

CAR *and* **DRIVER**

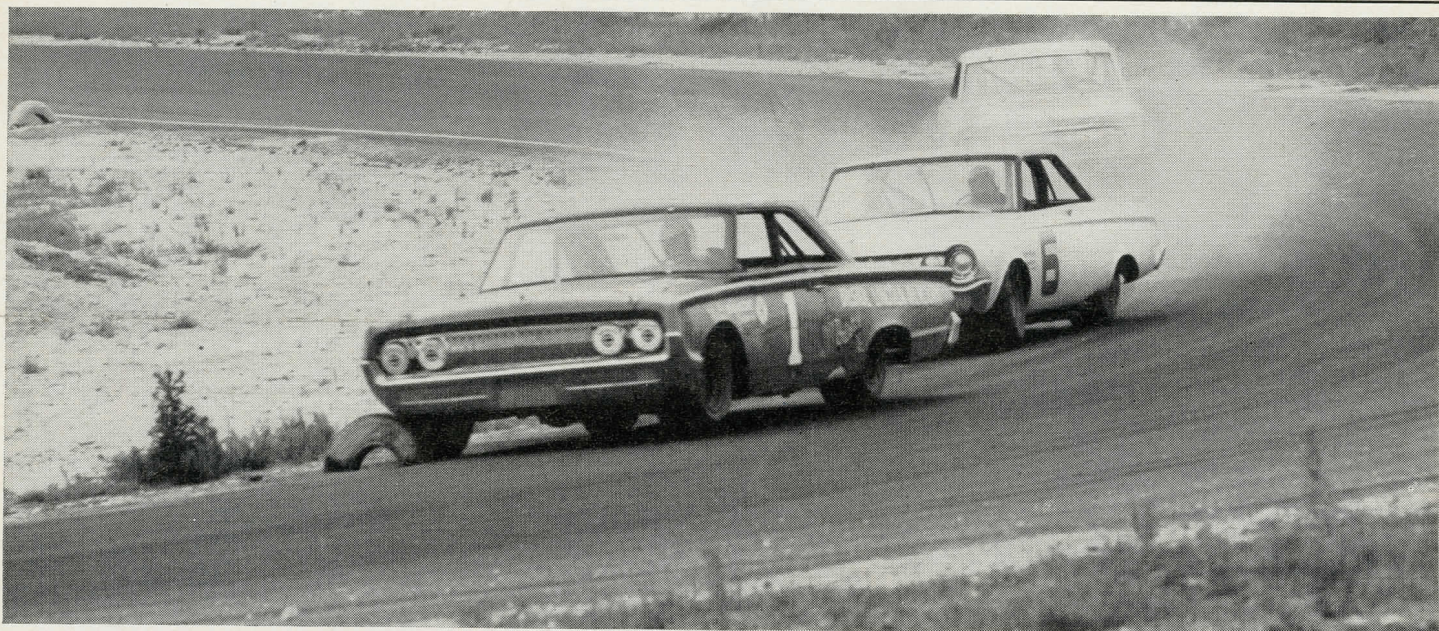
NOVEMBER 1964 • 50 CENTS

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***SUNBEAM PLUS FORD EQUALS FLYING TIGER
WE TRY STOCK CAR RACING: IT'S TOO MUCH!
NEW RACING PICTORIAL SECTION, PAGE 63***



A NOSTALGIC LOOK AT THE GREAT GULLWING — PAGE 44



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Editor and Publisher David E. Davis, Jr.

Managing Editor Brock Yates

Art Director Gene Butera

Associate Editors Steve Smith, Gordon H. Jennings; Technical Editor Jan P. Norbye; Asst. Art Director, Noel Werrett; Art Associate William Galbreath, Editorial Assistants Hazel Crombie, Eleanor Wachter; European Editor David Phipps; Contributing Editors Pete Coltrin, Robert Cumberford, Denise McCluggage, Warren Weith, Stephen F. Wilder; Staff Artists Paul Coker, Ken Dallison, T. E. Fornander, C. O. LaTourette; Staff Photographers Tom Burnside, Irv Dolin, James V. Elmore, Dave Gittens, Julius Weitmann.

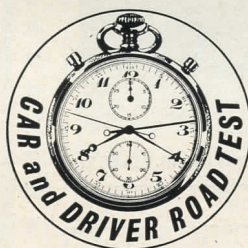
Advertising Director Lawrence Leins



This month's cover: It wasn't so very long ago that the Mercedes-Benz 300SL won the Mexican road race. What's become of the classic gullwing coupe? See the article beginning on page 44. Cover photo by Joe Skierski of Studio Place Photographic.

Next month's cover: What do YOU want for Christmas? If you're an enthusiast, chances are you'll find just the thing to give or receive in the special 16-page section of our annual accessory issue. Look for it on the newsstands November 19.

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PEUGEOT 404 CONVERTIBLE

French ideas on Grand Touring
include silence, economy
and long-distance comfort

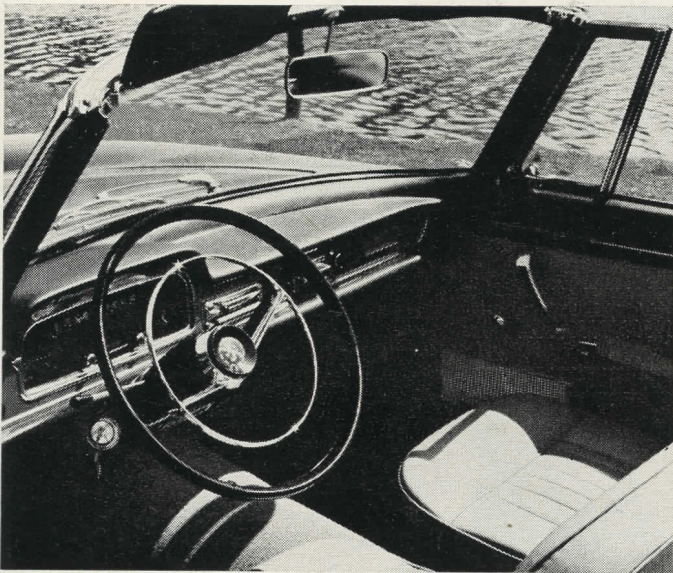
Sugar, spice and many standard parts are the ingredients of a "personal" car, a term originally coined by Ford for the Thunderbird. The Peugeot 404 Pininfarina-bodied convertible is a "personal" car, cut from production-line cloth, wrapped in a sleek special body, and a member of the same club as the VW Karmann-Ghia, the Renault Caravelle, and the Volvo P-1800. To all appearances, it may be expected to enjoy the same measure of success as its predecessors even though—or perhaps because—it is not a rip-snortin' sportin' machine.

The two-door convertible (or, optionally, hardtop) body, designed and built by Pininfarina, is handsome in the manner of a Fiat Spyder and every bit as robust and rattle-free as the regular 404 sedan. The soft top is easily coaxed up or down, fits tautly on its frame and is well sealed against wind and weather, making normal conversation possible up to 75 mph. The seating plan might be described as two-plus-two-plus, meaning that the two rear seats are more than occasional—adults are not unduly cramped and children will remain complacent about as long as they would in a Ford.

Another point of major departure from the normal 404 is the use of (German) Kugelfischer fuel injection on an otherwise virgin Peugeot engine, raising the power to 85 bhp from the stock 72 bhp. The injection really delivers what the Chevrolet billboards promise—Jet Smoothness—with remarkable silence. It brings

to mind the fuel-injected Maserati 3500-GT (May '62 C/D) which could pull away from a walking pace in top gear without faltering. With less than half the Maserati's displacement and two fewer cylinders, the Peugeot could not quite duplicate that trick, but it could accelerate from idle to over 60 mph in third gear. Top gear spans an 8.5-97 mph range.

This sort of flexibility can be had only with fuel injection (complexity being the only disadvantage) and it is unfortunate that the Kugelfischer system is not made optional on all 404s and 403s. The higher initial cost of fuel injection would eventually be paid off by the reduced fuel consumption; f.i. meters gasoline much more accurately and no fuel is wasted. On the overrun (using the engine as a brake), gas cut-off is complete, under part or full throttle the mixture is exactly controlled, and even when starting up in cold weather the pop-back "easy-start" button enriches the mixture only long enough to fire the engine. Driving fast on dry roads, the test car recorded 36-38 mpg and it was impossible to average less than 30 mpg, regardless of wheelspin, test runs, mountain or city driving.



PHOTOGRAPHY: STANLEY ROSENTHAL

To begin with, Peugeot will bring in the convertible 404 with carburetor engines, but we expect that the fuel injection version will be made available as soon as Peugeot dealers are ready to service it.

The most lasting impression given by the 404 convertible is its high level of refinement—a by-product of using a known, proved design as a basis for a special model. This refinement is most evident in the finish, which is flawless, and in the car's behavior: it accomplishes whatever is asked of it with little or no fuss.

During test-driving of the 404 convertible on all manner of Italian, Swiss and French roads, the silence and lack of vibration were particularly noteworthy. The springing is almost unbelievably good; no road-surface irregularities are transmitted to the occupants and the body lean is minimal in sharp corners. Steering into a high-speed bend, the car sets itself up at a moderate roll angle and simply tracks around.

The 404's handling eases perceptibly through neutral steer characteristics at sensible speeds to a final oversteer as the limits of prudence and adhesion are approached. The car is unusually stable while braking into a turn, but tighering a hairpin will get daylight under the inside rear wheel—the highest average speeds are maintained with all four wheels on the ground.

The drum brakes are large and fade-free; they decelerate the car swiftly and die-straight, even after hours of plummeting down Alpine passes with the

brakes warmed to a fare-thee-well. Moreover, the required pedal pressure remains moderate. On one occasion, a well-known sports car with four-wheel disc brakes was hard pressed to keep up with the 404's stopping ability; the competitor had problems with alternately locking brakes and darted in several different directions before being able to resume the normal line.

The hand-brake lever appears to be a hand-me-down from an earlier, less enlightened era: the pistol-grip handle is located too far forward, so that the driver must bend his nose to the steering wheel to grasp it. This position is not only awkward and undignified but also impossible to achieve when laced into a safety belt-harness (lap and over-the-shoulder).

The instrument panel is also straight out of the normal 404—with a speedometer of average legibility, no tachometer, a warning light rather than an oil-pressure gauge and no warning lights for choke or hand brake. The gas gauge, however, has a red light which flickers when the fuel level is getting low. Speedometer accuracy is above the average for the French industry.

From the 203 to the 403, Peugeot used an overdrive fourth gear. The 404 series has a new version of the same basic transmission, but with direct top. Because Peugeot was one of the first to adopt synchromesh for first gear (in 1954) it is doubly regrettable that the synchromesh quality of the 404 convertible is so poor; noiseless engagement of first gear is virtually impossible. Only if it is treated as a non-synchromesh affair—with courageous double-clutching—are good results consistently obtainable.

The column shift favored for so long by Peugeot is even more of an anomaly on the more sporting convertible. Although the transmission is four-speed, the shift pattern is exactly like that of an American three-speed manual column shift, but with the addition of the fourth gear hidden behind second (from third, move the lever to neutral, press forward and then up). Newcomers to the Peugeot 404 give the gearshift roughly the same achievement rating as the underwater basketweaving, but it's really not difficult, and one quickly gets used to it.

Thanks to the marvelous flexibility of the engine, the gear ratios constitute less of an irritation than might be expected. They are so widely spaced as to be more suitable for a station wagon or a pick-up truck where heavy loads, steep hills and slow speeds often make a low starting gear mandatory. All normal in-traffic work in the 404 convertible is done in third gear, with the smooth whir of the engine inaudible among the swarms of lighter-weights noisily trying to keep the pace the 404 maintains so easily.

The 404 convertible is an extremely pleasant car, giving much satisfaction and making very few demands—just sporty enough to give the faint-hearted pause, and still hold the interest of the hard-driving car fancier. Moreover, for Francophiles willing to overlook the originated-in-Italy bodywork, it is probably the best all-Gaul design to emerge from La Belle France since the much-lamented Delages, Delahayes, Talbots and Hotchkisses of prewar days.

The Lion of Belfort, which forms the centerpiece on the grille, is truly representative of the whole car, combining French inspiration with German precision, Swiss quality and Italian grace. The 404 sedan, at \$2645, is generally regarded as the pinnacle of value for money; the 404 convertible at \$3995 is less convincing on the score of economy. But five dollars short of four grand seems to be a popular price for high-grade European automobiles these days and if it's not an exorbitant price tag for the others, it's certainly justified for Peugeot.

C/D

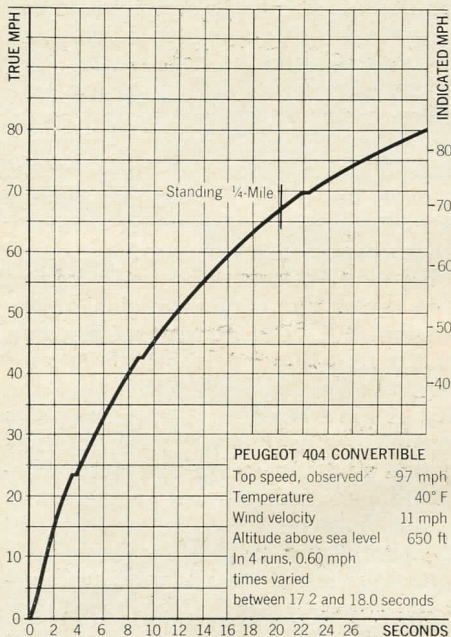
PEUGEOT 404 CONVERTIBLE

Importer: Peugeot Inc.
97-45 Queens Blvd.
Rego Park, New York.

Price as tested: \$3995 POE Boston,
Massachusetts.

ACCELERATION

	Seconds
Zero to	5.3
30 mph	7.8
40 mph	12.0
50 mph	17.4
60 mph	22.1
70 mph	33.0
80 mph	67 mph in 20.3
Standing 1/4-mile	



ENGINE

Water-cooled four-in-line, cast iron block, 5 main bearings
Bore x stroke 3.31 x 2.87 in, 84 x 73 mm
Displacement 98.7 cu in, 1618 cc
Compression ratio 8.8 to one
Carburetion Kugelfischer port-type injection
Valve gear Inclined overhead valves with pushrods and central rocker shaft
Power (SAE) 85 bhp @ 5500 rpm
Torque 102 lbs-ft @ 2800 rpm
Specific power output 0.86 bhp per cu in, 52.5 bhp per liter
Usable range of engine speeds 500-5500 rpm
Electrical system 12-volt, 55 amp-hr battery, 300 W generator
Fuel recommended Premium
Mileage 30-38 mpg
Range on 11-gallon tank 330-420 miles

DRIVE TRAIN

Clutch 8 1/4-inch single dry plate
Transmission, 4-speed all-synchromesh gearbox
mph/1000 Max
Gear Ratio Over-all rpm mph
Rev 4.32 17.28 -4.3 -23.6
1st 4.00 16.80 4.4 24.2
2nd 2.21 9.29 8.0 44.0
3rd 1.42 5.97 12.4 70.0
4th 1.00 4.20 17.7 97.0
5th
Final drive ratio 4.20 to one

CHASSIS

Unit-construction, all-steel structure.
Wheelbase 104.3 in
Track F 53.0 R 50.5 in
Length 176 in
Width 66.5 in
Height 56 in
Ground clearance 5.5 in
Dry weight 2375 lbs
Curb weight 2450 lbs
Test weight 2700 lbs
Weight distribution front/rear 56/44%
Pounds per bhp (test weight) 31.7
Suspension F Ind., MacPherson coil spring struts and lower wishbone, anti-roll bar.
R Rigid axle, torque tube and diagonal arms, vertical coil springs.
Brakes 11-in drums front and rear, 313.6 sq in swept area
Steering Rack and pinion
Turns, lock to lock 3 1/2
Turning circle 30 ft
Tires 165 x 380
Revs per mile 808

CHECK LIST

ENGINE

Starting Excellent
Response Good
Noise Excellent
Vibration Excellent

DRIVE TRAIN

Clutch action Good
Transmission linkage Poor
Synchromesh action Poor
Power-to-ground transmission Good

BRAKES

Response Good
Pedal pressure Very good
Fade resistance Very good
Smoothness Very good
Directional stability Very good

STEERING

Response Excellent
Accuracy Excellent
Feedback Fair
Road feel Excellent

SUSPENSION

Harshness control Very good
Roll stiffness Very good
Tracking Good
Pitch control Very good
Shock damping Very good

CONTROLS

Location Fair
Relationship Good
Small controls Excellent

INTERIOR

Visibility Good
Instrumentation Adequate
Lighting Excellent
Entry/exit Fair
Front seating comfort Good
Front seating room Excellent
Rear seating comfort Fair
Rear seating room Poor
Storage space Very good
Wind noise Excellent
Road noise Very good

WEATHER PROTECTION

Heater Good
Defroster Good
Ventilation Good
Weather sealing Good
Windshield wiper action Poor

QUALITY CONTROL

Materials, exterior Excellent
Materials, interior Very good
Exterior finish Very good
Interior finish Very good
Hardware and trim Excellent

GENERAL

Service accessibility Excellent
Luggage space Good
Bumper protection Fair
Exterior lighting Excellent
Resistance to crosswinds Good

