

# The FORD CONSUL

A Well-styled and Spacious Car of Low Price and High Performance

**STYLISH** in the best sense, the new Consul presents a valuable blend of attractive appearance and practical layout. Occupants are offered notably good all-round visibility.



**S**MART appearance and ample carrying capacity are the most obviously attractive features of the new Ford Consul.

The general outline of the car shows the swing in contemporary design from the curvilinear to the rectilinear, for just as the day of "razor-edge" styling is dead so is the day of the bulbous-looking car coming to an end. Certainly the new Consuls have an agreeably lean and sharp look, which is emphasized by the peaks of the headlamp hoods at the front and the suggestion of tail fins at the back.

If one opens the doors the evidence of thought in the styling studio is even stronger. The seats are of lightly coloured woven plastics material buttoned to reduce, although it must be admitted, not wholly to prevent, wrinkling in use; the facia is also plastics-covered and has a smart assembly for the instruments which in-

cludes a deep hood for the speedometer; the interior of the roof is easily washable, the door handles and window winders have an agreeable appearance and the simple yet elegant steering wheel has an unobtrusive coloured centre. In other words, although the Consul is a car of comparatively low price, it is far from being austere or drab. On the contrary it is gaily coloured and well proportioned.

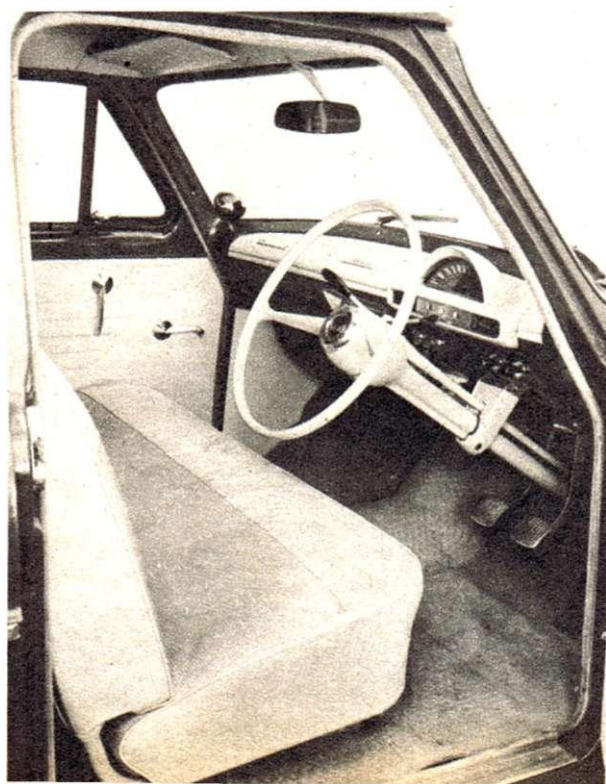
It is also exceptionally roomy. Something of this can be seen from the photographs and any impression they give is reinforced by a study of the dimensional body drawings which show that there are 54 inches across the front and 55 1/2 inches across the rear seats. The carriage of six persons is therefore not an uncomfortable possibility, acceptable only as an emergency over short distances, but a quite reasonable proposition especially as wheel arches, propeller shaft tunnel, and clutch

housing make but small inroads upon the platform area. Similarly, although the spare wheel is mounted naked and unashamed in the 20-cu. ft. rear luggage locker, the space remaining for suitcases is far above that normal to this class of car.

The fact that the luggage locker lid is counter-balanced draws attention to the many practical features to be found in the Consul which certainly cannot be criticized on the ground that styling conflicts either with engineering or commonsense. A valuable minor item is an ability to unlock both front doors, either of which can be previously sealed from the inside by the driver; and a major attraction is the visibility conferred by the full width rear window, the equally wide windscreen, and the combination of low scuttle with falling bonnet line.

The indentation in the bonnet top to match the scuttle air intake is attractive, the prominence of the front wings helps to position the car on the road and the large rear-view mirror gives the driver a commanding view of what is behind him.

Carriage of personal effects is well taken care of by a cubbyhole on the facia, of which the door has to be locked to maintain it in position, and by an open parcel shelf placed immediately below it. Relatively large objects may be placed upon a broad shelf between the rear seat and the bottom edge of the sweeping rear window.



**INTERIOR** design is harmonious and sensible, instruments being easy to read and hand controls easy to reach, but pendant clutch and brake pedals do not mate well with a low, organ-type throttle pedal, and the driving position could be made more comfortable.

### In Brief

Price: £520 plus purchase tax £261 7s. Od. equals £781 7s. Od.
Capacity ... .. 1,702 c.c.
Unladen kerb weight ... 22 cwt.
Fuel consumption ... .. 22.1 m.p.g.
Maximum speed ... .. 79.3 m.p.h.
"Maximile" speed ... .. 77.6 m.p.h.
Maximum top gear gradient 1 in 10.6
Acceleration:
10-30 m.p.h. in top ... 11.1 sec.
0-50 m.p.h. through gears 14.8 sec.
Gearing: 16.6 m.p.h. in top at 1,000 r.p.m.;
31.8 m.p.h. at 1,000 ft. per min. piston speed.

## The Ford Consul



**REVERSING and parking are simple when such a large rear window is allied to prominent wings. The petrol filler lies behind the spring-loaded number-plate.**

The interior ventilation is highly efficient and easily controlled. A lever moving in a horizontal plane beneath the fascia panel to the left of the centre-line of the car determines the distribution of the incoming air, from all to the body to the opposite extreme of all to the slots at the base of the windscreen. A similar lever placed right of the centre-line of the car controls air temperature from cold to hot with the option of bringing in the booster fan at either end of the scale to supplement the ram effect which normally suffices when travelling at over 30 m.p.h. There are large and rigidly mounted ashtrays, the switches are clearly distinguishable and quickly accessible, and although the instruments may easily be read at night they do not promote dazzle or reflection.

Less praiseworthy is the hinged and sprung rear number plate. This conceals the petrol filler but is apt to graze the skin of the petrol-pump attendant; the steering wheel is too close to the seat even when the latter is put right back, and the position of the pedals brings them rather high from the floor and prevents immediate transfer of the right foot from the accelerator to the brake. The driving position as an entity was in fact commented upon unfavourably by most people who drove the car, and tall men might experience real difficulty in comfortably accommodating themselves.

### Praiseworthy Performance

We need not speak in great detail about the performance of the car since the figures speak for themselves. They present a closer analogue to the earlier Zephyr than to the preceding Consul; in fact the maximum speed and 0-50 m.p.h. acceleration figures are almost exactly the same as those recorded on the earlier 6-cylinder types.

**AMPLEY WIDE, the bench seats can each carry three people, and the front-hinged doors swing open to a usefully wide angle. Trim and fittings are well designed.**

Compared to the Mark I Consul, the top-gear acceleration and hill climbing show no major improvement, but the latest car is, of course, considerably larger and roomier (although interestingly enough only 25 lb. heavier), and is also appreciably higher geared, engine speed at 60 m.p.h. having been reduced from 4,000 r.p.m. to 3,600 r.p.m.

Although the Consul will reach maximum, and sustain cruising speeds, equivalent to those put up by many 6-cylinder models of greater engine size, it is idle to expect any 4-cylinder engine above 1 1/2-litres swept volume to compare with a six in quietness and smoothness. From the vibration point of view the best that the designer can do for the four is to choose the point in the speed range where its obtrusiveness will be least unwelcome, and on the Ford this is between 15 and 25 m.p.h. The power unit becomes progressively quieter and sweeter up to 50-55 m.p.h., after which smoothness is maintained, but there is naturally a steadily increasing awareness of the engine from the noise point of view. Indeed, the car cannot lay claim to high standards of quietness although it may well be that some of the squeaks and rattles present on the test model (notably one caused by insufficient clearance between the exhaust pipe and the petrol tank) will be eliminated with greater production experience.

These minor defects were of little account compared to the high performance of the car which sweeps along at between 60 and 70 m.p.h. in such a manner that excellent average speeds can be put up. Matching this high cruising speed are the brakes. These show an average relation of stopping power to pedal pressure but have an unusually large figure of sq. in. per laden ton which gives them stability when used hard and frequently, and an ability to be run for well over 2,000 miles without adjustment even with the driving normal to *The Motor* road test. They are free of the modern vices of squeak or judder and, with an exception that will be mentioned later, can be given full marks.

The suspension system also merits high praise under two conditions frequently experienced. On smooth main roads cornering power is good and the roll angle by no means excessive. Hence there need be but little diminution in cruising speed on sinuous sections, although passengers may complain that the side forces to which they are exposed are difficult to resist owing to a complete absence of armrests or hand grips. In the opposite extreme of really rough roads the Consul springing system has exceptional merit, for really large bumps are swallowed up as if by magic and with big wheel motions the damping is highly effective. But on fast wavy surfaces there is a good deal of undamped vertical



**Contd.**

motion and although this does not degenerate into pitch it can have an adverse effect upon the mind and digestion of the passengers.

**Contrasts in Control**

The steering, as distinct from the cornering, also has varying degrees of merit. The turning circle is satisfactorily small, the castor return action from large angles of lock is good without excessive turning effort, and all road irregularities are damped out. The car is stable at speed on

a degree of skill. Similarly, on wet roads the front wheels lock first in an emergency and although the car always goes straight on, which is sometimes desirable, steering power is lost. Lastly, comment may be aroused by the fuel consumption figure, which is about the same as that achieved by the earlier model of the Zephyr. It is therefore pertinent to point out that there is little difference between the engine output of the old Zephyr and the new Consul; the maximum speed and all-round performance of the cars are almost identical; and the Consul has a wider, roomier body with the same wind resistance. In these contexts the swept volume of the engine

**REALLY large quantities of luggage can be swallowed by the boot even though the spare wheel is accommodated therein. The lid is counterbalanced and swings well out of the way when opened.**

the straight, partly by reason of an internal damping in the mechanism when at the neutral point. This can be irritating at low speeds and in traffic as it makes it difficult to steer the car within an inch or two sideways and thus causes the driver to hesitate to pass between two objects when the clearance is only three or four inches above the full width of the Ford.

When the roads are wet the normally welcome pronounced under-steering of the car is less desirable, and one may also experience unexpected loss of adhesion by the rear wheels. So if good speeds are to be maintained over slippery road surfaces the driver must be alert and able to exercise

is largely irrelevant, for fuel consumption is determined by the work done during the day. It follows that those drivers who deny themselves enjoyment of the outstanding performance offered by the Consul can claim a reward in improved fuel consumption.

Summing up, the new Ford Consul offers outstanding value for money. For substantially under £800 (with British purchase tax included) it offers the buyer a combination of highly attractive appearance, exceptional spaciousness, excellent visibility, comfort, performance and practical features which places it in the front rank of British volume production cars.

**Mechanical Specification**

**Coachwork and Equipment**

- 1, Fuel gauge. 2, Oil pressure warning light.
- 3, Speedometer. 4, Headlight main beam indicator.
- 5, Dynamo charge warning light.
- 6, Water temperature gauge. 7, Heater selector, interior or screen (slide sideways).
- 8, Heater temperature control and fan (slide sideways).
- 9, Radio controls.
- 10, Hand-brake (pull).
- 11, Ignition and starter switch.
- 12, Choke control (pull).
- 13, Direction indicator warning lights.
- 14, Light switch (turn for side, pull for head).
- 15, Windscreen wiper control (twist).
- 16, Bonnet release.
- 17, Direction indicator switch.
- 18, Horn button.
- 19, Dip switch.

