

CITROEN DS 19M



1963 Citroën DS 19 restored

Earth was invaded in October 1955 when the otherworldly Citroën DS 19 made its debut at the Paris Motor Show. The DS was a large and luxurious saloon, with a front-midengine, front-drive layout. The spacecraft-like fuselage was shaped of removable/repairable aluminum panels and a fiberglass top. The car fairly bristled with innovation, including the famous hydropneumatic self-leveling suspension. Basically it's a French low rider.

The Citroën DS is technically unsurpassed, completely inimitable and is a contender for the most beautiful car of all time. Years after its introduction at the Paris Auto Show, the futuristic, perfectly Gallic Citroën DS 19 retains the ability to wow.

The DS was the most technically gifted automobile of its time and the most quintessentially modern, in that it scorned all that was familiar in prewar design—big, exposed wheels, low roofs, strong shoulders and commanding chrome grilles—in favour of something utterly new, at least outside the realm of pulp science fiction.

The DS was a front-mid-engine, front-wheel-drive car with rear wheels closer together than at the front, allowing its sleek, tapering bobtail. The rears are enclosed in prim fender spats and, above, the remarkable panoramic greenhouse and fiberglass roof. The DS was a blaze of unorthodoxy and prescient human-factors design: The distinctive one-spoke steering wheel; the trendsetting

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multidirectional air vents, directed by little wands with plastic knobs; the turn signals located in chrome nacelles fixed to the roof for better visibility.

Sculptor and designer Flaminio Bertoni and aviation engineer Andre Lefebvre had been working on the design at Citroën even before World War II, but the DS was a pure product of the moment. While many cars evoked aeronautic forms—the Rocket Age wonderments of GM or Ghia-bodied Chryslers—the DS is the only car that ever looked like it could fly.

The soul of the DS is in its hovercraft-like stance, attainable thanks to the hydro-pneumatic self-leveling independent suspension, designed by Paul Mages. This complex suspension of hydraulics and pressurized nitrogen, held in the car's distinctive spherical accumulators, was also what gave the DS its uncanny, gliding ride.

The French structuralist Roland Barthes wrote that it was “obvious” the DS had “fallen from the sky.” But you couldn't call it avant-garde because nobody, not even Citroën, followed in the DS's conceptual path. Even though Citroën built and sold about 1.5 million of the cars, the DS remains a kind of a one-and-done, design-wise. In a 2009 poll of top automotive designers, Classic & Sports Car magazine declared the DS “The Most Beautiful Car of All Time.”

The rack and pinion steering is firm and reasonably keen for a vintage car. The Citroën's body rolls with nautical dignity, well damped, while floating above the busily pumping wheels. Obviously, the DS was designed to conquer the vast straight-aheads and is less composed with a lot of steering dialed in. But once at highway speeds, the Citroën rolls out the magic carpet. The seats are royal, the ride sublime. Few modern cars, maybe none, are as splendidly comfortable as the DS.

Our example comes from the South of France where she received a restoration a while ago. Everything is working in perfect order and she is looking stunning in her divine grey/red combination. Please contact us for more pictures, videos, a test drive or a zoom call. Or if you are nearby the east of Belgium, close to the Dutch and German border, please stop by.

Brand: Citroen

Type: DS 19M

Engine: 1911 cc weber carburator 83 hp

Year: 1963

Transmission: 4 speed manual

Mileage: 84.616 km

Exterior: Grey

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Interior: Red

Price: Sold

