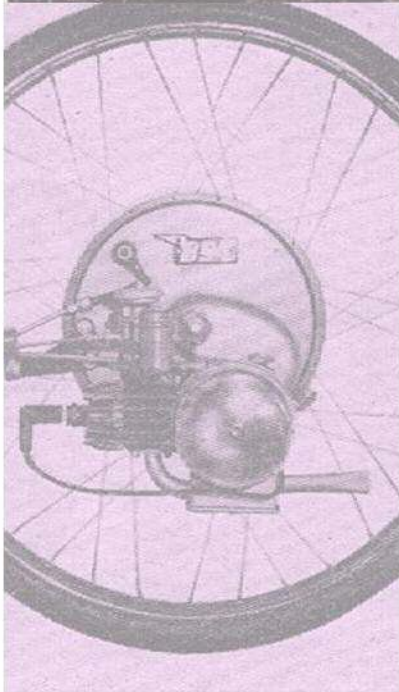


# IceniCAM Information Service



[www.icenicam.org.uk](http://www.icenicam.org.uk)

## Road Testing the

# Paloma

## 49.7 c.c. Minor

THE question is often asked, "What is the recipe for a good moped?" Recently I tried a flavoursome little French dish from the ovens of the well-known Paloma-Lavalette concern and found it very much to my taste. Ingredients? You simply take a maximum speed of 35 m.p.h., add a multimate clutch, throw in a fuel consumption of 155 m.p.g. at 20 m.p.h., sprinkle a few necessary details, and stick a £49 16s. 0d. price ticket on the finished product—and you have the Paloma Minor.

Keeping it simple seems to have been the plan when the Minor was first "invented," and the result is an extremely serviceable utilitarian machine, with no trimming or price-raising extras of dubious necessity, but with a performance—and a price—second to very few.

In appearance, the Minor is something of an ugly duckling compared with its more luxurious brothers. It is of simple, practical, and functional design. A tubular steel frame, easily recognizable as being related to the bicycle, appears to be of strong construction without any fanciness. Size-wise, it is 68in. overall length, 46½in. wheelbase, height 40in. and width 27in., which is well within city traffic infiltration standards. Ground clearance is 7½in., allowing a good safety margin.

The compact engine unit is well shielded, or rather the rider is well shielded from the engine, by a neat two-section cowling which is easily and quickly removable. The fuel tank is unobtrusively mounted behind the seat tube giving the rider ample leg room (ladies will approve), and reducing the chances of soiling of clothes.

The frame is quite unashamedly rigid, with a bicycle type steering head and forks. The only suggestion of springing is in the seat, which, I'm afraid, did not exactly give me the impression that I was riding on a cloud. The seat, like the handlebars, has a height adjustment of about 5in., and with a little experimenting I found a comfortable riding position. Contact with the ground is maintained through two white-wall 23 x 2 tyres of Michelin manufacture, which gave me no feeling of insecurity, whatever the road surface, wet or dry. The braking power supplied by the hub brakes is



The Paloma Minor boasts a high top speed, allied to a simplified yet practical design.

quite out of proportion to their size; the figures shown in the performance data indicate they had had more than just the passing interest of the designer. Both front and rear brakes are operated by the levers on the handlebars, and as there is no clutch lever, the "dashboard" is neat and unelaborate. I was impressed by the well-made solid-looking alloy hubs and brake levers.

Continuing the trend of simplicity, the reasonably effective silencer, which is neatly slung beneath the engine unit without any protruding pipes, etc., presents no problems where maintenance is concerned, lending itself to easy cleaning due to its shape. The side-mounted Gurtner carburetter, model D.12.G, which is quickly accessible under the engine fairing, is as uncomplicated a piece of mechanism as a carburetter can be.

### Celebrated Engine

Power is supplied by the celebrated Lavalette engine, the same model as fitted to the more expensive DASL and PAL models of the Paloma range. I recently had a first-hand demonstration of the astonishing capabilities of this sturdy 49.7 c.c. unit when I travelled almost non-stop from London to Paris and then back again a few days later on a Paloma DASL using the same engine as the Minor. Already 3 years old, it carried over 220lb. of man and kit at full throttle without a murmur of protest, bettering 35 m.p.h. on level ground.

Those who have tried a moped fitted with an automatic clutch will require no reminder how uncomplicated and foolproof they are in operation. One simply starts by kick start with the machine on its stand, or pedals away on it. The centrifugal clutch engages and away you go. The only control is the twist-grip for the throttle and the machine does the rest itself. When you wish to stop, merely de-throttle, and the two-stage clutch again automatically disengages. Acceleration is not as rapid, perhaps, as on a geared machine, but a little assistance with the feet levels that score. Likewise on the steeper hills, the Minor requires pedal assistance as do the majority of two-speeders; but it is a fairly savage gradient which calls for this.

The Minor's low position on the scale of evolution from the bicycle means that it has some advantages and some disadvantages over its more "civilized" competitors. On the debit side, its total lack of springing except within the seat, although quite acceptable as on an ordinary bicycle at the lower speeds, means that the rider has a very accurate and magnified picture of the state of the road surface when travelling at a high speed.

On the other hand, superfluous equipment is at a minimum, and the weight of the machine is much reduced; consequently it handles as easily and lightly as a bicycle at the lower speeds, but again seems to become distinctly more lively as the pace increases. It is possible to pedal the Minor, and quite comfortably too.

A strong luggage carrier is provided, and so is a small plastic tool carrier. The lighting equipment is not extraordinary, as the dynamo output is only 10 watts, but it is adequate for normal town use.

### Performance

**Maximum Speed:**  
Flying 1/10th mile, 35 m.p.h.  
Standing 1/10th mile, 17 m.p.h. (without pedals).

**Acceleration:**  
0-10 m.p.h., 4.5 sec.  
0-20 m.p.h., 9.5 sec.  
0-30 m.p.h., 21 sec.

Braking:	Front	Rear	Both
At 20 m.p.h.	20ft.	22ft.	12½ft.
At 30 m.p.h.	46½ft.	62½ft.	35ft.

**Economy:**  
At 20 m.p.h., 155 m.p.g.  
At 30 m.p.h., 112 m.p.g.

**Hill Climbing:**  
Time for hill, 2 min. 15 sec.  
Pedal assistance required at 0.4 miles.  
Test hill 0.5 miles long; max. gradient 1-in-10; average gradient 1-in-10.

**Pedalling:**  
Comfortable pedalling speed, 9 m.p.h.  
Maximum pedalling speed, 15 m.p.h.  
Tester's rating: Excellent.  
Tester's weight: 200lb.  
Weather: Dry with little wind.

### Specification

**Engine:** Lavalette 2-stroke; 40mm. bore, 39.6mm. stroke=49.7c.c.; 1.8 b.h.p. at 4,800 r.p.m.

**Carburetter:** Gurtner D.12.G.

**Transmission:** 2-stage automatic clutch. Second stage engages at 9 m.p.h.

**Frame:** Welded up tubular steel frame, rigid front and rear.

**Tank:** 5½ pint capacity, without reserve.

**Lights:** Flywheel magneto, dynamo output 6v. 10 watt.

**Wheels and Brakes:** Hub brakes operated by handlebar levers; chromed steel rims and alloy hubs; 23 x 2 Michelin tyres, white wall.

**Equipment:** Centre stand, tool kit, tyre pump.

**Finish:** Light blue.

**Dimensions:** Width 27in.; height 40in.; wheel base 46½in.; ground clearance 7½in.; overall length 68in.

**Makers:** A.C. Lavalette, 32, Av. Michelet, St. Ouen (Seine), France.

**Concessionaires:** Europa Imports Ltd., Arkwright Road, Reading, Berks.

**Price:** £41 10s. plus £8 6s. P.T.