

VAUXHALL CRESTA

WHILE not entirely new from the drawing-board stage onward, the latest Vauxhall Velox and Cresta are very different from their predecessors; they confirm the change in Vauxhall policy indicated by the earlier introduction of the Victor. The old Wyvern, Velox and Cresta are now superseded, but instead of another trio all with similar body dimensions, the four-seater 1½-litre Victor has taken over from the Wyvern, while the larger, six-seater Velox and Cresta replace their namesakes.

The six-cylinder 2,262 c.c. engine is similar to that used in the earlier cars, but it incorporates a number of improvements (the modified engine, incidentally, was fitted to some of the last examples of the previous models). Individual ports replace the Siamese type, and there is a higher compression ratio and larger valves. The better flow of mixture and exhaust gases have improved power output throughout the speed range. The increase in b.h.p. is gradual up to about 2,500 r.p.m., after which the latest engine leaves the old one behind in power output. Although torque is also better, the maximum is now at even lower r.p.m., making the car exceptionally flexible. The Zenith carburettor incorporates an automatic choke which adjusts itself to engine requirements after a cold start, subsequently being put out of action very smoothly by thermostatic control. The body is completely new.

A Cresta is the subject of this Road Test, but potential buyers of the lower-priced Velox may assume that in the matter of performance the cars should be as identical in their achievements as any quantity-produced units can be. The Cresta is distinguished from its sister by application of the de luxe treatment. The stainless steel above the waistline is polished instead of painted as on the Velox, and the car has stainless steel hub plates instead of the chromium-plated units used on the Velox. Two-colour paintwork also helps to identify the more expensive model. Standard equipment on the Cresta—which is available at extra cost for the Velox—includes heater-defroster, automatic interior light switches in the rear door jambs as well as at the front, a windscreen washer, and full diameter wheel discs. A wide range of colour combinations is available for the Cresta, and upholstery of leather, Elastofab

The new Cresta has a smooth shape. The traditional Vauxhall flute is now a decorative moulding of dished section running the full length of each side. The divided rear window is of similar proportions to the wrap-round screen (above). The head lamps are neatly cowed, and the front bumper wraps round the corners

or of nylon with Elastofab, is offered to customers' choice.

The new cars set out to be comfortable six-seaters, and succeed in their quest. Compared with previous models, front seating width is up by inches, and another important inch has been added to the fore-and-aft measurement of the front seat, giving better support for the thighs. The upholstery, with leather covering in red and black on the car tested, is very comfortable. The front seat now has an extra two inches clearance beneath the steering-wheel rim, which helps to aid entry and exit, but shorter drivers found during the test that this difference had the effect of bringing the top of the wheel slightly into the line of vision.

Leg room is little changed. The range of front seat adjustment is down from 5in to 3in; in the central position the driver has 3in less distance from seat to pedals (2in allowing for the longer seat cushion), but rear seat passengers have an extra 1½in. In practice even a long-legged driver may be seated comfortably, although a little more room in the rear would be appreciated when the front seat is right back, and particularly when three people occupy the compartment. However, despite this precise comparison with the earlier models, the essential fact remains



The rear wings have small fins terminating in the winking indicators, which are visible to the driver. Below these are the large oval assemblies for tail and brake lights



Vauxhall Cresta . . .

that the latest Cresta is not in the least cramped for six people of average height and girth.

In spite of the increase in size, the car's weight is up by less than a hundredweight, and the performance is much improved, no doubt in part as a result of the reduced frontal area, with noticeably lower roof line. The exception in the data table is an increase in the time taken to reach 30 m.p.h. from a standing start. This is attributed to a rather slow clutch which, however, was delightfully smooth.

Times for orthodox standing start tests to various speeds beyond 30 m.p.h. show the particularly large improvement in the upper half of the speed range hinted at by the new engine characteristics and better body form. It is possible to reach 50 m.p.h. in 12.1sec compared with 12.8sec previously. With 18sec to 60 m.p.h. there is a gain of 1.7sec, which increases to 3.4sec with a time to 70 m.p.h. of 25.5. On the latest car it was practical to test up to 80 m.p.h., which gave a mean of 36.9sec. The time for the standing start quarter-mile was reduced from 21.2 to 20.8sec. All this is good, sound achievement, topped by a substantial increase in maximum speed. The Cresta reached a true 90 m.p.h. in one direction, making a two-way mean of 86.5 m.p.h. compared with 80.8 m.p.h. for the earlier car.

Coupled with the engine flexibility mentioned is the smooth character of the unit itself. There is little noise and no vibration except for a momentary mild roughness between about 67 to 72 m.p.h. The engine became perfectly smooth again by about 75 m.p.h., and although this speed is approaching the maximum, the impression was formed that it could be used for long distances without sign of stress. On the debit side there was a considerable increase in fuel consumption when the car was driven really hard. The m.p.g. in these circumstances went down to 19.3, compared with 22 for the earlier Cresta. However, in normal driving (23.5 m.p.g.) there was little difference, and the fast driving figure was balanced by a gain when cruising economically at speeds of about 45 m.p.h. Only the very fast driver would suffer in the matter of fuel, and he receives ample compensation in the extra acceleration and speed available.

The gear box, as in the Victor, has synchromesh on all three forward ratios. The steering column lever operates smoothly, although the travel through the gate between first

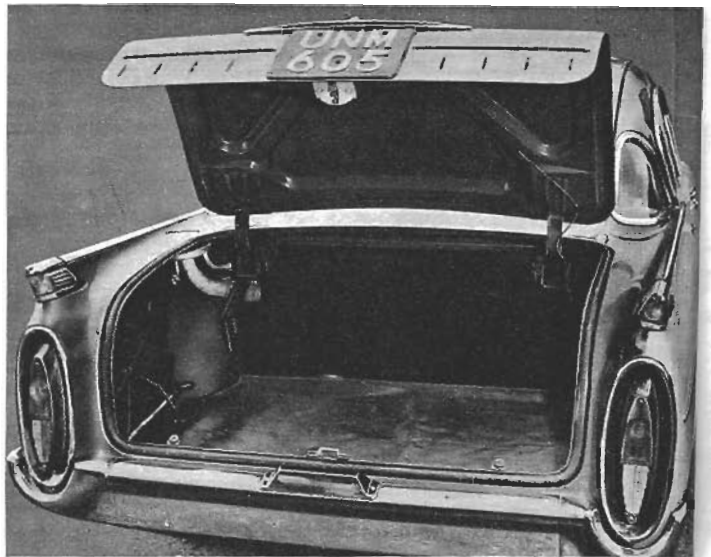
The spare wheel lies under the floor of the large luggage locker. The tools are clipped on the left. The box-like shape of the locker simplifies the stowage of orthodox suitcases and awkwardly shaped loads

and second might be reduced with advantage. Regardless of whether the car is stationary or not, there is no difficulty in engaging first gear, but the movement is a trifle notchy. During testing the synchromesh was never beaten, nor was appreciable difficulty encountered in engaging any gear, even though the total mileage of the car was but 3,000 when the car was received. It is possible that the slight roughness encountered when engaging first might be eliminated or at least reduced after further service.

First and second gears are not silent. Some noise on first is customary on most models, but the singing on the Cresta's middle ratio is more pronounced than that on the majority of its contemporaries. The sound itself is certainly not unpleasant, but it would be better that it should be absent. The gear change is quick, up or down.

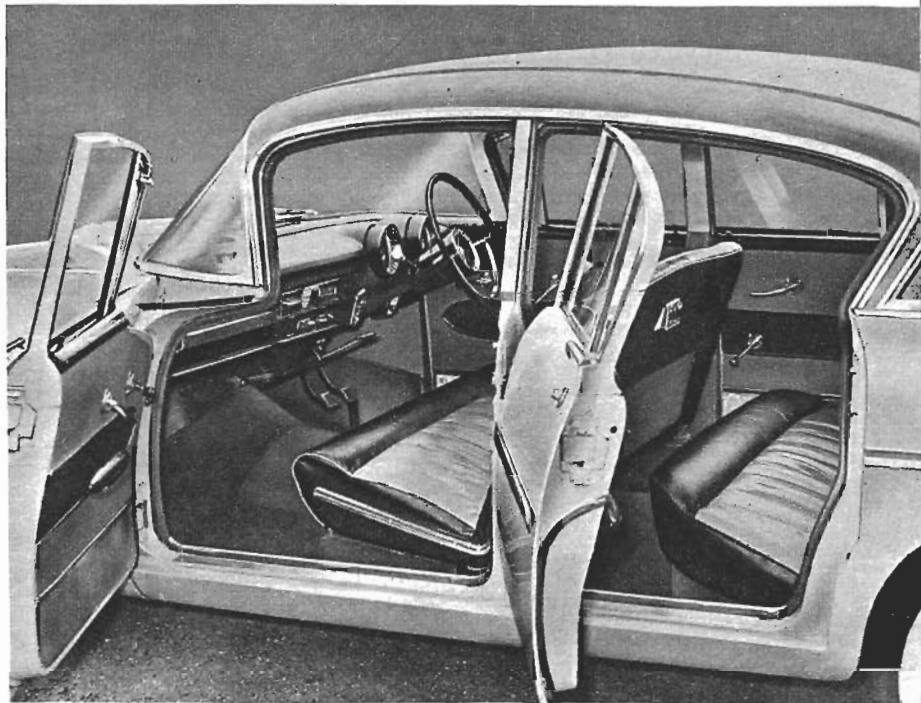
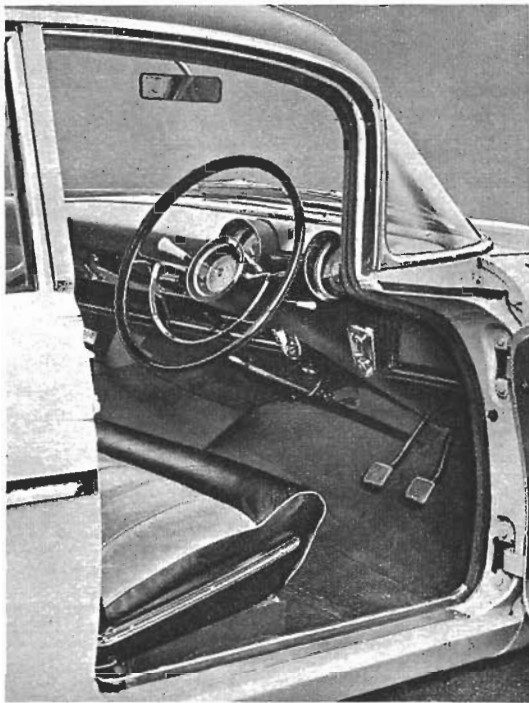
The steering is light at any speed; a woman driver would have no difficulty manoeuvring at car-park speeds. The 34½ft turning circle is tight in relation to the car's size. From one lock to the other nearly four turns of the wheel are required, with the result that there is a certain amount of unwanted winding on sharp bends taken quickly; yet, on balance, the majority of buyers would consider the compromise well selected.

Characteristics of the suspension are not quite so easy to define, for they do vary appreciably according to the speed and load carried. When the car is lightly laden the sus-



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Clearly lettered instruments are within cowl, directly in front of the driver. Below them are the minor controls. Entry to all seats, while by no means difficult, is affected at the front by the overhung windscreen and at the rear by the low roof-line

pension is a mite lively and, while smoothly surfaced bends may yet be taken very quickly, the characteristics change if bumps are encountered. There is a tendency then to float and for the tail to hop outwards. On flat surfaces there is very satisfactory adhesion, and a noticeable degree of understeer. When four or more people are carried, the stiffness of the suspension is overcome, and the stability on corners is further improved. With the car light or laden, the amount of roll is limited, the tyres beginning to slide in extreme conditions before the tilt of the seats becomes appreciable.

The ride is best when the car is fully laden and the speed is below 60 m.p.h., but even with only the driver on board it remains pitch-free and comfortable. When running light, cats' eyes and other imperfections in the road surface are more noticeable, as there is a fairly high level of damping. The car interior is not fully insulated from road noises, and when cruising with the windows open, there is also a mild background roar—not a drumming.

An increase has been made in brake lining area on the latest cars compared with that of their predecessors, with the result that the extra performance may be used without fear of brake deterioration. In exceptional conditions of hard driving, such as one might experience during a fast descent of an Alpine pass, the brakes will fade quite noticeably and the pedal pressures become heavy for only a limited effect. They do not pull to either side. The hand brake is of the pull-out-to-engage, twist-to-release type. It is not difficult to reach, and acts effectively and easily.

Although some of the minor controls are not ideally placed, the driving position will not be criticized by the great majority of owners. The lights switch is difficult to locate and operate quickly. This switch also controls the interior roof light, but in such fashion that the panel lighting must first be extinguished. The smart, modern instruments are grouped directly in front of the driver and are easy to read; the speedometer dial is a two-coloured band which swings round, increasing the proportion of amber to black as the road speed rises. The division between the amber and black moves steadily as speed alters, and gives a steady reading.

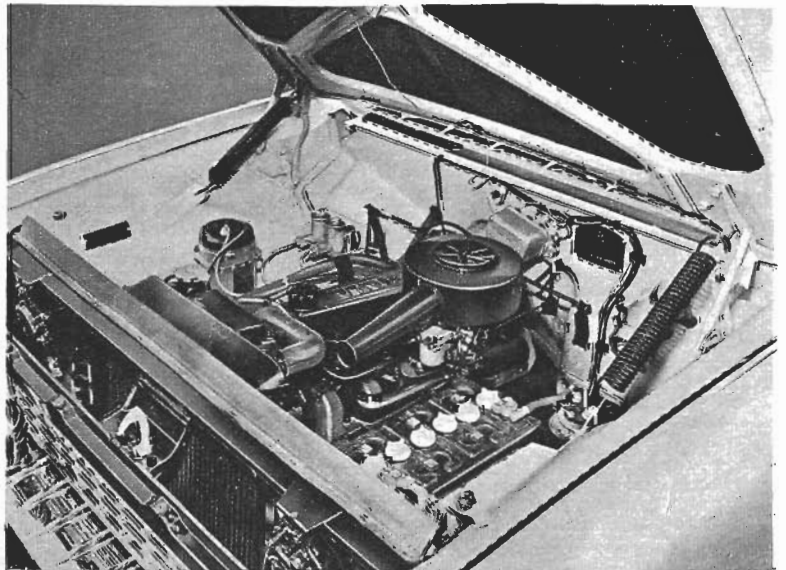
Through the panoramic windscreen there is good forward visibility, at the cost of narrow, awkwardly shaped swivelling ventilators rearward of each end of the screen. These have

catches whose operation calls for some dexterity. The windscreen wipers have two speeds, but leave a large proportion of the glass unwiped. Wind partially clears the curved ends.

There is a lockable glove compartment at the passenger side of the fascia and a smaller, open pocket for the driver; near the lockable compartment is a large pull-out ashtray. The heater has a two-speed fan, which is rather noisy, giving adequate warmth as far as could be judged in the weather prevailing during the test. The Vauxhall radio requires manual tuning and, while reception is average when the car is stationary or cruising gently, the performance is marginal. Its tone range is severely limited, and the volume may not be increased to match speed without distortion spoiling reception. On the Cresta the clock is fitted above the windscreen surround for all to see (but its controls could increase injuries in a collision).

The luggage locker is not only large but well shaped. It will take suitcases of orthodox shape. The lid must be opened with a key, but is self-locking when closed. The spare wheel is located in a compartment under the floor. To reach this entails moving any luggage which may be in

The six-cylinder engine remains similar in appearance to that used on the earlier model, but now has separate ports replacing the Siamese type. All components requiring regular servicing or checking are easy to reach. The unusually wide bonnet lid is spring-loaded



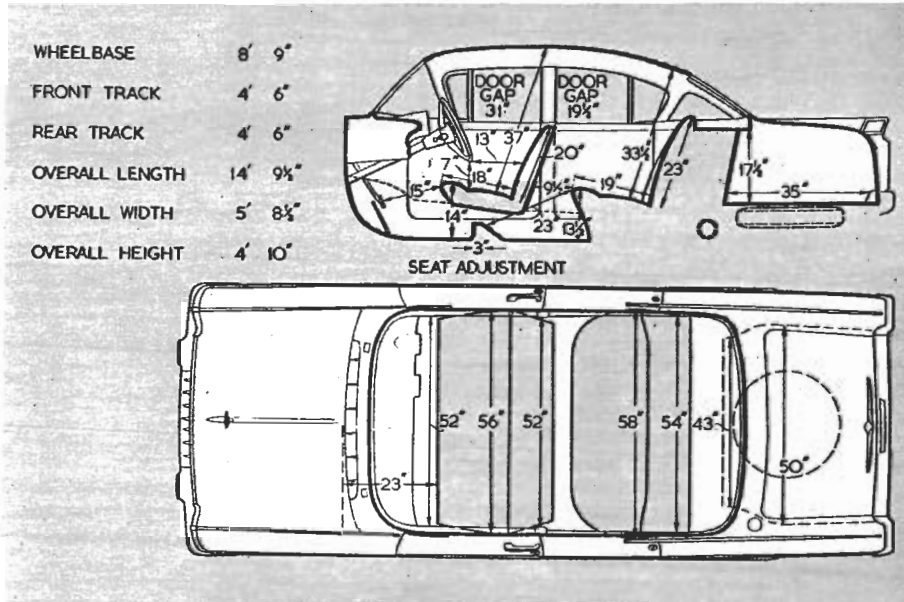
Vauxhall Cresta . . .

the locker. The latest Vauxhall Cresta—and Velox—caters for a wide international market. In spite of its long, low appearance, it will fit most garages. At a competitive price and with modern styling the car offers even more performance, size and passenger and luggage accommodation than most motorists really need—but which they so much like to have.

A clean profile is presented by the pair of new models, and the line of the sill is smoothly continued into the tail fins. Whitewall tyres cost extra



VAUXHALL CRESTA



Measurements in these 1/4 in to 1 ft scale body diagrams are taken with the driving seat in the central position of fore and aft adjustment and with the seat cushions uncompressed

PERFORMANCE

ACCELERATION: from constant speeds.

Speed Range, Gear Ratios and Time in sec.	4.1 to 1	6.7 to 1	11.8 to 1
M.P.H.	9.1	5.2	3.7
10—30 ..	8.2	5.0	—
20—40 ..	8.7	6.0	—
30—50 ..	9.5	—	—
40—60 ..	12.7	—	—
50—70 ..	18.9	—	—
60—80 ..	—	—	—

From rest through gears to:

M.P.H.	sec.
30 ..	5.1
50 ..	11.6
60 ..	18.0
70 ..	25.5
80 ..	36.9

SPEEDS ON GEARS:

Gear	M.P.H. (normal and max.)	K.P.H. (normal and max.)
Top ..	(mean) 86.5 (best) 90.0	139.2 144.8
2nd ..	44—56	70—88
1st ..	19—32	30—51

TRACTIVE RESISTANCE: 55 lb per ton at 10 M.P.H.

SPEEDOMETER CORRECTION: M.P.H.

Car speedometer	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
True Speed:	10	20	30	40	49	59	68	78	88

TRACTIVE EFFORT:

	Pull (lb per ton)	Equivalent Gradient
Top ..	235	1 in 9.5
Second ..	378	1 in 5.8

BRAKES: (from 30 M.P.H. in neutral):

Efficiency	Pedal Pressure (lb)
23 per cent	25
44 per cent	50
79 per cent	75
89 per cent	90

FUEL CONSUMPTION:
23.5 m.p.g. overall for 1162 miles. (12.0 litres per 100 km.)
Approximate normal range 19.5-32.0 m.p.g. (14.5-8.8 litres per 100 km.)
Fuel, Premium grade.

WEATHER: Diagonal breeze.
Air Temperature 43 deg F.
Acceleration figures are the means of several runs in opposite directions.
Tractive effort and resistance obtained by Tapley meter.
Model described in *The Autocar* of 4 October, 1957.

DATA

PRICE (basic), with saloon body, £715 0s 0d. British purchase tax, £358 17s. Total (in Great Britain), £1,073 17s 0d. Extras: Radio £20 15s 9d. Fog lamp £3 8s 6d. Glove box lamp 5s 9d. Under-bonnet lamp 12s 6d. (Prices include purchase tax where applicable.)

ENGINE: Capacity: 2,262 c.c. (138 cu in). Number of cylinders: 6. Bore and stroke: 79.4 x 76.2 mm (3.1 x 3.0in). Valve gear: o.h.v., pushrods. Compression ratio: 7.8 to 1. B.H.P.: 78 (nett) 82.5 (gross) at 4,400 r.p.m. (B.H.P. per ton laden 62.0). Torque: 124 lb ft at 1,800 r.p.m. M.P.H. per 1,000 r.p.m. on top gear, 17.7

WEIGHT: (with 5 gals fuel), 23 1/2 cwt (2,646lb). Weight distribution (per cent): F, 55.6; R, 44.4. Laden as tested: 26 1/2 cwt (2,982lb). Lb per c.c. (laden): 1.3.

BRAKES: Type: Lockheed. F, 2 L.S.; R, L and T. Method of operation: hydraulic. Drum dimensions: F, 9in diameter; 2.25in wide. R, 9in diameter; 1.75in wide. Lining area: F, 77.5 sq in. R, 60.25 sq in. (104 sq in per ton laden).

TYRES: 6.40—13in. Pressures (lb per sq in): F, 24; R, 24 (normal).

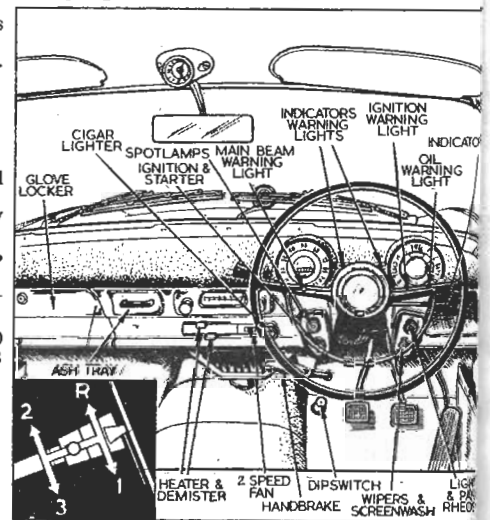
TANK CAPACITY: 10.8 Imperial gallons. Oil sump, 10.25 pints. Cooling system, 17 pints (including heater).

TURNING CIRCLE: 34ft 6in (L and R). Steering wheel turns (lock to lock): 3 1/2.

DIMENSIONS: Wheelbase: 8ft 9in. Track: F, 4ft 6in; R, 4ft 6in. Length (overall): 14ft 9 1/2in. Height: 4ft 9in. Width: 5ft 8 1/2in. Ground clearance: 6 1/2in. Frontal area: 20.1 sq ft (approximately).

ELECTRICAL SYSTEM: 12-volt; 53 ampere-hour battery. Head lights: Double dip; 36—42 watt bulbs.

SUSPENSION: Front, Independent, coil springs. Rear, Semi-elliptic.



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