

SCI CAPSULE ROAD TEST: MINOR 1000



Minor's compact size permits easy metropolitan parking yet can haul four passengers for short distances.

OVER THE past nine years the Morris Minor has been in outward appearance one of the most unchanging cars on the import scene. Stubby, somewhat plumpish and seemingly immorally high for its size, the smallest Cowley-built has looked the same except for minor trim changes since at least 1948. Under this ageless exterior however, great changes have been wrought over the years, some for the worse and some for the better.

When first brought into the U. S. in 1948, the car was one of Britain's top dollar earners. Two attributes were outstanding — fantastic road holding, and a gearbox that was sheer sensual pleasure to operate. Which last was a good thing for the car literally had to be rowed with the shift lever. Its engine packed only 48 very small cubic inches. What was there was willing enough but there just wasn't enough to do the job unless that shift lever was used judiciously. Along about 1954 the company was absorbed into the huge British Motors Corporation combine and the willing little flathead with its accompanying transmission was dumped in favor of the smallest of the Austin-based BMC engines and the gearbox which went with it. The less said about this particular combination the better; suffice it to say that it was sufficiently awful to cause the manufacturer to set about changing it with all speed. Design lead-time being what it is, the process brings us to 1957 and the Morris Minor 1000.

Had we not had some earlier experience with the previous types of Minor we might have been led to expect a miniature Grand Prix car in disguise from the raves that came from overseas and from enthusiastic distributors. We weren't having any, though. This was one car to be approached with an eye yellow with jaundice, having a mere two years before spent a miserable two hours wrestling with the interim gearbox.

At least until we got into the car. Still plumpish and high, it sat in the Hambro Corporation's garage looking like every

other Minor ever built except for a redesigned grille. A pull at the starter knob set it buzzing happily to life with, strangely, a healthy, crackling but muted bark of exhaust. Then came the next of a string of very pleasant surprises — the gear lever slid into the first gate without a whisper. The clutch took hold with a smooth but solid bite and the car buzzed out into city traffic with a kitten-like pounce that was as satisfying as it was unexpected. Shifts from low to second, second to third and third to high were just as easy and quick.

Not only was the transmission changed but so was the power. The new 1000 engine is an entirely new casting with siamesed cylinders and a displacement of 948 cc, just short of 60 cubic inches, not a *huge* increase but enough to make an entirely different car out of the Minor. Combined with the fact that the original road holding owned by all Morris Minors has been retained, this added power makes the 1000 an almost ideal traffic vehicle. When a hole appears in traffic a quick downshift and a poke at the throttle puts you right into the space. You don't ease this car into anything, you jump it in.

Out on Connecticut's hilly Merritt Parkway another innovation, at least for Minors, showed up — no shifting even for steep hills. One member of SCI's test staff with a long and varied experience with Minors early and recent was happily motoring along, not paying much attention to the big speedometer. When he did glance at it he did a classic double take:

"Look," he said, "it says we're doing 70 miles an hour!"

He had reason to be startled. Earlier Minors had to strain their little insides to get an honest 60 mph on a dead level road. This one was cheerfully cruising up a mild grade at 70 and doing it so smoothly that it was hardly noticeable. Later, a series of timed runs showed an average 72 mph. In fact it went right up to that figure and no further both with and against a gentle wind. Conjectures about what another carburetor and a tuned exhaust would do

immediately came to mind.

The brakes on the new Minor are more than equal to the job of handling the increased sizzle. Though some fade was noted, recovery was excellent and what fade there was didn't appear excessive. Handling is, as could be expected, superb if you like a light, quick and very positive steering and a readily provokable but controllable breakaway. Tire pressures influence handling on any car but on the Minor 1000 proper pressures (24 psi, front and 22 psi, rear) are vital. SCI's test car had a slow leak in one rear tire and when pressure dropped below 20 rear-end breakaway was instant and startling.

The Minor's behavior on bumpy, pot-holed roads must be experienced to be believed. On one horrible, short detour the car moved along at speeds 10 to 20 miles an hour faster than the other traffic with no feeling of jounce, or even any impression that it was being abused. On twisting back roads posted speed limits which in most cars seem entirely adequate seemed pitifully slow and unrealistic in the Minor 1000.

From the standpoint of encasing the human body, the Minor is a standout among small economy machinery. Headroom and legroom are more than adequate except for left arm space for large people over six feet when the window is closed. Even the back seat is roomy enough considering the size of the car. Weather sealing is good all around and wind noise is slight. Storage space is taken care of by *two* glove compartments and a trunk that, considering the car in question, is ballroom size. This is made all the more useable due to the spare tire being supplied with a hole of its own underneath the trunk.

All things considered, including a price just short of \$1600, the new Morris 1000 should give certain of its competitors fits providing enough of them are produced to supply the demand which will be sure to follow.

—jpc

Trunk is actually two compartments, keeping luggage separate from spare tire and tools in bottom.



Engine, now up to 948 cc and with considerably more power, is as always readily accessible for service.



Dash panel has two glove boxes and a luggage shelf as well. Instrumentation is speedometer, 4 warning lights.



1957 MORRIS MINOR 1000

TOP SPEED:

Two-way average	72.0 mph
Fastest one-way run	72.0 mph

ACCELERATION:

From zero to	
30 mph	6.7
40 mph	11.0
50 mph	16.5
60 mph	25.7
Standing 1/4 mile	22.9
Speed at end of quarter	57 mph

SPEED RANGES IN GEARS:

(1) I	0-21
II	2-34
III	8-60
IV	14-Top

SPEEDOMETER CORRECTION:

Indicated	Actual
30	29
40	39
50	50
60	60
70	68

FUEL CONSUMPTION:

Hard driving	30 mpg
Average driving (under 60 mph)	34 mpg

BRAKING EFFICIENCY

(10 successive emergency stops from 60 mph, just short of locking wheels):

1st stop	62
2nd	62
3rd	56
4th	51 (Rear wheel lock)
5th	55
6th	54
7th	48 (Rear wheel lock)
8th	51
9th	55
10th	48

POWER UNIT:

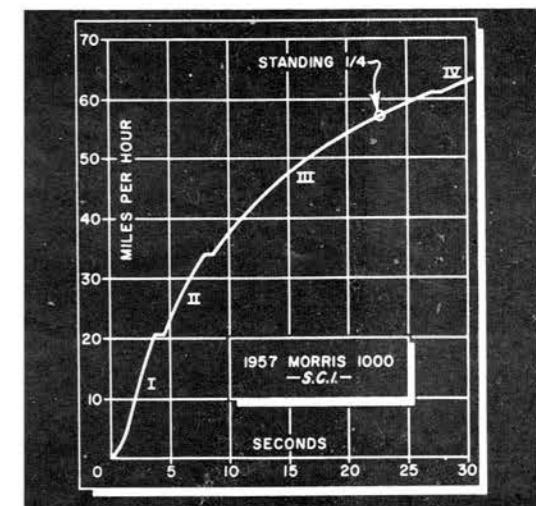
Type	4 in line
Valve Arrangement	OHV pushrods
Bore & Stroke (Engl. & Met.)	2.46 x 2.99 inc. (62.9 mm - 76.2 mm)
Bore/Stroke Ratio	1.2/1
Displacement (Engl. & Met.)	57.8 cu. in. (948 cc)
Compression Ratio	8.3/1
Carburetion by	Single SV
Max. bhp @ rpm	37 @ 4700
Idle Speed	700 rpm

CHASSIS:

Wheelbase	86 in.
Front Tread	50.5 in.
Rear Tread	50.2 in.
Suspension, front	Torsion bar
Suspension, rear	Springs
Shock absorbers	Armstrong
Steering type	Rack and pinion
Steering wheel turns L to L	2.5
Turning diameter	34.5 ft.
Brake type	1 LS Hydraulic
Brake lining area	63.8
Tire size	5.00-14

GENERAL:

Length	148 in.
Width	61 in.
Height	60 in.
Weight, test car	1736
Weight distribution, F/R	57/43
Fuel capacity — U. S. gallons	10



Minors have always handled well and added power of 1000 makes it even better. This one can be either driven or drifted through corners at will.

