

D Test No 3

Thursday, May 21 2009 @ 03:14 PM NZST

Contributed by: [FSB](#)

Views: 1,571



D TEST NO 3, 21/12/2007 – 1974 DS23 IE Pallas Automatique



Model: DS23 IE Pallas (DX)

Year: 1974

Years active: 1974-now

Engine:

2347cc Injection Electronique DX5

130 bhp DIN at 5,250 rpm, 141 bhp at 5,500

Transmission: Borg Warner 35 3 speed automatic (bvbw)

Colour: Beige Tholonet (AC 085).
Upholstery: Cuir Noir.

Test duration: 2005-2007

Course covered: Auckland/Waikato/Gisborne/Tauranga (Approximately **650 km** sofar)

Conditions: Various

For: As-new condition. Lack of arm & leg waving

Against: Nothing. It's a D.

I first came across this vehicle while it was in a skeletal/embryonic stage at Auto France back in May 2002. The engine bay had been painted at this point, although little else had been done.

I thought “Hell – another idiot like myself taking on a project like this” as well as “Will it ever get finished?” and of course “What!! An AUTOMATIC?? He’s NOT converting it to a 5 Speed?? Mad!!!”

This was prior to meeting Mr. Roger Simpson, the owner. The sentiments voiced in the preceding paragraph turned out to be extremely well founded on meeting him a few weeks later.

Over the next 3 years, I did see the car come together in its various stages every few weeks and I always looked forward to calling in and seeing what progress had been made and looking through the latest shipment of parts for her from overseas.

She was first shown at the National Rally at Waiuku in January 2005 where she won Car of the Rally.

INITIAL IMPRESSIONS

Wow! The first thing that struck me was that it was just like a brand-new car, straight off the lot at Shorters, Adlams, Moller Motors or Archibalds etc, depending on what part of the country you hark from.

And of course, the smell of that leather (I seem to have an issue with that, don't I!)

The engine bay was particularly impressive, albeit challenging, with the myriad of hardware for the fuel injection system neatly hiding any hint of an engine underneath.

At this point the Tester has not yet had a test drive. While sitting in the drivers seat at the National Rally, while the car was on display I was offered the keys. “Yeah right – like that’s going to happen now...”.

PERFORMANCE/HANDLING:

Finally, quite out of the blue, I was handed the keys after a DS 50th orginasation meeting 2 or 3 months later. I was expecting only to be taken for a drive, but no – I was allowed a drive

sans owner!! Joining me on this auspicious occasion was a certain Swiss person from Titirangi. The course covered was from Papakura to approximately half way to Waiuku.

Grinning from ear-to-ear I carefully negotiated Great South Rd until Drury then continued on under the motorway.

We then came across the first straight, slight uphill, with no other cars – specifically colourful Holdens with party lights on top. We had been tickling along with the motor idling quietly in top until now. I buried the accelerator pedal into the plush Pallas carpet and then, as Roger puts it “All hell broke loose!”

A mighty roar came from under the bonnet and the 23 belted up the hill. Most impressive for an AUTOMATIC D I thought. I continued on for some time, enjoying the drive of what really did feel like - and what was virtually - a brand new D. The performance was most impressive and she handled as was to be expected: ‘like a dream’ on her new Michelin 185 HR x 380 XVS’s.

I found a safe spot to turn around and offered Christof the wheel. He politely declined (I could sense a little fear there somewhere) and so I continued on, very tempted just to get on to the motorway and ring Roger from Wellington.

Imagine my surprise when we got back to Chez Simpson and Christof flies out of the car before I had finished parking it to run inside and tell the owner that I wouldn’t let him have a drive!

It was not until October 2006 I got my next fix. On arriving at the final meal venue at Gisborne near the end of the East Cape D-Tour we decided that there was a great space to project photos of the weekend onto one wall from my laptop. I was sent back to my motel unit to get the equipment, with the Keys to the 23 in my hand.

I drove rather conservatively, owing to the speed limit being 50 km/h in the Gisborne “CBD”, and it was night-time. On getting to the motel I realised I had left my unit key back at the restaurant. Cool! I thought – double the drive in Rogers car. I glided back to the restaurant, then to the motel and back again.

This time I was greeted at the entrance by the owner of the Automatique beast, who snatched the keys out of my hand and walked down to the car park and proceeded to walk around the DS and check for damage. This whole episode was done with me using my fingers to affect a certain well-known international piece of effective sign language at the offending inspector.

Cut to October 2007. The D-Tour this year was cancelled, and Roger & I needed some cheering up. We decided to go down to Hamilton to drag Alan Sklenars out of his Honey-Pit, give him a good wind-up and purchase some parts.

It was decided to take the 23. I was told that if I “played my cards right” I might get a drive.

Much to Alan Sklenars annoyance (following a most entertaining visit, and carrying boxes of various D parts), I was handed the keys for the return Journey. Alan has been promised a drive when he is “clean”. We are not sure if he will ever get a drive, poor Alan.

Anyway, much fun was had on the way home. It got to the point, just out of Huntly, that too many other road users had annoyed me. Passing me simply because I was in an old car and they seemed to feel they didn't want to get held up. This, despite the fact that I had been doing 110 km/h all along.

At least 8 vehicles passed me between Ngarawahia and Ohinewai, these included a boy racer Mazda, Grandma & Grandpa in an old Ford Lazer and a Volvo. Each would pass and then slow down to between 99 & 101 km/h. Except two vehicles. Grandma & Grandpa slowed down to 90km/h. The Volvo did not slow down.

So, onto the Expressway at Ohinewai. The self imposed 110 km/h went out the window and all the vehicles that passed me before (plus numerous others) ended up in my rear-vision mirror by Pokeno, now fully aware that the 23 was no slug. Bar one that is. The Volvo. This was one of those big 4-wheel drive truck like affairs. Every time it saw me coming up behind it, it would bury it's boot, moving above my "new" self imposed speed limit.

It is also important to note that during this entire journey, I was constantly being reminded (at approximately 2 minute intervals) that "notice – you do not need to change gear". If the journey took any longer, I think he would have had to have the Torque Converter surgically removed!

Climbing the Bombays and I was on the Volvo's tail all the way up, all other traffic being passed. Down on to the motorway – still behind it - with some woman in a sports car getting in on the action. Left her behind. Self imposed speed limit was increased still further but then - Bah!! Our off ramp came up!

To this day I am now ostracised by the aforementioned Mr. Simpson for not showing the Volvo the correct procedure when dealing with D's – they should be able to see the chevrons on the boot when looking forward, not the front of the D in their rear-vision mirror.

In view of this I am apparently not getting the keys again!

BRAKING:

Good, in typical D style but front/rear compensation needs some attention on the Test Car. (Apparently Testers fault as he promised to do this).

RELIABILITY:

Don't ask. Is great now, but has had a rocky path. The engine at one point seemed to prefer sitting on the workshop floor more than in the engine bay!

Then there was the 12v 700 W Alternator.



But we won't go to EITHER of those places. Suffice to say she's goin' great now!!

ENTERTAINMENT VALUE:

Apart from being a D? I think the aforementioned story tells it all. There will be plenty more of these If I have anything to do with it, but the sheer enjoyment that her owner gets from her, and I get from dropping alternator mounting bolts in the nightmare-on-elm-street-engine-bay in front of the owner and the web-site owner are second to none!

I am constantly finding things on the 'net to bolt onto the car to improve its looks – SM badges for the glovebox, 2cv petrol caps, sunroofs etc and bonnet handles. But Roger is yet to be convinced. Maybe I will take my drill and coach bolts around one day when he is out and mount that spoiler kit on the rear for a surprise eh Mr. Simpson?

As you can make out – most entertaining!

I hope you have enjoyed reading this. It is now on its fourth re-write after Mr. Fussy has corrected me on everything from lack of detailed specifications, year (whoops), leaving out the colour code, inconsistency in the Title of the road test description and typos. I hope it is now up to the high standard required. I do note however, that I have not had this rigorous critique on my two previous submissions.

Will there be another one? I will have to discuss this with my therapist.

Lets keep it a surprise.

