

= Talbot Tagora =

The Talbot Tagora is an executive car developed by Chrysler Europe and produced by Peugeot Société Anonyme ( PSA ) . The Tagora was marketed under the Talbot marque after PSA took over Chrysler 's European operations in 1979 . PSA presented the first production vehicle in 1980 and launched it commercially in 1981 . The Tagora fell short of sales expectations , described as a " showroom flop " just a year after its launch , and PSA cancelled the model two years later . Fewer than 20 @, @ 000 Tagora models were built , all of them at the former Simca factory in Poissy , near Paris , France .

= = Development = =

Chrysler Europe began development of the Tagora in 1976 , under the code name C9 , with the goal of replacing the unsuccessful Chrysler 180 series . Following the same development pattern as with the Horizon and Alpine models , the responsibility for the Tagora 's technical development remained in France , while the styling was devised at Chrysler 's design centre in the United Kingdom . An early proposal for the name of the car was " Simca 2000 " .

= = = Design = = =

The original C9 prototype was a modern @-@ styled saloon with a low beltline and large interior dimensions made possible by the long @-@ wheelbase . The British design team initially proposed some stylistic features inspired by the Citroën SM , including a front glass panel between the headlights to accommodate the number plate , round front wheelarches and rear spats . However , Chrysler management in the United States deemed these features too extravagant , so the design of the C9 became more conventional : front and rear wheelarches were squared off and the spats lost , and the license plate was placed on the front bumper as on most cars . To better balance the tall silhouette , the beltline was raised . Over the course of development , the C9 also lost its vertical taillights in favour of more " fashionable " horizontal ones .

= = = Engine dilemma = = =

The main competitors in the executive vehicle market offered engines bigger than the biggest two @-@ litre straight @-@ 4 used by Chrysler Europe , and a six @-@ cylinder engine was generally expected . Consequently , the company had to seek a new engine for the Tagora . One candidate was a straight @-@ six manufactured by Mitsubishi , but it proved unsuitable for a car of this class . The other proposal was the Douvrin V6 engine ( the " PRV " ) , a joint development of PSA , Renault and Volvo . Since the Tagora would be in direct competition with PSA models that used the PRV , it seemed unlikely that Chrysler would be able to procure that engine .

= = = Sales projections = = =

Chrysler Corporation approved the development of the model on the assumption that Chrysler Europe would sell 60 @, @ 000 C9 models per year , which translated into a projected 5 percent share of the executive car market . This estimate seemed achievable because Chrysler had a 7 percent market share in Europe overall . The projected sales would have covered the car 's tooling costs , with the development costs accounted for separately , as part of an independent annual budget .

= = = PSA takeover = = =

During the development of the C9 , the management of the bankruptcy @-@ threatened Chrysler Corporation decided to divest itself of its debt @-@ ridden European operations . The buyer was the

French PSA Group , formed in 1976 after Peugeot took over Citroën . The deal was finalised in 1978 , in which the buyer paid US \$ 1 @. @ 00 for the entirety of Chrysler Europe and its obligations . The take @-@ over was effective as of 1 January 1979 .

While the C9 project was well advanced , PSA already had a crowded lineup in the large vehicle segment , including the legendary Citroën CX , the slow @-@ selling Peugeot 604 and the newly launched Peugeot 505 . Nevertheless , PSA decided to move forward with the C9 project , making a few significant changes that enabled the use of their own parts . The Simca double wishbone front suspension gave way to MacPherson struts adopted from the Peugeot 505 and 604 , and the rear axle was replaced with that of the 505 , much narrower than the one originally planned , as it was designed with respect to the 505 body width . The C9 front end was extended to accommodate the optional PRV engine : now that the model belonged to PSA , using the PRV presented no problems .

= = Short market life = =

Following the renaming of Chrysler Europe 's models to the Talbot marque , the C9 was christened the Talbot Tagora , and the first batch of cars rolled out of the former Simca plant in Poissy in 1980 . The same year , PSA presented the Tagora at the Salon de l 'Automobile in Paris . Following a hands @-@ on demonstration of the model to the press in Morocco in March 1981 , the car went on sale in France in April and in the United Kingdom in May . The British billboard advertising campaign boasted " The new Talbot Tagora . Luxury and performance redefined . "

The Tagora was priced to overlap with high @-@ end Peugeot 505 and low @-@ end Citroën CX models , while slotting in beneath the Peugeot 604 . Its pricing was also comparable to the Renault 20 / 30 and Ford Granada . The Tagora was in the 20 @, @ 000 ? 30 @, @ 000 Deutschmark bracket in Germany . During the first fifteen months of the car 's existence , in 1980 / 81 , a mere 16 @, @ 169 Tagoras were produced which was only one quarter of Chrysler 's initial projections . Sales proved insufficient even for this production level , and volumes plummeted by more than 80 percent in 1982 . In 1983 the sales figures prompted PSA to cancel the model altogether . By the time the Tagora was discontinued , only about 20 @, @ 000 had been built ; by comparison , over 116 @, @ 000 Peugeot 505s and 74 @, @ 000 Citroën CXs were made in 1981 alone .

In December 2010 , Practical Classics reported that 99 @. @ 09 percent of all UK @-@ registered Tagoras were no longer on the roads .

= = Powertrains and models = =

As with most large cars of its time , the Tagora was a rear @-@ wheel drive vehicle , with a longitudinally mounted engine . There were three engine choices , mated to four- and five @-@ speed manual transmissions or an optional three @-@ speed automatic in the case of the four @-@ cylinder engines .

The available models were :

2 @. @ 2 litre ( 2 @, @ 155 cc ) Type 180 OHC I4 , double @-@ barrel Solex carburettor , 115 metric horsepower ( 85 kW ) , 184 newton metres ( 136 lbf · ft ) .

The base engine was a version of the older Simca Type 180 2 @. @ 0 litre with increased displacement , as also featured in the Matra Murena . It was unrelated to either the American Chrysler K or PSA Douvrin 2 @. @ 2 litre engines . Available trim levels were designated GL and GLS . The GL was the only model to feature the four @-@ speed manual transmission , and have power steering as an option as opposed to standard . It was first to be dropped , for the 1983 model year .

2 @. @ 3 litre ( 2 @, @ 304 cc ) XD2S OHV turbodiesel I4 , 80 metric horsepower ( 59 kW ) , 188 newton metres ( 139 lbf · ft ) .

This Peugeot @-@ developed turbodiesel was primarily used in the Peugeot 505 and 604 . The diesel @-@ powered version of the Tagora was designated DT .

2 @. @ 7 litre ( 2 @, @ 664 cc ) PRV OHC V6 , two triple @-@ barrel Weber carburettors , 166

metric horsepower ( 122 kW ) , 234 newton metres ( 173 lbf · ft ) .

The V6 model , which was actually badged " 2 @. @ 6 " , came in the top SX trim level , loaded with extras , but was not available with automatic transmission . The PRV engine used in the Tagora was different from the one used in contemporary Peugeot vehicles in that it was fitted with triple @-@ barrel Weber carburettors rather than fuel injection , resulting in a higher power @-@ rating . This made it the most powerful French car of its time . Nevertheless , only 1 @, @ 083 V6 Tagora models were made .

= = = Tagora Présidence = = =

The Tagora Présidence was a concept car designed by stylist Sunny Atri at the Talbot design studio in Whitley , Coventry . The concept was created to generate interest in employing high @-@ end Tagoras as chauffeur @-@ driven limousines by users such as business executives and government officials . The donor model for the Présidence was the 2 @. @ 6 SX , which had an interior appointed with Connolly Leather upholstery and brass highlights , plus a host of electronics including a telephone , dictaphone , text @-@ message receiver , and television with VCR . Originally valued at £ 25 @, @ 000 , the Présidence now resides at a car museum in Poissy .

= = Critical appraisal = =

The Tagora was not greeted with much acclaim by the British motoring press . Autocar reviewed the Tagora in its 2 @. @ 2 litre GLS iteration , and summed it up as " excellent , if not a great advance " . L. J. K. Setright of Car magazine asked who could want one given the crowded market into which it came . Concluding a group test in Car , the Tagora was described as a " problematic newcomer " that did not exceed the standard set by the winner of the group test , the Volvo 244 GLE . However , Motor Sport considered the Tagora a " usefully effortless , uncomplicated , simple @-@ to @-@ drive and very comfortable car " .

The recurring theme of published tests was the Tagora ´ s lack of clear advantages or of a competitive edge . In comparing the car to its likely competitors , Autocar 's verdict was that " the new Talbot is highly comparable with the others , and deserves to sell as any of them , although it does not come out with any startling advantages which you might expect of the latest appearance on the scene " . Those cars against which the Tagora 2 @. @ 2 GLS was compared were the Ford Granada 2 @. @ 3 GL , Opel Rekord 2.0S , Renault 20TX , Rover 2300 and Volvo 244 GL . Of these cars , the Tagora was the second most expensive but did not have a superiority among the significant attributes of speed , acceleration , interior room or chassis design . Out of the comparison group the Tagora had the second highest top speed , was the third fastest to 60 mph though it had the best overall mpg ( by 0 @. @ 7 mpg ) . In terms of interior room , it had the fourth best legroom ( front / rear ) . Motor Sport also noted the car ´ s modest competence in comparison with the Rover 2300 ( launched 1976 ) , saying that the Tagora had more leisurely acceleration . LJK Setright noted the cars ´ s overall " adequacy " going on to say that if fitted with the correct type of tyre he would still opt for a Peugeot 604 instead . Car judged the chassis design to be one area " where [ the Tagora ] does not show the comparative youth of its design " .

The Tagora ´ s handling was deemed " on the good side " , wrote Autocar , and performance was described as " good but not outstanding " . As such the car lay " uneasily close to being listed as under @-@ engined " though the authors conceded that generally the Tagora did not feel under @-@ engined when in use . LJK Setright dissented saying the Tagora was as " refined in its ride as should be expected of it " and that " the car also has a good deal more road @-@ holding and cornering than might be expected " . However , in December 1981 Car magazine judged the car ( 2 @. @ 2 GLS model ) to be prone to " untidy " handling , tending to under @-@ steer first followed by excessive over @-@ steer . The magazine made a particular note of the advantage in handling and grip enjoyed by the older live @-@ axled Volvo 244 , underlining the point about the Tagora 's lack of advantage in terms of road manners .

Regarding the interior , the seats drew praise for their comfort and detail design . However , again ,

Car provided a counterpoint to the effect that the Volvo was as roomy , despite its shorter wheelbase . The steering wheel was criticized in the same review for being too close to the driver ´ s legs . The ventilation temperature control was " not satisfactory " due to an unprogressive response at the cool end of the dial . There was no fan @-@ blown cold air ( cold air was by ram @-@ effect ) nor an option for cool air to be directed to the face at the same time as warmth being directed into the footwells . According to Car the ventilation " fell down badly " on account of its awkward controls . Oddment accommodation was " disappointment " . Lacking a self @-@ setting stay , opening the bonnet was " heavy work " and the boot , while large , had the demerit of an " unusual " locking method : " [ the boot ] is locked before being shut by pushing in a red handle set in the inside of the lid " .

In summary , the main competencies of the Tagora were its spacious cabin ( though it was not class @-@ leading ) , its comfortable seating , its fuel economy ( in 2 @.@ 2 GLS form ) and the size of its luggage compartment ( 572 litres ) . But the fact that a car launched in 1974 , the Volvo 244 GLE , could offer better seats , disc brakes all round , better headlights , better ventilation and better handling for only slightly more than Talbot was charging for their car indicated that the Tagora had come to market with a vehicle that was uncompetitive in too many major respects .

Nearly a decade after the Tagora had ceased production , the view of the car in the automotive press was that it was merely average though there was little actively wrong with the car . The view was that the Tagora had the advantage of refinement , good manners and , in V6 form , good performance . Rust was identified as the single biggest problem for the surviving cars , usually around the rear suspension mountings . Buckley suggested that the car might attain collectible status by 2003 .

= = Reasons for commercial failure = =

= = = Market situation and image = = =

In terms of engineering , the Tagora had no major flaws ( except perhaps for the poor cabin ventilation ) . The 1979 energy crisis , however , dealt a blow to the European automotive market : the large car segment contracted significantly , making Chrysler 's initial sales projections unrealistic . The Tagora was ultimately launched under the Talbot brand , which was not established in the marketplace and had a questionable pedigree , which was an unfavourable trait in the executive car market ruled by established names like the Ford Granada . In the view of Martin Buckley Talbot did not advertise the car effectively so " people did not know about the car " .

= = = Design = = =

As the British magazine What Car ? opined , the Tagora " has such a complete blandness of style as to disqualify it instantly in a market where character and status count for so much . " The design of the Tagora was focused on practicality , providing exceptional cabin space at the expense of style . The steep windscreen formed a quite strange angle with the relatively short , wedge @-@ shaped bonnet . The car was wider and taller than most of its competitors , and buyers were unaccustomed to such proportions . The PSA @-@ sourced axles had very narrow tracks relative to the width of the body , which provided an awkward look , especially at the rear . Nor did the plain , plastic dashboard stir enthusiasm among reviewers and prospective customers .