

## Ken and Janina Linfoot's Citroen.

This iconic and classic car is a beautiful 1974 Citroen DS23 Pallas IE Automatique, definitely a **Different Spirit** or **Distinctive Series**!

Founded in 1919 by André Citroën, the Citroën brand has a history marked by innovation and radical design, evolving from mass-produced cars to iconic models like the 2CV and DS, and eventually becoming part of the PSA Group (now Stellantis).

Citroens are still in production today and continue to remain in high demand.



This car was purchased in 2011 from Neil & Wendy Trotter in Port Macquarie.

It had been previously owned by Wayne Ellis, an architect working between Port Macquarie and Sydney. Wayne had put a lot of work into restoring the car which had been damaged in an accident in the Taree area in the late 1990s. He had purchased the damaged Citroen from Orchards Inspector Max Gowland who lived in Bathurst but who had made frequent trips to his future retirement home at Lake Cathie near Port Macquarie. Ellis arranged for an engine rebuild, the needed bodywork repairs, and personally renewed the upholstery and repainted the car. He had it back on the road again in 2000.



It is believed that Max Gowland from Bathurst had bought the car in Sydney in the mid-1980s and used it for work from his Bathurst home, visiting local fruit orchards in the Central West of NSW.... Gowland's name and Bathurst phone number were found inside one of the hubcaps, obviously written there for the finder in case the valuable hub cup was dislodged and lost whilst driving! Ironically, Ken was living in Bathurst at the time and had owned similar Citroens when Max had owned and was using Ken's present car in that very city!

Small world...probably waved to each other in passing!

The first years of this DS 23's life, from 1974 to the time of Max Gowland's ownership, are not known but Ken knew it was imported to Australia in 1974 by the then Citco organisation in Glebe, Sydney. Ken even has a copy of the original invoice to Citco from the Citroen factory in Paris, showing a wholesale cost to Citco of 24,469 French francs (approx \$5000 Australian) in 1974! At the time the retail cost was between \$8 and \$9000.

The odometer on these cars shows up to 99,999 kms then turns back to zero. Records show 29,000 kms on the odometer around the year 2000 when the car was re-registered after its accident repairs and the engine was rebuilt. Given that the car was then 26 years old, that reading must have been at least the second, perhaps third time around. When Ken purchased the car in 2011, the odometer showed around 53,000 kms but has now in 2025 passed zero again and reads just over 2,000 kms.

In the light of all of this, Ken believes the car has travelled around 302,000 kms and possibly 402,000.

Early shot.



The car's major renovation was undertaken in 1999 by Thoroughbred Car Restorations of Kendall, NSW.

A rebuilt automatic transmission in 2016 was supplied by Jim David Automatics, Girraween NSW

The repaint of the whole body was performed by Harry's Restos, Mt Druitt

All regular service & maintenance had been performed by European Autocare, Penrith until their recent closure.





Engine capacity is 2347 ccs and develops 141 bhp.

Engine is fuel injected using the Bosch D Jetronic system.

Engine had a major re-build in 1999 which involved new liners and a crankshaft re-grind.

Engine is a Citroen DX5

Engine and chassis numbers are original and match the numbers shown on the vehicle chassis. This car is of unique design and was created by Italian sculptor Bertoni, with the aim of giving the car maximum aerodynamic efficiency.

Citroen engineers developed a suspension system not based on metal springs but on hydraulic connections between wheel movements, and for each wheel a spherical chamber containing nitrogen gas to cushion the shock transferred from the wheels was fitted. The result of the system was the smoothest ride found in any car made to that time or since....a very effective independent suspension system indeed!

Another innovation was the inclusion of inboard disc brakes for the first time in a regular production car.

As can be seen Ken's DS23 has a sedan body, however there was a 2-door convertible body or cabriolet produced by the designer Chapron, in conjunction with Citroen.



A couple of topless versions.

Ken's DS23 has automatic transmission, adapting the Borg Warner 35 system, which was used in a number of car makes of the 1970s. It has inboard disc brakes on the front axles but uses drum brakes on rear wheels.



Picnic time at Wilberforce.



MCC run to Brooklyn.

The DS 23 is a beautiful car to drive, giving direct steering, a floating sensation over most road surfaces, impeccable light touch braking and independent suspension which prevents shock from uneven road surfaces transferring to other wheels. Very soft upholstery reinforces the smooth ride. Road holding is excellent under all conditions, especially on rougher roads. Under hard cornering, there is a tendency to understeer though this is easily corrected.



Air conditioning was fitted as an after-market “extra” when the cars were sold. The cars do transfer some engine heat to the cabin which can become uncomfortable in our hot summer days.

Maximum speed for the fuel injected models has been quoted at around 140 miles per hour, perhaps a little less for the automatic transmission models. These days, 100 kph is more realistic for what is now a 50 year-old car.

The Classic Car Register for the Citroen Car Club of NSW reports 57 D model Citroens on its books (1955-1975 models). The number of DS 23 Pallas EFI Automatique models would be rather less.



New FPR part recently fitted (**ref. Ramblings....Gnoo Blas!**)

If well maintained and serviced, the DS23 is quite reliable. In view of its age however, there is always the possibility of an ageing part unexpectedly failing. That has happened to the DS a couple of times over 14 years of ownership.



The DS is on Club registration with the Citroen Car Club of NSW. The car has made many trips around Sydney, as well as to Bathurst, Orange, Canberra, Tamworth and frequent outings with MCC. It is planned to drive the DS23 to the National meeting of the Australian Citroen Car Clubs to be held in Maryborough Queensland in May of this year (2025).

### **RACING PEDIGREE.**

**These vehicles were certainly a force to be reckoned with in their racing days!**



1960s...Monte Carlo Rally.

Forest Elbow Mount Panorama.



And no slouch indeed on Conrod straight!

The DS Citroen has won numerous awards from auto associations and best known car magazines internationally as “the most innovative...”, “the most beautiful...”, “the car ahead of its time”, and so on but of more interest for Ken has been its success in motor rallies. It scored well in the Monte Carlo rally of the 1960s.

It was famously leading the London to Sydney World Cup rally in 1968 by a huge margin, until a spectator car drove into it in a supposedly closed bush road between Canberra and Nowra.

And more recently, a Citroen DS was a rally leader into Paris in a 2013 re-enactment of the Peking to Paris rally ultimately winning 3<sup>rd</sup> place. That car was entered by a team from Tasmania where the car now remains. The list of rally achievements in the 60s and 70s and in more recent re-enactments is legendary!

## OTHER ESCAPADES!



As a young driver in the 1960s, Ken was introduced to the D series Citroen by a family member who took him on a long weekend drive over some of the roughest unsealed roads in the state at that time. He was impressed not only by the car's smooth suspension but its rock-solid road holding and stability at high speeds over those rough unsealed roads. Equally impressive was the reassuring braking, especially at high speeds on rough roads, where the car always stopped straight and quickly. It was these characteristics that first drew Ken to the D series Citroen rather than its styling. But in time, its reputation as one of the most beautiful cars ever produced has come to be appreciated.

Story has it that there is also a 2CV in the family!

And finally after a hard day at the office....



Many thanks for the info Ken and Janina.

Phil Gordon.