page and the four-cylinder 1,124cc Super [facing page]. Images: Daily Telegraph and Stellantis



Externally the only significant difference was the presence of side strips on the Super. Note: The repeater turn indicator on the Super is in the correct original location. As the images overleaf show side repeaters were not fitted to Continental cars. Images: Stellantis



## Citroën's Passport to Prosperity



now and the choice is wide, the permutations endless.

It is Peugeot's declared policy to shuffle the bits around as much as possible [in order to utilise production capacity to a maximum] and what we've seen up until now is just the start. What price, for instance, would you put on a V6 CX? Or a hydropneumatically suspended 604?

These are just conjectures, of course. What is certain is that the latest piece in the Peugeot-Citroën jigsaw, the Visa, will go on sale in France at next week's Paris Show and reach Britain in mid-1979. The Visa is based on

On the Continent at launch there was a third model: the Special with an even more basic specification. Externally it can be identified by the mesh grille rather than the four chrome bars of the more expensive models. Images: Stellantis

the Peugeot 104 floorpan and running gear and is offered with a choice of a newly developed flat twin cylinder engine or the in-line four presently used in the Peugeot 104 and Renault 14. In having front-wheel drive and a hatchback [with the sophistication of four side doors] the Visa follows the modern trend for small cars; front engine/rear wheel drive can hardly be regarded as conventional any more.

In the name Visa lies an outward sign of the new confidence pervading Citroën. In the wake of the 1973 oil crisis they were in the doldrums from which they were rescued by Peugeot finance and management. Since then the CX has been a phenomenal success, and today they're making more GSs than ever before. But any new models since 1973 have been introduced with great caution. The Peugeot 104 Coupé-based LN,

for instance, has been sold in France alone.

But Citroën intend to market the Visa widely and aggressively. Unlike the LN, which retained the 104 Coupé's body, the Visa has wholly new external panels, of a sleekness and distinction befitting the Citroën name.

To see how the Visa fits into Citroën's model range it is necessary to refer to the French government's tax-rating by a fiscal horsepower system. This is based on the car's swept volume and other factors such as gearing, and the most down-market model, the 2CV has [predictably] a rating of 2CV or horsepower. Next comes the 2CV6 and Dyane [both rated at 3CV]. But the least powerful GS, the G Special, counts as a 6CV.

The two engine options give the Visa tax ratings of 4 and 5CV, thereby neatly plugging the gap between Dyane and GS and suitably strengthening Citroën's range. Initially, it was thought that the two-cylinder Visa would have little appeal in the UK. But the British importers, Citroën Cars Ltd, now feel that the twin has sufficient performance [124kph maximum] and more than enough refinement [partly through a new design of crankshaft] to overcome the traditional British resistance to such an engine. The twin-cylinder Visa will be available with





## Citroën's Passport to Prosperity

a choice of trim levels, Special and Club, whereas the four-cylinder model will only be available as the Super on the UK market.

### Body & Structure

As the floorpan of any car is the one major pressing that costs more than any other to tool up for [because of its complex shape and sheer size] it is logical to 'commonise' this part throughout similar sized models of the same group. General Motors did this as far back as the Rekord II and Vauxhall FE Victor and latterly with the T-car [Kadett, Chevette, Gemini in Australia], for instance. The Visa is therefore based on the Peugeot 104's floorpan but is clothed in a body wholly designed by Citroën

stylists and clearly bearing their signature. The bonnet, for instance, has a typically steep slope, and the whole shape looks characteristically 'clean' and aerodynamically sleek. No drag figures have been quoted yet, however.

[Subsequent reports suggested the drag coefficient was 0.41. While this compared favourably with the Peugeot 104's figure of 0.44 it was suggested the engineers were not happy. The subsequent GTi version attained 0.39, but the Peugeot equivalent, the 205 GTi beat it with just 0.34. Ed.]

Although the car has an overall length of just 3.7m, Citroën say that the interior is exceptionally spacious. As the 104's is

Where it all started in 1972: the Peugeot 104. Originally launched with a boot it was converted to a hatchback with its 1976 relaunch. The short wheelbase version [shorter by 20cm] appeared in 1973. Images: Secret Classics [this page] and Stellantis and Actural [facing page].



spacious [for the class] we have no reason to doubt this. Like the latest 104s the body has five doors, and the rear seat can be folded to augment the car-

rying capacity greatly. Integral bumpers made of 'thermoplastic elastomer' on metal formers are provided and are claimed to give good protection in acci-





## Citroën's Passport to Prosperity



Whether powered by the twin [this page] or the four-cylinder [facing page] motor the engine itself was totally concealed by the spare wheel and in the case of the twin by the air-filter as well. The II RE on the facing page is a Series II Visa. Sales of the Series I cars with their bulbous front bumpers were disappointing. Heuliez was commissioned to revamp the car's appearance without incurring too much cost. Sales of the Series II cars were significantly higher. Images: Stellantis

dents, remaining free of damage in parking-speed collisions of up to 4kph.

Perhaps the biggest headache

the designers had was in trying to marry the two very different engine/transmission packages into the same structure. To our knowledge the Visa is the first car ever to be offered with two engine options, one of which is transverse, the other longitudinal. The 104 package fitted directly, of course, but the twin with its fore/aft GS gearbox had to be sited uncomfortably far forward so as not to intrude into the passenger compartment. As a result the twin's driveshafts 'trail' considerably back to the front wheels, though the angularity has been



minimised to some extent by moving the wheels forward with respect to the body. This is done by slight changes to the suspension [exactly what isn't known at the time of going to press] but the result is that the twin has a wheelbase 1.5cm longer than that of the four. It also has a new steering rack to clear the transmission.

### Interior

Citroën have very much taken to heart criticisms of poor ventilation in previous cars and have gone to great lengths to cure this shortcoming in the Visa. There are four face levels

vents of large size in the front, for instance, and ducts are provided to supply both fresh and heated air to the rear: definitely unusual for this class.

Perhaps what will create the most interest in the Visa's interior is the new control layout. The design philosophy is the same as that behind the CX's, a collection of switches grouped ergonomically on facia extensions rather than fingertip stalks. Unlike the CX's [which we find very effective, incidentally], the Visa's arrangement consists of a cylinder incorporated in an extension of the steering column



## Citroën's Passport to Prosperity

console on the left side alone.

The upper part of the cylinder has the controls for driving in rain [washers and wipers], the central section those needed at any time [indicators and horn] and the bottom those controls needed at night [lights master switch, dipswitch and flasher]. 'Scallop' shapes in the rotary switches enable their rotation by fingertip without the driver needing to take his hands

off the wheel.

On the right of the steering wheel there is another fascia protuberance carrying the slides for the heating system distribution and temperature. There is a profusion of warning lights and the speedometer is conventional.

### Engines

The power unit of the Super version is the in-line four cylinder light-alloy single overhead

The 104 also gave birth to the Talbot Samba, which only ever featured the Peugeot 4-cylinder motor... the last of the 104 derivatives. This was launched in 1981 and bravely soldiered-on until 1986 when the Citroën AX finally sounded the death knell which was long overdue. The largest motor available was 1,360cc in the Cabriolet and the range-topping GLS. Images: Talbot brochure

camshaft engine made by Societe Francaise de Mecanique at Douvrins in North France. It is presently fitted to the Peugeot 104 GLS [sold as the SL in the UK] and the Renault 14 and remains essentially unchanged for its Visa application apart from the cooling system. In the interests of economy, Citroën have raised the final drive from 4.06:1 to 3.563:1 with the gear ratios of the integral gearbox remaining

unchanged.

Although the twin cylinder engine of the Visa Special and Club was developed from the existing 602cc twin used in the 2CV6 and Dyane, the resulting design has very little in common with the original. The engine's crankshaft is still orientated longitudinally in the car, driving through a conventional single dry plate clutch to an in-line gearbox [from the GS rather

I suppose we should be grateful to the Peugeot bean-counters that they allowed Citroën to install a single-spoked steering wheel to the LN/LNA. While the LN [1976-'78] used the venerable 602cc motor from the 2CV the LNA [1978-'86, the a was for 'Athlétique'] used the 652cc Visa engine and Peugeot's 4-cylinder motors appeared in 1982. It was still shit. Images: Stellantis.





## Citroën's Passport to Prosperity

than the 2CV to cope with the great torque]. The camshaft is still mounted below the crankshaft, being gear-driven and operating the opposed valves via long push rods and rockers.

But that's about as far as similarities go. The new engine has a three bearing crankshaft, one either side of the crank throws as is normal in twins, but a third the other side of the camshaft drive on a nose extension. This arrangement is said to reduce noise and vibration greatly. 'The cylinders are now of aluminium, the bores being coated with nicasil [a material originally developed by Citroën for their abortive Wankel G2 engine]. Swept volume has been increased from 602cc to 652cc and a new cam profile helps boost torque to a competitive 51.5Nm/38 lb ft. Maximum power is 26.9kW/36bhp [DIN] at 5,500rpm.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the new engine, however, is the wholly electronic ignition system. Citroën 2CVs have never had a distributor as such, a spark being supplied to both cylinders every engine revolution whether they're on compression or exhaust. An extra spark in the 'dead' engine cycle has never been proved to have any deleterious effects. But the twin has previously had a contact breaker, access to which has only been possible by

removing the cooling fan on the nose of the crank.

In the Visa arrangement, the ignition system consists of a coil, an electronic control unit [computer], a vacuum sensor on the carburettor throat and two magnetic sensors on the clutch housing. There is a metallic slug fitted to the engine's flywheel which passes close to the two magnetic sensors, one of which is mounted at 10° before top dead centre [corresponding to the point of minimum advance] and 45° before top dead centre [maximum advance]. The magnetic sensors also produce a speed signal from which the computer [together with the vacuum signal] decides the optimum spark timing between these limits. The ignition advance curve is thus 'stored' entirely electronically.

Citroën claim that this extremely simple arrangement requires no adjusting; that it is more stable; that it provides much more accurate tailoring of the advance curve [and hence improved fuel consumption, torque, acceleration and reduced emissions]; and that it gives better starting and longer plug life.

This article first appeared in 'Motor' on 30 September, 1978. It is taken from the Editor's archive. The author is not credited.

## French Farming in the '90s

Bonjour chers amis Citroënnistes des antipodes,

The heatwave arrived late this year, and it ended yesterday.

At its height, I received an elegant request from our esteemed Editor.

« Alan, you may not be aware that this year is the 45th anniversary of the Visa launch. Might we re-print the tale you wrote for the British Citroënnian magazine about your French farming neighbours and their Granny Smith green Visa some years ago ? »

Leigh has an excellent memory for detail, and his archiving skills are legendary. I knew that he'd have retrieved a copy in less than the time it takes for a DS to rise to normal drive-height after a week's slumber.

« It was published in November 1993, you know... »

Thirty years les amis !

In France, the thirty boom-years for French farming [essentially 1950-1980] are usually referred to as « Les Trente Glorieuses » here in agricultural circles. The Farmers, of course borrowed the phrase from The Historians, but you can Google that one.

How, then, might we characterise developments in French farming over the most recent three decades, a period during which the number of « agricul-

teurs » in our locality has fallen from seventy to less than half that number ? And during which the roll-call of trusty two-pots or C15 diesel panel van farm vehicles has fallen from maybe two dozen to just... one ?

Well, as so often happens here in backwater Vendée, colourful inspiration came in the form of a visit from a neighbour...

After reading Leigh's email, I switched off the computer and walked the fifty paces from the office towards the kitchen. It would have been a winter Sunday afternoon in Melbourne, but in Sainte-Cécile it was mid-morning and the September sun was already high above the oaks.

I was half way to the kitchen door when I heard the crunching of tyres on gravel, then the hum of a hybrid DS4. I reflected that these days, we often hear the tyre noise first ; what a contrast to those two-cylinder Granny Smith Visa, Dyane or Deuche days when the whining duet of motor and transmission would announce the imminent arrival of a friend or neighbour before the Michelins did.

Gilbert's shiny-new conveyance hummed past the office door, and parked next to our venerable C8 Papybus beside a carpet of wind-fallen peaches. I saw him reach across to the basketful of tomatoes on the



## French Farming in the '90s

passenger seat.

As I thought about the Visa story Leigh had requested, Gilbert walked across towards the house. In flashback I pictured the green Visa and its « elephant man/wombat nose » front bumper; the successful launch of the Croué brothers' beef business; the silver Renault 5 giving way to a Twingo « Easy » automatic for Colette; Roger sitting on the rescued brown vinyl Ami 8 rear seat in front of the bakehouse bread oven fireplace at Le Breuil; numerous four-season visits down the decades to the wine cellar when nearly every agriculteur seemed to have a C15 or a Jumpy.

Then an array of aromas: maize silage in winter, like fermenting cider; brioche baking at Easter; cloudy vin nouveau in October; strong filtered coffee concluding every lunch. After Roger left us during the grape harvest of 2016, Gilbert and Jocelyn carried on the wine-making tradition for three or four years, but nowadays, with young farmers and their penchant for beer, the wine-press is inactive.

Finally the inevitable changes that have come in the last few years as tractors have become bigger with air-conditioned « cabines à l'australienne ».

A few seconds later, and Gilbert reached the kitchen door.

We shook hands after he placed the tomatoes on the table.

« Tu prends un café, Gilbert ? »

We sit and exchange Sunday heatwave thoughts as the kettle boils. I know that Gilbert and Geneviève have a proper-flash capsule coffee machine in their ultra-modern farmhouse kitchen. We laugh as I apologise for the instant coffee and our « préférence anglo-saxonne » for tea, even after all these years.

Gilbert and Jocelyn retired immediately after, as he describes it, « L'année Covid ». The brothers did not have children; their farm is now managed energetically and efficiently by a twentysomething neighbour's son who drives a black Toyota pick-up.

The brothers have not been blessed with good health since retirement, but both of them read assiduously « Ouest-France ». Their knowledge of world events, especially agriculture and economics, makes for enlightening conversation. He also brings me up to date with local issues and associated gossip great and small. He has a keen nose for political scandal at regional, national and pan-European levels. Gilbert was a farmers' federation representative in Vendée.

« Gilbert, je dois préparer un article sur la Visa de Colette pour un magazine Australien. »

I ask him if he has any recollections of the car.

« Ah oui, mon cher Alan ! When we bought it new from Citroën in La Roche it was the first brand-new car we had ever owned; the dealer took our Ami 8 break in part-exchange, and La Visa was of interest to us because the road-tax rating was the same as the Ami if you chose the smaller engine: just trois chevaux, three fiscal horsepower. I collected it from the dealer before Christmas in 1978. It had snowed in Vendée, and that is a rare event. »

I remark that we have rarely seen snow in recent years, usually only a sprinkling in January.

« We chose that green colour because Colette liked it. The seats were cloth with those brown polka dots. Much better in summer than the Ami vinyl ones. And les instruments ! In their square pods with those satellite switches like a... tablette de chocolat ! The engine was quite perky for such a small size, but I think the Ami felt smoother. Perhaps that was just an impression because the car was new. I drove it home on the Route Nationale, which had been salted, then on the Départementale, which had not. It drove very well on the snow. The intérieur was not as quiet as the Ami, I thought. »

I mention that Visas are a rare sight these days...

« Oui, oui mon ami. Just last week, out of curiosity I looked on L'Internet and found 42 for sale in the whole of France on Le Bon Coin »

He laughs when I tell him that in Australia, Le Bon Coin is known as Gumtree.

« Yes, you told me once that gumtree is another term for eucalyptus... 42 Visas ! I would perhaps buy one for old time's sake now that I am retired. But it would have to be one of the early ones with that chocolate box dash and all of the Citroën-inspired flourishes which disappeared in the facelift model, presumably after Peugeot got their way. Most of those for-sale ones are later models, with the bigger engine. I think I could find a good early model for two or three thousand Euros. »

I observe that this would be the price of a single head of cattle, and we make a joke about trading one fattened cow for three horses.

As we drink our respective tea and coffee, I tell him that Shirley will visit Colette in the Sainte-Cécile retirement home later that afternoon. Colette just turned 90.

I ask if he has any thoughts about change and progress over the past thirty years.

« I think our parents saw the most revolutionary changes, mon ami. Roger started his career as a tenant farmer with a



## French Farming in the '90s

pair of oxen and a plough. Their first tractor was 1953; une Renault, orange naturellement. Then a blue 2CV six years later. The Ami 8 in 1968, and it was beige. Then the green Visa a decade later. When he retired both Jocelyn and I drove tractors with cabins. They were green too ! »

I remark that they had also, through hard work and intelligent planning, become owners of their hundred and fifty hectares, and that this process had gained momentum around the time that they purchased the little Visa in 1978.

Gilbert smiles.

« Oui, les années Giscard ! He used to drive a DS and a Deux-

Chevaux you know ! And a selection of Renaults to advertise the state-owned manufacturer at the time. »

I thank him for the reminder, and asked him if he missed anything from the old days.

« Perhaps the... disponibilité, by which I mean how people seemed to have more time to help one another. Now we have more efficient machinery. Our work is less physical. It is the physical work that has weighed heavily on my brother and me. But I am not certain that we necessarily have more... quality time... than we had before ».

He pauses, then adds :

« It is the pace of change these days which I sometimes find...

bewildering. But we must live with our times, must we not ? Je ne regrette rien ! »

We smile once more when I tell him that he just uttered the French phrase with which anglophones are more familiar than any other.

He finishes his coffee, and I transfer the giant tomatoes from his basket to ours, then offer him some peaches in return.

« Non, non, ça va. We also have had a bumper crop of pêches de vigne this year ! »

As he drives away, the electric hum of his hybrid fades down the lane. Time stands still again as I work out how to put the past quarter of an hour into writing.

After a few seconds, or perhaps longer, I emerge from the rêverie.

In the distance, on the other side of the stream, I hear a two-cylinder screaming down the hill past the chook Hilton sheds.

I look across, between the trees. There is the boxy silhouette of a claret-coloured LNA flashing between the poplar trunks.

I know it will be Christophe, René's son, who inherited the car after René left for the celestial wine-cellar in 2019. It is the only two-cylinder former farm car in Sainte-Cécile now.

And the story of René's LNA, to which he had given the name « Titine », al-ong with the link

between that particular little Citroën and a pair of Dassault Mirage aircraft on the day of René's funeral is, Amis Antipodéens, a story we shall share soon.

In the meantime, I hope that you will enjoy reading the Visa tale from 1993. Alan Brown September 2023



A traditional treat during the grape harvest. These peaches ripen around the same time as the wine grapes in Vendée, and are eaten by the pickers during vineyard picnics.



René washing his LNA for the last time. his funeral was just two weeks later.



## French Farming in the '90s

Here is Alan's original story...

### Granny Smith Still a Steady Earner

High summer, thirty-five celsius forecast for this afternoon, although the mid-morning air still carries the cool memory of dawn. Gilbert raises his voice to compensate for the Visa's two-cylinder engine as it buzzes to keep the needle over 100kph...

'There's a good spot down by the river where we can get the cattle, the valley and the woods into one shot.'

We pass the newly-erected signs for the three Country Walk circuits the Ste Cécile village council has approved.

Access to the river would call for some serious off-roading, to which the larger wheels and longer travel suspension of a 2CV would have been better suited. The Visa copes, just about, with the descent. We'll worry about the climb back up the valley after the photo session. While Gilbert is off rounding up the most attractive bovines, I cast an eye over the farm hack, which, until last spring, had been his mum's pride and joy.

Bought new in 1979, the little twinpot had Granny Smith apple-green duco, chocolate vinyl floorcoverings, and polka-dot choccy drop trim.

Tasty.

Thirteen years travelling the couple of kilometres from le Petit Breuil to the village shops, with the occasional foray to Chantonay had put 28,000kms on the clock.



On his retirement, Roger handed over the farm to his two sons and treated Collette to a silver Renault 5. The budding beef baronets, Gilbert and Joselin, started to wear out the Citroën...

With a thriving cattle farm to run and a busy schedule, the lads quickly loosened up the lazy 652cc lump, sometimes reaching speeds worthy of a four-cylinder down the long descent from the Carrefour de la Lune into Ste Cécile, veterinary hypodermics rattling in the dust-lined boot. Last year they experimented for the first time with 'plasticulture', growing lofty maize in record time under strips of biodegradable plastic. Granny Visa transported the rolls of PVC, abetting in one farmers' solution to the Eurocratic neatness of set-aside; make the 85% of your land produce 15% more...

Gilbert is striding back up the paddock in shorts and wellies, leading a dozen Rambo-like Charolais, future stars of the brochure we're preparing to promote ~ 'Le Boeuf de la Vallée du Lay'. Young agriculteurs must be dynamic these days. The halcyon époque of subsidies is almost over. He has decided, unlike the majority of his colleagues locally, not to diversify into poultry or tourism. Instead, he specialises in maize and silage to produce beef, beef

and beef. Such is his dynamism and the quality of the product, that it is rare not to find at least one 'représentant' in the wine cellar at aperitif time.

When we've exposed all the film we need, I comment that the Visa is wearing well, considering. Despite its nickname, it has not yet reached the geriatric stage where fencing wire and bindatwine repairs become necessary. And it probably won't. With the disappearance of all of those 'inefficient' farmers, out go the threadbare 2CVs, Ami 8s and Renault 4s. France, and the world, has moved on. The Supermarket is king, and a despot to boot. Despite the ad-man's hype of H vans and chickens in forests, the reality is hard-nosed business. Gilbert is bemused when I tell him that, for an increasing number of Britons, the main aim of a Sunday is to do their shopping in cathedrals to consumerism...

Collette's Visa is a stop-gap while Gilbert awaits a more economical, youthful and capacious replacement. Next month he takes delivery of a C15 diesel.

The Visa is dead, long live the Visa! Judging by the way Citroën is promoting the five seater 'mixte' version of the C15 in some parts of Europe, the career of this model is far from over. At the Visa launch, the French press dubbed it 'l'Eléphant man'. The later fron-



## French Farming in the '90s

tal treatment was to be less bold. The test of time has perhaps, however, confirmed the manufacturer's affirmation... 'ca, c'est une auto!'

With a touch of the starter, the Green Machine bursts into life, we make it out of the valley, and join in the picnic down by the irrigation lake the brothers built last year. We pull up just as René is pouring the 'Troussepinette', a local aperitif of Oberlin wine, eau de vie, sugar and springtime shoots from the blackthorn tree. He's

**Inset:** The little twinpot had Granny Smith apple-green ducos, chocolate vinyl floor-coverings, and polka-dot choccy drop trim. **Image:** Driven to Write

**Main picture:** Rambo-like Charolais cattle. **Image:** Beef Magazine

already sampled several by the look of things... He shouts across as I finish the film...

'Alain, la Dyane ne démarre plus'.

With the neck of the bottle he indicates the stricken Dyane at the edge of the lake. Another product of the René Uzenot School of Economical Vehicle Maintenance. But that, of course, is another story...

This article, by Alan Brown, first appeared in 'The Citroënian', and appears with the approval of the author.



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## *A Sporting Duel*



How would Australia's only local small car hotshot, the Ford Laser Sport, score against the best of best of Europe's baby bombshells? It's a match Ford thought would never happen, for the Europeans are not sold here. But we've found a Citroën Visa for a France-v-Australia international, played at home. Start barracking!



## A Sporting Duel

The reactions may be different ~ a sacre bleu! against a cor; strewth! ~ but the blueprint to get a car to stand out is universal and no cars need to be noticed more than sporty versions of ubiquitous sedans. Visual appeal and suggested charisma are as much their forte as genuine power boosts, which may be token or even nonexistent. That blueprint, in Australia as in France and anywhere else, requires your stock tinbox-car to come with stripes, tachometer, flashy wheels, colourfully 'young' interior designs, a smaller diameter steering wheel thickly, and preferably leather rimmed, a spoiler or two and enough black paint over the chrome to keep the Minstrel Show in black faces for a year.

The Ford Laser Sport, staggeringly Australia's only local small car with this sort of appeal, fits the bill perfectly. These days it even has some substance to its boy-racer claims ~ five more kilowatts than other Lasers thanks to a high-compression, twin-carburettor version of the 1.5-litre engine.

Europe today has a big selec-

Visas handling is secure and comfortable with lots of grip, but steering lacks Laser's sharpness. Right: 'Dash' looks messy but works well, switch pod is brilliant. Far right: Seats are soft, room good but car is narrow

tion of these hot-shot small cars. It is true to say that Volkswagen, Renault, Peugeot, Ford, Fiat and lately Austin Morris with the MG Metro have given the type a new respectability and appeal, often hand in hand with considerable performance and handling improvements. Despite the best efforts of the French ~ who, in the country areas particularly, are stalwart boy-racers ~ Citroën cars have not been a great part of this boom. Its big sedans have an image all their own, anyway, and the mind boggles at what would have to be done to a Deux Chevaux to impose on it a sporting character. Not even the French would bolt a deep front spoiler on to the 2CV.

Now, however, Citroën has dipped a toe in the water with the introduction of a Super X version of its 2CV of the 1980s, the Visa. Like our own Laser, it



comes with extra power ~ a whole 46kW from its 1,219cc engine, lashings of black-painted trim and special wheels shod with low-profile Michelin TRX tyres. As boy-racer specials go, it's reserved, but there's no mistaking its purpose. For real devotees there's another, even more unlikely, version of the Visa II called the Chrono which comes with every sporting addendum known to mankind.

Neither the Chrono nor the Super X is on sale in Australia and neither is ever likely to be. There is, however, one Super X in early four-speed trim that made it to these shores and which now lives in Sydney where its tall, narrow and so-French body can be regularly seen mixing it in the Parramatta Road rush-hour. This is the car in our photographs, the car we pit here against the Laser Sport, the representative of European

efficiency to keep the Japanese designed Oz hot-shot honest. Well, what else is there to compare the Ford with?

### Prices/Equipment

The Sport is the most expensive of the hatchback Lasers at \$8,221. It differs from the cooking models in having body stripes and 'Laser' graphics, a rear spoiler, smart alloy wheels [shared with Laser Ghia], the twin-carb 1.5 engine [shared with some Meteor and Laser models], stiffer dampers, the addition of a front anti-roll bar and a black treatment cabin with heavily bolstered front buckets. Like the split rear backrest ~ foldable to increase load space and equipped with head restraints ~ the seats are covered with either red- or grey-striped upholstery. There are twin internally-adjustable rear-view mirrors, a five-speed gearbox and rear wiper/washer as standard. An AM radio is fitted, disappointing considering the nature of the car and the fact that the cheaper Laser Ghia comes with an AM/FM/cassette unit.

With the exception of that missing stereo, the Laser is up to equipment standard, although the car pales against the Mazda 323 SS, the Japanese-built version of the same car. This model misses the front anti-roll bar and rear deck spoiler but does come with an electric sunroof, four-speaker stereo ra-





## A Sporting Duel

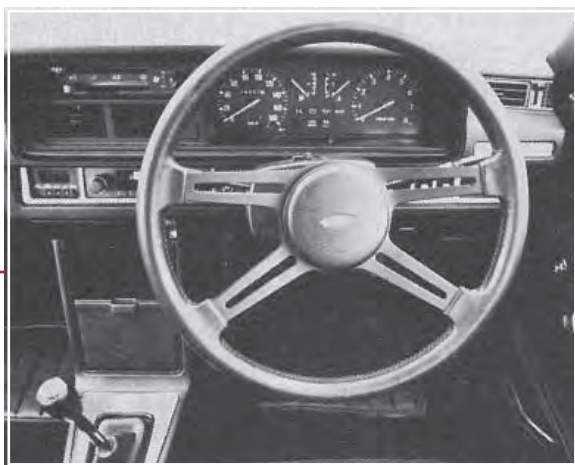
dio/cassette and improved interior trim as well as the Laser's goodies. the 323 SS is listed at \$8,570, but as those who have tried to buy one for that will know, limited availability has resulted in option-loaded 'dealer specials' which go for as much as \$11,500.

In France, the Visa Super X costs FF42,900 which, at seven francs to the dollar, is equivalent to \$6,128 [the Chrono is \$7,857]. In Britain, where this Visa was bought, the Super X four-speed costs the equivalent of \$7,038 and the five-speed \$7,476. Included are the TRX wheels and tyres, twin [non-internally adjustable] mirrors, a rear wiper/washer and handy map light. There are also carpets, cloth seat coverings, a tachometer, heated rear window and cigar lighter ~ all matched by the Laser but a big step up on the rubber mats image of lesser Visas. The stereo and sunroof of the test car are options.

### Performance/Transmission

If you harbour doubts about the effectiveness of 1.2 and 1.5-litres, forget them. Both the Ford and the Citroën engines are high-efficiency single over-

**Laser feels to be on rails compared with Visa with great grip, balance and accuracy but always firm ride. Right: Dash is neat, driving position excellent. Far right: Cabin is bright and comfortable, Sport is still four-seater.**



head camshaft units with high power peaks [the Visa's unemissionised 46kW is developed at 6,500rpm!] and the ability to rev easily to the red-line in the first three gear ratios. Importantly, both engines also offer strong measures of torque at 3,000rpm to allow easy city trundling on the accelerator; neither engine is so highly tuned that it needs constant gearbox shuffling to keep engine rpm high. Both will pull cleanly and briskly from below 3,000rpm in fourth gear.

But it's on the open road, using the gearlever and every last drop of revs, that these cars start justifying their extra cost and the suggested performance of their exterior treatments. Both cars succeed, offering responsiveness and liveliness unavailable in their cooking-model brothers [and a world apart from the 26second 0-100kph

performance of the twin-cylinder Visa] and going on to record top speeds that seem to be beyond their stingily-sized engines' ability.

The Citroën's gear change ~ very light and fairly quick given a guiding hand to overcome some vagueness ~ provides four well-spaced ratios, all of which feel short thanks to the 4.1 final drive. They do mean a very brisk off-the-line performance, however, and excellent access to the good mid-range torque for an encouraging fourth-gear flexibility between 60 and 120kph. With the four-speed box, high-speed cruising is limited by a reluctance and coarseness past 5,500rpm ~ 140kph.

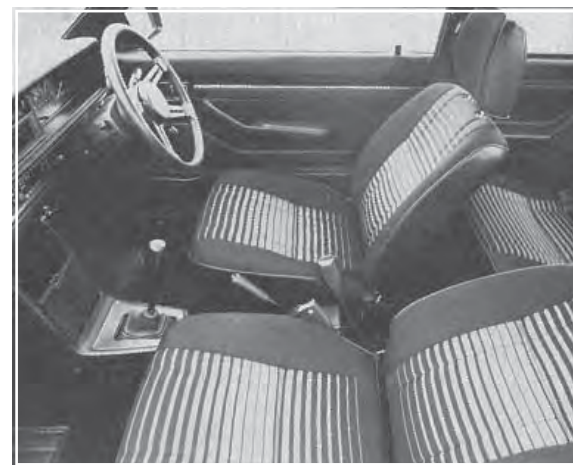
The Laser's gearbox, with five forward ratios, is an obstructive and notchy thing to use when cold, but when warm the changes free nicely to become firm, positive movements free of

baulking. Almost irrespective of gear, there's always a solid reply to accelerator movement and, with a crispness that continues to the red-line at 6,000rpm, this contributes a relentless quality to the performance which is most satisfying. This is despite gear ratios less than ideally suited to the engine's sporting nature. Fourth, especially, is too tall and much too like a normal top gear, which it is in four-speed Lasers. A fourth which will pull 6,000rpm with ease, running out at perhaps 150kph, would transform the top-end performance without affecting cruising ability, for which there is already an ideally tall fifth ratio. We also dislike the clutch, which is very light and too sharp in its take-up.

### Fuel Economy

The Citroën is handicapped here by its missing fifth gear, but the returns are still excellent, ranging from a hard-driven 9.2L/100km to a 6.2 on our fuel loop. It's fine fuel economy and what we've always known a sound European engine without emissions gear and with sparkling performance can give.

After that, it is enough to say that the Laser, with the advantage of a five-speeder and the economy penalties of emissions gear and decisively more power and performance, is just as thrifty as the Frenchman. Running the two together, in





## A Sporting Duel

fact, showed the Ford to have the more restrained thirst, not even looking like sipping its way to below 9.4L/100km. On the fuel loop, too, the 200cc and 13kW extra caused the consumption to be only marginally worse than the Citroën's at 6.5L/100km. In its performance and economy balance, the Laser Sport can hold its head high anywhere in the world and is the best car available in Australia in this respect.

### Handling/Roadholding/ Steering/Brakes

Both the cars are front-wheel-driven, independently sprung, rack and pinion steered and disc/drum braked, but there are big differences in each's ability on the road.

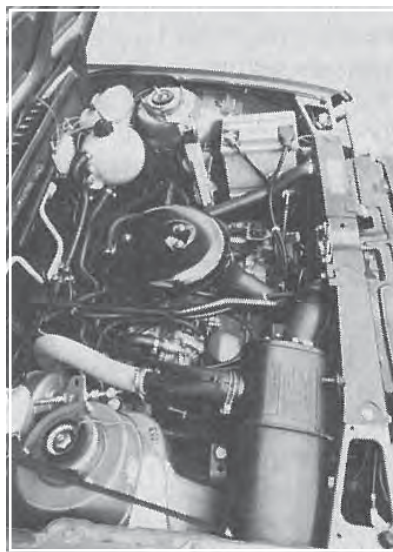
With its ultra-quick steering [which takes some getting to know], good body control, strong roadholding and neutral handling tending towards mild understeer, the Laser is every inch the sporting sedan. It is

**Right:** Spare wheel sits on top of strong, thrifty engine. **Below:** Wheelarches make boot even narrower



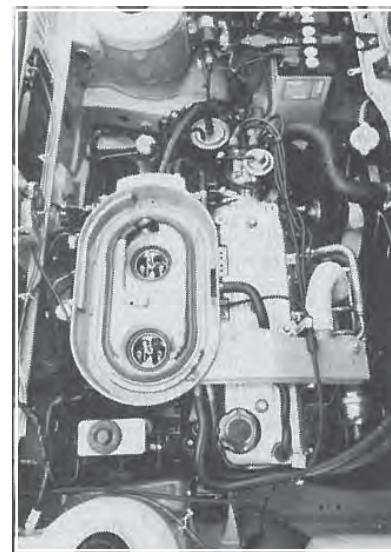
really a balanced little car with great accuracy [once used to the steering] and balance. The driver is rarely aware of the short wheelbase, with all that that usually means in fast tail getaways. Even with all the power on less than smooth roads, tyre slip is limited and stability unaffected: the car just goes on pointing. When the front does start to run wide, gentle accelerator control will have it moving back with millimetric precision.

Our dislikes are few: less than perfect straight-line stability, specially in crosswinds, a spongy brake pedal whose travel increases markedly with high-speed stops and a nasty little accelerator pedal which rules out heel-and-toe braking and thus makes progress never as



smooth as it could be.

Despite its grippy TRX tyres, the Citroën Visa never feels as sporty, but what it does it does well. It steers accurately [if, like the Laser, heavily at low speeds], stops securely and corners with plenty of body roll but the sort of fail-safe handling that makes the car fool-proof. But against the Laser it's uninspired handling, tending towards early and excessive understeer and with too much loading-up through the steering wheel and too much kickback when the body is leaning over and all the long suspension travel is used up. As an extra-power version of a cheapo sedan it does a good job, but as a machine to please an enthusiastic driver it doesn't come anywhere near matching the Ford.



### Ride/Comfort

Here, the Visa does an excellent job, for it is one of the world's most comfortable riding small cars. The Super X's extra body control makes it perhaps the most comfortable of the Visa range, for roll is contained more successfully than in lesser models without compromising the suspension's ability to soak up bumps.

It's a comfort enhanced by soft, well-shaped seats which are effective at masking the knees-up seating positions. The steering wheel is fixed at a good angle and from the driver's seat there's adequate visibility [marred by thick rear pillars] and easy access to all major controls, although the high-mounted pedals accentuate the knees-up attitude for those long of limb. The cabin is kept nice by [surprisingly for a Citroën] an excellent throughput of ram-fed fresh air, though at standstill the noisy fan is unable to provide

**Left:** twin-carb engine offers well-balanced speed/economy. **Below:** There is useful boot-room too.





## A Sporting Duel



a tenth of what's available at 50kph, albeit with a fair amount of wind roar. Engine noise at high rpm is the other dominant sound, though it intrudes minimally at cruising speeds up to about 120kph where the Visa is subdued. An exhaust boom at 3,500rpm spoils cruising at 90-100kph.

Despite the on-paper similarity of the suspensions, there is a world of difference between the Ford and Citroën on the road. The way the Laser is set-up, there's not a hope it will be able to soak up bumps like the Frenchman and it doesn't try. The Sport feels only slightly firmer underneath than ordi-

nary Lasers [and they're no softies] but it's enough to result in a tautness that's a good match for the car's character, with only an unyielding quality to the springing around town to make it uncomfortable hard. At least the ride smooths out, but big, sudden holes or bumps still jar the car noticeably. Were it not for the seats and driving position ~ both first class ~ the bumps would be sometimes too much to take.

Wind, engine and tyre noises regularly penetrate the Laser's cabin and reinforce the suggestion, created by the unyielding suspension, that the passengers and driver aren't as well-

### PERFORMANCE REVIEW

	Ford Laser Sport	Citroën Visa Super X
<b>Fuel Consumption on Test</b>		
Best	8.1	8.9
Worst	8.8	9.2
Fuel loop	6.5	6.2
Min. range [km]	478	436
<b>Speedo Reading</b>		
50kph	49.5	55
70	69	75
90	88	95
110	107	117
130	127	
<b>Speed in Gears [kph/rpm]</b>		
First	48/6,000	41/6,500
Second	84/6,000	77/6,500
Third	126/6,000	117/6,500
Fourth	162/5,400	157/6,000
Fifth	170/4,800	
<b>Acceleration [standing start]</b>		
0-50	4.1	3.9
0-60	5.6	5.4
0-70	7.2	7.1
0-80	8.9	9.2
0-90	10.9	11.5
0-100	13.2	14.6
0-110	15.9	17.9
0-120	18.7	23.1
0-130	21.7	29.8
Standing 400m	18.0	19.2
<b>In the Gears [2/3/4/5]</b>		
30-60	3.5/5.9/9.1/12.4	4.0/6.2/10.1/-
40-70	3.6/5.7/9.3/12.3	4.3/6.4/9.8/-
50-80	4.0/5.8/9.3/12.7	5.0/6.5/9.8/-
60-90	-/6.0/10.1/12.9	-/6.7/9.9/-
70-100	-/6.5/10.8/13.9	-/6.8/11.5/-
80-110	-/6.8/11.1/14.7	-/7.5/13.2/-
90-120	-/7.8/12.6/16.5	-/14.8/-
100-130	-/14.2/19.0	-/18.2/-

isolated from the outside world as they could, and should, be. There is sometimes too much harshness in the noises and bumps for comfort.

The Sport comes only as a three-door and its cabin is therefore not as accessible as the five-door Visa's, though the seat-tilt arrangements in the Ford are good. There's fine visibility all around and efficient heating and ventilation. All the driver wants for, sitting in the extremely comfortable and well-bolstered seat behind the adjustable steering column, is a decent sound system.

### Accommodation/Controls

There's no getting away from the fine job Mazda did in designing so much room into the 323/Laser. The Visa, despite much-vaunted European space-efficiency and a longer wheelbase, confirms it. Probably there's more comfort for four in the Citroën ~ and there's certainly more headroom ~ but the width is very un-Australian and legroom can be tight, though the high-mounted seats ensure that what is available is put to good use. Despite the Laser's shorter wheelbase and lower seats, the car in Sport form is still very much a four-seater, with excellent head- and elbowroom front and rear and legroom, boosted when necessary, by the flexible driving position, that will cause four adults



# A Sporting Duel

## SPECIFICATIONS

	Ford Laser Sport	Citroën Visa Super X
Engine		
Cylinders	Four	Four
Cooling	Water	Water
Valves	SOHC	SOHC
Com. ratio [to one]	10.0	9.3
Bore/Stroke	77×80	75×69
Capacity	1,490	1,219
Max power [kW/rpm]	59/5,500	46/6,500
Max torque [Nm/rpm]	119/3,000	93/3,000
Transmission		
First	3.41	3.08
Second	1.94	1.65
Third	1.29	1.09
Fourth	0.91	0.75
Fifth	0.77	—
Final drive	3.85	4.1
Kph/1,000rpm 4th/5th	29.9/35.3	26.2/—
Suspension		
Front	Struts, coil springs, anti-roll bar.	Struts, coil springs, anti-roll bar.
Rear	Independent, struts, coil springs, parallel lower arms, anti-roll bar.	Independent, trailing arms, coil springs, anti-roll bar.
Brakes		
Front/Rear	Servoed disc/drum	Servoed disc/drum
Steering	Rack and pinion	Rack and pinion
Turning circle	9.2m	9.3m
Turns lock-to-lock	3.5	3.4
Tyres	Uniroyal 180/70S13	Michelin TRX AS 160/65 R340

no problems. The Laser's boot space is very fair but no match for the depth of the Citroën's boot, although luggage width in the Visa is greatly restricted by the wheelarches.

With its attractive steering wheel, colourful seat coverings and black base ~ thankfully relieved by the windows which, despite the blackness, make the cabin feel light and airy the Laser's cabin is welcoming and snug. The controls are well-placed [except the accelerator pedal] and the dashboard is logical and smart, with clear white-on-black instruments: speedo, fuel, water temperature and tachometer. There's no under-dash shelf but a useful array of bins, including a large rubbish receptacle.

Though the Citroën has an under-dash shelf there are precious few other places for the driver to store things. But in its instruments ~ 'dashboard' doesn't really apply ~ and switches, especially, the Citroën is ahead. Perched on top of the steering column behind the one-spoke wheel are two square instruments, monitoring road speed and engine revolutions, with a fuel gauge between them. Eight push buttons, some with warning lights built in, and a similarly-illuminated choke are lined up on a flat panel around the centre of the wheel: they are superbly easy to use and to

## DIMENSIONS

	Ford Laser Sport	Citroën Visa Super X
Kerb mass [kg]	845	815
Fuel capacity [L]	42	40
Dimensions [mm]		
Wheelbase	2,365	2,426
Track [fr/rr]	1,390/1,395	1,302/1,251
Overall length	3,690	3,690
Overall width	1,630	1,535
Overall height	1,375	1,398

monitor. To the right of this, a finger flick away, is a stuck-out triangular pod containing the heat/vent slides and to the left is the master control pod, a cylinder lurking just below your left hand and from which the driver, with a variety of twists, pushes, clicks and pulls, works all lights, wiper/washer and horn functions. It works brilliantly in this car as it would in any car ~ yes, any car, from a Gemini to a Lamborghini Countach, for it outdates all other systems, including the Citroën CX's. It also contributes greatly to the Visa's character, not that the car is lacking here and not all of it is good ~ the peculiar locking arrangement for the front passenger's door, for instance, and the three different keys for ignition [up the right way, of course], doors and fuel flap. Also, the cabin's narrowness and expanses of painted metal get to you.

## Conclusions

The Citroën Visa is a delight-

ful car in many ways and in Super X form its comfort, room, economy and charm are given a new meaning by an engine that is willing and, for the most part, smooth. But the Super X is no sporting hot-shot: the Visa's character, honest enough to be considered anathema to that of a boy-racer special, is far too dominant to be tamed by a bit of black-paint and a bigger engine. What the Super X represents is a faster, smarter Visa and that, for us, is enough, for we fell in love with the car.

Love is too strong a word for our view of the Laser Sport. We regard it highly ~ it's easily one of our favourite Australian-built cars ~ and we admire it for the great driving satisfaction it is able to give, coupled with excellent economy and practicality. In some ways it's a 'compromise car' ~ the gear ratios for instance ~ and in some areas it's rough around the edges, but as Australia's Golf GTi it works, and works well. Compared with Europeans, Australian motorists are poorly served with sporting small cars ~ thank heavens the one representative of the type we do have is as fine a car as the Laser Sport.

This article first appeared in 'Wheels', however I am uncertain of the publication date. The author is not credited but the photographs were taken by Greg McBean.



## Member's Model: Visa Super X

**Visa Super X: Originally!**  
**Visa Chrono: It became!**  
**Pocket Rocket: It was!**

In 1982, Graham wanted a new car to replace his GS 1220 Wagon. I was manager of Maxim Motors Sydney at the time, so Jim [Reddiex], my boss, was approached about buying a new car. He had bought in a new two cylinder Visa for his wife Val to drive, so a new Visa seemed a good choice, and was clearly something different.

Bringing in the car was not the problem, registering it was! Jim said that he had recently bought in a Visa Super X [a four cylinder Visa, with some sporting pretensions] for Laurie O'Neil. Laurie was a car buff, with a passion for Citroëns.

Laurie owned Laurex Waste

Exchange, and had previously owned Blue Metal and Gravel. Jim told us that Laurie had never driven the Visa, and was considering selling it. Laurie had more cars than you could poke a stick at, and had wondered why he really needed the Visa. We approached Laurie, and he advised us that he already had someone else interested in it.

The potential buyer was procrastinating, and Laurie was getting fed up. So we stepped in with the money Laurie wanted, and the car was Graham's. The other buyer was really pissed off! He who hesitates is lost forever. There was one stipulation... REGO.

We picked up the Visa in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs, Laurie offered to show us his car collection. It was in the basement of a huge multi-story block of

units in Double Bay. Neither of us really knew quite what to expect. You're never too sure what to believe from people sometimes, so we were prepared for a few cars, but nothing special. We arrived at the units, and I asked Laurie which one he owned. He said the lot!

The collection was housed in a section of the basement car park, that had been blocked off. From the outside, you couldn't see how large it really was. Laurie opened the side entry door and took us in.

There must have been a dozen cars. All under their own tailored car covers. We stood there in amazement as his daughter, removed the covers, one by one. There was racing Bentley from the 1920s, a Ford GT40, a racing Porsche. The last Ford Mustang convertible built.

It still had the wrapper on the hood. No wonder he didn't need the Visa.

The Visa Super X had a 1,219cc engine, mated to a four speed gearbox. It had no Australian Design Rules [ADR] compliance plate, and came with Queensland registration. We didn't ask any questions.

The papers said it was a Citroën GS? Funny that! We installed a local sunroof, and factory front fog lamps and pressure headlamp washers. It was a great little car with a great ride, but something was missing? Every other manufacturer had their pocket rocket. Where was Citroën's?

For sale only in France, Citroën had released the Visa Chrono. Only one thousand were built. They had a larger 1,360cc engine with twin side draft carburetors.





## Member's Model: Visa GT

rettors [Solex, YUK!], producing 100.7kW//135hp, coupled to a close ratio five speed gearbox. The front brakes had been enlarged, to cope with the massive power increase, and the front and rear suspension springs had been beefed up to keep it on the road.

It went like the clappers, and sounded like just what the doctor ordered, although the exterior of the Chrono was pretty loud.

So on the next sea freight



Maxim Sydney ordered, was one Chrono engine, one Chrono gearbox, four coil springs, and a set of front brakes, and a heap of other bits and pieces to change our Visa, mechanically, to a Chrono. You Beauty... One instant Pocket Rocket! And not too loud to attract the Coppers.

Jim had given up worrying about what we ordered in Sydney, he only worried now, about me paying my account. I did too... but not often.

When the parts arrived, they were soon installed. We used Maxim Motors as the workshop. We learnt a few valuable lessons about replacing suspension coils springs.

When fitting the new

springs, the spring compressors slipped on one of the front springs. The spring doubled up and flew off like a projectile. It narrowly missed my leg, and flew threw the open roller door at colossal speed. I new there was some reason why I like Hydraulics! We fitted Visa GT badges to finish off the package. It was later fitted with a factory air conditioning kit, which I think has now been removed

We were a pair of hoons in the Visa when it was finished, though neither of us would admitted it. You could sit at the traffic lights, and rev the engine a bit, and give the guy in the Ford or Holden beside you a bit of a look. You knew it was on! The traffic light Grand Prix.

The lights would turn green

and you were off, and sitting at the next set. He'd be still back there, wondering how this shitty little red Citroën had just beaten the crap out of their Ford or Holden.

Graham drove it regularly at CCC of NSW gymkhanas, but the sight of Graham and the Visa arriving meant that no other cars would get a look in. I think the Visa won every gymkhana it was entered in, including Cit In in 1983 at Camden.

Was it good for your ego? YOU BET!

WHERE IS IT NOW?

The Visa is presently owned by Nathan Wade in Lismore, and it was unfortunately submerged in the floodwaters earlier this year.

Greg Fienberg.





# Totally Traction

I mentioned a while back that I did not know of any 4-speed gearbox conversions for the 15/6. Now I do. I am grateful to CCOCA member George Dyke who sent a link via Leigh Miles to a couple of Citroën articles from April 2016 and September 2017. These describe a 4-speed gearbox that has been created by Pierre Duperray. Back then the price was stated to be €4,500.

The final drive ratio is 20% taller than standard and it looks to be a well-engineered conversion. There is no funny business selecting reverse ~ no additional lever or knob to pull ~ reverse is right opposite first as it is on the standard box. Second and third are in the centre plane with fourth on a dog leg off to the left. The earlier article suggests the converted car would attend the 2016 ICCCR in Middachten but the 2017 article does not mention it. I know I

was there but I can't remember seeing that car.

## Traction Brakes

I've been messing around with my DS [OK DSuper]. A hydraulic leak had me pulling the radiator out and since I was there I decided to change the front brake pads ~ since I could now see them. And of course one of the pistons was stuck fast. And so I spent more time than I was expecting understanding how differently Citroën did things on the DS from on the Traction. Inboard disc brakes reduce the unsprung weight and eliminate both fade and the need for adjustment. Mounting them under the hydraulics and the radiator may make them susceptible to contamination ~ certainly when the high-pressure pipe leaks! The first symptom [which I did not recognise as such until later] was juddering. The callipers were both filthy with oil and crud and, even without an LHM leak some of this must get

onto the discs. The callipers, underneath the crud, turned out also to be the front engine mounts. Many of you will have known this but it was new to me. The callipers are massive ~ maybe because they double up as engine mounts or maybe just because, being inboard they did not need to fit inside the wheels. The DS was a pioneer in the use of disc brakes and they remained unchanged throughout its life. The 2CV and GS adopted the same scheme but the CX went to outboard brakes, presumably because the transverse power train left no room for inboard brakes.

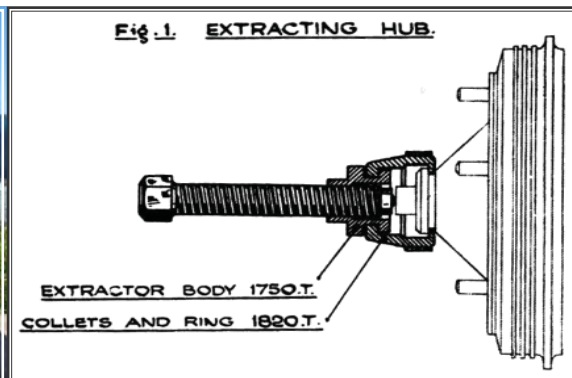
Was there a problem with the Traction brakes which led to the DS pioneering discs? Much has been written about the Traction's brakes. There are those who think they are rubbish and those who think they are quite good. The difference is partly about expectations ~ if you are used to a modern car with servo assisted disc brakes you might be surprised about the effort needed to effect a stop. And you might also be surprised about the need for occasional adjustment which does make quite a difference. The other difference, which may be demonstrated by those of you joining the Traction Owners' Club rally in Devon in June, is the tendency to get hot and smelly and ultimate-

ly ineffective after prolonged hard use ~ such as descending a long steep hill [low gear now please]. This sort of thing is typical of drum brakes. Disc brakes will still benefit from a servo just as much as drums. And in extremis discs brakes will also fade. I remember demonstrating that in my Triumph Herald descending an Austrian alp at speed [don't ask]. The big benefit of disc brakes for most of us is the ability to completely ignore them and still experience consistent retardation ~ until the pads wear out.

Inspection of the Traction's front brakes, which do most of the work, requires removal of the drums. A special puller is required for this task. I suspect this puts some people off, as do dire warnings about the need to fit them back on the taper and tighten the nut properly. A properly adjusted set of brakes are more than up to the job of stopping a Traction ~ poorly adjusted brakes not so much. If after all that, you still hanker for an upgrade, I read in Citroën-vie that a disc brake conversion is available from M Duperray ~ he of the four-speed 15/6 gearbox.

## Two Filler Cap Petrol Tanks

I am grateful to John Stanley who responded to my question about why Citroën fitted two filler caps to the single petrol tank on the early Trac-





# Totally Traction

tions. He sent me a link to a photo of an early Traction at a filling station pointing out that in the olden days you didn't know on which side of the road the pump would be. This would be before the days of long hoses. I did a little research of my own and found that the contemporary Peugeot 202 which was introduced in 1932 also had two filler caps. Maybe that car had set the standard? I see no evidence of Renault exhibiting this extravagance. But talking of Renault and extravagance ~ and nothing to do with Traction Avants, my Googling brought me to a 1932 Renault Nervastella, built



for the Astor family, the coachwork of which was inspired by Salvador Dali. The car can be seen at the Automobile Museum of Málaga. It is a thing of beauty and has just a single filler cap at one end of its external tank. They also have a Panhard Dynamique ~ a production car that makes the Dali inspired Renault look positively normal. I very much admire the style of the Dynamique ~ especially the



two-door version.

## Traction Maintenance

And so to matters practical and Traction. We are approaching the second three day weekend in May. I almost completely squandered the first one but did manage to grease all the grease points and check the plugs. I can't remember when I



last looked at them ~ the gaps were OK so I just scraped the soot off three of them [the 4th was very clean ~ I now wonder if it was doing anything?] and put them all back.

This weekend I really will sort out the indicators and a few other things and then we're off to Jersey with about 30 other Traction. I'll be sure to let you know how that goes.

You don't have to have a Traction to come on a Traction Rally ~ but of course it helps. Cars come up for sale regularly and whilst some asking prices look outrageous, the auction results show these cars to still be very good value. You can get a decent Traction for little more than twice the price of a 4-speed 15/6 gearbox. That's not great news if you are selling but good if you are buying. Who knows how long it will stay this way?

A couple of Traction joined the West London and Surrey Group's Drive it Day jaunt to the Winkworth Arboretum near Guildford. One was mine and the other was Martin de Little's. Thanks to Darrin for organising it and getting a colourful selection of Citroëns despite the dampness. I think eight Citroëns turned out for this and I only saw three other old cars the whole day. Old Citroëns rule!

Chris Bailey



## Every Visa?

### VISA SPECIAL

The Visa was introduced in the autumn of 1978 in three versions. The Special was the cheapest one, fitted with a 652cc two-cylinder air-cooled engine and so-ber equipment. The yellow car is recognisable as a Special by the mesh grille and the absence of reversing and fog lights set into the rear bumper. While most advertising for

**Vive la simplicité.**  
For driving pleasure at your fingertips, a satellite brings together a whole range of controls within easy reach.

**Vive l'économie.**  
Fuel efficiency is one of its great qualities:  
5.7 l at 90 km/h, 7.6 l in urban driving  
(conventional fuel consumption per 100 km).

**Vive le confort.**  
4 spacious and comfortable seats, 5 doors for easy access, and a folding rear bench seat, and plenty of space.

**Vive l'électronique.**  
With the integral electronic ignition engine start from cold... and with a 1/4 turn.

**Vive la Visa 4 cv.**  
The Visa is all that!... It's also about safety with proven robustness and reliability: advanced gearbox; new air-cooled 652cm<sup>3</sup> air-cooled engine. **CITROËN**

Optional extras: radio equipment and combined rear window wiper/washer.

**CITROËN TOTAL**

the Visa in 1978 made use of the headline 'Ça, c'est une auto' [This is a car] here that is replaced by 'Long line simplicity, economy, comfort and electronics... a reference to the two-cylinder model's integrated electronic ignition.

### VISA CLUB

The Club was the Special's sister model with some more chic. Technically they were

**Ça, c'est une auto.**  
A car should have a complete and functional dashboard. The Citroën Visa's dashboard is just that. Model presented Visa Super.

**Ça, c'est une auto.**  
A car must have solid bumpers. A real shield that wraps around the radiator grille and can absorb light impacts without deforming. The Citroën Visa's front bumper is just that. Model presented Visa Super.

**Ça, c'est une auto.**  
A car should be easy to drive. With the satellite that groups the main controls, the Citroën Visa can be driven with the touch of a fingertip. Driving the Visa is just that, a pleasure. Model presented Visa Super.

**Citroën Visa. Ça, c'est une auto.**  
A car has to meet everyone's needs. The Visa is available with two engines (4 and 5CV) and three trim levels: Visa Super, Visa Club and Visa Special, shown from left to right.

**CITROËN TOTAL**

### VISA SUPER

The Super was technically quite different from the cheaper models. It was powered by a water cooled four cylinder engine, measuring 1,124cc. Major visual differences were the plastic strips over three quarters of the car's length.

The ad's headline says 'Now that's a car that's welcoming'.

**La simplicité, c'est parfait.**  
For driving pleasure at your fingertips, a satellite brings together a whole range of controls within easy reach.

**L'économie, c'est sans prix.**  
Sobriety, a virtue so highly prized these days, is one of its greatest virtues. 5.8 l at 90 km/h, 7.7 l in urban traffic (conventional fuel consumption per 100 km).

**Le confort, c'est de l'or.**  
4 spacious and comfortable seats, 5 doors for easy access, a folding bench seat, boot space... and plenty of room.

**L'électronique, c'est magique.**  
With the full electronic ignition engine, you can start from cold... with ease.

**La 4 cv Visa, c'est tout ça!**  
The 4 CV Visa is all that!... And it's also safety, proven robustness and reliability: advanced gearbox; air-cooled 652 cm<sup>3</sup> engine. The Visa is also available in a Super version, with a 4-cylinder 1124 cm<sup>3</sup> engine.

**Citroën Visa 4 cv.**

Visa monocoque yellow with radio aerial option.

**CITROËN TOTAL**

identical, but on the outside the Club could easily be distinguished by a smarter radiator grille and wheel covers.

This was the only advertising specifically for the mid-range model. UK delivery cars were better specified than this French example being equipped with the roof aerial and rear washer/wiper clearly absent here.

**5 portes, 5 places**

**Ça, c'est une auto qui accueille.**

**Visa Super**

A car where you can fit 5 people plus luggage without having to duck your head.  
A boot that's got plenty of space: easily accessible via the rear hatch, it increases in no time at all, thanks to the folding rear bench seat, from 280dm<sup>3</sup> to 674dm<sup>3</sup>. Compact on the outside (3.67 m) and well protected by its 'shield' bumpers, the Visa Super is particularly at home in towns.  
The Visa Super also boasts:  
- A 41 kW (55 CV) 1050 cc (DIN)  
- water-cooled, 1124cm<sup>3</sup>, multi-valve, 4-cylinder, 4-speed, 4-cylinder engine.  
- A steering that brings virtually all the main controls within easy reach.  
- Steering gear 100m in 10° 30' and a top speed of 144 km/h.  
- 4.2 litres at 90 km/h, 8.4 litres at 120 km/h and on a single track (conventional fuel consumption per 100 km).  
Now that's a car.

**CITROËN TOTAL**



## Every Visa?

*Ça, c'est une auto.*

*Qui arrache.*

The Visa Super 5 CV is a 3.69 metre long car with a lot of guts (4 light alloy cylinders, 1124 cm<sup>3</sup>) and a barn-storming drive. A featherweight that can overtake heavyweights.

*Qui accueille.*

A 5-door that seats five, plus luggage, without having to duck your head. A boot with plenty of room...

*Qui s'essaye.*

Come and try it out. It's amazing, surprising and convincing. Contact us... the Visa Super will make you rediscover the pleasure of driving. The Visa Super's waiting to seduce you.

Visa Super shown in granium red with optional radio pre-equipment

Image: autoencyclopedie.com

**Citroën lance la voiture "basses calories."**

With a new engine (1124 cm<sup>3</sup>), a new carburettor and a new gear-box, the VISA Super E is a particularly fuel-efficient car: 5.5 litres per 100 km at 90 km/h\*. It's a "low calorie" car, an energetic little tourer. But that's not all. The VISA Super E is equipped with the famous econometre, the device that, thanks to a system of indicator lights, allows you to drive more economically: the choice is yours!

Everyone's talking about economy, but Citroën is taking action: for example, the VISA Super E, the "low calorie" car.



**VISA SUPER E**

\* Conventional consumption (in litres per 100km): 7.3 l at 120km/h, 8.2 l in urban driving

VISA SUPER E

For the model year 1981 the Super was succeeded by the the Super E. 'E' stood for 'Économie', because the Super E had slightly lower fuel consumption. All Visas for 1981 were fitted with integrated, matte black side mirrors.

VISA SUPER X

Also new for 1981 was the Super X. The 'X' had a more powerful four-cylinder 1,219cc engine, and better, more sporting equipment than the Super E. The nice alloys could be had as an option. The first series Visa Super X was only sold for a short period and most of them were sold in France.

It is noted in relation to the

advertisement which accompanies this article that the rear lights on the Super X presage the Visa II facelift with them extending over the rear wing. While these can be seen in the inset image the picture of the green car makes these lights far more obvious.

VISA II SPECIAL

More or less by surprise, Citroën replaced

**L'enfant terrible.**

Take a look at it. With her little aggressive look. The front spoiler. It's cheeky and at ease with itself, with its 1219 cm<sup>3</sup> engine and its 64 bhp DIN (46.1 kW/ISO) that respond in kind: 400m standing start in 18"9, the standing start km in 36" start. And it leaps from 0 to 100 km/h in 14". Performance that would cheekily take

you to a top speed of 155 km/h. And it comes as standard with an electronic rev counter, digital quartz clock, front headrests, assisted braking, rear quarter adhesives and a second outside rear-view mirror on the right. Optional light alloy wheels. The Visa Super X. Citroën's enfant terrible.



**Citroën Visa Super X**

\* CONVENTIONAL CONSUMPTION (IN LITRES PER 100KM): 6.7 l AT 100KM/h, 9.4 l AT 120KM/h, 9.2 l IN URBAN DRIVING

CITROËN - TOTAL

CITROËN

The first version of the Super X gave some hints to soon-to-be-launched Visa II with its enlarged rear lights and black 'trompe l'œil' rear window surround. Image: Cars-Data.com



the first Visa series by the Visa II in March, 1981. The Visa II was restyled quite dramatically by the firm of Heuliez, however without changing any of the panels. Most significant was the more traditional front end, with larger bumpers and larger rear light clusters. Matt black side window surrounds with black rear quarter bezels, black 'trompe l'œil' strips



## Every Visa?

at the base of the windscreen and rear window [on Super E and above] all helped make the Visa II look longer and wider, and the glass surfaces appear larger. Sales are finally set to take off!

The structure of the model range remained the same. The Special was once again the base version.

The theme chosen for the launch was

## Mon auto c'est mon palais.

### 5 real seats, 5 big doors

Engine: 1124cm<sup>3</sup>, 5CV and 4 cylinders that take you 38" 1 for a standing start 1000m. It rolls.

Handling: front-wheel drive, 4 independent wheels. It holds. It's a Citroën. Fuel consumption: 5.1 L at 90km/h, 7 L in urban driving and even better 6.6 L at 120km/h, a sort of record.\*

Space: 5 real seats, 5 large doors, boot that can be extended to 690dm<sup>3</sup> with the seat folded down. Dimensions: 3.69m x 1.53m, compact on the outside and big on the inside.

Like a palace, the VISA II Super E is a great idea. A Prince's idea.

\*Conventional consumption



Saint-Exupéry's Little Prince. The 'poetry' of the character is underscored by carefully crafted photos and evocative slogans, each of which promotes a particular quality of the car: habitability, performance and fuel consumption.

The white background lightened the composition of the page.

Note the gradual disap-

## Dessine-moi la Sobriété.

4.8 l aux 100 km.

No, it's not a mirage! The Visa II Super E consumes just 4.8 litres per 100 km at 90 km/h, and 6.3 litres at 120 km/h on urban roads.

And yet this exemplary fuel-efficiency tourist is no slouch: with its

1124 cm<sup>3</sup> transverse engine, it reaches 100 km/h in 16.8 seconds from a standing start. With its camel-like sobriety, it accelerates

to 140 km\* per hour. The Visa II Super E is so economical, who'd be surprised? For a prince, isn't sobriety the highest form of elegance?

**Citroën Visa II Super E**  
l'Année Champion

pearance of the black frame that had surrounded all Citroën advertising since the early 1970s and the replacement of the 'a' in 'l'Auto' by a double chevron! VISA II CLUB

Like the old Visa, the Visa II also included a better equipped two-cylinder version with the name 'Club'. The Club could be recognized by the plastic strips over the full car length, black window surroundings and steel wheel covers.

### VISA II SUPER E

The Super E showed even more of the model change than the cheaper versions. To suggest a larger glass area, the bodywork under the wind shield was painted black. Other visual modifications were the steel wheels of a new design.

VISA II SUPER X  
The Super X version, which was only made in small numbers in its initial form, was continued as a Visa II model. Today Super Xs are hardly ever seen. Model designations of all Visa IIs changed back to just Visa for the 1983 model year.

### VISA TROPHÉE

As part of a campaign to make the Visa more popular, Citroën started a rallying programme. Citroën's secret weapon was called the 'Trophée'. The Trophée was built in a limited homologation series of 200 pieces by Heuliez, and took part in Group B of the European rally championship. It had the 1.2-litre engine of the Super X, tuned up to around 75kW/100bhp. Dutch ace Paul Maaskant was quite successful in it.

### VISA [II] L

As an interim model between the Club and the Super E, Citroën brought the Visa II L for the 1982 model year. Its equipment was basic, but it did have the 1.1-litre four-cylinder power

## Mon auto c'est mon étoile filante.

38" 1 for a standing start 1000m

Handling: front-wheel drive, 4 independent wheels. It holds up. It's a Citroën. Fuel consumption: 5.1 L at 90km/h, 7 L on the open road and even better 6.6 L at 120km/h, a sort of record.\*

Engine: 1124cm<sup>3</sup>, 5CV and 4 cylinders that take you 38" 1 for a standing start 1000m. It rolls.

It goes. A car like a shooting star, the VISA II Super E is a great idea. A Prince's idea.

\*Conventional consumption









## Every Visa?

X was succeeded by the Visa GT. The GT was equipped with the 1,360 block of the Chrono with twin carburettors, delivering 60kW/80bhp. Top speed was 168kph. Styling was more subtle than the Chrono's, with only small spoilers front and rear, stylish wheels and modest striping. Inside, split-fold rear seats, upholstered in Shetland Tweed fabric, were a useful [and rather luxurious] feature. External colours were silver, red or black.

In press ads, unusually, this model is always shown from the rear angle.

### VISA SUPER E DÉCAPOTABLE

In February, 1983, the Visa Décapotable was introduced. The topless version of the Visa was designed and produced by



Heuliez. When it comes to technical characteristics or equipment, it was largely identical to the Super E.

The décapotable was rather heavier than the Super E, on which it was based, so the 50hp, 1,124cc engine seemed decidedly underpowered. Interestingly, the Talbot Samba

cabriolet [which was smaller and lighter than its Visa sibling] was powered by Peugeot's 1,360cc motor which was fitted to the Visa GT.

### VISA

The model year 1984 brought new names for various types within the Visa model range. The former Visa Special was christened just 'Visa'. For the year 1985, all Visas got a restyled, more conventionally designed dashboard. From that moment, the characteristic satellites belonged to the past.

### VISA II E

With the introduction of the new model designations, Citroën continued -



### CATCH THE SUN VISA CONVERTIBLE

At the turn of a convertible with the excellent mechanical equipment of 1124cc Visa IRE. The three-way top gives complete insulation from weather when up, folds a half back as a sunroof or all the way back for real open-air motoring. Top stows neatly away under a tonneau cover when right down. Heating layout is designed to keep heat in the car at a constant level - even with the top thrown back.

Visa has all the convenience of four doors - as well as a real boot. Available in Surprise Red or metallic. Superior Part City equipped with alloy wheels and tinted windows as standard. This model is available to special order only.

used the policy it started with other models of the brand. The former Visa L became the Visa II E.

### VISA II RE

From the model year 1984, the Super E became known as the II RE. The black spoiler at the rear door became standard. The II RE became one of the best sellers within the Visa model range.

### VISA II RE DÉCAPOTABLE

The convertible Visa was continued as II RE. Its production stopped in July, 1985 after just over 2,200 had found homes.

## La Visa décoiffée, ça décoiffe!



Citroën Visa décapotable.  
Décapotable 4 portes, elle est unique en son genre.





## Every Visa?

### VISA MILLE PISTES

The Mille Pistes [1984] was a Group B rally version of the Visa, equipped with four wheel drive, and powered by a 1,360cc engine, delivering 84kW/112bhp. A series of 200 cars had to be produced to homologate it for the championship. Afterwards, some actively rallied Mille Pistes were tuned to even higher specification. Even today a couple of these hairy monsters are still being rallied.

There were two styles of advertisement for the Mille Pistes. The first conformed to that of the 1984/5 'Draguez moi' campaign [see following page]. The other shown on this page is aimed at the technical enthusiast with its 'ghost' drawing showing the new rear axle. The copy, which is angled, energises the layout.

### VISA 17 D

In March, 1984 a sensational diesel engine Visa was introduced. The lively new 1,769cc engine delivered 45kW/60bhp and made a top speed of more than 150kph possible. There were two versions, of which the 17 D was the more humble. From the exterior, diesel versions could be identified by the black plastic front wheel arches.

These wheel arches were necessary because the width of the transversely-mounted diesel engine pushed the front track beyond the pressed met-



**Visa "mille pistes"  
la 4x4 qui décoiffe!**

1<sup>st</sup> outing, 1<sup>st</sup> victory for the Visa "mille pistes" in the Jean-Francois Piot Trophy:  
Remember Sarlat on 29 October 1983.  
4-cylinder aluminium engine with overhead camshaft,  
fed by 2 Weber twin horizontal carburetors.  
4 independent wheels, integral transmission, 4 wheel disc brakes.  
5-speed gearbox.  
Visa "mille pistes"\*, group B, the 4 x 4 competition car that's still going strong!

\*Expected to go on sale in the 1st quarter of 1984.

CITROËN TOTAL CITROËN

al wheel arches of the original body.

### VISA 17 RD

The 17 RD was better equipped than the 17 D. Major external differences were the plastic side strips and the standard rear wiper.

### VISA 11 E OLYMPIQUE

The Olympique appeared in March 1984 on the occasion of the Olympic games in Los Angeles. It was based on the 11 E. Three body colours were avail-

able: white, light blue or red. On the wheels special wheel covers, resembling alloys, were fitted. Special striping and an appropriate logo completed the outfit. Just 3,000 Olympiques were built.

While the model did not benefit from its own magazine advertisement it did have a dedicated brochure.

### VISA 14 TRS

In July, 1984, the 14 TRS came along. The TRS had the familiar 1.4-litre engine, known from the GT, but now only a single carburettor was mounted. With the resulting 44kW/59bhp, the top speed of the trs was 156kph. External features were the full wheel covers, and a more luxurious dressing of the interior.

The advertisement for this model [and the associated ads for the Visa GT] were the final series of advertisements in support of the Visa in France. They were referred to above as the 'Draguez moi' series. The series of black and white adverts is intended to be 'sexy', but there were suggestions that some



**DIESEL AND NO ARGUMENT**

Nowadays the New Generation voters find time to appreciate about 100,000 km and no longer spend long cool hours. A car is a machine for mobility, a super-convertible machine. You choose your car for its efficiency, economy and elegance.

So you choose the new Citroën Visa Diesel, a thoroughbred modern motor car that sets you on the New Generation road. And the benefits are undeniable: outstanding fuel economy, smooth running, low maintenance costs and the promise of great road miles.

Visa Diesel is the Old Generation and they have their natural list of alleged diesel defects. The New Generation is a modern 1.7 litre. The modern Citroën Diesel is quiet, environmentally cleaner and quick to start from cold. The Visa Diesel is fast, so engine powerful and refined.

The new Visa Diesel, the car for the New Generation.




**Visa Olympique,  
la championne qui décoiffe!**

Série limitée



## Every Visa?

**Top modèle.**




The whole world wants it, everyone's clamouring for it. It's in great demand. Because it's got everything you need, where you need it: 1360 cm<sup>3</sup>, 60 bhp DIN at 5800 rpm, optional 5-speed gearbox. Not to mention its looks: iodine headlights, thick carpet, rear window wiper, 2 outside mirrors, radio pre-equipment and a quartz clock. Visa 14 TRS, a top model.

**Draguez moi... la Visa ça décoiffe!**

CITROËN - VISAL

**Beau cul.**



Rapid. And it is not short of advantages: 168 km/h on a closed circuit; 1360 cm<sup>3</sup> developing 80 bhp DIN at 5800 rpm. 5-speed gearbox from 0 to 100 km/h in 16.9 seconds, spoiler and quartz electric watch, sheldard fabric seats, radio pre-equipment and options that take your hair off: light alloy wheels, tinted windows, electric wind-screen washer, automatic door locks... Visa GT, a beautiful little car with a very sporty look, beautiful from the front, the side and the back! (Conventional fuel consumption: Visa GT 5.6 l at 90 km/h • 7.4 l at 120 km/h • 9.6 l in town).

**Draguez moi... la Visa ça décoiffe!**

CITROËN - VISAL

### VISA GTI

From January, 1985, the sporting Visa driver could order a new, powerful version: the GTi. The GTi was propelled by a 1,588cc engine with fuel injection, developing 78kW/105bhp. With that powerplant, the

were a little over the top... The headline on the GT advertisement translates as 'Nice arse.'

### VISA 14 RS

On a selected number of markets [especially in the Scandinavian countries, but probably also in Germany] another Visa with the 1.4-litre single carburettor engine was available: the 14 RS. The RS shown above has a so called 'Nordic' kit fitted, existing of a special grille with additional lights and head lamp washers.





## "JACK ROBINSON..."

To get more than a fleeting glance of the brand new Citroën Visa GTi, you have to see it parked in your local showroom.

There you can admire the eye-catching front spoiler, side skirts, flared wheel arches, alloy wheels and four headlights without getting a sprained neck.

A more familiar sight will be the two rear spoilers attached to the hatchback.

Because the Visa GTi can accelerate from 0-60mph before you're time to open the sunroof, 9 seconds by our stopwatch.

Keep your foot down

and you'd be in Germany. Although with a top speed of 117mph you soon won't be.

Even the interior's pretty flash. The dash has almost as many dials, lights and switches as the space shuttle. (Mind you, everything works on the Visa GTi.)

And with 5 doors and comfortable seats, it's ideal for back-seat drivers too.

Yet the Visa GTi trails way behind its rivals on price. At only £6,274 even your bank manager won't stand in your way. Like everyone else, he'll be left speechless.



**THE NEW CITROËN VISA GTI £6,274. WE GO FURTHER FASTER.**

NEW RANGE STARTS FROM £4,995. THESE CORRECT FIGURES OF CORRECT PRICES EXCLUDE CAR TAX AND FRONT AND REAR SEAT BELT DELIVERY AND HUMANITY PLEASE. SEE YELLOW PAGES FOR YOUR NEAREST DEALER. CITROËN CAR LTD, 100, THE STREET, SOUTHAM, RG4 7JH. TEL: 01235 330000. 1984



GTi got close to the 200kph mark. Of course the under-frame was revised to cope with the freecoming forces. The spare moved to the boot, leaving only room for a package of sandwiches and a toothbrush. The GTi was easy to spot among other Visas, with its double headlamps, side skirts and spoilers.

In common with the diesel-engined versions the wheel arch extensions were essential because the 1.6-litre engine pushed the track beyond the original wheel arches.

In France there were no specific advertisement for the GTi but there was in the UK.

### VISA ENTREPRISE

In 1986, the Visa Entreprise got rear door handles, but the doors remained welded to the bodywork. The Entreprise could be ordered with 652cc two-cylinder or 1.1-litre four-cylinder petrol engines and with the 1.7-litre diesel engine as well.

### VISA 10 E

For the 1987 model year, in several markets, the 11 E was succeeded by the 10 E. The



## Despégate con el Nuevo Citroën Visa GTi.

*Ahora con 115 CV.*

*A new avalanche of flying objects is coming. Faster. More powerful than ever. These are the new CITROËN VISA GTi, equipped with a veritable time bomb in the form of a powerful engine, now capable of developing 115 bhp and reaching target speeds of around 192 km/h.*

*A car that is seen and unseen on the road, but which attracts all eyes in the city. Because, going into detail, the VISA GTi is as spectacularly equipped and finished as its aggressive, aerodynamic exterior. Come and try it out. You'll see what a sports car is all about.*

VISA GTI (115 CV)	
Unlimited mileage	180 km/h
Acceleration 0-100 km/h	8.8 sec
Consumption	8.1 l/100 km
	7.0 l/100 km
	6.1 l/100 km
Consumption	11.2 l/100 km
	11.1 l/100 km

10 E had a smaller four cylinder engine, measuring only 954cc, which had already been available in some South European countries from the early eighties. With this smaller engine, it was rated in a lower tax class. In countries where this was not necessary, the 11 E remained in the programme.

### VISA GTI-115HP

For 1987 the engine of the GTi



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perimposed on the aircraft carrier which had featured in the French television commercial for the launch of the 105hp version.

### Visa Limited Edition Versions

#### VISA CARTE NOIRE

The Carte Noire came on the market in April, 1979, and thus was the first limited edition Visa. It was based on the Super. The Carte Noire,

was tuned up to 86kW/115bhp. With this engine, the GTi reached a slightly higher top speed of 192kph. External markings were the '115 ch' stickers on the front wings of the car.

The only advertising support for the 115hp GTi was in Spain. Here an image of the 115hp version was su-



of which 2,500 examples were made, could be distinguished by its black paint with golden striping. Unlike some other special versions, it was also sold on some export markets.

VISA SEXTANT The Sextant [produced as run of 2,000 examples] was a second limited edition model of the Visa. It was introduced, exclusively on the French market,



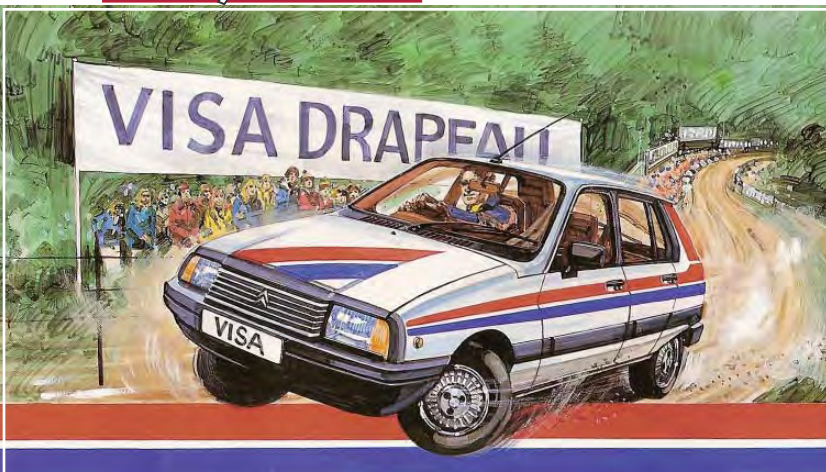
in March, 1980. Typical was the colour scheme in white and blue. Technically it was identical to the Super. VISA II WEST END

In April 1982 a limited series of 1,000 examples appeared as the Visa II West End. Based on the Super E, it was equipped with leather upholstery, a sunroof, tinted glass and alloy wheels. The only avail-





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able paint colour was rouge délage. The West End was continued in 1983 as Visa [without 'II'] West End, but neither were ever sold outside France.

The copy in the advertisement refers to the upholstery being 'box-line' ~ today it would be called 'vegan leather'.

### VISA DRAPEAU

The Visa Drapeau was a Britain only version, which could be had in both two cylinder or four

cylinder specification. The colour scheme was similar to that seen on the Chrono.

### VISA PLATINUM

Another British version was the Platinum. It was marketed in 1982, based on the Super E, and had metallic grey paint, alloys, striping, coloured glass and some other extras.

### VISA CHAMPAGNE

The Visa Champagne was an limited



## VISA CHAMPAGNE



Left: Visa 954 Reflex.  
Image: visavision-info

edition model once again for the British market, sold around 1983. It was a well equipped, with a sunroof, alloy wheels, tinted windows, and metallic champagne paint.

### VISA 954 REFLEX

The Reflex was a limited edition model for the Greek market, based on the 954cc four cylinder model, which was only available in a small number of Mediterranean countries.

### VISA PLATINE

The Platine





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### VISA GT TONIC

On the GT base in October 1983 the GT Tonic appeared. It had body modifications that had earlier been seen on the Chrono. The GT Tonic was produced 2,000 times, and was sold in France and exported to some other countries.

### VISA BI-CAMPEÃO

The Bi-Campeão was another vari-

was a special series of 2,000 cars, introduced in September 1983. It was based on the 11 RE. Paint colour was dark grey metallic, which was never applied to any other Visa, ever. In the interior an exclusive, chequered cloth was used. Alloy wheels completed the Platine. The Platine was sold in France and in some export countries.



Visa Bi-Campeão. Image: FS Automóveis.



Image: Maarten van der Eijnde via Visa-vision.

ation on the GT theme, produced at the same period as the GT Tonic. It was exclusively offered in Portugal, after the Visa GT scored well in Group N of the Portuguese national rally championship. Probably some 750 Bi-Campeãos were sold.

### VISA GT SPIRIT 330

The GT Spirit 330 of Janu-

ary, 1984, was a warmed over Chrono, of which the Dutch importer ordered 400 examples, but only sold 70. The remaining 330 cars were stripped of their colourful stickers, painted all white and fitted with a numbered plate on the dashboard, on which the name of the first owner was engraved.

### VISA 14 TRS/17 RD STILO

Around 1985 a special version of the 14 TRS and 17 RD could be had in Spain: the Stilo.

### VISA CHALLENGER

The Challenger was a sporting limited edition model, based on the 11 E, but powered by the 1.4-litre engine of the GT. The only body colour you could get was white with red striping, in combination with a special black with red interior. Built in 3,500

examples, from spring 1985.

### VISA 14 S

In the Netherlands, the Challenger was called 14 S. A total of 300 were sold.

### VISA CHALLENGER

In Spain a different Challenger was offered. The Spanish version of the car was available in white or

### VISA CHALLENGER: UNE SÉRIE SAUVAGE!



CITROËN VISA CHALLENGER

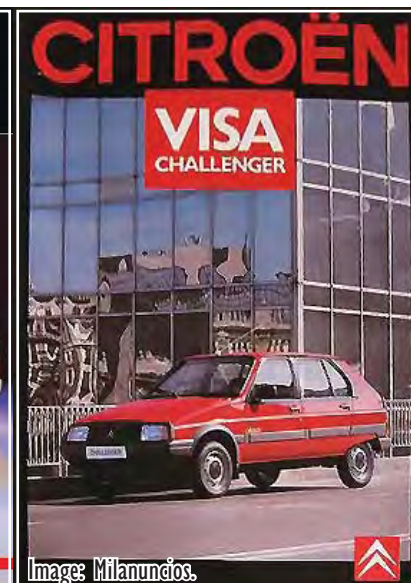


Image: Milanuncios.



## Every Visa?



Interior of the Visa Leader and the associated brochure. Images: Citroënët.

red, and could be had with the 1.1-litre petrol or the 1.7-litre diesel engine. The petrol version had the wheel covers also fitted on the Visa Olympique, those on the diesel were different.

### VISA II E LEADER

The Leader is likely to be the most well known of the limited series Visas. It was introduced in September 1985. It could be ordered with the 1.1-litre four cylinder engine, and in some countries with the 1.7-litre diesel as well. The II E Leader was based on the II E. In some markets [including the UK] the second series of the Leader was offered based on the 10 E. It was painted in gris perle, and had extras fitted like side strips,

### VISA LEADER: SPECIALE SERIE!



The Visa Leader 17 D is identifiable by its front wheelarch extensions. Image: Wikipedia.

## CITROËN



## VISA CRYSTAL

Image: ebay.

wheel covers, rear spoilers, head rests on the front chairs, and an attractive and durable interior of grey/red chequered cloth. A small number of Leaders were painted in light metallic blue, but these are nowadays very rare. The Leader became a big success, and Citroën was tempted to continue the series for the model year 1987. In the end, almost 12,000 Leaders left the factory gates. The Leader

name was also applied to similarly equipped, coloured and trimmed BXs and CXs.

### VISA 17 D LEADER

The diesel engined Leader was based on the 17 D, and had the same extras as the petrol version. It is much rarer than the II E Leader, and in many countries it was never officially offered.

### VISA 17 D CRYSTAL

In Germany, in 1987 a special version of the 17 D was offered, named Crystal. The Crystal could be recognised by light blue metallic paint, side strips and striping. The fitting of an optional radio was included. 1,000 Crystals were sold.

### Visa Third Party Versions

#### VISA JUNIOR

The Citroën concessionaire in Lomme [near Lille] marketed some used Visas, which were used by local driving schools, as the Visa Junior. It used the body kit of the Visa Chrono.

#### VISA VERSAILLES

The Versailles was an II RE [1985 model year], tarted up by the English dealer Moto Baldet. Major attractions were the wheel covers [probably



Visa Versailles. Image: Visavision.



# Every Visa?

Visa Break and Sedan. Images: Citroënët.  
Bottom: Visa Lotus. Image: Visavision.



bought from the local Halfords], a Philips radio and 'Versailles' striping. A sunroof could be had as an option.

## Visa Non Production Versions

### VISA BREAK & SEDAN

Around 1980/1981, Citroën produced an asymmetrical prototype of a Visa Break. The detailing of the car already gave clues to the Visa II, which at that stage had not been presented to the public. In the end the break did not reach production: the necessary tooling ~ it was impossible to build it alongside the hatch in one production line ~ was thought to be too expensive.

Citroën also considered a saloon version of the Visa, and got as far as a prototype. This was better integrated aesthetically than many similar cars, such as the saloon version of the 1985 Vauxhall/Opel Nova or the VW Derby, which was based on the first Polo. However, it was not put into production, and in reality would have been of more interest outside France than within it as southern Europe [Greece, Italy and Spain] and the Balkan states prefer a saloon over a hatchback.

### VISA

#### POLITECNIC/STRAKIT/LOTUS

In 1981, Citroën made the first efforts to make a competition car out of the Visa. Guy



Verrier, the leader of Citroën's sport department, had an initial Visa prototype prepared by the French constructor Politecnic. It had a midship engine of 2-litres. After that, two further prototypes were built: the Strakit and the Lotus [pictured] The Lotus featured a centrally fitted 2.2-litre Lotus engine. Sensational, but not very successful altogether, so it remained a one off. Today it is part of Citroën's historical collection.

### VISA FUNNY CAR

In May 1982, the Visa Funny Car was shown to the press on



Images clockwise from top left  
Visa Funny Car. Image: Vivavision.  
Visa 'K'. Image: Martijn van Well via Visavision.  
Visa Bimoteur. Image: Visavision.

the racing circuit in Castelet. Power output of the turbine engine was 1,119kW/1,500bhp, top speed over 300kph.

### VISA M/S/O/R5/D/K

In 1982/1983, Citroën asked several specialist constructors to build mid engine rallying prototypes. The resulting cars, christened 'M', 'S', 'O', 'R5', 'D' and 'K' [pictured], were all differently engined. The Visa M ultimately formed the base model for the Visa Mille Pistes production car. Today, the 'D' and 'K' still exist, and are included in Citroën's Conservatoire.

### VISA BIMOTEUR

In 1982/1983, Citroën built three twin-engined prototypes of the Visa. The first was fitted with two tuned Chrono engines, one with 75kW/100bhp [front], one with even 134kW/180bhp [rear]. Some time afterwards,



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a version with engines of the Trophée was developed. The third version had two engines of 1,434cc.

## VISA II MERCURE

At the Paris motorshow in 1982, Heuliez presented the Mercure, based on the Visa.

## VISA SIX-WHEELER PICK UP

During the same Paris show, this bizarre Visa six-wheeler, developed in collaboration with the French magazine 'Chrome et flammes', was presented. It was the first prize in a competition being run by the magazine.

The competition involved drawing a customized Citroën Visa, the most extraordinary were selected and finally a jury chose the best projects.

A six-wheeled Visa pick-up was designed and built by Citroën,

On the stand, ten Citroën Visa models, customized according to the best projects, were displayed around the six-wheel pick-up.

Coco-Donato's Visa 'Voyage' was awarded the first prize and the designer was immediately hired as an assistant designer at Citroën!

He became the Citroën design manager a few years later. In 2000 he became head of de-

Left, top to bottom:

Visa II Mercure. Image: leroux.andre.

Visa Six-Wheel Pick-Up. Image: Citropolis.

Visa Luxor. Image: Visavision.

sign at Ferrari!

The current whereabouts of the six-wheeled Visa is not known.

## VISA LUXOR

During the Paris Salon de l'Automobile in the autumn of 1983, Citroën showed a series of one offs. One of them was this Visa Luxor, based on the Visa GT.

*And Furthermore...*

## WULING

LZW 7100

From 1989  
until 1995,



Image: yiyouliao.com.

somewhere between 850 and 1,300 examples [depending on your source] of the Chinese Wuling were produced.

After the Visa disappeared as a Citroën, Chinese company Wuling entered the picture. Wuling Auto Company had come about in 1988 from the merger of two other Chinese companies and immediately plunged into buying all the



Image: autoweek.nl.



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remnants related to Visa production. Remarkably, Citroën itself reportedly had nothing to do with the deal that resulted in the continuation of Visa production. Instead, Wuling is said to have done business directly with a Visa factory, which only makes the story juicier.

By 1990, the Chinese had their sourcing business in order and started assembling the car, whose parts were shipped in crates from Europe to China. This involved all parts except the engine. In this area, Wuling sought refuge in Japan, at Daihatsu to be precise. A 1.0-litre three-cylinder from that company was screwed into the front and provided the re-incarnated Visa with just under 36kW/50bhp and a top speed of 130kph.

LZW 7100, also known as LZ 110MC and LZ 7100, was the absolute antithesis of its antecedent in terms of sales figures. Only a few dozen were sold annually.

Since 2002 Wuling has been part of the SAIC-GM-Wuling group. SAIC is today the business behind the MG brand. This article is largely based on research undertaken by Okke Groot and published on his website. The material is used with his permission.

[WWW.VISAVISION.INFO](http://WWW.VISAVISION.INFO).

Additional information has been obtained from a wide range

of sources. Unless otherwise stated in the article all images are from

[WWW.AUTO-PUB.NET](http://WWW.AUTO-PUB.NET).

Translations of European material have been undertaken by the Editor using [www.DeepL.com/Translator](http://www.DeepL.com/Translator).

Footnote: While Okke's original article purports to be a listing of all the versions of the Visa that were produced, in my research I did find others including the sedan version which is on Julian Marsh's excellent Citroënët website. Many years ago I rented a four-cylinder Visa Super E from Graveley Motor Co in the UK. While this car's particular trim/two-tone colour mix is not listed in Okke's article it was clearly not just a 'standard' Visa Super E. Having said that, I do not recall it sporting any special model name.

Leigh F Miles





# Montertel'auto

Many of you will be aware that for the last six months my husband, Philip, and I have been in the UK and Europe. As part of our travels we rented a boat and navigated the Nantes-Brest Canal for two weeks in the company of my eldest brother and his wife.

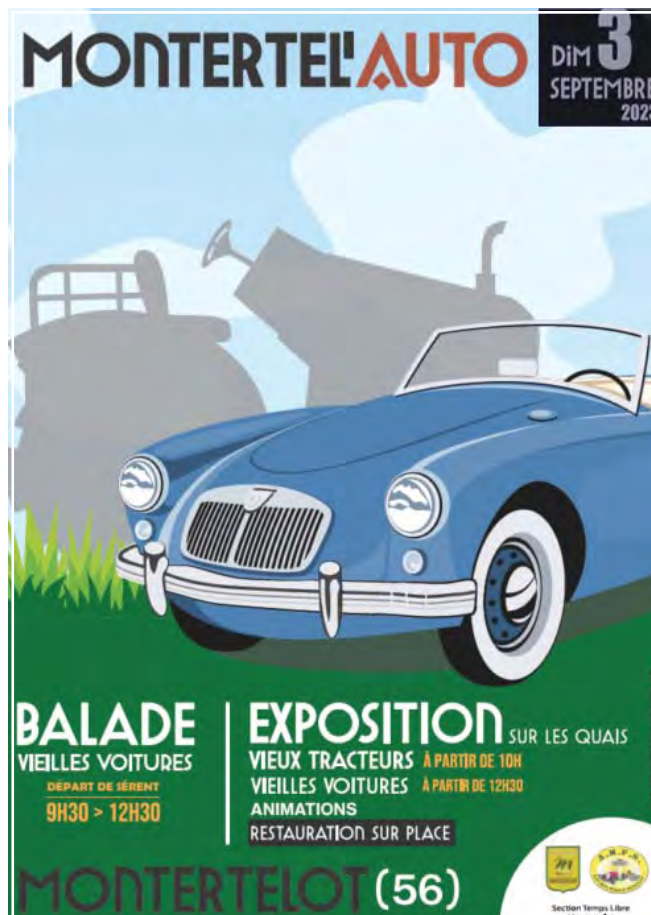
This was our fourth such excursion... clearly we love this holiday experience. Our first trip was in south-eastern Burgundy [Bourgogne], then north-western Burgundy and last year we traversed the Garonne River which meets the sea at Bordeaux. You will note the close relationship between our travel and famous wine regions of France. This year, as I said we were on the Nantes-Brest Canal in Brittany [Bretagne]. Not a vineyard to be seen.

It is not the holiday for everyone. Travelling at no more than 8kph ~ just 3kph within marinas ~ is either restful or boring, depending on your perspective.

We head off after breakfast and plan to be at our destination in time for lunch with a spot of sightseeing in the local

Above: The advertising poster for the 2023 car and tractor show held in Montertelot.

Right: A postcard showing the 1932 Pardon de Notre-Dame du Roncier in Josselin.



village as the sole activity for the afternoon. Yes, we do try and be in town for market day, but that is simply a bonus.

Sometimes you miss the highlight of the town's year by a matter of days. This happened to us in Josselin. We arrived on Monday, 4 September and left on Wednesday, 6 September. Little did know when planning the

trip that the 7-8th September is the religious festival the Pardon de Notre-Dame du Roncier to celebrate the origins of the church in Josselin. This is a distinctly Breton tradition that has survived into the 21st century. In this context, a religious Pardon is perhaps best described as a communal expression of devotion to a particular saint, from whom grace or a pardon is requested. Since the 15th century, these annual festivals, celebrating and honouring local saints, witness the gathering together of worshippers; some local and others who have made a special pilgrimage from further afield. Damn... and we missed it.

On the morning of Sunday, 3 September however we arrived at the small village of Montertelot to see, just above the lock, a collection of old tractors. The models on show dated back to just after the Second World War and they were attracting a good deal of attention from the small crowd on the river bank.

Now I know nothing about tractors, but I was interested in the Deutz D3005 tractor as it is air-cooled. On doing some Googling, it seems a quite usual method for cooling tractor engines.

I did not realise it, but the tractors were just a foretaste of the prime event. Around 12:30 the vintage and classic cars began to arrive. They had been





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flagged-off about 09:30 to head on a tour of the region and they returned amid the hooting of horns and waving of arms.

Naturally, most of the cars were French with representations from Renault, Peugeot, Simca and Citroën.

2023 was the fifth of these events and, apparently every year the vehicular attendance increases. The organisers, whom I met, had expected about 35-40 cars but there must have been over 50 cars parked in the park that borders the river at Monterlot.

The Citroëns on display included a Traction, well laden with period accessories, a Mehari, an XM, a 2CV Spot and a 1923 B2. Clearly the Citroëns were what caught my eye, but the others in our party [my husband Philip, my brother Campbell and his wife Vivienne] showed a wider interest.

Philip's attention was caught by the rather stylish Simca 1511, seen in a photo parked next to one of two Simca 8s.

When Simca took over the business of Ford of France they inherited the 13CV Ford Vedette powered by a flat-head 2.4-litre V8, producing 55kW [later models produced 62kW]. In 1957 a new entry level model, the Ariane, was launched. This used the four-cylinder 1.3-litre [35kW] motor lifted from the Aronde. The two-tone blue



model on show was an Ariane. Why did not pulling the skin of a rice pudding spring to mind? As an aside, Chrysler in Adelaide produced the Vedette from 1959 to 1963.

A rarity, which attracted a good deal of attention with the burgundy and white Auto Union.

Renaults have played a large part in my family's automotive life [at one stage there were five Renault 12s in the 'fleet'] so Campbell's eye was taken by the Renault 10 Major.

There was just a single Traction on the day, but as I have already said it was adorned with a large array of period accessories. The most interesting, for me, was the clock mounted in the centre of the steering wheel.

You may remember Peter Stringer's recent article about fitting his iPhone to the steering wheel hub, well it turns out that back in the day a number of manufacturers produced clocks for mounting in this manner. One was even sophisticated enough that turning the steering wheel would the clock! [I





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am grateful to Marcel Ningen from Traction Avant Nederland for this information.]

But the most popular car of the day was Pierre Yves Tanguy and his 1923 B2 Torpedo. Pierre has owned the car for a couple of years and it was pretty much

fully restored when he bought it. He clearly loves the car and spent some of his time during the day taking eager passengers for rides. As you can see from the pictures, he is man of presence and the B2 is clearly a snug fit... especially when it had four,

yes I counted four passengers plus the driver at one point.

Pierre's father worked for Citroën at the Quai de Javel fac-

tory and even after he left Citroën's direct employ he worked in Citroën garages as a mechanic for his entire working life.

Pierre and the entire organising committee of the event made me very welcome and we had a super afternoon in the small village of Montertelot! Leigh F Miles ~ Editor





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