

# THE AUTO VAP STANDARD

Recently introduced to Great Britain, this French moped has many attractive features, says "Centaur"



**L**AUNCHED with a lavish press conference in the Savoy Hotel, London, and christened by the French actress Marie Claire Verlene with an expensive bottle of perfume, the Auto Vap moped from France became available in England within the last month. The concessionaires, Scootamatic Ltd., are associated with a company that is better known in another section of this magazine: the Elswick Hopper bicycle concern.

Does this moped warrant the introduction to British trade it received? In my opinion yes, for its major attraction is of the sort that appeals to everyone: price!

For 53 guineas (the price of the standard model) it is possible to buy an attractive yet strong moped, powered by a well-proven French engine and with the power transmitted through a sweetly-running automatic clutch. There are several other accessories of interest which I will deal with later.

I was surprised when, after the measured 1/10th mile, I had only recorded a fraction under 30 m.p.h. During my familiarization runs it had seemed perfectly easy to maintain an easy speedy gait, and despite the obvious optimism of the speedometer I had fitted, I felt I had been travelling at above-average speeds. Where had this sensation come from? I tried the "measured tenth" again ignoring the stop-watch this time, and concentrating on the speedometer.

## Upper Range

At the lower speeds, the needle moved sluggishly, a fairly usual procedure with most automatic clutch models. Then, when it reached about 15 m.p.h. it fairly leaped forward to the upper extremity of the moped's performance. This excellent acceleration in the middle and upper range had given the impression of travelling at a faster speed. Nevertheless I am sure the maximum speed could be higher than mine if the model is allowed a longer running-in period than I was able to give it.

The Auto Vap's progressive clutch was something of a dream. Usually I use the pedals on most models when starting, since this ensures an absolute lack of strain on the clutch. But on one lengthy running-in journey I became tired and lost interest in saving the moped work. It performed its added duties without complaint.

Perhaps the most revolutionary and startling

thing about this moped is the ease with which it can be converted into a bicycle. A finned section of the large pedal pulley on the nearside is turned fractionally, and that is that. No tools, no sweat. This is very definitely how it should be. I luxuriated in this finger-tip action and converted and reconverted several times over.

To give greater knee-room at the front the fuel tank has been installed at the rear and is attached to the seat pillar tube. I appreciated the simple and effortless petrol tap which is operated by a plastic-headed screw. A minor rap on the knuckles, however, for the fuel tank filler cap. This is merely a push-in object, also made of some type of plastic. In cold weather with cold fingers (and in fact quite normal weather) removing this from the tank calls for a Samson grip. It may ease off as time goes on though.

## Adequate Brakes

\* Brakes are full-width internally expanding at both front and rear. The braking distance figures are not very short but I never felt that I lacked stopping power when on the road. I did like the handlebar levers which seem

unique as far as I am concerned. The end of the lever is sensibly supplied with a small knob to prevent the fingers slipping off, and both levers were smart and within easy reach.

It seems inevitable that testers always refer to the fact that they hardly noticed the moped was unsprung at the rear, but once again this is the truth. A "pan" saddle absorbed every discomfort while the shocks at the steering end were effectively damped by strong telescopic.

I can testify to the effectiveness of the mudguards which protected me satisfactorily during some torrential rain storms, and would like to point out two other factors connected with the frame and styling. Cables are neatly ducted down small tubes welded to the main frame tubes. This serves the dual purpose of keeping the lines of the machine clean and the cables out of harm's way. The other point is the engine fairing. Both offside and nearside fairings are very truly quickly detachable as they are held by one small wing-nut each. But they do not rattle or hum. At the point where the upper edges are inserted into holding slots, rubber sleeving has thoughtfully been attached to prevent such an occurrence.

## Good Fittings

As always, the existence of a tool kit complete with rubber tool bag pleased me, and I was also glad to note that the centre stand had been provided with a protruding peg on the nearside to facilitate the operation of the stand. Mudguards are also prevented from working loose by robust stays at both the front and rear.

All in all, a desirable purchase considerably enhanced by a refreshingly low price.

But one grumble. One morning I discovered a tyre had deflated. I removed the pump from its very sensible mounting above the engine and attached the connector. The rubber tubing of the latter seemed rather frail and I was not surprised when first one brass end blew off and then, minutes later, the other end did the same. Then the tubing itself split. I managed finally to inflate the tyre by cutting the split section of tubing away and keeping an eye on the two brass ends every time I made a pump stroke. A small point, but one which cost me an hour's wasted time one morning.

## Performance

**Maximum Speed:**  
Flying 1/10th mile, 29 m.p.h.  
Standing 1/10th mile, 16 m.p.h.

**Acceleration:**  
0-10 m.p.h., 6 secs. 0-20 m.p.h., 15 secs.

**Economy:**  
At 20 m.p.h., 165 m.p.g.

**Hill climbing:**  
Time for hill: 2 min; 13 secs.  
Pedal assistance from 0.3 miles.  
Test hill 0.5 miles long; max. gradient 1 in 10;  
average gradient: 1 in 16.

**Braking:**

	Front	Rear	Both
At 20 m.p.h.	33ft.	61ft.	23ft.

**Peddalling:**  
Maximum pedalling speed: 15 m.p.h.  
Comfortable pedalling speed: 8 m.p.h.  
Tester's rating: easy to pedal.

**Tester's weight:** 220lb.

## Specification

**Engine:** Vap two-stroke; 40mm. bore x 38mm. stroke = 48cc.; c.r. 6.5 to 1; 1.75 b.h.p. at 5,000 r.p.m.

**Gearbox:** Single speed with progressive automatic centrifugal clutch; primary belt drive and final chain drive; pedal starting.

**Frame:** Tubular construction cradle pattern; telescopic front forks and rigid rear end.

**Tank:** 5 pints.

**Lights:** Head and tail lamps fed direct from flywheel magneto generator.

**Wheels and Brakes:** Both brakes 3 1/2 in. diameter internally expanding in full-width hubs; chromium plated rims; 2 1/2 x 2.00 in. whitewall tyres.

**Equipment:** Tyre pump; tool kit and bag; luggage carrier; centre stand.

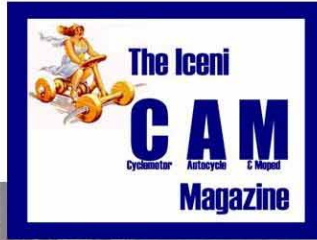
**Finish:** Duo-tone blue.

**Weight:** 84lb.

**Concessionaires:** Scootamatic Ltd., Glaisdale Drive West, Aspley, Nottingham.

**Price:** £55 13s.

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