**Daimler V8 Saloon – buying tips**

You could almost write this guide with one word –RUST! But before we discuss that, let’s look at the derivation of the Daimler V8 saloon.

Jaguar launched the Mark I in 1955. It was a very advanced car of monocoque construction, with very modern styling and six cylinder engines of 2.4 & 3.4

litre capacities. It was in production until 1959, by which time, nearly 40,000 had been sold.

Enter the Mark II. This had larger windows and a wider rear track plus the option of a 3.8 litre engine. Although the styles were very similar, most body panels were different. An abundance of exterior chrome work was matched by a plentiful supply of wood veneered surfaces inside.

In 1962, the Daimler 2.5 litre V8 was introduced. It featured a fluted grille, split bench front seats with armrests, automatic transmission and a power steering option. In 1967 a manual version was offered just before the September 1967 facelift. Narrow bumpers and a reduction in interior wood were offset by the standardisation of reclining seats, power steering and an alternator. On balance, I believe that the 1967 facelift was positive for the Daimler Saloon and that the face lifted cars appear more modern.

So what should you look for when buying a Daimler Saloon? Firstly bear in mind that only around 18,000 Daimlers were made and of these, only less than 5,000 were the face lifted version. Although Daimler bumpers are interchangeable with Jaguar ones, it is becoming difficult to source the narrow versions and this probably applies equally to overriders.

Very few examples will have got through life without attention, especially to the bodywork. It is worth pulling back the carpets along the sill to see whether there is any wiring running under the carpet. It should run through the sill so if it is under the carpet, you know the sills have been replaced or badly repaired and the loom through the sills has been damaged. The sills are particularly vulnerable to corrosion and it is important to ensure the inner and outer sills are in good order. So probe around and make sure you know of any corrosion that exists. Look carefully at the front arches, front lower apron, sidelight pods, front crossmember crows foot, jacking points and around the lower rear panels particularly around the back of the fuel tank. Examine the inner rear arches – there is a seam that rusts badly from behind the rear seat to the bottom of the boot floor.

The lower portions of all four doors are vulnerable to corrosion as indeed is the boot (trunk) lid and the bodywork at the bottom of the radiator grille. Under the bonnet (hood), the inner wing panels can flex and rupture around the hinges. Look inside the boot and the fuel filler for rust then get under the car and probe for weaknesses. Clearly a ramp is useful as it is very difficult to do this thoroughly on a vendor’s drive.

Most Daimlers are automatic – from April 1964 they incorporate D1/D2 controls.

The Borg Warner type 35 is a 3 speed and is mated to a 4.27:1 final drive (4.55 on manual transmission.) The result is a box that shifts relatively smoothly by today’s standards but is a little breathless on Motorways. This is easily solved by installing a 3.54:1 axle which gives you a comfortable 25mph per 1000 rpm and makes 70mph cruising a pleasure. The 2.5 litre engine has plenty of torque low down and this makes the lower (numerical) ratio effortless.

Suspension is durable but wears out in time. I see many Saloons that are riding

an inch low and basically need new springs and dampers. Conversely, there are also cars that have had too hard a spring fitted at the rear and sit up high!

Manual steering has been described as a test of manhood. P.A.S is highly desirable and if it has not been fitted, you will probably want it. There are electronic rack and pinion systems on offer but my experience with these has not been one hundred percent. Likewise you can add systems from newer Jaguars but this is not exactly straightforward. Or you can try and source an original system but these are becoming hard to find and difficult to service. I am currently experimenting with P.A.S alternatives and hope to have a recommendation shortly.

The door handles, rear light plinths and reversing light surround are all made

from Mazac and tend to pit in service. Depending on the extent of the pitting,

rechroming can be possible but, if not, replacement is expensive.

The interior is leather and there is a lot of it – so it is expensive. There is also a lot of wood, which will probably need attention, and re-veneering is also expensive. The same goes for chrome. There is a lot of it on a Daimler Saloon, particularly the early models with wide bumpers, and it is expensive to refurbish. So before you buy, get a good idea of restoration costs

The engine is straightforward. It has good longevity and performs well. Repairs

can be expensive however as an eight cylinder engine inevitably costs more than

a six to rebuild. Likewise the BW35 gearbox will probably need specialist

attention if it is not performing to standard. This can be costly so try before you

buy. And look out for slow changes and snatching.

In summary the Daimler Saloon is a beautiful car. It is tranquil and reassuring

and handles better than the 6 cylinder models due to its weight distribution. Daimler prices are below Jaguar but are starting to climb as people realise the worth of the Daimler.

Chassis numbers start at 1A1001 for RHD and 1A20001 for LHD. The 1967

facelift models start at 1K1001 and 1K30001 respectively