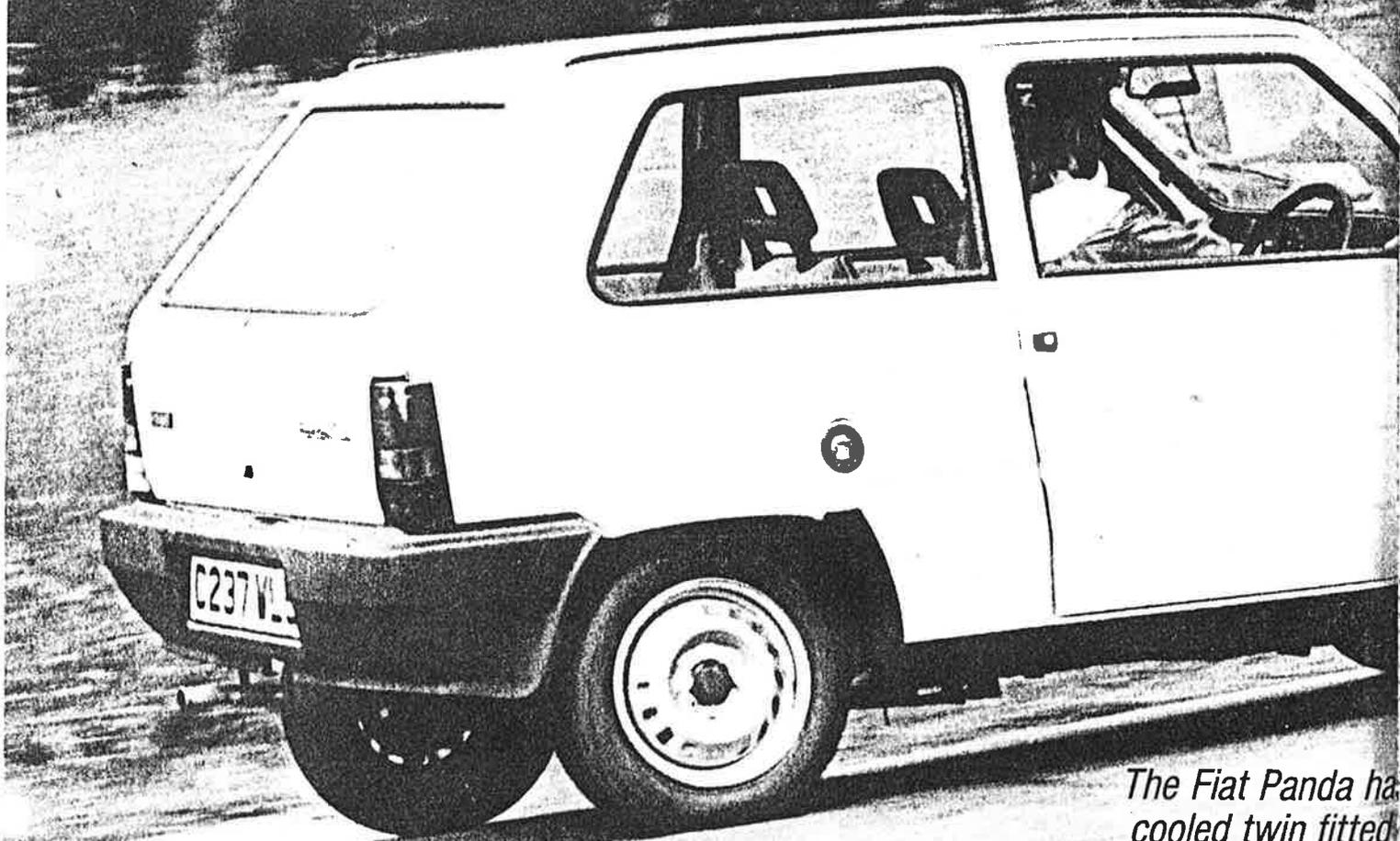


FIAT PANDA



The Fiat Panda has cooled twin fitted suspension cha

Fiat's boxy Panda has recently undergone its second facelift, and Italy's second-best-selling car (after the Uno) now has a choice of two robot-assembled FIRE engines; the 1000 cc Uno unit, and a brand new 770 cc engine for the £3290 "base" 750 model which we test here.

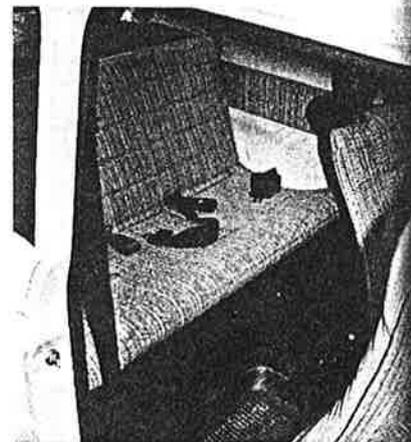
Other significant mechanical revisions to the whole range include new rear suspension borrowed from the Lancia Y10 and revised spring and damper rates all round in answer to criticisms regarding ride quality. Inside there are new instruments and heating and ventilation controls while, outside, Giugiaro's original

shape has lost its ribbed door panels and there are new wrap-around bumpers and wider wheel arches to go with new headlamps and a shallower rake to the grille.

Attention to the cosmetics is subtle; the major interest lies in the mechanicals – in particular the new 770 cc engine which produces 34 bhp at 5250 rpm from considerably oversquare 65/58 mm bore and stroke dimensions, and a very respectable 42 lb ft of torque at only 3000 rpm. It's a compact little engine and although the Panda is certainly never intended as a motorway flyer, short gearing and a willingness to rev make the

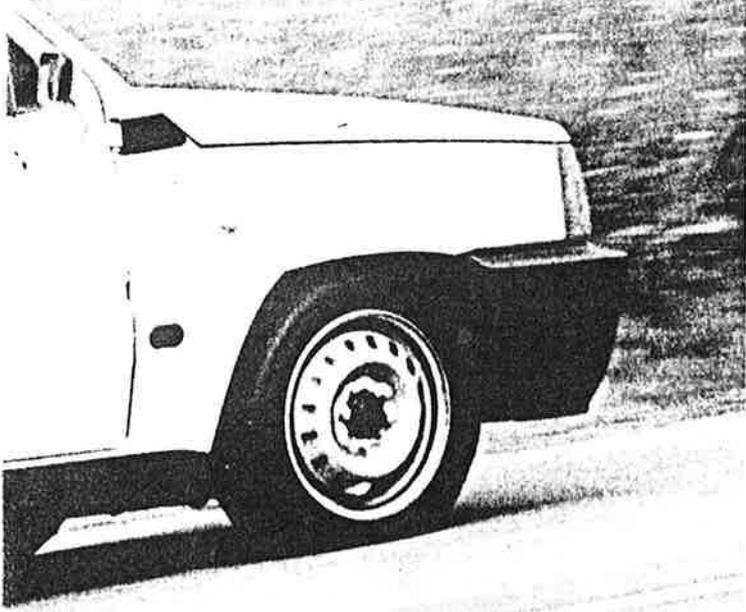
baby Fiat nippy rather than fast.

It will happily reach its maximum speed of 75.5 mph under most conditions but having to give away 100 cc and more to all its rivals, bar the 600 cc twin-cylinder Citroën 2CV, means that the Panda is also slower than all but the French car. The acceleration contest has a similar look to it, but the Panda's respectable torque enables it to sneak ahead of the Yugo and the Renault 4 as well as the Citroën with a 20.8 sec best to 60 mph against 24.1, 21.6 and 32.1 sec respectively. The top gear acceleration times are far more impressive and from 30-50 mph the Panda's 14.6 sec effort has to give best only to the



Panda is roomy in the back, but footspace is restricted

750L



but the Panda is impressively economical and an overall thirst of 39.8 mpg is bettered only by the slower 600 cc Citroën.

The gearchange is light and precise and although the ratios are wide to allow a low first for easy hill starting, the engine's torque deals with the gaps with ease. Reverse is conveniently sited and easily found – an important detail in a town car.

The previous Panda had simple leaf spring/dead beam axle rear suspension and attracted much criticism for its choppy ride. This layout has now been replaced by the centrally located "Omega" curved beam and trailing radius rod arrangement which first appeared on the Lancia Y10. The Lancia doesn't ride at all well, but on the Panda the new suspension seems to work satisfactorily and there is none of the Y10's tendency to deviate spectacularly over bumpy bends. Instead the new Fiat exhibits safe and predictable understeer and there is a surprising amount of grip from 135 x 13 tyres. Body roll has, if anything, increased over the old Panda, but this has endowed the chassis with more feel, and the steering has less woolliness about the straight ahead position. It's not a hot hatchback by any means, but the direct steering and greater precision over bad surfaces enable you to hustle the car along briskly without

effort. This also helps to disguise the engine's lack of litres in cut-and-thrust traffic.

The ride is much improved, but will still check over severe undulations and the simple seating can see the occupants jogging vertically on bumpy lanes. It is quite acceptable by small car standards, however, and much more supple than that of the Mini, for instance.

The brakes are conventional disc front/drum rear and the absence of a servo gives a pleasantly firm pedal action with no lost motion and plenty of stopping power.

A functional interior and general lack of sound deadening makes for a noisy car whenever the confines of the town are left behind. There is a particularly unpleasant tinny resonance period between 65 and 70 mph which was not present on the older 903 cc four cylinder Panda, and a greater level of refinement might have been expected with a completely new engine. At about town speeds the car is commendably quiet, however.

The upright body allows an upright steering wheel and the un-Italianate driving position accommodates drivers of vastly differing heights with ease. The general ease of conducting and parking the Fiat is further aided by good visibility and plenty of glass; the front quarter lights have disappeared, which gives

*new 770cc FIRE engine in place of the air
the never-imported Panda 34. Styling and
es also figure on this cheap, but always
cheerful, small car*

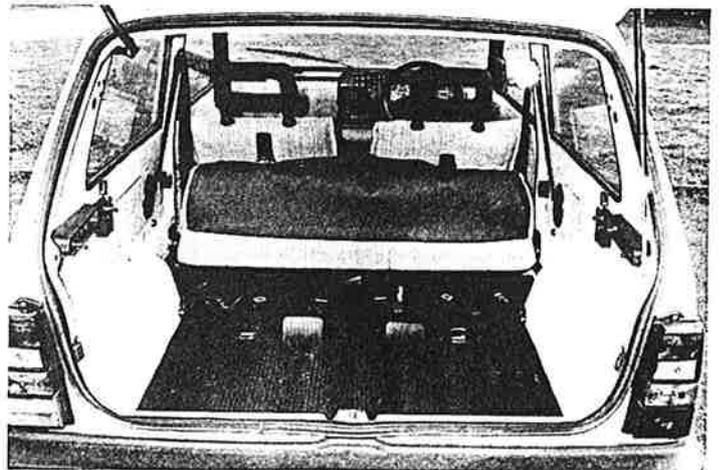


Front seats are more comfortable than they look

class-leading Domino's 12 sec, although the latter's was achieved in the fourth of five speeds.

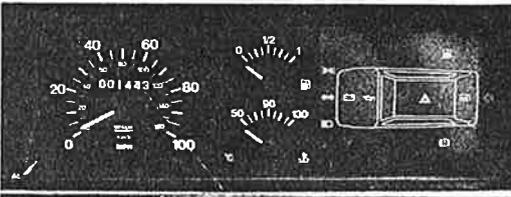
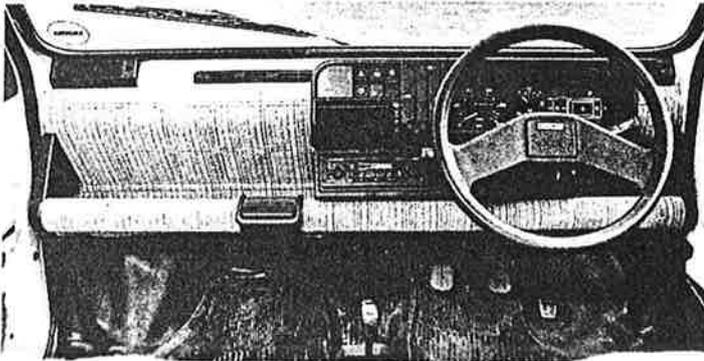
At this point, it is worth remembering that although the Domino is easily the quickest of the group, at just under £4000 it is also the most expensive. Performance is not a Panda prerequisite, however, and in its intended role as a car-about-town the subjective impression of ability to keep up with traffic is further massaged by a willing engine and a light, slick gearshift – both of which aid sprightly progress.

Free-revving engines can extract their toll on the fuel consumption for obvious reasons,



Large practical boot. Rear seat can be completely removed if needed

MOTOR ROAD TEST FIAT PANDA 750L



Oddment space beneath fascia is reminiscent of a Mini, but dash is modern (above) with corporate-style Fiat instruments, basic but clear

better sight of the wing mirrors. Fiat's options list doesn't list the rear wash-wipe for the basic L model, which seems a surprising omission with a grime-prone vertical rear window, although a wiper is standard on the CL and S models. The seats are more comfortable than they look although their side support is not in keeping with the car's cornering abilities.

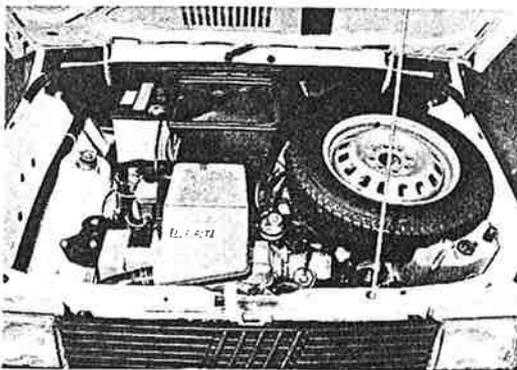
It is possible to fit four adults into the Panda with comparative ease, and although space could not be described as generous it's surprisingly good within a 2.16m wheelbase, and an overall length of 3.4m. Only the Domino and Mini offer more head and legroom in the front and the Panda manages class-competitive rear legroom with a larger boot capacity than all but the Citroën, whose tail-up shape sneaks an 0.01 m³ advantage here. The Fiat also features a useful fold-down hammock-style rear seat, which considerably expands the car's load carrying ability.

Instrumentation is now Fiat corporate style, and better for it, and the switches for the minor controls are illuminated on base model Pandas. The heating and demisting is very effective, drawing ram air direct from under the vertical screen. Cool fresh air is easily available independently from the same source and is dispensed from end of fascia

vents, an arrangement which works better than many much more expensive systems. There is a heated rear screen even on the cheapest model and two wing mirrors are standard.

The simple hammock which lies under the screen in front of the passenger's knees swallows a remarkable amount of bric-a-brac and is very practical. There is also a useful driver's door pocket storage bin. Painted metal and holes filled with rubber grommets and exposed bolt heads are part of the Panda way of life, but it's no worse in that respect than a 2CV or a Mini.

The Panda has a definite air of chic about it and in common with the Mini a classlessness that makes it safe to be seen anywhere in one. At £3290 it's substantially cheaper than the Domino (£3995) and the Renault 4GTL (£4040), and although dearer than the quirky Citroën (£2985) and outdated if competent Yugo (£3099), the Panda is an up to date model with four-cylinder watercooled engine. It has bags of character, which is difficult to quantify in value-for-money terms, is extremely economical and has no serious flaws as do some of the opposition. Its closest opposition, however, could be the 1000 cc Panda, which at only £300 more, is still class-competitive and might just be better value for money.



Diminutive FIRE engine leaves plenty of space for the spare wheel up front

PERFORMANCE

WEATHER CONDITIONS

Wind	13 mph
Temperature	55.4 deg F/ 14 deg C
Barometer	29.6 in Hg/1003 mbar
Surface	Dry tarmac/adam

MAXIMUM SPEEDS

	mph	kph
Banked Circuit (4th gear)	75.7	121.8
Best 1/4 mile (4th gear)	77.5	124.7
Terminal speeds: at 1/4 mile	62	99.8
Speeds in gears (at 6000 rpm):		
1st	22.8	36.4
2nd	43.1	69.4
3rd	66.4	106.8

ACCELERATION FROM REST

mph	sec	kph	sec
0-30	5.2	0-40	3.8
0-40	8.6	0-60	7.7
0-50	13.8	0-80	13.6
0-60	20.4	0-100	23.4
0-70	37.1		
Stand'g 1/4	21.9		

ACCELERATION IN TOP

mph	sec	kph	sec
20-40	14.1	40-60	8.2
30-50	14.6	60-80	9.5
40-60	17.0	80-100	13.3
50-70	27.5		

ACCELERATION IN 4TH

mph	sec	kph	sec
20-40	9.0	40-60	6.1
30-50	9.8	60-80	6.4
40-60	12.5	80-100	9.9

FUEL CONSUMPTION

Overall	39.8 mpg	7.2 litres/100 km
Touring*	49.2 mpg	5.7 litres/100 km

GENERAL SPECIFICATION

ENGINE

Cylinders	4-in-line		trailing arms and coil springs.
Capacity	769 cc		
Bore/stroke	65/58 mm		
Max power	34 bhp (25.4 kW) at 5250 rpm (DIN)		
Max torque	41.9 lb ft (111.6 Nm) at 3000 rpm (DIN)		
Block	Cast iron		
Head	Aluminium alloy		
Cooling	Water		
Valve gear	Single overhead cam, belt drive		
Compression	9.4:1		
Fuel system	Single choke Weber carburettor		
Ignition	Coil and contact points		
Bearings	Five main		

TRANSMISSION

Drive	To front wheels
Type	Four-speed synchromesh
Internal ratios and mph/1000 rpm	
4th	0.98:1/15.11
3rd	1.34:1/11.1
2nd	2.06:1/7.2
1st	3.91:1/3.8
Rev	3.73:1
Final drive	4.2:1

AERODYNAMICS

Cd 0.41

SUSPENSION

Front	MacPherson struts, with lower transverse links and angled radius rods.
Rear	Centre pivoted "Omega beam" axle with

Govt tests	45.6 mpg (urban)
	56.5 mpg (56 mph)
Fuel grade	97 octane
	4 star rating
Tank capacity	40 litres
	8.9 galls
Max range*	438 miles
	705 km
Test distance	743 miles
	1195 km

*Estimated (no 75 mph figure available).

STEERING

Turning circle	9.5 m 31.1 ft
Lock to lock	3.8 turns

NOISE

	dBA
30 mph	72
50 mph	75
70 mph	84
Maximum†	84

†Peak noise level under full-throttle acceleration in 2nd

SPEEDOMETER (MPH)

True mph	30 40 50 60 70
Speedo	33 43 54 65 75
Distance recorder:	0.25 per cent fast

WEIGHT

	Kg	cwt
Unladen weight*	690	13.6
Weight as tested	870	17.1

*No fuel

Performance tests carried out by Motor's staff at the Motor Industry Research Association proving ground, Lindley, and Millbrook proving ground, near Amptthill.

Test Data: World Copyright reserved. No reproduction in whole or part without written permission.

Make: Fiat Model: Panda 750L

Country of Origin: Italy

Maker: Fiat SpA, Turin, Italy

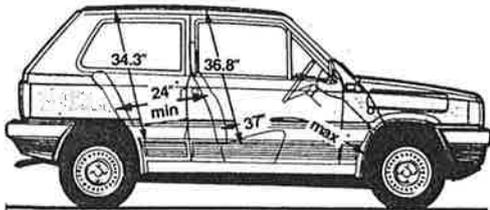
UK Concessionaire: Fiat Auto (UK) Ltd., Bakers Court, Bakers Road, Uxbridge UB8 1RG Tel: 0895 51212 Total Price: £3290.00

Options: Radio - price dependent on model

THE RIVALS

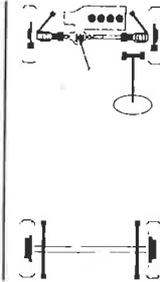
Other possible rivals include; FSO 1300 (£2949), Citroën Visa 10E (£4050), Lada Riva 1.2L (£3095), Nissan Micra 1.0 (£3999), Skoda Estelle 105S (£2548).

FIAT PANDA 750L



Length 3.38m (113") Width 1.46m (57.5") Front track 1.25m (49.3")
Wheelbase 2.16m (85") Height 1.44m (56.8") Rear track 1.24m (49")

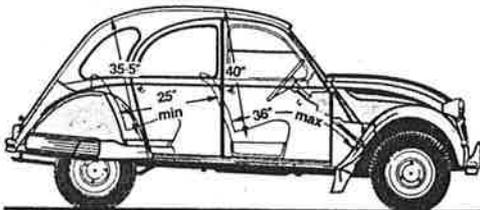
£3290



Capacity, cc	769
Power bhp/rpm	34/5250
Torque lb ft/rpm	42/3000
Max speed, mph	75.7
0-60 mph, sec	20.4
30-50 mph in 4th, sec	14.6
mph/1000 rpm	15.1
Overall mpg	39.8
Touring mpg	49.2
Weight kg	690
Drag coefficient Cd	0.41
Boot capacity m ³	0.20

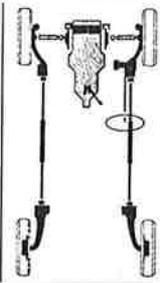
The Fiat Panda doesn't pretend to be anything other than a modestly-priced utility car, yet it still manages to be chic, stylish and fun. Originally designed by Giugiaro, the baby bear now has a torquey 770cc FIRE engine, and the new suspension has given better handling and an improved ride. Instruments and trim are more up market than before, and for the money the base Panda is now extremely good value.

CITROËN 2CV SPECIAL



Length 3.83m (150.8") Width 1.48m (58.3") Front track 1.26m (49.5")
Wheelbase 2.40m (94.5") Height 1.60m (63") Rear track 1.25m (49.5")

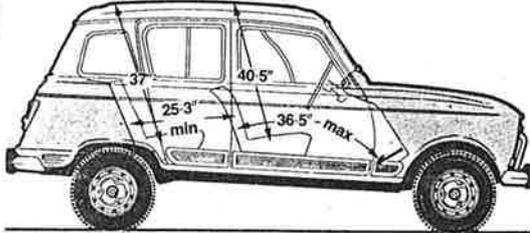
£2985



Capacity, cc	602
Power bhp/rpm	29/5750
Torque lb ft/rpm	29/3500
Max speed, mph	67.0
0-60 mph, sec	32.1
30-50 mph in 4th, sec	20.2
mph/1000 rpm	12.6
Overall mpg	40.8
Touring mpg	50.2
Weight kg	587
Drag coefficient Cd	0.51
Boot capacity m ³	0.21

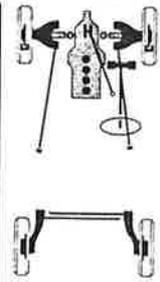
Citroën's ageless 2CV6 offers marginal but willing performance, excellent economy and a charm all of its own. Safe handling is characterised by larger roll angles, while ride is amazingly supple for a small, light car. Special version lacks the cosmetic frills, padded seats and more comprehensive instruments of the Charleston, but costing £500 less is better value. Common to all models are an easy gearchange, crude ventilation, a roll-back roof and noise. Hatch optional.

RENAULT 4 GTL



Length 3.67m (144.5") Width 1.48m (58.5") Front track 1.25m (49.5")
Wheelbase 2.36m (93") Rear track 1.24m (49")

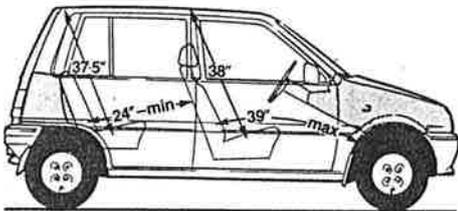
£4040



Capacity, cc	1108
Power bhp/rpm	34/2500
Torque lb ft/rpm	55/2500
Max speed, mph	70.8
0-60 mph, sec	24.1
30-50 mph in 4th, sec	19.1
mph/1000 rpm	19.6
Overall mpg	37.2
Touring mpg	47.3
Weight kg	685
Drag coefficient Cd	0.42
Boot capacity m ³	0.25

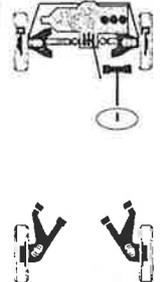
Renault's evergreen workhorse remains a viable proposition amongst newer rivals. Performance is sluggardly and economy is not the best, but the R4 compensates with generous accommodation, good load space and a likeable character. Very comfortable ride, but in some areas - instruments, heating and ventilation, and ergonomics - the Renault has been surpassed. Functional interior with lots of bare metal.

DAIHATSU DOMINO



Length 3.19m (125.8") Width 1.39m (54.9") Front track 1.21m (47.8")
Wheelbase 2.25m (88.6") Height 1.41m (55.5") Rear track 1.20m (47.4")

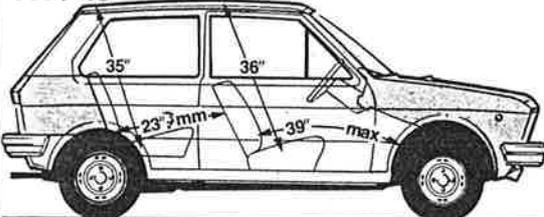
£3995



Capacity, cc	846
Power bhp/rpm	43/5500
Torque lb ft/rpm	50/3200
Max speed, mph	82.9
0-60 mph, sec	14.9
30-50 mph in 4th, sec	12.0
mph/1000 rpm	17.9
Overall mpg	39.5
Touring mpg	53.2
Weight kg	608
Drag coefficient Cd	0.36
Boot capacity m ³	0.12

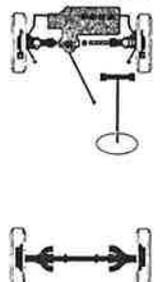
Low-cost Mini-sized five-door hatchback is Daihatsu's best effort so far. Nippy performance from willing, remarkably flexible three-cylinder engine - economy is good too. The Domino is easy to drive with a good ride, reasonable handling. It sets new standards for interior packaging, though boot is tiny. Cabin is sparsely but tastefully furnished. Very well equipped with excellent instruments, standard five-speed gearbox, rear wash wipe, remote tailgate release.

YUGO 45



Length 3.50m (137.5") Width 1.31m (51.8") Front track 1.31m (51.5")
Wheelbase 2.15m (84.5") Height 1.40m (54.8") Rear track 1.31m (51.8")

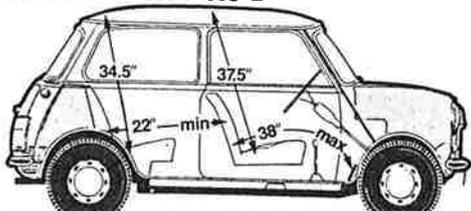
£3099



Capacity, cc	903
Power bhp/rpm	45/5800
Torque lb ft/rpm	46/3300
Max speed, mph	77.0
0-60 mph, sec	21.6
30-50 mph in 4th, sec	18.4
mph/1000 rpm	15.2
Overall mpg	36.2
Touring mpg	35.4
Weight kg	748
Drag coefficient Cd	0.40
Boot capacity m ³	0.19

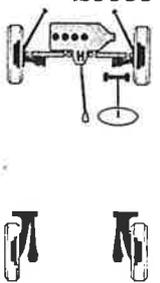
Based on Fiat 127 mechanicals, the most basic Yugo is not dissimilar in character. At least it's a true supermini with reasonable styling and packaging, though less than peppy performance isn't matched with competent handling: grip runs out very early by current standards. Ride, however, is good. The 45 is particularly well equipped for the price and despite being noisy is one of the better cars in its class.

AUSTIN MINI CITY 1.0 E



Length 3.07m (120.8") Width 1.41m (55.5") Front track 1.21m (47.5")
Wheelbase 2.03m (80") Height 1.35m (53") Rear track 1.17m (46")

£3598



Capacity, cc	998
Power bhp/rpm	40/5000
Torque lb ft/rpm	50/2500
Max speed, mph	81.3
0-60 mph, sec	18.5
30-50 mph in 4th, sec	15.6
mph/1000 rpm	18.9
Overall mpg	38.5
Touring mpg	49.1
Weight kg	605
Drag coefficient Cd	0.48
Boot capacity m ³	0.11

In some ways the latest Mini is better than ever. Performance, economy and packaging are still good though roadholding is no longer exceptional. Ride comfort and noise levels have been improved but still fall short of current small car standards, and many original faults - small boot, crude heater and poor driving position - remain. City is sparsely appointed but it's still a practical little workhorse that's fun to drive.