

I Like the Morris Minor Family Saloon



SAYS THE HON. MRS. VICTOR BRUCE

A VERY short run in a modern Morris Minor Family Saloon is sufficient to demonstrate how enormously far the car designer has travelled from the original conception of the "small" motorcar, in both mechanical performance and riding comfort. But only by alternating runs on the newest model with alternate trips over the same ground and with the same load of passengers in an equivalent vehicle of two or three years ago can the true measure of progress be estimated.

This, in fact, was a little task which I set myself recently, when the new model came into my hands for test. Fortunately, I had a friendly neighbour who provided me with the necessary contrast, in the shape of a 1930 Minor Saloon, and I spent practically the whole day in running the one car against the other, and testing their relative performances in every imaginable respect. The older vehicle, be it said, has had the one owner only; it has been meticulously maintained; its total mileage,

in spite of its years, is well under the five-figure mark—and, in fact, it is probably in better condition than when new, being now well and thoroughly run in.

Before going into any details of comparison, I ought to add that one point impressed itself upon me very quickly, and that was that although the comparative runs naturally showed up the greater desirability of the new car, at the expense of that of the old one, it is necessary to keep in mind that in its day we were very pleased indeed with the little Morris "baby"—as we used to call it. It was, indeed, almost

beyond criticism, and a great advance upon anything we had imagined possible from its limited dimensions and moderate price. The point of view to take, therefore, was *not* how poor was the performance of the old car, in comparison with that of the new, but, considering how satisfactory the 1930 model is known to have been, what marvels of progress are indicated by the superiority of the new 1933 model. In fact, the purpose of the

Its generous body dimensions, coupled with a specification in which nothing has been stinted, go to make the new Morris Minor Family Saloon a car which is rapidly earning for itself appreciation in all quarters. Here is the candid opinion of Britain's premier woman motorist

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comparisons was not to belittle the performance of the one, but to discover the true merits of the other.

The first thing that naturally makes a big impression is the extraordinary roominess, both relatively and in actual fact, of the Minor Family Saloon. There really is adequate room for four well-developed adults, and leg room in the rear seats is not secured by the provision of foot wells of exaggerated depth.



Ample leg-room for the complete comfort of four full-sized adults is a characteristic feature of the new Family Minor.

The compromise between the low overall height of the car which is necessary to conform to modern ideals of what a saloon should look like, and plenty of interior headroom, plus the necessity for providing a sufficient ground clearance, is another obvious and definite achievement.

Ease of Control

One mentions the car as a passenger-carrying carriage first of all because it is in this direction that the most obvious progress has been made, but in the actual running and control of the engine, and in the various means of control of the car itself, enormous improvement is at once noticeable. All the usual qualities which the modern motorist demands are provided in full measure. The clutch, for instance, is light in operation, and just as devoid of fierceness in engagement as it is without any suspicion of a tendency to slip; steering has that delightful lightness and certainty that a few years ago was found only on much larger and

more expensive cars, and I was very happy to find that with this steering gear it is possible to control the direction quite instinctively, and without the conscious concentration upon "holding her straight" that is more than half the cause of undue fatigue in driving; a fault, incidentally, which is probably at the root of the dislike of small cars so often expressed by those who spend most of their time at the wheel of a larger vehicle.

In regard to the performance of the car as a whole, there is a distinct feeling of "high-gearedness" which is rather delightful, in spite of the fact that it involves a little care in keeping the revolutions up if unduly frequent gear-changing is to be avoided. The reduction of engine sound in spite of relatively high speed is all to the good, and in this particular case the possible disadvantages of a high gear are entirely eliminated by the fact that the gearbox possesses four speeds, and that "second top" is quiet and easy to engage, and is, moreover, a particularly useful ratio for fast hill-climbing and rapid acceleration.

Excellent Springing

It is difficult to award supremacy of importance to any particular feature of the new car, when all are so important; but I am rather tempted to give the palm to the springing of the Family Saloon. So far as riding comfort is concerned, it would be quite impossible to detect that one was a passenger in a little 8 h.p. vehicle, since that feeling of floating rock-steadiness

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This three-quarter view emphasises the good lines and good wheelbase of the latest addition to the Minor range.

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which is a big-car characteristic is present in large degree. Cornering at speed can be accomplished with perfect security, and the shock of even a really bad pothole has all the violence softened out of it before it reaches the passengers. Ordinary road irregularities cease to exist, and naturally this excellence of suspension is reflected in the road-holding qualities of the car.

Acceleration

Acceleration on top gear is quite good, though it goes without saying that the more and the better one uses the gearbox, the more spectacular the performance in this respect. However, for those who are content with a more plodding type of progression, the engine has a very satisfactory knack of hanging on to top even on quite severe hills if it is driven with ordinary intelligence; and, as I indicated before, very little special skill is necessary to alternate successfully between the fourth and third gear ratios.



The remote control for the rear blind comes conveniently to hand.

So far as actual speed is concerned, the car is capable of exceeding fifty-five miles an hour without evidence of being overdriven, while I should write down its comfortable cruising speed—at least, of the particular model which I tested—at something nearer forty than thirty-five miles an hour. When cruising along at this pace on the level or on a moderate gradient, instantaneous acceleration is possible in the event of sudden need; or, if the excellent braking is brought into play, equally satisfactory deceleration is possible. I did not actually measure the distances required to stop from various speeds, but my impression was that both the action and the stopping powers of the brakes were beyond reproach.

Ease of Maintenance

From the owner-driver's point of view, the car should be delightfully easy to maintain, as all the main items of adjustment are reasonably accessible, although I did not have occasion for practical experience.

The 1933 Morris Minor Family Saloon is in every respect a most creditable motorcar—and you do not have to add "for its size."