

Classic Choice



MINOR MIRACLE: Trustiest of post-war saloons

Great odds on an old favourite

IF AN award were ever given for Britain's most fondly remembered family car, it would have to go to the Morris Minor.

It started life just after the war as an austere, dingily-coloured little saloon and lasted through a variety of models until the beginning of the Seventies.

Aimed at the motorist who cared more for room and reliability than for high technology, the Minor built itself a remarkable reputation for trustworthiness. Its simple design and zesty engine also made the car fun to drive... as long as you didn't mind a slow take-off.

By the end of 1960, Minor production reached its first million. As well as saloons, buyers could take their choice of a two-door, wooden-framed estate called the Traveller (affectionately known as the Tudor cottage) and a two-door, four-seater convertible.

TIPS FOR BUYERS

BODY rust is the bugbear of all Minors. Even though they were less prone to it than many of

their contemporaries, no car of that era was well protected from road salt.

Mechanically, Minors are sturdy, and a simple repair proposition for either the local garage man or the DIY enthusiast.

Parts, including those for the body and chassis, are easy to find... not least because of the efforts of Charles Ware of The Morris Minor Centre, Bath, who refurbishes Minors and is starting to make new body spares in a factory in Sri Lanka.

Today, prices start at about £500 for a runner. Reliable saloons are nearer £2,000, while really well-kept, low-mileage versions can command as much as £4,000. Travellers and Convertibles don't start cheaply, and peak at £1,000 to £2,000 higher. A Charles Ware Minor, rebuilt and gently modernised, can cost £10,000.

Buyers who plan to use their cars every day would be wise to go for the post-1962 Minor.

It is equipped with an enlarged 1100 cc, 48 bhp engine, bigger brakes and a higher overall gearing for better cruising, yet fuel consumption remains in the 35 mpg-plus region.