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D Test No 5

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D TEST NO 5, 07/03/2009 – 1970 DSpecial



Model: DSpecial (DV)

Year: 1970

Years active: 1970-now

Engine:

2175cc DX2 Type

115 bhp DIN at 5,250 rpm

Transmission: 4 Speed Manual (7 X 34)

Colour: Bleu Danube (AC 630)

Upholstery: Fauve Targa.

Test duration: 10/2005

Course covered: Auckland/Taranaki/Wellington/Hawkes Bay

Conditions: Various

For: Sporty Performance, Wonderful original condition DSpecial
Against:Nothing. It's a D.

Back in September 2005, final organisation was taking place for the DS 50th celebrations- the D-Tour & D-Rally – that would take us from Auckland to Napier via the Waikato, Taranaki and Wellington over a week. As I was not in the possession of a D of my own at the time, I was to accompany Mum & Dad in the Bronze Goddess. Until...

One of the entrants, Greg Collinge, was lucky enough to own 2 D's – A 1974 DS23 BVH Pallas and a 1970 DSpecial. He wanted both to take part in the Tour but had no-one to drive the latter car. He got in touch with Roger to find out if he knew of anyone who might be able to drive the DSpecial.

Naturally, I leapt at the chance. He got the car to Auckland and I picked it up the day before the first leg of the tour. It was with great excitement and drove her home.

INITIAL IMPRESSIONS

This car could certainly go! It had been fitted with DS21 pistons, barrels and carburettor and coupled to a 4 speed low ratio 'box, she could certainly pull! We flew over the harbour bridge, and although she was certainly not the quietest D in the world, she made up for it in sheer driveability.

I loaded her up to the hilt with all the gear required for the trip and left early the next morning for Cornwall Park.

PERFORMANCE/HANDLING:

As I have already pointed out, the engine was somewhat more powerful than your average DSpecial, and been shod with near new XVs's all round, I was able to make full use of this peppy beast (I did notice these tyres were no longer on the car at the following D-Tour!!!!). A higher ratio 5th gear would have been nice for cruising, but one soon got used to the higher revs required and got on with passing inferior vehicles and keeping up with some of the 'bigger' D's on the trip.

On day two, I was following the Bronze Goddess up the Kaimai's – we were both roaring up- both in fourth gear –passing a few other things at the same time. We ripped around a left hand bend near the top, passing a Mitsubishi Mirage, when around the next bend, in the rest area/lookout at the top, were the rest of the convoy. We were both going a bit quick for the entrance, so had to use the exit, with both our cars parked the opposite of all the others!

This exercise certainly showed the car was in fine form with the Kaimai's simply being a little bump in the road to it. I will admit there was a certain white DSpecial that was fairly

hard to keep up with however...

BRAKING:

This has actually been mentioned elsewhere on this site in Ricci's diary. Just before Karapiro, Dad decided he had an urgent need to top up with petrol. I was following him, behind me Steve Wotton in the aforementioned DSpecial, then after that, Big "Sebastian" Kev in the black 23.

Well! We came around a right hand bend, and there, on the left was a Service Station. The mushroom in the Bronze Goddess was squashed down rapidly, causing the brake pads to come in contact with the disk very quickly and she swung in rapidly to the service station.

A split second passed. I thought "I do not want to end up running into the back of BG". I squashed my own mushroom, and effectively retarded the Sporty DSpecial to avoid contact with the rather large tow bar in front. I then thought "Petrol- what a good idea" and swung in behind Dad, to then see Steve following suit behind me – quite comical.

Even more so was the black 23, that rapidly shot through on the other side of the road to avoid us, with all horns blaring!

As Ricci put it: "Then on the way to Te Puke Chris & Faye Adams (we had breakfast with) made a class late turn into the Mobil nearly taking out Jeremy and a Traffic Island in the Process"

(Hehehe!)

RELIABILITY:

No problems encountered bar the clutch cable which required adjustment. Once rectified I experienced butter-like changes!

ENTERTAINMENT VALUE:

UNBEATABLE.

Now, what is the ultimate entertainment in a D?

Showing off the brakes as in the braking section above? NO

Showing off the swivelling headlights at night? NO

Making it go up and down? NO

All of the above are great, but it's the age-old 3 wheel trick that takes the cake. I wanted to get Rogers 23 for the event but he got a bit nit-picky, so I decided the Sporty DSpecial would have to entertain!

And entertain it did! We ripped the rear left wheel off at Clifton Beach on the Sunday afternoon on the last day and drove around the D-lined paddock while the photos were taken

after lunch much to everyone's amazement.

It was interesting how many people had never seen it done 'in the flesh'. When I was a kid, It was done at each national rally!

The car was well photographed and videod during the escapade. Greg Collinge at one point came charging across the paddock towards me – “Hey, that's my car” he yelled. “Yeah, ahh sorry Greg”, I replied (not stopping of course. “Wait” he yells – “I want to get my camera – I've never seen it done before”



So, my association with the Sporty DSpecial ended on a great note. It was hard to take her back the following morning and hand over the keys, although I was lucky enough to get my first decent long distance drove in BG on the way home, just one of many highlights of that week.

Thanks Greg – hope my car is still going well!!