

Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of Australia

Phantom II Continental Road Test

(From a contemporary Road Test Report)

ROLLS-ROYCE CONTINENTAL TOURING SALOON

Specification:- Number of cylinders 6, size, 4 ½ in by 5 in, capacity, 7,668c.c.; nominal h.p., 43.3; number of main bearings, 7; top gear ratio, 3.41; petrol capacity, 20 gallons; tires, 20 by 7 in.; turning circle, 48ft. 8in. and 53ft. 10in.; wheelbase, 12ft; track, 4ft 10in. (front), 5ft. (rear); ground clearance, 8in.; weight 2 tons 8½ cwt Price £2,425. The above are all the data given by the makers

The 40-50 h.p. Phantom II. Rolls-Royce Continental Touring saloon has no second thoughts in its spontaneous responsiveness. It needs no urging, it is always ready to tackle its job, and hard work is undertaken lightly yet swiftly and surely. It gives the impression that, down to the smallest nut, the greatest care has been given to ensure that every part is a worthy member of the whole.

The 4-5-seated Park Ward body is thoroughly comfortable and makes a very smart car with its sloping screen, wings, and back. There are four doors and four side windows, and these windows together with the screen give an exceptionally clear view as their upper edges are taken up to the roof. As the speed and handbrake levers are on the offside, entrance for the driver here requires some manoeuvring. There is good luggage space behind, for in addition to the boot, where also the small tools are kept, there are swivelling arms or brackets upon which a motor trunk may be secured.

The cylinders are cast in two blocks, but have a single detachable aluminium head, above which are the valves which have bronzed seatings and are worked by pushrods. The valves have only single springs, but one cannot complain of noise in the engine. Adjustment of clearance is made in the ordinary way; there is forced lubrication throughout - even to the gudgeon pins; the driver has a control in front of him whereby a special supply is given to the cylinder walls while the engine is cold, and over the valve mechanism there is a cover held by four permanently attached hand screws. The pistons are of aluminium alloy, and the compression ratio is rather higher than on the ordinary Phantom II. There is a set of sparking plugs either side of the engine, and these give two independent ignitions or can be used together when they are synchronised. The water system can be drained easily, and there is now a plug in the side of the base by which to run off the oil.

On the nearside of the engine there is the three-branch exhaust manifold with its central pipe, and behind the timing case is the generator and the magneto, which is driven by a long shaft with disk couplings. To save taking out the floor boards the make-and-break can be examined in a mirror. The starter is built-in under the back bearer arm and works in sequence. The petrol filler for the back tank is handy in the boot, the reserve supply is under the control of the driver, the autovac rightly does not depend on the induction pipe, the air being exhausted by a vacuum pump driven off the camshaft. A true reading can always be obtained on the large petrol gauge on the instrument board by a small pump, and the petrol filler has a metal bowl.

On the offside is the water pump with its adjustable gland, the six-branch aluminium inlet manifold, the new carburettor with its large air cleaner and silencer, the handy vertically driven make-and-break and distributor, and the coil, which is kept cool, being just behind the fan. The ingoing gas is exhaust heated, and the bypass exhaust gas is taken away to a separate small silencer. The oil filter is in the rear bearer arm, and although it has no gauze it is easily reached. There is a special cleaning oil filter connected with the clutch pedal. The steering box contains worm and nut and is placed well forward. The front hydraulic shock absorbers can be refilled from under the bonnet. The honeycomb radiator has thermostatically worked shutters.

Engine, single-plate dry clutch, and four-speed "easy change" gearbox form a unit which is held either side in front and behind the gearbox; support is also given either side of the flywheel case. The centralised chassis lubrication system includes such bearings as those of the clutch and pedal shafts, in addition to the chassis spring leaves, which are drilled and channelled for the purpose. The speed lever works in a visible gate, has a catch for reverse, there is synchromesh, and a quiet second and third. The gearbox has a dipstick and a top filling plug, and the mechanical servo for the four-wheel brakes is on the nearside. The propeller-shaft is open, the back axle is fully floating and there is hypoid bevel gear. The hand brake works separate side-by-side shoes at the back. The springs are half-elliptical, and on the car tried there were telecontrol hydraulic shock absorbers regulable in front of the driver, in addition to the Rolls-Royce ones. The front springs are flat and shackled forwards, and the back springs are also long, underslung, and held out of centre.

ON THE ROAD

This car had a heavier body than the one I tried before, and rather more wind-resisting surface. It had done about 13,000 miles. The engine was silky, with good acceleration, and quiet. It gives effortless travel, and high speed is as safe on this car as a much slower rate on a lower grade car. The clutch had no stop; thus it was best to touch the synchromesh before engaging first, second, or reverse with the car stationary. Changes into third from second, from third to top, and top to third can be made at any time with simple or straightforward movements without scrape. The steering on this saloon allowed too much reversibility on rough surface, though most of this could be cured by adjustment, and the action was light. I

should prefer cam steering. The suspension was on the hard side, and some speed was lost on occasion through wheel bounce. However, one always travels comfortably. The braking was good and in conformity with a car of this power and speed. The machine is capable of about 50, 75, and over 90 on second, third, and top. On the stretch the 15 was increased to 70, the 30 at the bottom of the 1 in 22« Dashwood Hill was raised to 69 at the top, and with standing starts on top and third the crest of the old hill was passed at 27 and 44 miles an hour respectively. The roads were dry, there was the usual load, and the slight breeze was mostly against the car.