

The Motor Road Test No. 13/59

Make: Singer **Type:** Gazelle Convertible, Series III (with overdrive)
Test Data **Makers:** Singer Motors Ltd., Coventry.

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CONDITIONS: Weather: Mild and dry with 10 m.p.h. wind. (Temperature 46°-50°F., Barometer 29.6 in. Hg.) Surface: Dry tarred macadam and concrete. Fuel: Premium-grade pump petrol (approx. 97 Research Method Octane Rating).

INSTRUMENTS

Speedometer at 30 m.p.h. 2% fast
 Speedometer at 60 m.p.h. 2% fast
 Speedometer at 80 m.p.h. 2% fast
 Distance recorder Accurate

WEIGHT

Kerb weight (unladen, but with oil, coolant and fuel for approx. 50 miles) 21 cwt.
 Front/rear distribution of kerb weight 57/43
 Weight laden as tested 24½ cwt.

MAXIMUM SPEEDS

Direct Top Gear
 Mean lap speed around banked circuit 83.4 m.p.h.
 Best one-way ¼-mile on straight 87.8 m.p.h.

Overdrive Top Gear
 Mean lap speed around banked circuit 82.3 m.p.h.
 Best one-way ¼-mile on straight 87.8 m.p.h.
 "Maximile" Speed. (Timed quarter mile after one mile accelerating from rest.)

Mean of four opposite runs 80.1 m.p.h.
 Best one-way time equals 82.6 m.p.h.

Speed in Gears

Max. speed in overdrive 3rd gear approx. 80 m.p.h.
 Max. speed in direct 3rd gear 65 m.p.h.
 Max. speed in 2nd gear 40 m.p.h.
 Max. speed in 1st gear 31 m.p.h.

FUEL CONSUMPTION (Overdrive Top Gear)

44½ m.p.g. at constant 30 m.p.h. on level.
 41 m.p.g. at constant 40 m.p.h. on level.
 37 m.p.g. at constant 50 m.p.h. on level.
 33 m.p.g. at constant 60 m.p.h. on level.
 30 m.p.g. at constant 70 m.p.h. on level.

(Direct Top Gear)

42 m.p.g. at constant 20 m.p.h. on level.
 37 m.p.g. at constant 30 m.p.h. on level.
 33 m.p.g. at constant 40 m.p.h. on level.
 29 m.p.g. at constant 50 m.p.h. on level.
 26 m.p.g. at constant 60 m.p.h. on level.

Overall Fuel Consumption for 1,384 miles,
 56 gallons, equals 24.7 m.p.g (11.4 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) 32.5 m.p.g.

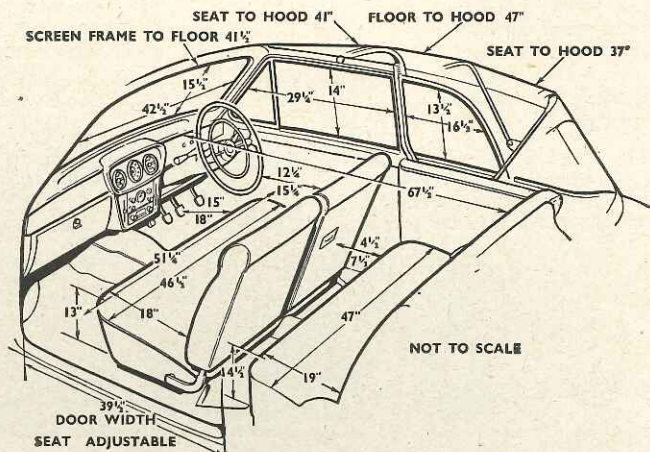
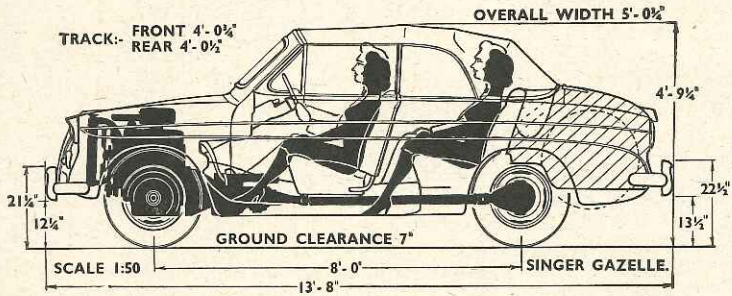
Fuel Tank Capacity (maker's figure) 10 gallons.

STEERING

Turning circle between kerbs:
 Left 36 feet
 Right 35 feet
 Turns of steering wheel from lock to lock 3

BRAKES from 30 m.p.h.

0.98 g retardation (equivalent to 30½ ft. stopping distance) with 95 lb. pedal pressure.
 0.78 g retardation (equivalent to 38½ ft. stopping distance) with 75 lb. pedal pressure.
 0.56 g retardation (equivalent to 54 ft. stopping distance) with 50 lb. pedal pressure.
 0.21 g retardation (equivalent to 143 ft. stopping distance) with 25 lb. pedal pressure.



ACCELERATION TIMES from standstill

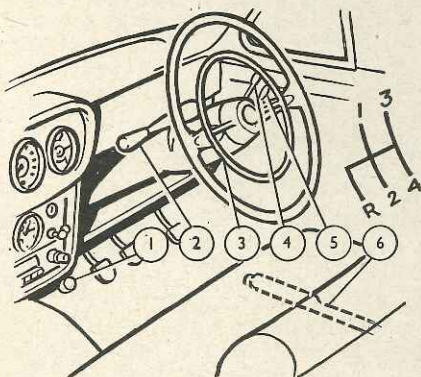
0-30 m.p.h.	5.9 sec.
0-40 m.p.h.	9.1 sec.
0-50 m.p.h.	14.3 sec.
0-60 m.p.h.	21.2 sec.
0-70 m.p.h.	32.9 sec.
Standing quarter mile	22.5 sec.

ACCELERATION TIMES on upper ratios

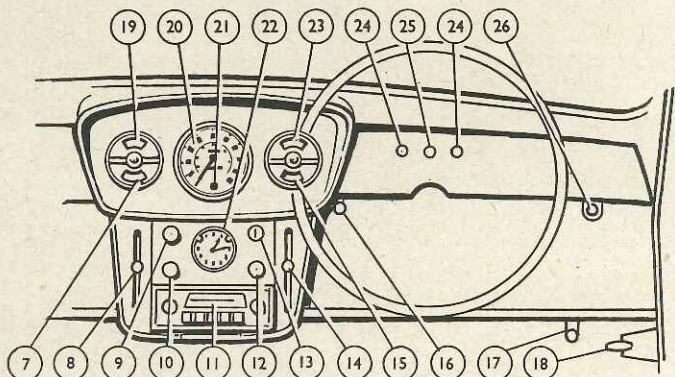
	Overdrive Top	Direct Top	Overdrive 3rd	Direct 3rd
10-30 m.p.h.	11.7 sec.	10.0 sec.	6.8 sec.	7.4 sec.
20-40 m.p.h.	18.0 sec.	11.5 sec.	10.0 sec.	9.0 sec.
30-50 m.p.h.	18.9 sec.	11.1 sec.	10.9 sec.	11.7 sec.
40-60 m.p.h.	21.9 sec.	13.7 sec.	13.3 sec.	11.7 sec.
50-70 m.p.h.	27.2 sec.	19.5 sec.	19.1 sec.	—

HILL CLIMBING at sustained steady speeds

Max. gradient on overdrive top gear	1 in 17.9 (Tapley 125 lb./ton)
Max. gradient on direct top gear	1 in 10.9 (Tapley 205 lb./ton)
Max. gradient on overdrive 3rd gear	1 in 9.5 (Tapley 235 lb./ton)
Max. gradient on direct 3rd gear	1 in 7.0 (Tapley 315 lb./ton)
Max. gradient on 2nd gear	1 in 4.8 (Tapley 455 lb./ton)



1, Headlamp dipswitch. 2, Gear lever. 3, Horn ring. 4, Direction indicator switch. 5, Overdrive switch. 6, Handbrake. 7, Fuel contents gauge. 8, Demister control. 9, Lights switch. 10, Choke control. 11, Radio controls. 12, Windscreen



wipers switch. 13, Ignition and starter switch. 14, Heater control and fan switch. 15, Water thermometer. 16, Trip adjuster. 17, Cold air vent. 18, Bonnet release. 19, Oil pressure gauge. 20, Speedometer and distance recorder. 21,

Dynamo charge warning light. 22, Clock. 23, Ammeter. 24, Direction indicator warning lights. 25, Main beam indicator light. 26, Windscreen washer button.

The Singer Gazelle Series III Convertible



QUICK furling of the hood to a *coupé de ville* position is a big attraction of this model, which shares body pressings with other Rootes marques but has individual frontal treatment.

A 1½-litre Car
of Popular
Size Offering
Above-average
Refinement
and
Performance



A GOOD all-rounder invariably commands both liking and respect, and the Singer Gazelle is a very good all-rounder indeed. With a 1½-litre engine and the reasonably compact dimensions which large numbers of motorists all over the world regard as sensible, it rises commendably above the average in performance, refinement and quality of finish. Priced only about 10% above the de luxe models of more popular makes which are comparable with it dimensionally, the Singer offers measurable value for the modest price premium as well as having the distinction associated with its more exclusive appearance.

Our test example of the latest Series III Gazelle has been a convertible, costing £67 more than the saloon (plus nearly £28 extra purchase tax in Britain) and offering very real attractions accompanied by cer-

tain limitations. In spring, the pleasures of being able to open a car partially or completely hardly require emphasis, and freedom to choose "coupé de ville" or "open car" conditions is not obtained at the expense of weatherproof qualities in colder or wet seasons. So that the hood can fold completely out of sight into a well, there is some reduction in the length and width of the rear seat, and also a slight reduction in luggage capacity. Furthermore, to replace the steel roof which stiffens a saloon body, the convertible has additional X-bracing below the floor which adds perhaps 35 lb. to the car's weight and slightly reduces ground clearance amidships.

Whilst those seeking the utmost possible roominess or performance must note these disadvantages of a convertible body, many people can ignore them and enjoy the very real advantages. To open the front half of the folding roof is a one-man job taking very few moments (closing it again is an equally brief task) and a great deal of driving can enjoyably be done thus: there is enough shelter from the wind to let the (optional) interior heater keep feet warm and to make fast main road travel comfortable.

Opening the car completely is a second stage, which takes rather longer if the hood is to be folded neatly away and the cover fitted over it. For holiday sightseeing, the completely open car thus obtained (all four glass windows and their frames can be wound down out of sight when required) is delightful, but if the car is driven fast in this trim it suffers (like many other open four-seat cars) from a strong draught

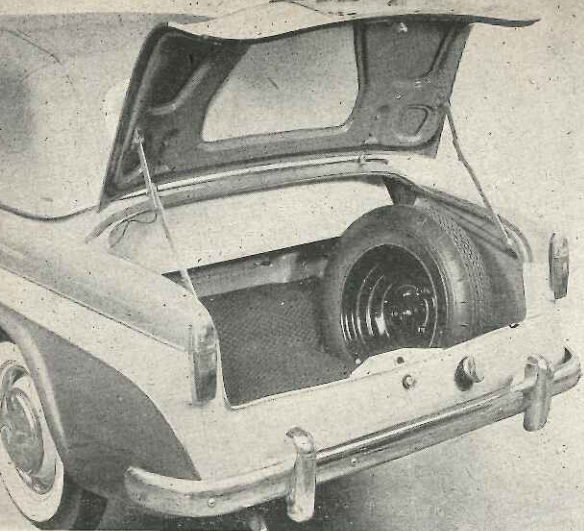
which blows forwards under the front seat.

As a closed car, this Gazelle Convertible is a two-door model whereas the equivalent saloon has four doors. Those who seldom carry rear-seat passengers, or who carry young children and prefer them to be out of reach of door handles, will find two large doors highly attractive. When the rear seat is to be used, either half of a split front-seat backrest tilts forward to give tolerably easy (with the car fully open, very easy) access to the back compartment. Driven with the roof up, this model is usually as rattle-free as a saloon (and, with a soft top which does not flap, is probably quieter in other ways) although fast driving over rough surfaces can occasionally induce sideways shake of the scuttle and steering column. With the roof folded, the car still feels thoroughly rigid in itself, but the unsupported side windows can vibrate sideways to some extent.

Since our last test of the Gazelle, a short-stroke engine with pushrod-operated o.h.v. has replaced an overhead-camshaft unit, and with the latest 32 mm. Solex carburettor this engine has given the Gazelle a notable performance increase—the maximum speed has gone up from 78 m.p.h. to 83.4 m.p.h., and the time needed to accelerate from rest to 70 m.p.h. has dropped from 40.2 seconds to 32.9 seconds. With substantially the same cubic capacity as the earlier engine, this new unit gives very much the same pulling power below 35 m.p.h. in top gear, but above that speed its better breathing becomes progressively more evident so that the top gear acceleration time from 50 m.p.h. to

In Brief

Price (including overdrive as tested)	£707 10s. plus purchase tax £295 18s. 4d. equals £1,003 8s. 4d.
Price without overdrive (including purchase tax), £943 4s. 2d.	
Capacity	1,494 c.c.
Unladen kerb weight	21 cwt.
Acceleration:	
20-40 m.p.h. in top gear	11.5 sec.
0-50 m.p.h. through gears	14.3 sec.
Maximum direct top gear gradient	1 in 10.9
Maximum speed	83.4 m.p.h.
"Maximile" speed	80.1 m.p.h.
Touring fuel consumption	32.5 m.p.g.
Gearing: 15.2 m.p.h. in top gear at 1,000 r.p.m. (overdrive, 20.1 m.p.h.); 30.4 m.p.h. at 1,000 ft./min. piston speed (overdrive, 40.2 m.p.h.).	



SPACE for luggage under the self-supporting boot lid remains ample despite the fabric bag into which the hood folds. The generous rear window is of clear flexible plastic.

The Singer Gazelle

70 m.p.h. is now under 20 seconds whereas formerly it was 24.2 seconds. A certain hesitancy about starting when warm was the sole criticism levied against this more powerful engine.

Our test car was equipped with the optional-extra overdrive, usable in conjunction with either top or 3rd gear. No alteration in rear axle ratio accompanies the fitting of this extra, and our highest speeds on level road were recorded in the direct top gear. Overdrive in this instance adds only 3 or 4 m.p.g. to the fuel economy when cruising, and a lesser amount to overall m.p.g. dependent upon how much or little use is made of it, but it certainly provides quieter cruising; whilst there is no great rate of acceleration in the 3.61/1 overdrive top gear, it is pleasant to engage this ratio once cruising speed (be it 30-35 m.p.h. or 70-75 m.p.h.) has been reached. At the 40-60 m.p.h. cruising speeds favoured by many British motorists, this is amongst the quietest of popular-size cars, and even when it is

driven really hard it is by no means noisy.

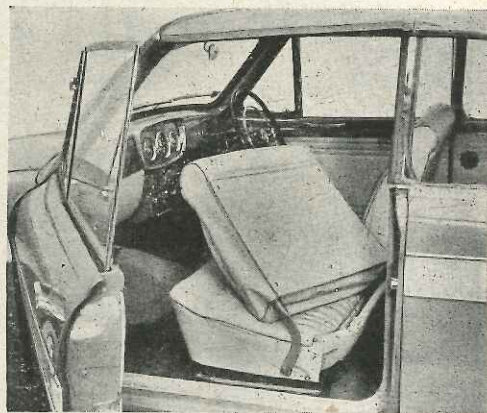
Combining the overdrive with a four-speed gearbox results in overdrive 3rd being a ratio only a little lower than direct top gear, so that in many respects these two ratios are interchangeable. The gearbox being quiet, it is often convenient to use 3rd and overdrive 3rd instead of 3rd and top gears, around town or when hurrying along a winding road, and to enjoy switch-controlled clutchless changes between these two ratios. Utmost acceleration was obtained by switching from 3rd to overdrive 3rd gear at just over 60 m.p.h. with the throttle held wide open rather than by changing into top gear.

Apart from the optional overdrive, most people will probably use this as a "three speed" car, 2nd being the normal starting ratio (although at a pinch 40 m.p.h. can be reached in it) and 3rd for overtaking or the majority of steep hills; 1st gear is not a great deal lower than 2nd gear, and the extra acceleration when starting on the level hardly justifies its habitual use

although for re-starting on a freak gradient it is occasionally very valuable.

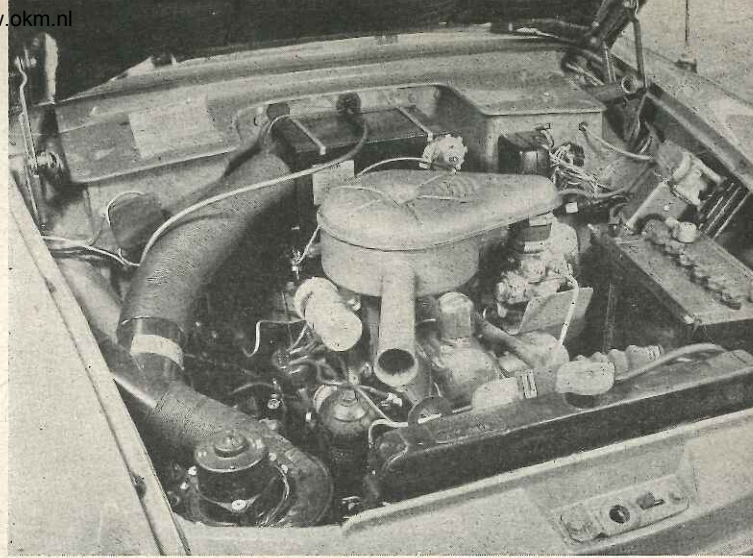
As a dearer and more luxurious car than most others of its size, this model does not need to be phenomenally economical of fuel, but its thirst is very reasonably restrained and the 10-gallon tank gives a useful cruising range. Our overall figure of 24.7 m.p.g. for some 1,300 miles reflects the usual preponderance of rather hard driving during our tests, and figures on the economical side of 30 m.p.g. are readily obtained when running more gently. Also in relation to its character, it is comment rather than criticism of this car to mention that complete absence of pinking at all times required use of one of the slightly better "Premium" petrols, such as cost an extra 1d. per gallon.

OPEN CAR amenities are shown in the photograph below, taken with roof and windows lowered out of sight. Diagonal tilting of the split seat backrest permits access to the rear of the two-door body.



Pleasant riding characteristics have been built into the Gazelle, which without being either very firmly or very softly sprung contrives to cope pretty easily with whatever surface and whatever pace a driver chooses. The springing is soft enough to allow a certain amount of initial body roll during cornering, but whilst the fact that the same factory also builds the 1½-litre Sunbeam Rapier emphasizes that the Singer Gazelle is not a sports model, its good behaviour when driven fast is reassuring. The steering is reasonably light (thanks to a re-designed steering gear since our last test of a Gazelle), shock-free rather than absolutely positive but yet

FULL of mechanism when the optional heating system is installed the engine compartment has main components such as distributor, carburetter, battery and tappets within easy reach.



Series III Convertible

making it easy for the driver to follow a chosen "line" with accuracy.

In keeping with the quiet competence which characterizes most aspects of this car's behaviour are the brakes, which with sturdy 9-inch drums are well up to any demands likely to be made upon them. The pull-up handbrake on the right of the driving seat is also effective, and convenient unless overcoat-tails envelop it as can sometimes happen—the optional interior heating of this car is powerful and controllable enough to make indoor clothing suffice for the driver in almost any weather, but a convertible body can still call for the wearing of a bulky coat if fresh air is to be enjoyed on fine but cool days.

Drivers of around average size find the seating of this car as comfortable as its

springing, and are happy at the wheel for very long periods. The substantial minority of tall or long-legged men are apt to complain that the high-backed driving seat will not slide back as far as they like, despite which rear seat legroom in the closer-coupled convertible body is not generous at its existing minimum setting. Headroom above the back seat is not unreasonable, but the downward-facing edges of a channel-section hood-frame member which fabric conceals but does not cushion seem potentially dangerous. Luggage capacity in the boot is quite good, despite a fabric hood-bag hanging down into the locker.

Especially inside the body, the Gazelle convertible is pleasingly designed and finished, although some purists were fiercely offended by an imitation-wood instrument panel which has been used as a (very close) match for other fillets of genuine wood on the facia and doors. On

the whole, the facia layout strikes a sensible balance in being neat without loss of instrument legibility or after-dark accessibility of the minor controls, and the combination of a parcel shelf with a big lockable glove-box proved practical. Courtesy switches on the doors operate an interior light which, low-mounted in the rear of the pillarless convertible body, might perhaps have been more effective if placed above the windscreen.

In no single feature of its dimensions, mechanism or styling does the 1959 Singer deserve to be called outstanding. But, by its all-round excellence and its ability to create quiet pride of ownership, the Gazelle in general and the Gazelle Convertible in particular have much to offer to motorists seeking a car which is not bigger but distinctly better than the average.

Specification

Engine	
Cylinders	4
Bore	79 mm
Stroke	76.2 mm
Cubic capacity	1,494 c.c.
Piston area	30.4 sq. in.
Valves	Pushrod o.h.v.
Compression ratio	8.5/1
Carburetter	Solex 32 PB10
Fuel pump	pump-type downdraught
Ignition timing control	AC mechanical and vacuum
Oil filter	Full-flow (Fram or Tecalemit)
Max. power (gross)	60 b.h.p. (56.3 b.h.p. net)
at	4,500 r.p.m.
Piston speed at max. b.h.p.	2,250 ft./min.
Transmission	
Clutch	Borg & Beck 8-in. s.d.p.
Top gear (s/m)	4.778 (Overdrive, 3.612)
3rd gear (s/m)	7.126 (Overdrive, 5.387)
2nd gear (s/m)	11.807
1st gear	15.227
Reverse	19.228
Overdrive	Laycock-de Normanville (optional extra)
Propeller shaft	Hardy Spiter open
Final drive	Spiral bevel
Top gear m.p.h. at 1,000 r.p.m.	15.2 (Overdrive, 20.1)
Top gear m.p.h. at 1,000 ft./min. piston speed	30.4 (overdrive, 40.2)
Chassis	
Brakes	Lockheed hydraulic, 2 l.s. front
Brake drum internal diameter	9 in.
Friction lining area	121 sq. in.
Suspension:	
Front	Independent by coil springs, wishbones and anti-roll torsion bar
Rear	Semi-elliptic springs and rigid axle
Shock absorbers:	
Steering gear	Girling or Woodhead-Monroe telescopic
Sparking gear	Burman recirculating-ball
Tyres	Dunlop tubeless, 5.60-15

Coachwork and Equipment

Starting handle	Yes
Battery mounting	Alongside engine on left
Jack	Screw pillar type
Jacking points	External on bumper brackets
Standard tool kit: Sparking plug spanner, tommy bar, distributor key, tyre valve key, nave plate extractor, jack, wheelbrace, starting handle, tool bag.	
Exterior lights: 2 headlamps, 2 sidelamps/flashers, 2 stop/tail lamps, number plate lamp.	
Number of electrical fuses	1
Direction indicators	Self-cancelling flashers (white front, amber rear)
Windscreen wipers	Electrical 2-blade self-parking
Windscreen washers	Tudor hand-pump (standard equipment)
Sun visors	2
Instruments: Speedometer with total and (decimal) trip distance recorders, fuel gauge, oil pressure gauge, ammeter, coolant thermometer.	
Warning lights: Dynamo charge, flashing turn indicators, headlamp main beam.	

Locks: With ignition key	Ignition/starter/accessories switch, and either door
With other key: Glove box and luggage boot	
Glove lockers: One on facia with lockable lid	
Map pockets	None
Parcel shelves: One on driver's side of facia	
Ashtrays: 1 on facia, one in rear compartment	
Cigar lighters	None
Interior lights: Lamp on nearside of body below rear window, with manual and courtesy switches.	
Interior heater	Optional extra, fresh air type with screen de-misters
Car radio: Optional extra, Ekco or Radiomobile	
Extras available: Individual front seats, heater, radio, clock, reversing lamp, white-wall tyres and full range of Rootes accessories.	
Upholstery material: Vynide leathercloth	
Floor covering	Rubber mats (front) and carpet (rear)
Exterior colours standardized	5
Alternative body styles	4-door saloon, 4-door estate car

Maintenance

Sump	8 pints, S.A.E. 20/20W
Gearbox	2½ pints, S.A.E.30
Rear axle	1½ pints S.A.E. 140 EP gear oil (below freezing, S.A.E. 90 EP)
Steering gear lubricant: S.A.E. 140 EP gear oil	
Cooling system capacity	12½ pints plus 1 pint in heater (2 drain taps)
Chassis lubrication	By grease gun every 1,000 miles to 23 points
Ignition timing: 9°-11° before t.d.c. static	
Contact-breaker gap	0.015 in.
Sparking plug type	Champion N5
Sparking plug gap	0.025 in.
Valve timing: Inlet opens 10° before t.d.c. and closes 45° after b.d.c.; exhaust opens 46° before b.d.c. and closes 9° after t.d.c.	
Tappet clearances (hot):	
Inlet	0.012 in.
Exhaust	0.014 in.
Front wheel toe-in	¼ in.
Camber angle	¾°
Castor angle	1½°
Steering swivel pin inclination	5½°
Tyre pressures:	
Front	24 lb.
Rear	24-26 lb. according to load
Brake fluid	Lockheed 70R2
Battery type and capacity 12 volt, 38 amp. hr.	