

D Test No 7

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Contributed by: [FSB](#)

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D TEST NO 7, 10/07/2009 – 1974 Dsuper5



Model: Dsuper5 (DP)
Year: 1974
Years active: 1974-2003

Engine:
2175cc Carbureted DX2
115 bhp DIN at 5,250

Transmission: 5 Speed Manual bvm

Colour: Beige Vanneau (AC 083).
Upholstery: Tabac Targa.

Test duration: 1986-1994
Course covered: All of North Island
Conditions: Various

For:

Against: Nothing - It's a D.

I first came across this vehicle when Dad decided it was time to update Mum's trusty 1967 ID19b. She was probably thinking something like a new BX, but no, the boys had seen a late model Dsuper5 for a good price, and that was that. We ventured south one evening to Brookby to view the car and give it a once over.

It passed muster and was purchased the following weekend for \$6500.

It needed some TLC – the regulator, high pressure pump, some work to tame the onset of the tin worm in the boot area as well as a damn good clean-up and service were required. This work took a back seat however, and was deemed a lower priority as the old ID was still going OK, and there was other work to be done. I think Dad thought he would just potter on it over the next few weeks.

Well, this became 2-3 months. Suddenly that changed however - one day we greeted Mum as she came home from work in the '67. There was a distinctive clatter from the depths of her engine bay. "How long has it been doing that?" "A week or two now" was the reply. "WHAT!!! That's the TIMING CHAIN! You should have told me" etc etc, unprintable comments followed. The ID was parked up indefinitely by the side of the house, Mum used BG for the rest of the week (always a popular decision (yeah right)) and work started in earnest on the Dsuper5 that weekend.

It was ready by the end of Sunday and warranted & registered on Monday. Mum finally had her "new" car.

She used this as her daily work horse until May 1992 when I took it over.

INITIAL IMPRESSIONS

After driving the ID (with its original engine), to me this seemed streets ahead – more power from the 21, late model dash, 5Speed gearbox etc, but the main thing was the lack of rattles and how much taughter it was on the road compared to the well travelled purple Pipi.

It lacked of course the refinement of Dad's 21 Pallas, but then that wasn't the point of the exercise.

At this time each of the licensed members of Chez Adams' had a D. Quite a site when we were all home on a Saturday with the garage door opened.

And when my Sister got her license? No, sorry, - 1978 Toyota SR Coupe...

PERFORMANCE/HANDLING:

No complaints in the handling department, naturally, which was surprising in some ways. At some point in its life it had been in an accident. The wife of the owner told us on the day we took delivery that she could never drive another car as the Citroen suspension saved her life as the nose of the car disappeared under the rear of a large, high truck! Apparently the RH sphere sheared off, causing the car to drop suddenly, thereby avoiding injury/death by some protrusion from the truck...???

A quick glance at the husband giving her daggers, and she quickly turned to the GS in the garage and said they did a good job fixing it – yeah right!

Anyway, we didn't put two and two together until quite some time later we had the engine out and I noticed the repairs from the Car-O-Liner on the chassis near the gear change linkage by the manifold, and evidence of a new front frame. That was when we recalled the comments above!

She had CX front spheres fitted, which remained on for a few years until replaced with the original type which we preferred.

Performance however, although better than the old ID was never something to write home about, even after an engine rebuild – it just never had the same pep as BG.

In 1992, after shifting back home for a while, I decided I definitely wanted a late model D at last – a “twin headlighter”. The papers were scoured, and lots of rubbish was looked at, when we finally came across a Dsuper5 that seemed reasonable. We went for a viewing and at first glance it looked very good for the asking price of \$3200.

During this time, Mum bought her first BX, a 1984 BX16. Numerous hints about buying the Dsuper5 were discouraged however, but as it turned out, Dad had a plan.

The dash and transmission were extremely good, but the interior tired, the engine fummy and some disgusting repairs to the boot area that really would have made it uneconomical to put back on the road. However, that transmission, dash and some damn good body panels were too good to let go...

It turned out the owner was a young architect straight out of Uni who had landed on his feet by getting a job in New York. The car had been advertised for 2 weeks but had not sold, and his plane left in 24 hours!

I still didn't realise Dad's plan at the time, but he told me to go in and offer the owners Father \$1500 and see what happens!

The guy rang up that evening and said he would accept the offer Wahaaay! We picked it up the following day.

All was then revealed. The latest acquisition was to be used for its body panels and transmission for me to put on to Mum's ex (the body panels (which I still have!) were getting little tired), all other spare parts & the '67 ID would be Dad's, and I would be left with a 1974 Dsuper5 with a Beige Vanneau bonnet, left rear door & boot lid, white roof and the remainder of the panels in Ivoire Borely to call my own...

All doors & guards finally ended up the same colour after an altercation with a Psychologist in a Celica, but that's another story!

But I digress from that lacklustre performance.

The donor Dsuper5 was wrecked, which was a shame as she was one of the last, being a 1975 model, but was pretty rotten, despite originating from the South Island (Originally a company car!)

I left home a couple of months later, but during a conversation with the old man, commented that the one we wrecked with tired motor performed better on its final journey than mine did, I still felt it gutless and it would miss at high revs and very low revs. When cold it was positively useless. He went down to the workshop and gave me another distributor – the one out of the '75 with “Cassette” points.

I went home and installed the later distributor, set the timing and took her round the block. I went up a steep hill and hit 80km by the top, changing into 5th. Around the block again – this time into 5th at the bottom and crawled up at 50kmph. Didn't miss a beat! Onto the motorway after that – it was a new car!!

Suffice to say, travelling after that point in the old girl was usually done with great verve!

I could keep up easily with 80's Mitsubishi V3000's, and even showed a BMW what happens when you cut a D off on the motorway. His speedo would have been reading 170kmph, but I can't remember what I was doing. The aforementioned V3000's were doing the same speed, but once again, not sure about me!

BRAKING:

Good enough to cope with BMW's and Mitsubishi V3000's

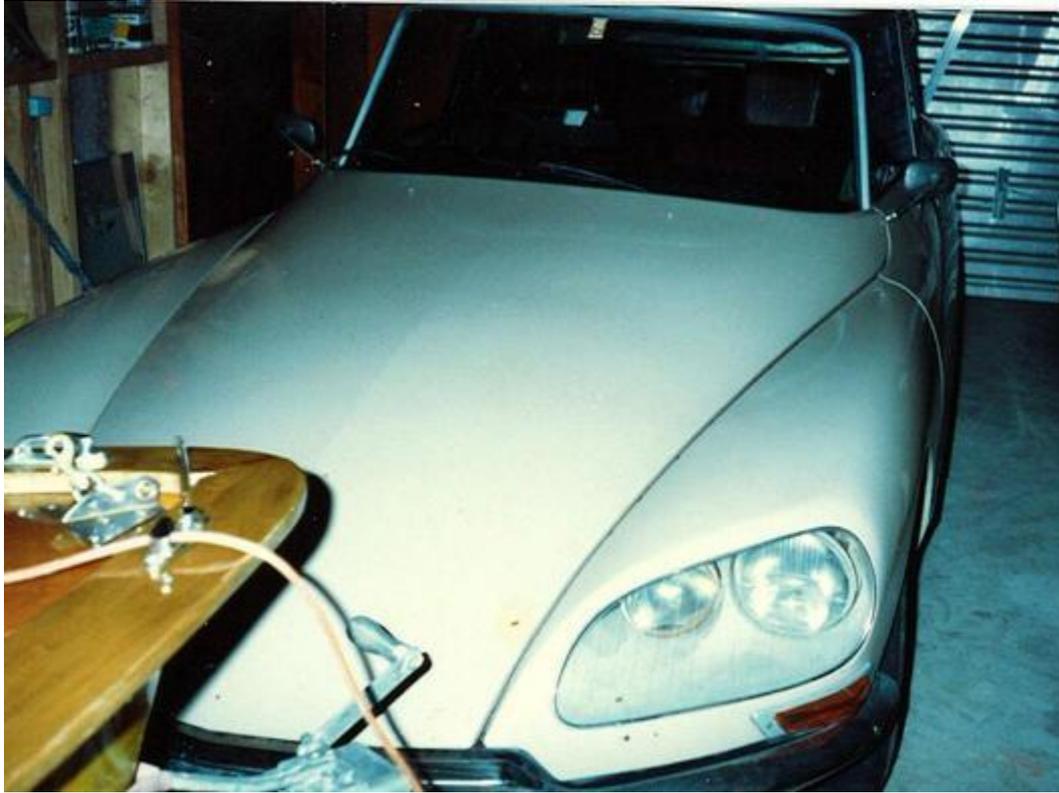
RELIABILITY:

After the Distributor replacement, no problems there, however it did throw a starter motor once in Glenfield and a water pump bearing in Hawera on the way to Wellington.

Had heaps of fun in the rain with a leaking windscreen, but got that sorted with the help of copious amounts of silicon after removing & refitting. Wouldn't have liked to have been the bloke who had to remove it next!

The Steering rack was replaced with a Pleaides unit in late 1992.

A WEE BIT OF HISTORY:



The car was actually ordered from, and picked up directly from the factory by the original owner we bought it off. It came with a radio fitted to the engine hump and the factory speaker in grey.

He toured Europe and the UK in it for a few months, before shipping it to Washington in the US where he worked for a few more months when he finally brought it back to NZ.

Mum bought it in 1986, then I took it over from 1992, to 1994 – a most reluctant sale, but I had to move to Toyotas as I was repping and clocking up huge mileages around the North Island – an expensive pastime in a 20 year old D!

I sold it to a young bloke, and last saw it in Khyber Pass Road with a caved in door and a Lucas indicator lense taped to the LH trumpet, Hmmpph.

According to Carjam, it changed hands several times after that, including ending up with Stuart Craig at one point before finally failing a WOF attempt in Wellington on 7th February 2003.

Is it really dead? Is the last owner restoring it? If anybody reading this knows of her – rego was HH8512, Chassis No 4545781 – I would love to know. Her Rego exemption expired in 2005, so there may be hope!