

SIMCA

Montlhery

SC1 ROAD TEST:

YOU ENJOY a kind of exclusiveness when you drive a Simca. It's a car that looks frisky and sound, and it makes you feel that way, too, when you drive it. Strangely, Simca has not until recently exploited the publicity value of such things as maintaining an average of better than 70 mph for 37 days in a stock machine at Montlhery, the "French Indianapolis" for which the car is named, but it is certainly a strong testimonial to stamina and durability.

Looking under the hood at the size of the engine, it's hard to understand how so few cubes can give such big performance. Possibly it's a tribute to high specific output and well-chosen gear ratios, but whatever the reason, the Simca 1300 Montlhery keeps up with the traffic and accelerates with the big cars.

Reaction to accelerator belies engine capacity, just as the four-door-sedan body styling is misleading in terms of roadability. When you swing out to pass a line of slow cars, you have both the power and the correct gear to keep you from hanging about, and the handling characteristics allow you to effortlessly swing through a sudden bend, if one should pop up. This is meaningful, when one considers a swept volume of only 1300 cc — a lot less than is found in a great many underpowered cars that are absolutely frustrating to drive — and the engine is pushing a full-sized far-from-Spartan sedan.

When we picked up our Montlhery from Simca, Inc., the

odometer registered between ten and twenty miles. Since no one with a conscience will wind out a machine without running it in a bit, a few familiarization miles were in order. Again, anyone who's read road tests under this by-line knows that snow on the ground automatically means skis on the feet, and to drive a car through metropolitan traffic, over state highways, and across the twisting, narrow cow-paths that Vermont laughingly labels on a road map as secondary roads, is a meaningful road test.

With two aboard, and two pairs of skis attached to a roof rack borrowed from Alpine Ski Shop, we entered the Friday afternoon Metropolitan traffic, which has the qualities of being at the same time severely congested and exceedingly rapid. The nimbleness of the Simca, jumping through small openings that close almost as fast as they open, was rewarding. Downshifting into third — or even second and first, at times, is a natural movement, and the range of the engine-gear combinations allows an experienced driver to leave the six and seven liter boys wondering what kind of car that was that just went by.

On more open roads, the Simca settles to a happy cruising speed of between sixty and seventy, indicated. If you wish, you can go higher without feeling that you are abusing the engine. You get very little wind noise, but you will be aware of the engine's exhaust system. It's not offensive; on the other hand, we liked the roar. It gives one a feeling of power.

But all roads are not straight, and if you are going to maintain high average speeds, which is the purpose of a sports-type car, you have to have a suspension system that will allow you to corner without applying brakes. We were amazed that this four-door sedan — so harmless looking on the road that we passed automobiles that were intercepted by the local constabulary for speeding after we had passed them — could barrel into a turn at high speed and come out of it without even squealing the tires. In our opinion, the Montlhery takes a corner better than some bona-fide wind-in-the-face sports cars (no, we're not going to mention names!).

For all-out competition-type cornering, another technique is required. The Montlhery is not a torque machine, so to put it mildly you don't have to worry about wheelspin. When *in* the corner, the side loadings on the tires provide enough drag to slow the car down. Once the stand-on-the-loud-pedal point is reached, the torque just about equalizes this drag. In other words, you'll pull through the corner at uniform velocity, postponing acceleration until the car starts to straighten out.

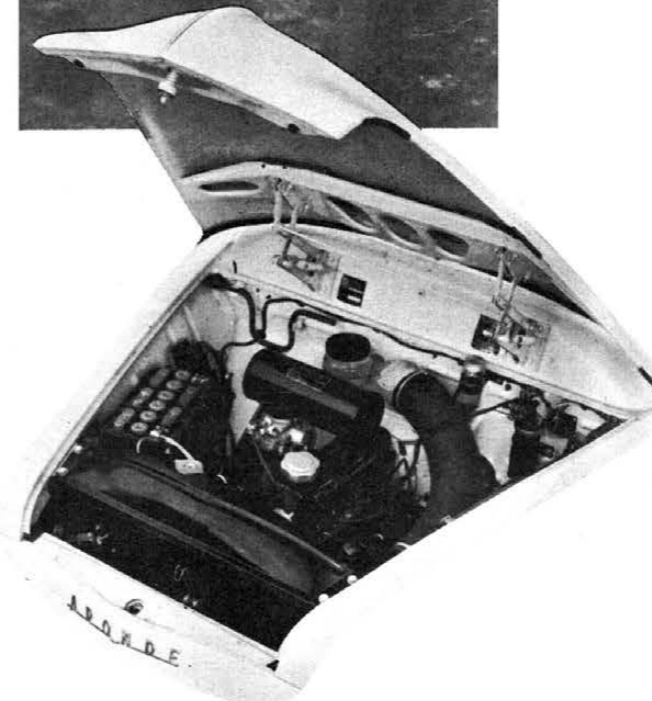
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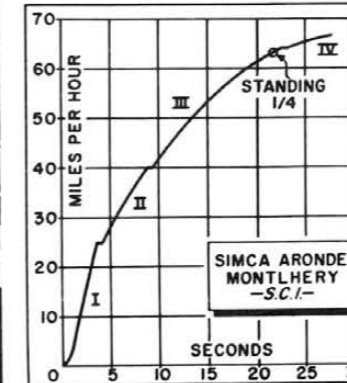
Montlhery features standard-equipment adjustable-rake seats, for relaxed motoring or roadside catnaps.



If you want to take corners real quick, yet keep it a secret, the Simca corners fast, flat, without tire squeal.



Combination of high-output engine and ideal gear ratios gives big-car acceleration with small-car economy. Body is extremely stylish, with ample room for four.



SIMCA ARONDE MONTLHERY

Price at East Coast and Gulf POEs—\$1810 basic, \$1925 as tested (Slightly higher on the West Coast)

U.S. Importer: Simca Inc., 445 Park Ave., New York, N.Y.

PERFORMANCE

TOP SPEED:
Two-way average 80½ mph
Fastest one-way run 80½ mph

ACCELERATION:
From zero to seconds
30 mph 5.6
40 mph 8.8
50 mph 13.5
60 mph 19.0
Standing ¼ mile 21.6
Speed at end of quarter 63 mph

SPEED RANGES IN GEARS:
(6000 rpm max)
I 0-25
II 9-40
III 14-64
IV 21-top

SPEEDOMETER CORRECTION:

Indicated	Timed
30	30
40	38
50	47
60	56
70	64

FUEL CONSUMPTION:

Hard driving 24 mpg

BRAKING EFFICIENCY:

10 successive emergency stops were made from 60 mph, just short of locking wheels at 2/3 g. Linings began to smell toward the end and additional pressure was needed. By last stop, pedal was nearly on floor, but recovery was very quick.

SPECIFICATIONS

POWER UNIT:

"Flash Special" In-line four, water-cooled
Valve Arrangement Pushrod overhead valves, in-line
Bore & Stroke 2.91 x 295 in (75 x 75 mm)
Stroke/Bore Ratio 1.01 /1
Displacement 77.4 cu in (1290 cc)
Compression Ratio 7.8 /1
Carburetion by Solex 32 PBICT downdraft with automatic choke
Max. Power 57 bhp @ 5200 rpm
Max. Torque 66½ lbs-ft @ 3100 rpm

DRIVE TRAIN:

Transmission ratios	test car	optional ratios
I	3.69	
II	2.35	
III	1.47	
IV	1.00	
Final drive ratio	4.44	(5.38)
Axle torque taken by	Rear springs	

CHASSIS:

Frame Pressed steel, monocoque body-frame
Wheelbase 96¼ in
Tread, front and rear 49½ in
Front Suspension Coil springs, unequal wish-bones, anti-roll bar
Rear Suspension Rigid axle, progressive rate semi-elliptic springs
Shock absorbers Telescopic
Steering type Gemmer hour-glass worm and roller
Steering wheel turns L to R 3½
Turning diam., curb to curb 36 ft
Brakes Hydraulic, leading and trailing shoes
Brake lining area 122 sq in
Tire size 5.60 x 14

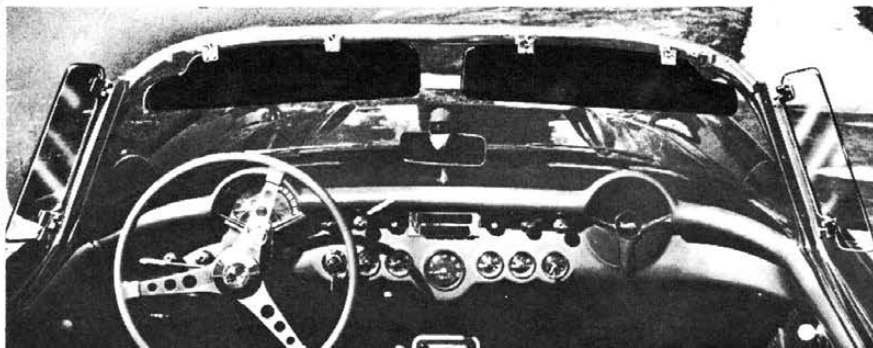
GENERAL:

Length 162 in
Width 62 in
Height 58 in
Weight, as tested 2170 lbs
Weight distribution, F/R as tested 52/48
Fuel capacity 11 U.S. Gallons

RATING FACTORS:

Specific Power Output 0.74 bhp/cu in
Power to Weight Ratio 38.1 lbs/hp
Piston speed @ 60 mph 1875 ft/min
Braking Area 112 sq in/ton
Speed @ 1000 rpm in top gear 15.8 mph

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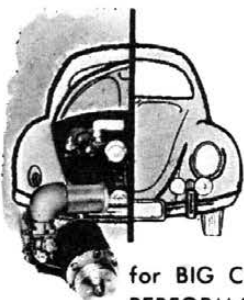
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SIMCA

(Continued from page 29)

Simcas are basically trackers, because it is difficult to induce the rear to slide out. But despite the lack of dramatics, you'll find that there are very few corners or turns that can not be taken at cruising speed. As a sort of rule of thumb, we settled on double the posted turning speeds over a section of highway that will go unidentified. When the sign said "Slow, Turn, 25 mph"; we took it at fifty. We had no anxious moments, felt perfectly secure, and attracted absolutely no attention. As we said before, the Simca looks harmless. If you're the kind of person who'd be willing to sit home and get his tickets by mail just to build a reputation, don't buy a Simca. This one is for the person who tracks dust, but who spends his money on wines instead of fines.

In appearance, the Simca is French, in the same way that Paris is French. It's a car that breeds nostalgia for that particular Paris-taxi beep-beep kind of feeling that permeates the City of Light.

The interior of our test car was finished in green-on-green upholstery, with reinforcement covering the points of heavy wear. Both seats are to be sat in by well-proportioned adults over a long distance, comfortably and luxuriously. The appearance of the car is by no means representative of the nominal purchase price and low operating costs.

In order to verify exact fuel consumption over operating conditions, we took an average from eight-hundred miles of hard driving. This consisted of New York City traffic, high-speed running over open and semi-congested, low-gear roads, and acceleration and performance testing. We did our best to get the worst possible mileage that anyone could get, short of running deliberately in low gear. We averaged 24.5 mpg. Without trying too hard, it should be as easy to get 30 mpg from a Simca as it is to get a speeding ticket in Connecticut in a Lotus.

One of the standard features with the Montlhery is the adjustable-rake seats, which twice, in the course of two days, we found occasion to put to welcome use. The first time was on a Saturday, about noon, when after having skied for a few hours under Spring sun in a T-shirt (no, not just a T-shirt) we stopped for lunch. Strong sun and warm food, lethargy, seats stretched full back, and an hour's cat-nap before resuming the sport. Again, Sunday night, and many bruises later with a few hundred more miles to go, driver and co-driver alternated driving and sleeping. As a tribute to Simca roadability, at one point the writer opened one eye to see the speed needle glued to the seventy-five peg, but he just went back to sleep.

To get down to a few particulars, the engine is very responsive and capable, and the Solex carb is equipped with an automatic choke that impressed us. To start the engine, always keep the foot off the throttle; the choke automatically supplies the correct openings. We tried it in 60° New York weather and below-freezing Vermont weather, with both hot and cold engine, and it worked every time. The

clutch is as soft as any we've ever tried; yet no matter how rapidly we changed gears or how far off we went on our engine-speed/wheel-speed synchro, as soon as the clutch was popped, it took a solid bite. And we soon learned our way around the gear box.

The shifting lever that controls the four-speed (top three synchro) gearbox is located on the steering post. The pattern is the standard "H" with first gear occupying the slot Detroit reserves for reverse. Reverse is engaged by pushing the lever toward the instrument panel, then down. Shifting is very smooth, but it is difficult to go from one leg of the "H" to the other until you have practiced it a while. And familiarity proves that the quickest way to shift is to be deliberate: taking our time, we shifted from second to third, and third to second, in four-tenths seconds.

The steering is quick, but not so quick as to be scary. Comfortably quick is a better phrase; you can corner without cranking, but if you go a little too far you can back off easily without twisting the car. It feels solid, has no play, and has just about the right amount of return. And road shocks do not give your self-winding wrist watch a hard time.

The brakes were subjected to ten successive emergency stops from sixty mph in 40° night air. On each stop, we registered better than 2/3 g, but from the fifth stop to the tenth, it became necessary to apply more pedal pressure. After the eighth stop, the linings began to smell noticeably as the car eased to the left. After the tenth stop was completed, the pedal was just about to the floor, but the decelerometer gave uniform readings for all ten stops.

The car accelerates quite rapidly, going up to sixty a lot quicker than you have a right to expect from 79 inches pushing a sedan, and then sustains a healthy deceleration rate. Though the brake pedal gradually disappears from underneath the foot, recovery is complete, and it is doubtful, in the same way that it's doubtful a VW will ever take first overall at LeMans, that anyone would ever need more stopping power from a four-door sedan for road use.

The co-driver did take exception to the location of the front pillars, as at times they interfered with peripheral vision; however it was a unilateral gripe. The writer found a defective defroster unit more irritating than anything else — four hundred miles through snow and rain with the defroster sweeping the entire windshield with the exception of the section immediately before the driver's eyes. If a ski goggle demisting cloth hadn't been readily available, there might have been more to say about defrosters that don't operate properly. Other than this minor goof, the quality of the workmanship was excellent.

The car is sturdy and compact; it is a car that is small on the outside and big on the inside. On the road, it feels solid; you get the impression that you are part of the car, which in turn is part of the road. Simcas are a lot more than basic transportation, and in terms of appearance and performance, the only way you can tell it's an economy car is to take a look at the price tag.

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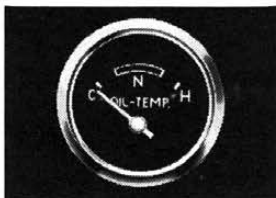
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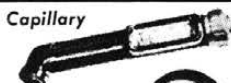
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