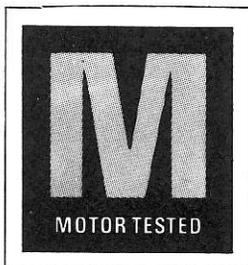




Versatile load-carrier

Tremendous capacity with self-levelling suspension to cope with heavy loads; very good roadholding and handling; good performance but engine rather noisy and rough.



HAVE you ever wanted a vehicle that can corner like a sports car and cruise at 100 m.p.h. yet provide enough room to sleep two in comfort or carry, say, five adults, four children, a couple of refrigerators and a restless Irish wolfhound? Pending a few more space-age miracles the closest approximation to this objective is the Citroën Safari 21 Confort which lives up to the implications of its name in its ability to carry improbable quantities of people and luggage over long distances. If the Safari be summed up in a word, it should be that much abused one "versatile". The double bed—albeit a rather short one—for example, is easily obtained by reclining the front seats on to the back one.

But that is a mere commonplace: in the floor of its rear hold are not one, but two fold-up dickey seats. And the rear seat will fold forward to create a cargo area over 8ft. long, practically big enough to land a helicopter on, which can be increased in length another 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. by folding down the bottom half of the tailgate. Nor does this mobile tennis court get crushed down to its bump stops under a heavy load, becoming a place good only for wet-weather picnics or for playing poker in while the favourite is being vetted for dope. The self-levelling hydropneumatic suspension keeps the car on an even keel whatever its contents which

PRICE: £1,623 12s 1d plus £498 4s 11d purchase tax equals £2,121 17s.

INSURANCE: AOA group rating 5; Lloyd's 5.

with a total load capacity of 1,433 lb. could consist of five 15-stone adults with nearly 400 lb. left over for their luggage—in the Safari you *can* take the kitchen sink if you want to. A built-in roof rack, a feature of many American estate cars but rare in Europe, will take 200 lb. of this load—enough for a sizeable boat.

With this tremendous load potential the importance of the self-levelling suspension cannot be over-estimated: as we have demonstrated in a recent Group Test, quite a few estate cars settle firmly on their rear bump stops when loaded to anything like full capacity. Nor does this exhaust the advantages of Citroën's complex plumbing which includes the well known but useful party tricks of being able to increase ride height for rough terrain and of providing power jacks for wheel changing. Even the outer headlamps are self-levelling, while the steerability of the inner ones is a unique gimmick that really works.

In the DS21 form tested, the Safari is fitted with a 2,175 c.c. engine developing 106 (net) b.h.p. at 5,500 r.p.m. in place of the smaller 1,985 c.c. unit which delivers 91 b.h.p. at 5,900 r.p.m. The more powerful engine, in conjunction with the manual transmission which is standard on the Safari—and which we greatly prefer to the Citroën semi-automatic arrangement—makes the car much less sluggish than is commonly supposed; its performance is, in fact, excellent. But there are drawbacks. The oversquare engine, even though redesigned a few years ago,

Citroën Safari Confort 21

is rough and noisy and excites vibrations in the structure. The unstressed body panels look flimsy, vulnerable and a little disjointed, though there is no reason to doubt the strength of the underlying base frame, while the idiosyncratic mixture of squalor and opulence in the trim and fittings is not to everyone's taste. In Britain the Safari 21 is rather highly priced at £2,122 but, for anyone with logistic problems, it is good value for money.

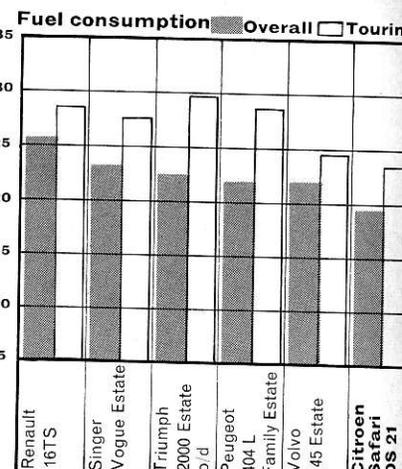
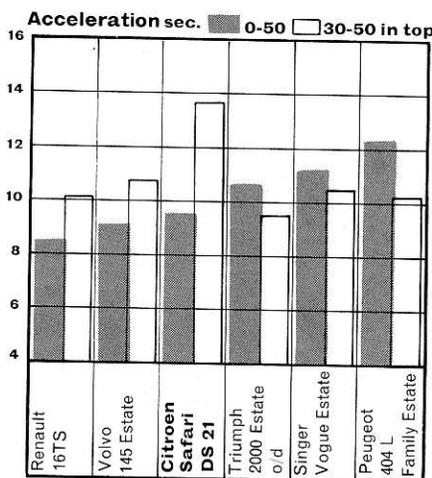
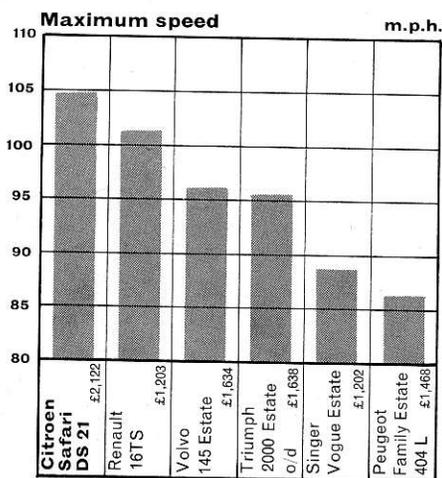
Performance and economy

In its manual transmission form the Citroën is started by a button on the steering column nacelle instead of the gearlever-operated switch of the semi-automatic; that is, after first turning

the ignition-steering lock (which incorporates a fiddlesome arrangement by which the key is retained in its grasp until the centre portion of the lock is pulled out with the key against spring loading). There is a normal choke which ensures instant starting and reliable pulling when cold. Once firing, the 2-litre engine soon shows that refinement is not its most outstanding characteristic, for it tends to be rough at low revs and very noisy at high. But at speed in top gear it is seldom obtrusive and most of the fuss is excited by the engine, rather than actually generated by it, and could probably be tuned out with a bit of further development: on our test car, for example, the was a peculiar whistling noise at high revs which could have emanated from either intake or exhaust systems or even have been produced by a panel vibrating in sympathy with the engine.

Despite being a lot of motorcar pulled by a modest 2-litre engine when it could well take a beefy V8, the Safari has a

Performance



Performance tests carried out by Motor's staff at the Motor Industry Research Association proving ground, Lindley. Test Data: World copyright reserved; no unauthorised reproduction in whole or in part.

50-70 14.2
60-80 16.3

8.6
10.8
a speed midway between 40 m.p.h. and maximum speed (= 72.4 m.p.h.)

Pedal force at beginning lb
Pedal force at 10th stop 25
Pedal force at 20th stop 25

Conditions

Weather: Cool with heavy rain at times
Temperature: 57-58°F
Barometer: 29.2 in. Hg.
Surface: Concrete and Tarmacadam
Fuel: Premium 98 octane (RM) 4 Star rating

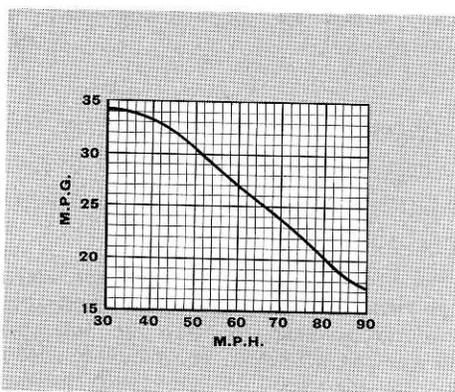
Maximum Speeds

	m.p.h.	k.p.h.
Mean lap banked circuit	104.8	168.8
Best one-way ¼-mile	105.8	170.0
3rd gear	80	129
2nd gear	52	84
1st gear	31	50

"Maxmile" speed: (Timed quarter mile after 1 mile accelerating from rest)
Mean 99.0
Best 100.0

Acceleration Times

m.p.h.	sec.	Top	3rd
0-30	4.5		
0-40	6.7		
0-50	9.6		
0-60	13.0		
0-70	17.8		
0-80	23.8		
0-90	34.8		
Standing quarter mile	19.2		
Standing kilometre	35.3		
		Top	3rd
m.p.h.	sec.	sec.	sec.
10-30	—	—	—
20-40	13.5	8.4	8.1
30-50	13.7	8.1	7.9
40-60	13.2	7.9	7.9



Fuel Consumption

Touring (consumption midway between 30 m.p.h. and maximum less 5% allowance for acceleration)
23.4 m.p.g.
Overall 19.6 m.p.g.
(= 14.4 litres/100km)
Total test distance 1,664 miles

Brakes

Pedal pressure, deceleration and equivalent stopping distance from 30 m.p.h.

Distance	lb.	g.	ft.
10	10	0.30	100
20	20	0.45	67
30	30	0.62	48
40	40	0.81	37
50	50	0.93	32
Handbrake	8.7	0.30	100

Fade Test

20 stops at ½g deceleration at 1 min. intervals from

Steering

Turning circle between kerbs: ft.
Left 33½
Right 32½
Turns of steering wheel from lock to lock 3.2
Steering wheel deflection for 50ft. diameter circle 1.0 turns

Clutch

Free pedal movement ¾ in.
Additional movement to disengage clutch completely 3¼ in.
Maximum pedal load 30lb.

Speedometer

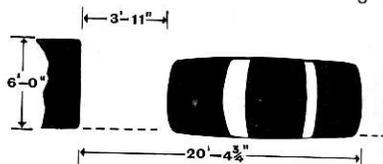
Indicated 10 20 30 40 50 60 70
True 8 18 25 36½ 45 55 65
Indicated 80 90
True 73 83
Distance recorder 1.8% fast

Weight

Kerb weight (unladen with fuel for approximately 50 miles) 27.5 cwt.
Front/rear distribution 62/38
Weight laden as tested 31.3 cwt.

Parkability

Gap needed to clear 6ft. wide obstruction in front 3' 11"



excellent performance. Its maximum speed of 104.8 m.p.h.—at which it felt completely safe and stable—does credit to the aerodynamic design of the front end. It also confirms Citroën's belief that our road test Pallas—which achieved a maximum of only 100.4 m.p.h.—was a slow one. (We have since checked the maximum of another Pallas and found it to be 105 m.p.h.) At high speeds, incidentally, the Safari's speedometer became wildly optimistic: at the end of a maximum timed quarter for which the terminal speed was about 103 m.p.h., the needle had gone off the end of the dial and buried itself behind the scale at an indicated 130 m.p.h. or so, in an excess of Gallic enthusiasm.

With an unladen weight getting on for $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons our hard-driving overall fuel consumption of 19.6 m.p.g. is not unreasonable, and most owners will probably be able to approach the 23.4 m.p.g., touring fuel consumption, giving a range of 320 miles from the $14\frac{1}{2}$ gallon tank.

Transmission

Our test drivers were unanimous in declaring their preference for the manual gearbox with steering column change—standard equipment on the Safari—over the semi-automatic transmission fitted to DS and Pallas models. The change is light and accurate, the clutch progressive, and the proof of our preference is to be found in the acceleration which supports the assertion made in our test of the Pallas that “. . . given a manual gearbox any competent driver could knock seconds off the standing-start acceleration times”. Although the Safari is $1\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. heavier than our Pallas, it was much quicker off the line, its 0-60 m.p.h. time being 13.0s against 16.2s; the improvement is maintained all the way up the speed range. Even quicker times might have been obtained had not violent tramp intervened at the slightest wheelspin. Of course, the comparison is not strictly fair because of the below-par nature Pallas already mentioned.



The transparent fairing over the twin headlamps (not allowed in the USA because of safety regulations) gives the Citroën a clean frontal appearance. The inner quartz halogen lights steer with the front wheels, while the outer ones remain in the straight ahead position but are kept level by a system of levers. Fresh air enters the car through the two slots above the bumper, sometimes bringing particles of dust with it, though there is a coarse filter in the system.

This 110-gallon aircraft tank taken from a de Havilland Venom is some ten feet long and just fits into the back of the Safari with the bottom tailgate open. (Taken in front of the aircraft museum at Salisbury Hall, South Mimms.)

Despite the intrusion of engine and transmission into the front compartment, legroom is quite good; it is also good at the rear.



Citroën Safari Confort 21

Big Citroens are often said to be open-road cars, too sluggish for convenience in town. Although the engine is quite flexible and will pull from as low as 20 m.p.h., in the high motorway top gear, acceleration in this ratio is certainly lethargic, as the 30-50 m.p.h. time of 13.7s shows. But in a built-up area it is more sensible to use third in which a genuine, if hysterical, 80 m.p.h. is attainable and in which the 30-50 m.p.h. acceleration time drops to a respectable 8.1s; using the gearbox in this way we did not find the Safari at all tedious to drive in heavy traffic. First and second gears are well spaced below third, but the car would barely manage a restart on a 1-in-3 slope.

Handling and brakes

Citroen power steering is one of the few systems which don't give much assistance for parking, when quite a lot of effort at the wheel is needed. We suspect, too, a lack of sophistication or precision in the hydraulic valves, for on full lock at a standstill the steering wheel sometimes comes alive in a series of rhythmic twitches—to a much lesser extent the same twitching is very occasionally apparent on the road when the steering is in the straight ahead position. But we hesitate to indict the system for these minor failings because it is so good as soon as the car gets moving: it is then light, responsive, accurate and, most important of all, gives good feel of the road. With steering like this the Safari can be hurled along twisting roads with Mini-like abandon, and since it is little wider than an ordinary car the driver begins to forget that there is a great deal of vehicle extending behind him—and we never found this considerable overall length to be an embarrassment on tight turns perhaps because of the narrow rear track.

Now you see them . . . now you don't. A pair of most useful dicky seats fold up from the floor of the rear luggage space.



Corners can be taken with astonishing ease and rapidity accompanied by considerable roll and much protest from the Michelin XAS tyres which are standard wear. Hard acceleration in slowish bends spins the inside front wheel a little and scrubs off speed safely without much alteration in line which is little affected by lifting the throttle. In the wet the Safari is also very sure-footed, and the self-levelling suspension which compensates for changing loads and keeps the car on an even keel ensures that the excellent handling is little changed by a heavy cargo.

Similar load compensation by a balance-bar arrangement for the powered hydraulic brakes gives safe and stable braking for all conditions and surfaces, though we could not achieve a maximum deceleration better than 0.93g. The small brake button which responds to pressure with little movement felt usefully more progressive and less sensitive than that of our road test Pallas—though this is not borne out by the figures—but jerky braking was sometimes difficult to avoid on bumps. The hand-brake, which acts on the front wheels, could not hold the car when facing down the 1-in-3 slope, but it coped when facing up.

Comfort and controls

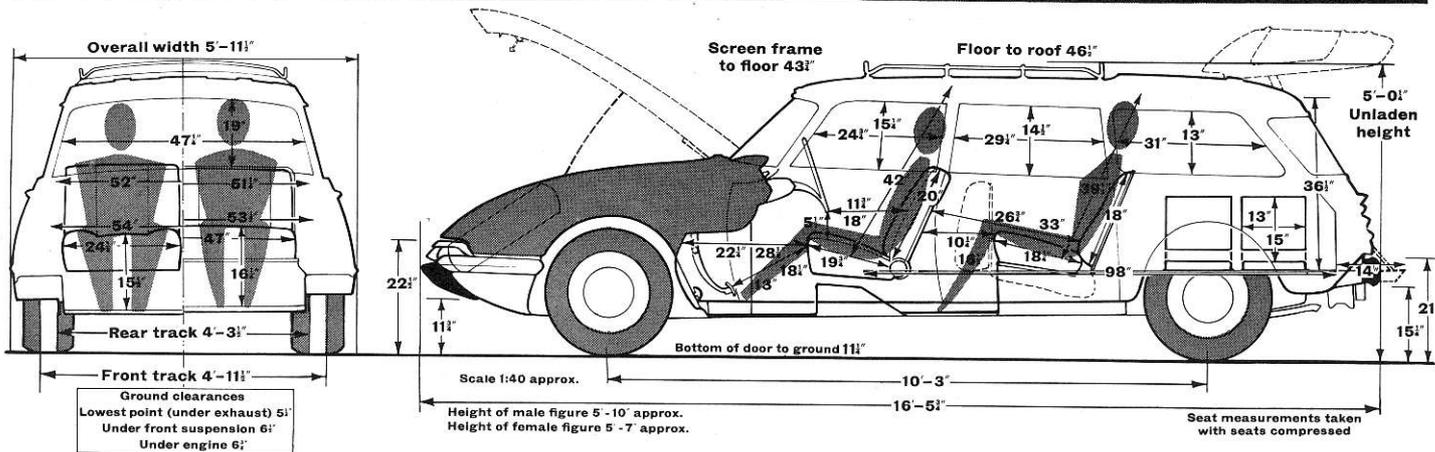
To big Citroen owners ride is something that other vehicles mostly lack. Certainly the very soft, very long travel suspension can soak up incredible punishment without transmitting it to the passengers and manages at the same time to be sufficiently damped to avoid that floating motion so conducive to car-sickness. The passengers are aware of the turmoil going on beneath them when the Safari sails over the worst sort of Belgian pavé (we tried it on MIRA's particularly savage sample), but at the speeds attained many ordinary cars would be shaking themselves to pieces. But although the system is still one of the best in the world, not all its qualities are miraculous. Its very softness means that all travel is rapidly taken up on hump-back bridges or similarly shaped but smaller humps which are therefore taken with a sharp and uncomfortable jolt—one soon learns to treat such road features with circumspection. Small-scale surface irregularities are transmitted quite strongly to the car at times, and excite a variety of vibrations and body resonances. Similarly, but surprisingly—in view of the radial tyres—there is quite a lot of high-frequency buzz and roar on many surfaces which can make up the major part of the total noise level at high speeds; whereas the thumping on Cat's-Eye studs and the like more usual with radial ply tyres is relatively subdued.

There is a slight hiss from the front pillars as well as from the fresh air vents when they are half open and, understandably, a faint owl-like drone from the roof, presumably created by the roof rack.

Although the reclining front seats are as soft as the suspension, some drivers complained of lack of lumbar support, while lateral support was quite inadequate for the car's tremendous cornering power; for the driver the problem is aggravated by lack of a suitable bracing-spot for the left foot. Taller drivers, too, would have appreciated a little more fore-and-aft adjustment. The rear seats are just as soft as the front ones and perhaps a little better shaped. There is excellent head and legroom at the back.

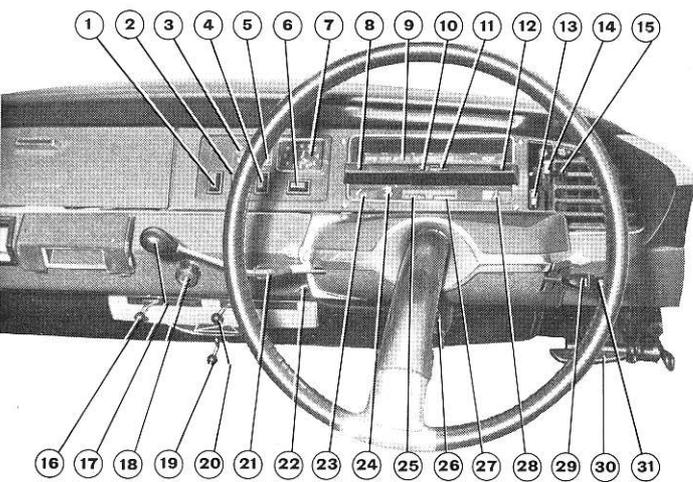


Specification



2,175 c.c. four-cylinder engine; front-wheel drive; unique all-independent suspension

Engine		Shock absorbers:	Tappet clearances (cold)	Inlet 0.006 in.; Exhaust 0.008 in.
Block material	Cast iron	Front } Integral	Valve timing:	
Head material	Aluminium alloy	Rear }	inlet opens	1/2° b.t.d.c.
Cylinders	4	Steering type	inlet closes	42 1/2° a.b.d.c.
Cooling system	Water	Tyres	exhaust opens	38 1/2° b.b.d.c.
Bore and stroke	90 mm. (3.54 in.) x 85.5 mm. (3.37 in.)	Wheels	exhaust closes	4 1/2° a.t.d.c.
Cubic capacity	2,175 c.c. (132.8 cu.in.)	Rim size	Front wheel toe-in	2.4 mm.
Main bearings	5		Camber angle	0-1/4° negative
Valves	Pushrod o.h.v.		Castor angle	1° 42'
Compression ratio	8.75:1		King-pin inclination	zero
Carburettor	Weber 28/36		Tyre pressures:	
Fuel pump	Mechanical		Front	29 p.s.i.
Oil filter	Full flow		Rear	32 p.s.i.
Max. power (net)	106 b.h.p. at 5,500 r.p.m.			
Max. torque (net)	122 lb.ft. at 3,500 r.p.m.			
Transmission		Coachwork and equipment		
Clutch	8 1/2 in. s.d.p.	Starting handle	Yes	
Internal gearbox ratios:		Tool kit contents	Plug spanner, screwdriver, 2 spanners, pliers	
Top gear	0.855:1	Jack	Stand only—jacking inbuilt	
3rd gear	1.188:1	Jacking points	One each side	
2nd gear	1.835:1	Battery	12 volt negative earth, 57 amp hrs capacity	
1st gear	3.251:1			
Reverse	3.155:1			
Synchromesh	All forward ratios			
Final drive	Hypoid bevel 4.375:1			
M.p.h. at 1,000 r.p.m. in:				
Top gear	20.5			
3rd gear	17.4			
2nd gear	9.5			
1st gear	5.4			
Chassis and body		Maintenance		
Construction	Baseframe with unstressed body panels	Fuel tank capacity	14 1/2 galls.	
Brakes		Sump	8 pints SAE 20W/40	
Type	Twin circuit with automatic balance for weight distribution and inboard front discs; drums at rear	Gearbox and final drive	3.5 pints SAE 80EP	
Dimensions	Discs 11.81 in. dia; drums 10.04 in. dia.	Steering gear	Lubricated for life	
Friction areas:		Coolant	19 pints (2 drain taps)	
Front:	36.1 sq.in. of lining operating on 260 sq.in. of disc	Chassis lubrication	Every 3,000 miles to 8 points	
Rear:	66.4 sq.in. of lining operating on 173 sq.in. of drum	Minimum service interval	3,000 miles	
Suspension and steering		Ignition timing	12° b.t.d.c.	
Front	Equal-length parallel wishbones with self-levelling oleo-pneumatic struts and an anti-roll bar	Contact breaker gap	0.016-0.020 in.	
Rear	Trailing arms with self-levelling oleo-pneumatic struts and an anti-roll bar	Sparking plug gap	0.020-0.024 in.	
		Sparking plug type	Marchal 35/36; Champion L87Y; Lodge Golden H or Autolite AE 32P	



1, heater blower switch. 2, driver's fan switch. 3, charge warning light. 4, interior light switch. 5, oil pressure warning light. 6, parking light switch. 7, clock. 8, indicator tell-tale. 9, speedometer. 10, front brake pad wear warning light. 11, hydraulic pressure warning light. 12, main beam warning light. 13, heated air control lever. 14, fresh air control lever. 15, vent direction lever. 16, heater air volume control. 17, gearlever. 18, choke. 19, air temperature control. 20, air distribution control. 21, lights control. 22, starter button. 23, fuel gauge. 24, trip reset. 25, trip mileometer. 26, ignition/steering lock. 27, mileometer. 28, temperature gauge. 29, indicator horn/flasher stalk. 30, handbrake. 31, wipe/wash stalk.

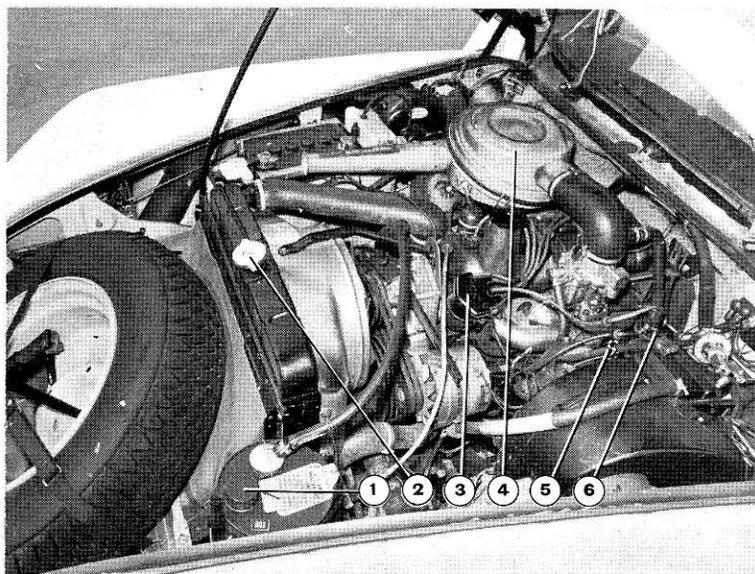
Citroën Safari Confort 21

There were no complaints about the location of the gear lever, or of the pedals, although they are not laid out for easy heel-and-toeing—perhaps just as well for the brake button is a little too sensitive to act as a convenient fulcrum. The large steering wheel is also well placed, and its single spoke admirably fulfils its function of minimising any obstruction to the driver's view; the cheap-looking binding on its rim, however, presented a slightly sweat-inducing surface to the palms.

Changes to the Citroën's fascia have brought about a dramatic improvement in the layout of its minor controls since we last tested a DS21. In place of a platoon of unmarked knobs there are now properly labelled and sensibly located push switches for the individual heater/ventilation fans, interior light and parking lights with a straightforward pull-out choke knob beneath them. Happily, too, the nightmare foot-operated parking brake which goes with the semi-automatic transmission and which can all too easily be depressed instead of the proper one—and its complicated release mechanism—is replaced on manual gearbox cars with a conventional pull-up type of handbrake. The only trouble is that this cannot be reached by a belted-in driver; we got into the habit of slipping off the top safety strap when we needed to pull the brake on. One stalk controls the complicated function of the lights—side, dipped or full beam with and without the steerables—another the indicators, horn and flasher; and a third the wipers. All sensible enough except that the indicators don't self-cancel and we'd prefer the horn to be on the wheel and the light stalk to do the flashing—it would be a little less confusing that way and you'd be able to sound the horn and flash the lamps simultaneously, which you can't do at present.

With thin, well-located pillars forward visibility is good and the pattern of the two speed wipers adequate. But an unexpected disadvantage of the aerodynamic front end is that torrential rain flows up and sideways off the screen in a thick layer which the wipers cannot disperse. As there are no significant projections beyond the tailgate, reversing and parking manoeuvres present no difficulty, but we lack enthusiasm for the mirror mounted on the scuttle instead of at the top of the screen. It's that much more difficult to adjust for a long-range view especially against the silhouette of the children fighting each other in the dickey seats and makes an infuriating blind spot in the nearside front wing area. There is, however, a supplementary exterior mirror on the door pillar.

The normal fixed—but self-levelling—headlamps provide a fair main beam but are rather dim when dipped but, as before, we found that the steerable quartz halogen lamps give truly fabulous illumination.



1, hydraulic fluid reservoir. 2, radiator filler cap. 3, distributor. 4, air cleaner. 5, dipstick. 6, coil.

To suit its go-anywhere image the Safari is fitted with a heater designed to cope with an external temperature of -5°C ; formerly an option on some models in the ID/DS range this is now fitted to all. It is controlled by straightforward air volume, temperature and up/down distribution levers beneath the fascia. The booster fan operated by the right-hand button increases fresh air flow to the driver's fascia vent compartment only, the left-hand button controlling the fan for normal windscreen or interior heater air. Each of the large fresh-air vents at the ends of the fascia is regulated by an up-down lever flanked by a second lever which allows warm air to be blended with or substituted for the cold. All this means that you are very hard to please if you cannot find a comfortable combination of warmth and ventilation.

Since the entrances to the ducts which lead air to the fresh air vents are situated low down at the front of the car just above the bumper they tended to admit particles of dust on occasion, though there is a coarse filter. Two extractor vents above the rear quarters keep the rear window clean.

Fittings and furniture

The Safari's fascia still looks as jagged as the north face of the Eiger—a cynic might say “as built by a scrap dealer”—for it is a mess of matt-black finished panels, Philips screws and chromium-plated strips; but it goes with the rest of the interior which is a slap-dash mixture of luxury and austerity. The most prominent protuberance—after the nacelle from which the steering wheel sprouts—is the ridge containing warning lights for the indicators, headlamp main beam, the brake and hydraulic systems. Above this is the speedometer, marked only at 20 m.p.h. intervals, beneath it fuel and temperature gauges with trip and total mileometers. With the seat well back it is impossible to read the speedometer because it is so deeply sunk. Also part of the fascia is a small document cubby-hole, a compartment with a lid but no lock and an ashtray—there is no cigarette lighter, but there is another ashtray attached to the back of the passenger's front seat.

As for the rest, owning the Safari must be rather like buying a vintage tourer and subsequently finding an unsuspected dickey seat in it. In fact the Safari has two of these sideways facing, which lift out of the rear baggage area to give a true people/luggage versatility which few other estate cars possess. This rear area is almost as big as the total load space of a small estate car when the rear seat is in use and its floor is covered with a carpet that can be removed to carry heavy and dirty objects—a very practical and sensible feature. Folding the rear seat (retained by flimsy catches) forward and the backrest down clears the rear deck, but folding the cushion forward and down in a second stage position increases its length still further. There is room for even longer objects with the lower tailgate open, and another 200 lb. can be carried on the roof rack. The backs of the front seats will recline to meet the squab of the back seat and form a short but rather bumpy bed. Practically the only thing you can't do is increase its length by folding rearwards the backrest of the rear seat: the slight protrusion of the rear wheel arches prevents this.

For the same price as the Safari 21 you can buy the Familiole version which is equipped with a fixed front bench seat, another bench seat seating two at the extreme rear—though still with a boot space behind it—and a large central space containing three forward-facing lift-up dickey seats.

Servicing and accessibility

Despite the overlay of auxiliaries and the unusual shape of the rocker box cover, the Citroën's mechanical parts are surprisingly accessible, the radiator and oil filler caps, dipstick and hydraulic fluid reservoir, battery, coil and distributor all being within easy reach. A front-mounted spare wheel means no disturbance of luggage if you get a puncture, and the wheel brace with a sensibly long tommy-bar does double duty as a starting handle, though you will have to drill through or remove the number-plate to use it.

Servicing, which involves some chassis greasing, is required every 5,000 km. (3,000 miles). Long established in this country, Citroën have 110 dealers and distributors.

MAKE: Citroën. MODEL: Safari Confort 21.

CONCESSIONAIRES: Citroën Cars Ltd., Slough, Bucks.