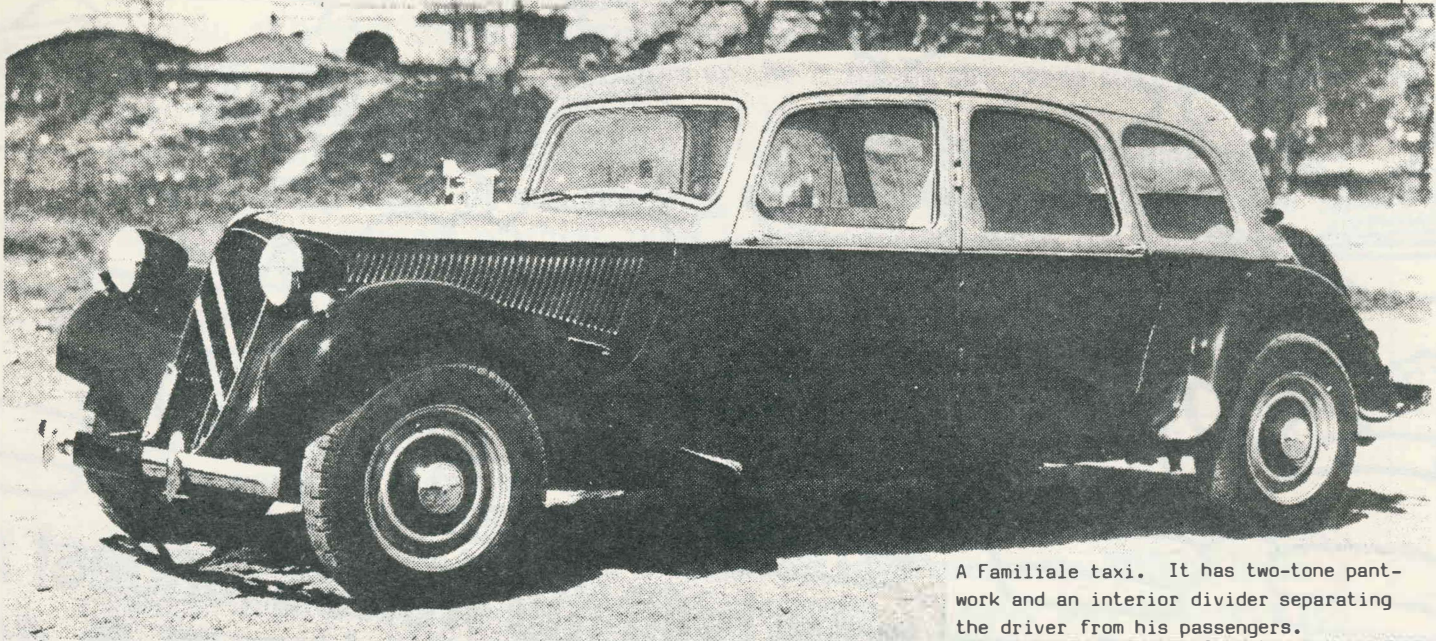


IMPRESSIONS: 1954 11 CV FAMILIALE



A Familiale taxi. It has two-tone paint-work and an interior divider separating the driver from his passengers.

During the course of last year, when 11CV Citroën customers were starting to show signs of weariness, even though subjected to unflagging publicity about its virtues, the Quai de Javel management judged that it was time to revive its "Familiale" bodywork, which had been in retirement since the beginning of the war.

This operation was easy, as the dies for pressing the body panels were still in existence. As well, a new market, that of large families, could be reached all the more readily because there were no other models on the French market which offered so many seats. The Renault "Prairie" was not thought of so much as cumbersome; rather its appearance and character was so utilitarian that one forgot that it had six proper seats and vast luggage capacity. The Citroën 11 nevertheless staked its claim here too, with a long-bodied commercial version which had a large rear opening and was equipped with a false floor.

The Citroën Familiales made their reappearance at the last Paris Salon, in both 11 and 15-six form. After more than six months on the market, however, it could not be said that the six-light had either raised the rate of 11CV production or halted the slump in demand for the 15-six, in which public interest was maintained by adding hydro-pneumatic rear suspension, an interim solution, needless to say.

It seems appropriate for us to examine one of these new Familiales

and provide a 1954 impression on the twentieth anniversary of the 11 Traction, the oldest design of any French car currently in production.

We will not simply sit back and drink champagne toasts to it either; the only way to test the car is at the wheel, where the light of the twenty candles on the birthday cake will not dazzle us - sparkling performance will be needed to do that!

Engine and Transmission

The capabilities of the 11CV engine have been known for so long that it is hardly necessary to mention them. All the same, the 1954 motor is claimed to give 59CV instead of the previous 56CV at the same speed of 4,000 rpm. It is difficult to see where the extra 3CV have come from, as all the engine characteristics, including the cubic capacity, have stayed the same. Nevertheless, the performance of the Familiale is quite adequate, as, without passengers, we achieved a top speed of 116 kmh, a result which is scarcely less than the 120 kmh of the 11 "Legere". We were curious enough to repeat the speed trial with a full load of 600 kg, the equivalent of the eight passenger capacity claimed by the makers, and we attained 108 kmh under these conditions. Its flexibility and capabilities when climbing hills are praiseworthy. The gearbox not having been changed, the synchromesh is still defective, which is noticeable when you want to change from third to second, for example. The only mechanical difference in the six-



The roominess of the Familiale is important, but for three adults, the folding seats are uncomfortable during a long trip.

The boot leaves little room for luggage, for it now must house the spare wheel as well.



light model is the reduction of the final drive ratio compared with the standard 11, to 8 x 31 instead of 9 x 31. Acceleration benefits to the extent that, when empty, a Familiale is a little more lively than its sisters. Fuel consumption, while not exceptional, stays acceptable, as over a combined city/highway route of 600 km, we used 12.95 litres per 100 km.

The brakes, which were regarded as outstandingly effective before the war, would now be considered average by today's standards.

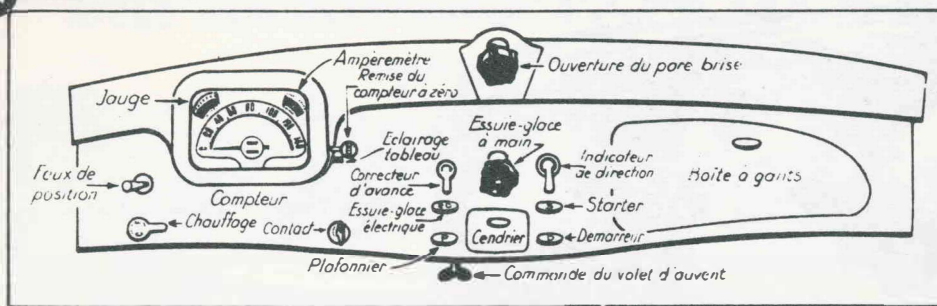
Roadholding and suspension

The Citroën also had astonishing roadholding before the war, but certain other makes have made such progress that today, if the stability of the Traction has not been surpassed, it has been at least equalled by cars whose suspension is better. Thanks to its tyres and the extra 18 cm in wheelbase, the Familiale seems to us slightly superior in crosswinds to the other 11's, and it appeared that nothing could put it off course.

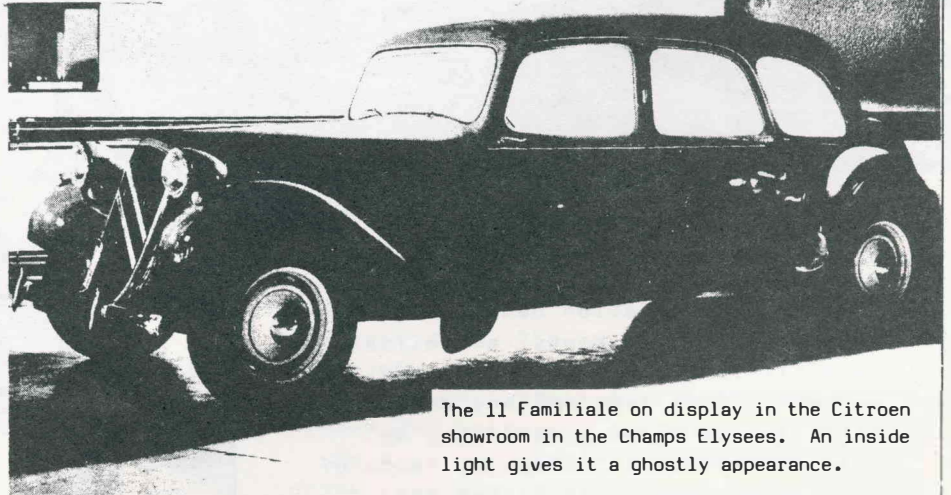
Steering has not been similarly improved. Its "gentleness" tires the driver's arms, the road reaction through the steering wheel becomes unpleasant after some distance, while the turning circle is often inadequate. We measured the radius as 7.6 metres; it is often difficult to turn right-angle corners at one attempt in streets commonly encountered in our towns. If the seats are now comfortable, the suspension has not made such progress. Its firmness is legendary, but when loaded we have noticed that it sometimes bottomed at the rear.

Bodywork and Roominess

We have deliberately not commented on the lines of Tractions in general; this we regard as the province of enthusiasts. What you get with a Familiale is about a further 20 cm of space between the rear doors and the mudguards. This elongation makes the car look lower. The space in the front is just sufficient, on account of the seat adjustment being limited by the fold-down seats. At the rear, when the auxiliary seats are folded up, two people, or three of moderate size, can fully stretch their legs out on the completely flat floor. But when the folding seats are down, there is no more than 18 cm for their occupants' knees, and only 15 cm for the legs of the back seat passengers, which is clearly not enough. We can



Notable absence from the dashboard are any anti-theft device, water or oil temperature indicators.



The 11 Familiale on display in the Citroen showroom in the Champs Elysees. An inside light gives it a ghostly appearance.

say, however, that five large people and three children could be accommodated in the Familiale under acceptable conditions. But they couldn't carry much luggage, because the boot has a very small capacity and is absolutely inadequate for a family car.

Interior heating is very simple, taking hot air from the radiator to warm the driver's feet. Ventilation is assured, by means of four wind-down windows, without deflectors, a flap and an opening windscreen.

Accessories

Apart from a speedometer and an odometer, the only instruments are a petrol gauge and an ammeter. Nothing for water and oil. No anti-theft device. The windscreen wipers are well-placed and rapid and the connection between the two blades can be adjusted. One stops in a low position, while the other must be returned by a large rubber handle. The switch for the direction indicators is on the dashboard and controls a bright flasher unit which returns automatically. The tiny interior roof light is turned on with a pull-out switch, while the sidelights are unchanged.

Conclusion

In the much-reduced range of French vehicles, this Familiale is practically without competition, because it offers more than six seats at a very reasonable price. It is therefore in a privileged position, even though aimed at a limited section of the public. But it is clearly showing its age, not so much because of its performance, because that scarcely matters in this class, but in its appearance and its general standard of comfort. It does not seem, on the other hand, to be a good choice as a taxi because of its bulkiness, lack of manoeuvrability and the poor accessibility of its rear seat. It nevertheless fills a gap that no other manufacturer has thought to fill: for a very large modern limousine which is an elegant touring car.

(Original article by Bernard Carat in Auto-Journal, 15 May 1954; reproduced from Almanach du Citroeniste, 1984; translated by Peter Simmenauer.)



Summary of Performance and characteristics:

Dimensions: Wheelbase 227 cm
Track (front) 149 cm
(rear) 147 cm
Ground clearance 18 cm
Length 482 cm
Width 176 cm
Height 158 cm

Maximum speed: 116 kph (108 with 600 kg load)

Acceleration: (best of 3 runs)
4.6 sec to 40 kph
6.6 50
8.6 60
11.6 70
15.6 80
20.4 90
28 100
45 110

(Curiously, when unloaded, the acceleration was slightly superior to that of an 11 Legere, thanks to a lower final drive ratio.)

Fuel consumption: (in third gear, at constant speed, on the Montlhery course of 2548.24 metres, for a

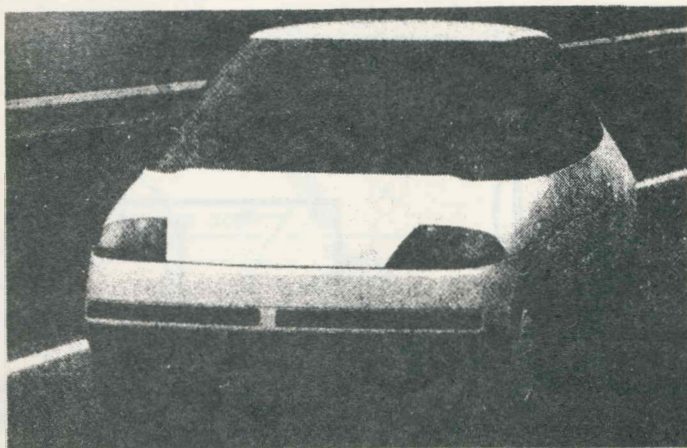
flying 9 km)

8 litres @ 40 kph
8.35 50
8.9 60
9.6 70
10.5 80
11.6 90
13.1 100
15.3 110
17.2 116

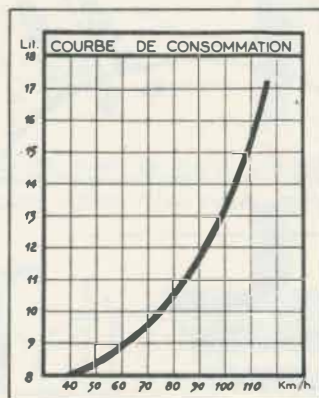
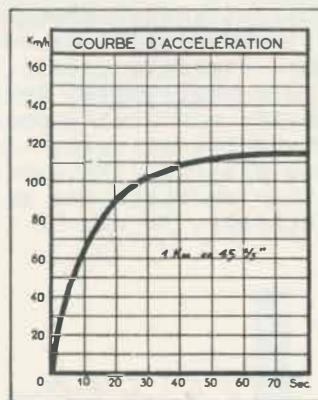
Water-tightness: A special trial involved subjecting the car to artificial rain at 10 kg pressure for two minutes as well as a spray from underneath. Results were satisfactory, although leaks appeared at the ventilator flap and in the boot.

Luggage capacity: A standard set of eight suitcases was used. Only cases 4, 5 and 7, representing a usable volume of 85 cubic decimetres, could be fitted. The luggage capacity is absolutely insufficient and ridiculous for an eight passenger car. Note that the new boot is no improvement, as the spare wheel occupies almost all the extra volume. This goes for the Normale and 15-six as well.

CHEATING THE WIND -Citroën Revitalizes the Panhard?



Citroën's ECO 2000 prototype will be one of the stars of the Birmingham Auto Show. A study of what cars of the future will be like, ECO 2000 had three main priorities: to be aerodynamic, light and have an efficient engine. Three four-seater prototypes have been built; all weigh less than 1060 lb. The most recent prototype—pictured—is only 137.5 in. long, yet has a Cd of 0.21. In this form, ECO 2000 uses a three-cylinder transverse engine with sohc, water cooling and 35 bhp. Top speed is 88 mph, with 0-60 in 18 sec. The official fuel economy cycles average is over 80 mpg [64 US mpg].



VIT. MAX. 116 KM.-H. - CONS. MOY. 11 L. 100 KM.