

**Make:** Facel Vega

**Makers:** Facel S.A., 19, Avenue George V, Paris 8ème., France

**Concessionaires:** H. W. Motors Ltd., New Zealand Avenue, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey.

**Type:** HK 500

**Test Data**

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**CONDITIONS:** Weather: Cold and dry with 10 m.p.h. wind. (Temperature 37°-39°F., Barometer 29.9 in. Hg.). Surface: Dry concrete and tarred macadam. Fuel: Premium grade pump petrol (approx. 97 Research Method Octane Rating.)

**INSTRUMENTS**

(Using 6.70-15 Michelin "X" tyres)

Speedometer at 30 m.p.h. .. .. .	8% fast
Speedometer at 60 m.p.h. .. .. .	6% fast
Speedometer at 90 m.p.h. .. .. .	7% fast
Speedometer at 120 m.p.h. .. .. .	7% fast
Distance recorder .. .. .	3% fast

**WEIGHT**

Kerb weight (unladen, but with oil, coolant and fuel for approx. 50 miles) .. .. . 36 cwt.  
 Front/rear distribution of kerb weight 55/45  
 Weight laden as tested .. .. . 40 cwt.

**MAXIMUM SPEEDS**

Mean maximum speed (see text), approx. 140 m.p.h. at r.p.m. limit

"Maximile" speed. (Timed quarter mile after one mile accelerating from rest.)  
 Mean of four opposite runs .. .. . 128.8 m.p.h.  
 Best one-way time equals .. .. . 132.4 m.p.h.

**Speed in gears (at 5,000 r.p.m.)**

Max. speed in 3rd gear .. .. . 98 m.p.h.  
 Max. speed in 2nd gear .. .. . 69 m.p.h.  
 Max. speed in 1st gear .. .. . 39 m.p.h.

**FUEL CONSUMPTION**

25.5 m.p.g. at constant 30 m.p.h. on level.
25.5 m.p.g. at constant 40 m.p.h. on level.
23.0 m.p.g. at constant 50 m.p.h. on level.
20.5 m.p.g. at constant 60 m.p.h. on level.
18.5 m.p.g. at constant 70 m.p.h. on level.
16.5 m.p.g. at constant 80 m.p.h. on level.
14.5 m.p.g. at constant 90 m.p.h. on level.
13.0 m.p.g. at constant 100 m.p.h. on level.
11.0 m.p.g. at constant 110 m.p.h. on level.

**Overall Fuel Consumption** for 2,178 miles, 187.9 gallons equals 11.6 m.p.g. (24.4 litres/100 km.)

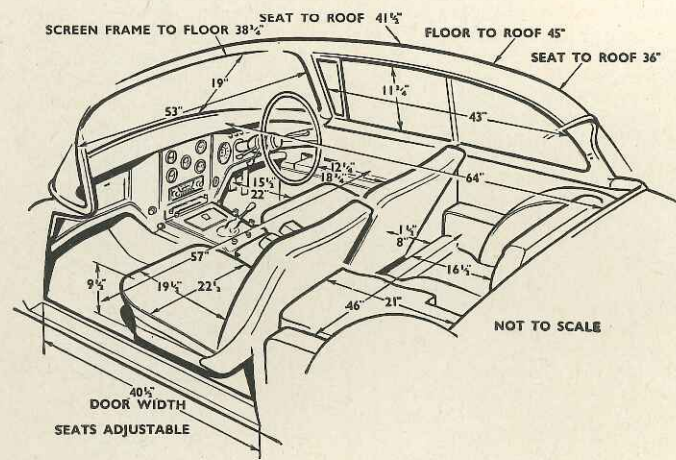
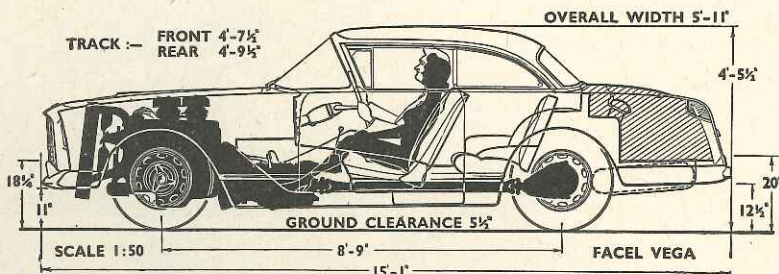
**Touring Fuel Consumption** (m.p.g. at steady speed midway between 30 m.p.h. and maximum, less 5% allowance for acceleration). 14.7 m.p.g.  
 Fuel tank capacity (maker's figure) 22 gallons.

**STEERING**

Turning circle between kerbs:  
 Left .. .. . 37½ ft.  
 Right .. .. . 38½ ft.  
 Turns of steering wheel from lock to lock 4½

**BRAKES from 30 m.p.h.**

0.96 g retardation (equivalent to 31½ ft. stopping distance) with 190 lb. pedal pressure.  
 0.85 g retardation (equivalent to 35½ ft. stopping distance) with 150 lb. pedal pressure.  
 0.72 g retardation (equivalent to 41½ ft. stopping distance) with 100 lb. pedal pressure.  
 0.51 g retardation (equivalent to 59 ft. stopping distance) with 50 lb. pedal pressure.  
 0.17 g retardation (equivalent to 177 ft. stopping distance) with 25 lb. pedal pressure.



**ACCELERATION TIMES from Standstill**

0-30 m.p.h. .. .. .	3.4 sec.
0-40 m.p.h. .. .. .	4.8 sec.
0-50 m.p.h. .. .. .	6.8 sec.
0-60 m.p.h. .. .. .	8.4 sec.
0-70 m.p.h. .. .. .	10.8 sec.
0-80 m.p.h. .. .. .	14.0 sec.
0-90 m.p.h. .. .. .	17.0 sec.
0-100 m.p.h. .. .. .	21.1 sec.
0-110 m.p.h. .. .. .	26.5 sec.
Standing quarter mile .. .. .	16.3 sec.

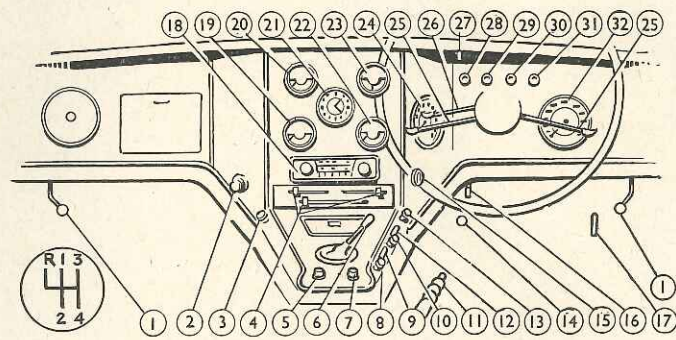
**ACCELERATION TIMES on Upper Ratios**

	Top gear	3rd gear
10-30 m.p.h. .. .. .	7.4 sec.	5.1 sec.
20-40 m.p.h. .. .. .	6.2 sec.	4.6 sec.
30-50 m.p.h. .. .. .	6.3 sec.	5.1 sec.
40-60 m.p.h. .. .. .	7.7 sec.	5.3 sec.
50-70 m.p.h. .. .. .	8.2 sec.	5.8 sec.
60-80 m.p.h. .. .. .	8.8 sec.	—
70-90 m.p.h. .. .. .	10.0 sec.	—
80-100 m.p.h. .. .. .	—	—
90-110 m.p.h. .. .. .	—	—

**HILL CLIMBING at sustained steady speeds**

Max. gradient on top gear .. .. .	1 in 5.8 (Tapley 385 lb./ton)
Max. gradient on 3rd gear .. .. .	1 in 4.3 (Tapley 510 lb./ton)
Max. gradient on 2nd gear .. .. .	1 in 3.0 (Tapley 705 lb./ton)

1. Cold air vent.
2. Cigar lighter.
3. Two-speed heater fan switch.
4. Heater controls.
5. Windscreen washer button.
6. Gear lever.
7. Headlamp flasher.
8. Fog-lamp switch.
9. Rear interior light switch.
10. Side- and head-lamps switch.
11. Handbrake.
12. Front interior light switch.
13. Variable-speed windscreen wipers switch.
14. Dip switch.
15. Ignition and starter switch.
16. Trip re-setting knob.
17. Bonnet catch release.
18. Radio.
19. Fuel contents gauge.
20. Water thermometer.
21. Clock.
22. Oil pressure gauge.
23. Ammeter.
24. Speedometer, distance recorder.
25. Horn.
26. Direction indicators switch.
27. Panel light rheostat.
28. Direction indicator warning light.
29. Dynamo charge warning light.
30. Headlamp dipped-beam indicator light.
31. Fuel contents warning light.
32. Rev. counter.



# The FACEL VEGA HK500

POWER galore from a big American V-8 engine gives this low French sports saloon with British disc brakes safe and effortless high performance. In-built foglamps and air intakes for the interior heating system are conspicuous in this front view.



## One of the World's Fastest and Most Controllable Luxury Sports Saloons

**I**N the world of motoring, some few cars come to deserve the adjective "great" because, although they have faults like everything else in this imperfect world, they provide such a highly desirable combination of virtues. Driving the latest Facel Vega HK500 in Britain, France, Switzerland and Belgium (and giving seven different people the chance to praise and to criticize) we found it hard to keep superlatives out of the conversation. It is not merely one of the world's very, very fast cars but it is also extremely comfortable and well furnished, is highly controllable in every sense and consequently safe when handled intelligently, and represents one of the most untiring machines for completing long road journeys in a short time that we have ever encountered.

The limitations? Some drivers would find that around town the brakes, clutch and steering are rather heavy to use, city gents being offered the option of power steering, an automatic gearbox and a

slightly milder single-carburettor engine. The braced-tread tyres which are usually fitted for normal motoring are not approved by their makers for sustained speeds in excess of 120 m.p.h. (although in "maximile" tests using these tyres we touched 135 m.p.h. momentarily without incident) and even on racing tyres the water pump belt (which also drives the fan and dynamo) sets a speed limit equivalent to approximately 140 m.p.h. by being liable to leave its pulley at just over 5,000 r.p.m. The comfortable body is an occasional four-seater with only rather limited luggage room or transforms into a two-seater with plenty of luggage capacity, but is not a true four seater. The vast majority of potential customers will hardly regard these as limitations, finding the carrying capacity of this, the smaller of the two Facel Vega V-8 models, ample for their business and private journeys, the immense and effortless performance (few motorists want to exceed upon public highways the 120 m.p.h. limit advised for touring tyres) just what they have dreamed about.

Few cars are more truly international than the Facel Vega which, French in origin and with its tubular chassis, four-speed gearbox and all-steel body made in Paris, also takes its engine from the U.S.A., its cast light-alloy wheels from Italy and its servo disc brakes from England. Every feature of the car is straightforwardly designed on orthodox modern lines, and the result now attained is a beautifully balanced whole.

Power is the essence of the Facel Vega, and it is provided by a V-8 overhead-

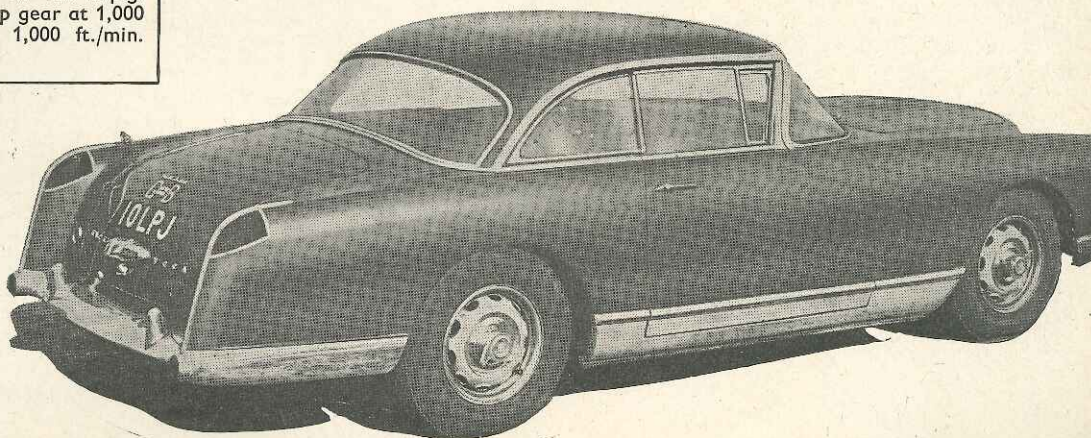
valve engine of 6,286 c.c. displacement built by the Chrysler Corporation. Two quadruple-choke Carter downdraught carburettors, their eight throttles opening progressively two-by-two as the accelerator is depressed towards the floorboards, allow the big engine to breathe very freely, maximum gross output under the favourable test conditions of the Society of Automotive Engineers being quoted as 360 brake horse power! Too fierce use of the accelerator at very low r.p.m. (30 m.p.h. in top gear represents only 1,100 r.p.m.) can disclose carburation shortcomings, but once a driver gets the feel of it this is a perfectly well-mannered engine for use around town, responding quite gently to a light touch on the accelerator and only unleashing its brute power when the pedal is really depressed. Sudden hard acceleration can emit a sharp bellow of sound from the twin exhausts instead of the usual subdued and slightly off-beat rumble, but the car then disappears out of earshot with a rapidity which leaves only two black marks in the road (a Powr-lok differential was fitted to our test model, and effectively made sure that both rear wheels propelled the car) as a reminder of its recent presence: cruising on the open road, this is a quiet car internally and does not seem to excite other people by external noise, either on ordinary roads or on motorways along which something over 100 m.p.h. is an effortless cruising gait.

Whilst it is possible to specify the Chrysler automatic transmission (using a torque converter and epicyclic three-speed gearbox), a great majority of British

### In Brief

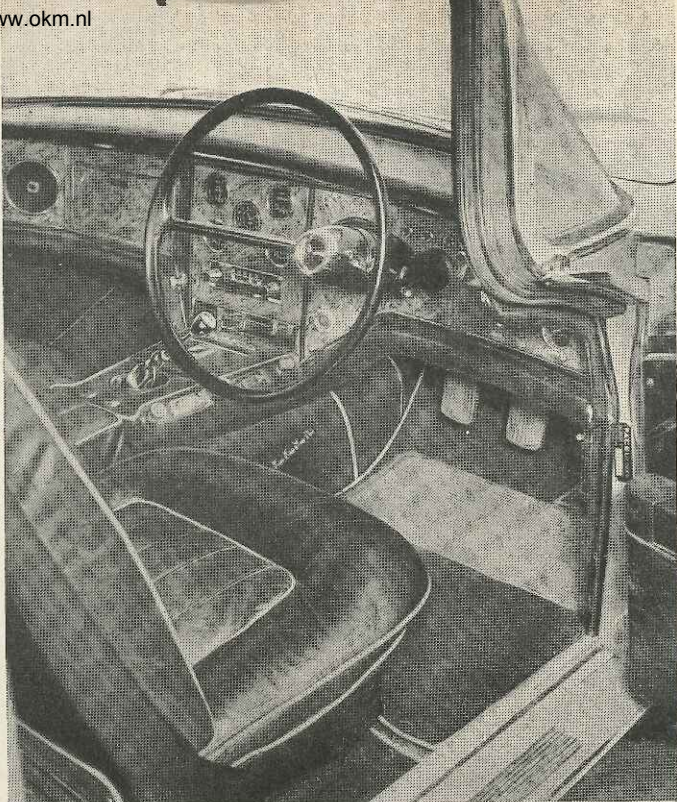
Price (as tested) £3,345 plus purchase tax	
£1,394 17s. 6d. equals £4,739 17s. 6d.	
Capacity ... ..	6,286 c.c.
Unladen kerb weight ... ..	36 cwt.
Acceleration:	
20-40 m.p.h. in top gear ...	7.4 sec.
0-50 m.p.h. through gears	6.8 sec.
Maximum direct top gear gradient ... ..	1 in 5.8
Maximum speed (at r.p.m. limit) ... ..	approx. 140 m.p.h.
"Maximile" speed ... ..	128.8 m.p.h.
Touring fuel consumption ...	14.7 m.p.g.
Gearing: 26.8 m.p.h. in top gear at 1,000 r.p.m.; 47.5 m.p.h. at 1,000 ft./min. piston speed.	

ITALIAN light-alloy wheels with centre-lock hubs combine with polished metal along the lower edge of the body to produce a distinctive and businesslike appearance.





LUXURY is provided for the occupants of individual front seats, who have a good view forward over a big instrument panel and a long, power-bulged bonnet. Rear seats of limited roominess have a backrest which can fold forwards to form a carpeted platform for luggage.



## The FACEL VEGA HK500

customers choose the orthodox clutch and four-speed manual gearbox with which our test car was equipped. At first acquaintance, the central gear lever seems to be tilted sideways at an odd angle and to have quite a long fore-and-aft travel, but it is soon appreciated that gear control is ideally positioned and utterly positive, all four ratios being quiet to the point of inaudibility, and the synchromesh on each being smoothly effective. This is certainly one of the cars on which it is possible to forget to engage top gear, so silent is third either in town or at quite high speeds—it is a ratio on which 100 m.p.h. can be approached closely without endangering the fan belt.

Transmitting the 425 lb. ft. torque of such a big engine through an orthodox clutch has obviously posed problems, and so that the strong clutch springs needed to ensure freedom from slip shall not result in excessive pedal pressures a helper spring has been used in the pedal linkage. Adjustment of this clutch operating gear is obviously critical, as in the extreme case the helper spring can be over-helpful and momentarily delay the return of the clutch pedal from the floor after a gear-

change. With this system, a little experience and judgement are needed before smooth starts from rest can be counted upon—our performance tests were unmarred by any trace of clutch slip but fractions of a second were lost after each change of gear because this clutch did not lend itself to "racing" treatment.

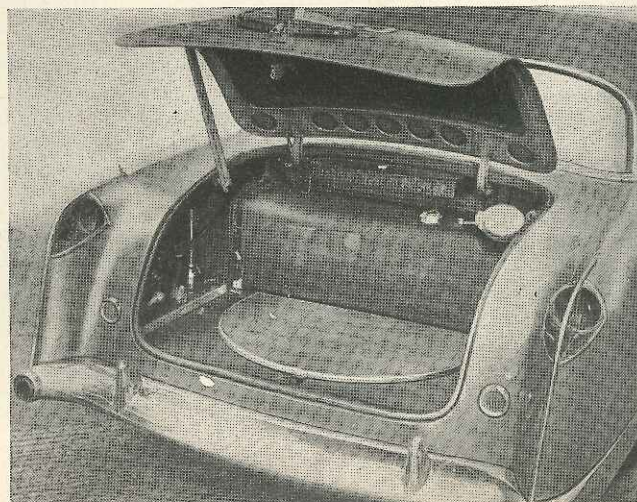
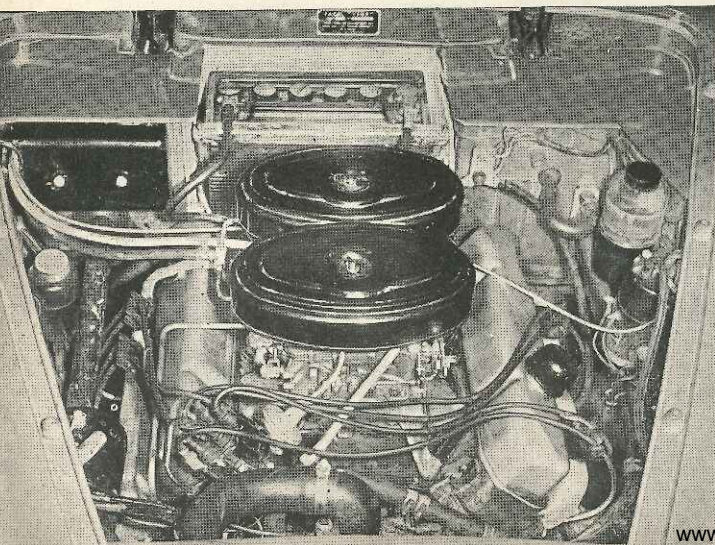
The endearing thing about the Facel Vega is not, however, its ability to record "best ever" through-the-gears acceleration times in the hands of an expert driver who is really on his mettle, but rather its ability to hurl itself forwards in response to any sudden traffic opportunity with a rapidity which makes most other cars look pathetic, and to go over hills as if they were not there, at any time and without pump-handling of the gear lever. There are no automatic devices to remember or overdrive switches to fiddle with, the ordinary top gear ratio of 2.93 : 1 in which 140 m.p.h. is readily obtainable on suitable tyres also providing acceleration from 30 m.p.h. to 50 m.p.h. in only 6.2 seconds, a time which 2½-litre saloons such as many people consider fast could not match by a change down into 2nd gear.

Immense performance is something which people expect of a 6½-litre sports saloon, and there need be no surprise at its achievement. What does surprise some people is the brilliant combination of good comfort and quite exceptional roadworthiness which has been achieved. The car is built on an immensely sturdy foundation, with welded steel bodywork carried on a tubular steel chassis; it is also low and wide, with no more than 5½ inches of ground clearance but a track of 4 ft. 9½ in. As it stands at the kerb, the HK500 can be moved gently up and down on its springs in almost the transatlantic manner, and negotiation of bad roads with high-speed tyre pressures of the 35 lb./sq. in. order involves no discomfort. At very high cruising speeds on open but ill-surfaced French roads (anything between 90 and 110 m.p.h. seems a natural and tireless gait, with no strain and comparatively little wind noise) there is a fair amount of up and down motion, but certainly not more than in other orthodox cars driven at comparable speeds.

Despite its comfortably soft springing, at the extremely high speeds of which it is capable this is a very controllable car indeed, stable yet capable of being

POWER UNIT of the HK500 is this 6½-litre V-8, tolerant of 96-97 octane rating fuel despite a 10/1 compression ratio, and coupled to an all-synchromesh four-speed gearbox.

LUGGAGE capacity is provided behind the big petrol tank on this flat floor beneath which is the spare wheel. Tools are stowed in the left wing and in a fitted tray above the fuel tank.

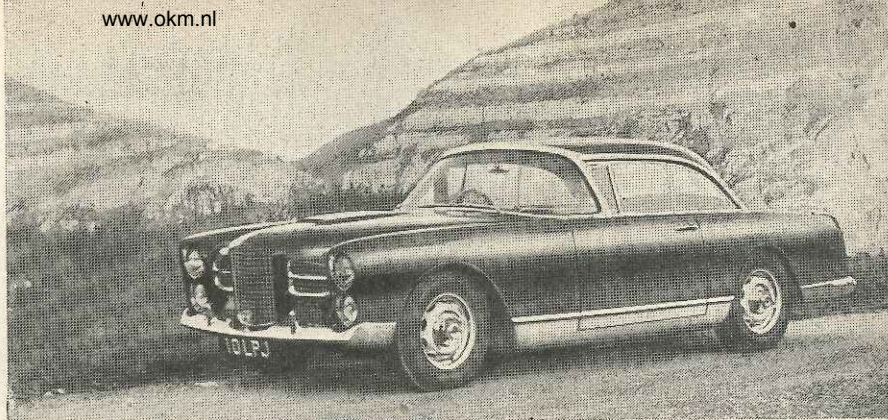


**FARAWAY PLACES** become much closer in this car, which ran from this Geneva scene via a leisurely lunch to the Channel coast between a late breakfast and an early dinner-time.

cornered with all the effortless verve of a first rate sports two-seater. Despite being as free from roll as a saloon car can ever be, this Facel Vega contrives to escape from the lateral rocking action which offsets this virtue on some other sporting saloons. The braced-tread Michelin X tyres do not squeal or break away until very, very severely provoked, yet when the limit of adhesion is reached the car remains controllable. Only on closing the throttle suddenly at 130 m.p.h. half way around a corner on the M1 motorway did we induce a mild snake, as a reminder that for really high speeds the racing tyres on which we did our fastest driving along a continental motorway are more appropriate than are touring tyres with very flexible side-walls. From being rather heavy in crowded town streets, the steering becomes light at speed but never embarrassingly so. Road shock has been kept away from the steering wheel, apparently without loss of precision, but the long unsupported column can vibrate vertically at times, to an extent sufficient to shake the ash off a driver's cigar.

It is by no means only on dry roads that this car handles well. We have driven it in rain and over beaten snow, it being of course possible to provoke slides on really slippery surfaces but, thanks to progressive throttle response and the car's excellent balance, easy to control any slide which is provoked.

To cope with the immense speed potentialities, Dunlop disc brakes have been fitted to the Facel Vega, with a vacuum servo to assist their application. Despite the servo assistance, pedal pressures needed by the brakes of our test model were higher than is nowadays usual, emphasizing perhaps that this is a



"man's car" although women also drove it without difficulty during our test. What these brakes do provide is completely smooth and progressive retardation, which can be depended on from high speeds or low, and is powerful after a check from 120 m.p.h. or at the end of an Alpine descent unaided by any use of the indirect gears as well as from town speeds. The handbrake, operating on the rear discs, was almost completely ineffective.

A wrap-around windscreen does not obstruct entry to a car of this size in the way that it can when applied to a small car. The driver and the front seat passenger occupy two big leather-upholstered seats with separate folding armrests (an amenity which during our test was generally used only by the passengers) and there is something of a "space ship" air about the interior layout. The fascia panel is set a long way forward with effective padding above and below it, there being a full set of instruments, and the minor controls overflowing from the deep imitation-wood panel on to the huge central transmission tunnel in an array which, slightly awe-inspiring at first glance, soon proves eminently practical in almost every respect save for the array of identical-colour warning lamps. Passengers are comfortable enough to enjoy being driven fast in this car, and are not thrown around as in some other much less rapid saloons. With the front seats adjusted reasonably far forward,

two adults can travel in the back compartment, but the majority of buyers are obviously likely to cover more miles with the rear seat backrest folded down to form a carpeted luggage "deck" than with passengers in the limited space. Behind the body, a 22-gallon fuel tank with a huge filler (needed to meet a thirst which with hard driving can be measured at 12 miles per gallon of ordinary "Premium grade" petrol) does not leave room for an immense luggage locker, but as this locker is sensibly cubic in shape and has a flat carpeted floor it accommodated suitcases at least as easily as will some larger but more awkwardly shaped lockers. Almost any "extra" which a customer might require is provided as standard equipment, including an excellent fresh-air heating system, electric windows with a double switch on the driver's door which opens either near or off-side windows, a British-made radio with twin speakers and automatic aerial erection when the set is switched on, twin foglamps wired so that they may be used to broaden the main headlamp beams and go out as the headlamps are dipped, adjustable rake seat backrests, and so on.

In a very brief period of days, we found that our test of the Facel Vega had extended to well over 2,000 miles. It is one of those cars which asks to be used for long journeys, and then makes you wish that each journey was even longer.

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## Specification

<b>Engine</b>	
Cylinders ... ..	V-8
Bore ... ..	107.95 mm.
Stroke ... ..	85.85 mm.
Cubic capacity ... ..	6,286 c.c.
Piston area ... ..	113.4 sq. in.
Valves ... ..	O.h.v. (pushrods)
Compression ratio ... ..	10/1
Carburettor	Two four-choke (1 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. bore) Carter downdraught
Fuel pump	Mechanical, with rear-mounted electrical pump in series
Ignition timing control ... ..	Centrifugal and vacuum
Oil filter ... ..	Mopar full-flow
Max. power (gross) ... ..	360 b.h.p.
at ... ..	5,200 r.p.m.
Piston speed at max. b.h.p.	2,980 ft./min.
<b>Transmission</b>	
Clutch ... ..	Borg & Beck 11-in. s.d.p.
Top gear (s/m) ... ..	2.93
3rd gear (s/m) ... ..	4.01
2nd gear (s/m) ... ..	5.75
1st gear (s/m) ... ..	10.1
Reverse ... ..	9.45
Propeller shaft ... ..	Hardy Spicer open
Final drive ... ..	Hypoid bevel
Top gear m.p.h. at 1,000 r.p.m.	26.8
Top gear m.p.h. at 1,000 ft./min.	47.5
piston speed ... ..	
<b>Chassis</b>	
Brakes	Dunlop disc-type, with vacuum servo
Brake diameters:	
Front discs ... ..	12 in.
Rear discs ... ..	11 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Friction areas: 41.3 sq. in. of pad area working on 606.3 sq. in. rubbed area of discs.	
<b>Suspension:</b>	
Front:	Independent by coil springs, transverse wishbones and anti-roll torsion bar.
Rear:	Semi-elliptic springs and rigid axle.
Shock absorbers ... ..	de Carbon telescopic
Steering gear	Gemmer cam and roller
Tyres: 6.70—15 Michelin "X," with tubes (or racing tyres for driving speeds above 120 m.p.h.).	

## Coachwork and Equipment

Starting handle ... ..	No
Battery mounting ... ..	On scuttle behind engine
Jack ... ..	Hydraulic
Jacking points ... ..	4 pads on front and rear cross-members of chassis
Standard tool kit: Jack and handle, hub-cap mallet, screwdriver, Phillips screwdriver, sparking plug spanner, pliers, 2 adjustable spanners, drain plug key.	
Exterior lights: 2 headlamps with pilot bulbs, 2 foglamps, 2 stop/tail lamps, number plate lamp, reversing lamp.	
Number of electrical fuses ... ..	4
Direction indicators: Self-cancelling flashers (combined with foglamps and stop-lamps on test car, separate amber flashers on subsequent examples).	
Windscreen wipers	Variable-speed electrical two-blade, self-parking
Windscreen washers	Electric pump type
Sun visors ... ..	Two, universally pivoted
Instruments: Speedometer with total and decimal trip distance recorders, rev. counter, clock, fuel contents gauge, oil pressure gauge, coolant thermometer, ammeter.	
Warning lights: Dynamo charge, low fuel level, turn indicators, headlamp beam.	
<b>Locks:</b>	
With Ignition key	Ignition/starter switch
With other keys ... ..	(a) both doors
	(b) luggage locker

Glove lockers/map pockets	Two compartments in doors, with lids
Parcel shelves ... ..	None
Ashtrays ... ..	One above gearbox, two in rear compartment
Cigar lighters ... ..	One on fascia
Interior lights: Two above fascia with manual and door-operated switches, two in rear compartment.	
Interior heater: Fresh-air interior heater and screen de-mister with two-speed fan.	
Car radio: H.M.V. Radiomobile transistorized, with power-operated aerial and twin speakers, fitted as standard.	
Extras available: Power steering, automatic gearbox, fitted luggage for boot and for rear compartment, adjustable rear shock absorbers, Webasto opening roof, Powr-lok spinning differential.	
Upholstery material ... ..	Leather
Floor covering ... ..	Pile carpets
Exterior colours standardized: 10 standard colours (cars painted in special colours by factory to order).	
Alternative body styles: None (HK500 is available with 330 b.h.p. engine, automatic transmission and power steering; Excellence four-door pillarless saloon body available on long-wheelbase chassis).	

## Maintenance

Sump: 8 pints, plus 2 pints in filter, S.A.E. 20 winter and S.A.E. 30 summer, or multi-grade.	
Gearbox (synchronesh): 4 pints, S.A.E. 90 (automatic gearbox contains 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ pints of A.T.F. 55).	
Rear axle	3 $\frac{3}{4}$ pints, S.A.E. 90 hypoid gear oil
Steering gear lubricant ... ..	S.A.E. 90 gear oil
Cooling system capacity	44 pints (3 drain taps)
Chassis lubrication ... ..	By grease gun every 1,000 miles to 15 points
Ignition timing	6° before t.d.c. static
Contact-breaker gap ... ..	0.015 in.
Sparkling plug type ... ..	Champion X18
Sparkling plug gap ... ..	0.028-0.030 in.
Valve timing: Inlet opens 20° before t.d.c. and closes 60° after b.d.c.; exhaust opens 58° before b.d.c. and closes 22° after t.d.c.	

Tappet clearances ... ..	Not adjustable (hydraulic tappets)
Front wheel toe-in ... ..	$\frac{1}{8}$ in.
Camber angle ... ..	1°
<b>Tyre pressures (according to speed and load):</b>	
Front ... ..	27-30 lb.
Rear ... ..	27-34 lb.
Brake fluid ... ..	Lockheed heavy duty
Battery type and capacity ... ..	12-volt, 72 amp hr.
Miscellaneous: Front hub bearings to be re-packed with molybdenum disulphide base grease every 5,000 miles, and their adjustment checked; power-operated aerial to be lubricated regularly with special grease supplied with car.	