

THE RUDDSPED VOLVO 122

105 m.p.h.
from 1,780 c.c.



ALTHOUGH perhaps a little dated in some ways, the Volvo 122 is still a good seller, by virtue of its combination of speed, carrying capacity and, above all, reliability over long mileages. The engine, in particular, has proved to be one of the best mass-produced power units for many years, and even in its standard form the B18 1,780-c.c. engine gives the relatively high output of 90 b.h.p. at 5,000 r.p.m. Therefore few people have seriously set out to extract more power from this unit, and Ruddspeed Ltd., of Ford Aerodrome, Ford, Arundel, Sussex, are almost unique in offering extensive conversions for the Volvo range.

A wide range of tuning and other accessories are offered by Rudd's, including modified cylinder heads, camshafts, exhaust systems, remote-control gear-levers, oil coolers, servo brakes, sound damping, suspension modifications, wire wheels, replacement facias, reclining seats, etc., etc. We have recently been testing a 122 with a fair selection of the above equipment, including a completely modified cylinder head with 11-to-1 compression ratio, high-lift camshaft, Stage II exhaust system, twin 42DCOE Weber carburettors, heavy-duty main bearings, remote shift, lowered suspension and Koni shock-absorbers, sound deadening, oil cooler, and a brake servo. In the interior of the car new carpets are supplied, the lower half of the facia is covered with Vynide, and a rev.-counter is fitted. Naturally this work is pretty extensive and raises the price of the car from its basic £1,100 to £1,414. However, less exotic states of tune are available and the items can be purchased separately if required.

Ruddspeed supply a graph with the car to show the power curve, and with the equipment fitted to the test car the engine gives 127 b.h.p. at 6,000 r.p.m. The cheaper layout, using the existing S.U. carburettors, gives 118 b.h.p. at 6,000 r.p.m.

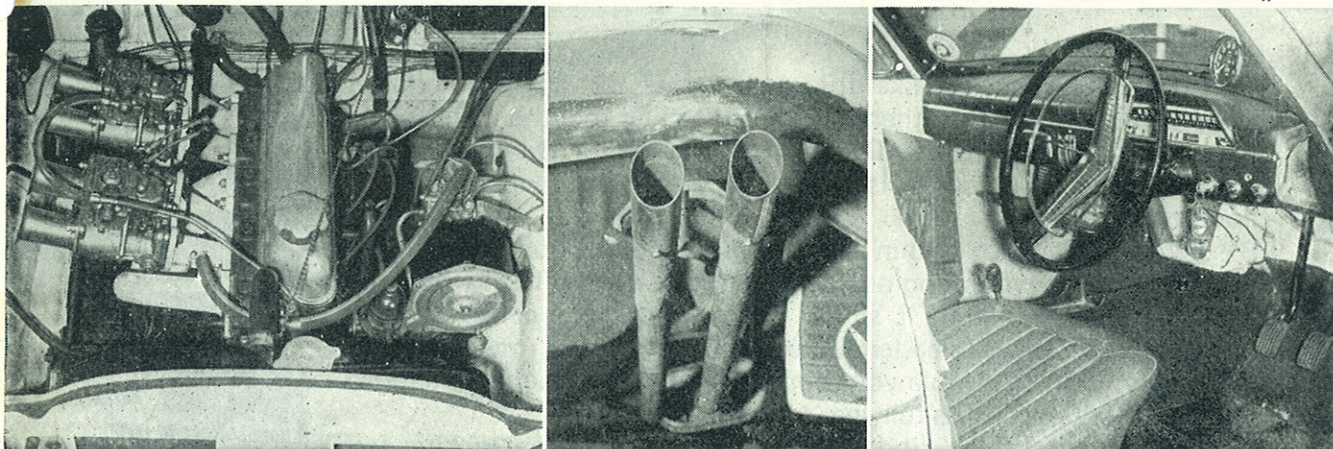
On the road the extra power is immediately apparent, both in the way the speedometer ribbon streaks across the dial (it's a strip

type) and the way the unsilenced trumpets on the Webers bellow out their message. The enthusiast will not mind this at first, but some form of carburetter silencing would make long journeys less fatiguing. The rev.-counter is conveniently placed above the facia as there is nowhere for it to go on the rather full facia board, and it will indicate 6,000 r.p.m. in all gears, except overdrive top, with surprising rapidity. In top gear 6,000 r.p.m. is only a shade under 100 m.p.h., and it will pull this on any short stretch of road; in overdrive, 5,000 r.p.m. (105 m.p.h.) comes up on flat roads, and we saw 5,300 r.p.m. (111 m.p.h.) on one downhill stretch. From a standstill the Volvo reaches 80 m.p.h. in 20 sec. and covers the standing-start ¼-mile in 18 sec. Power is rather lacking below 3,000 r.p.m. and full use has to be made of the tiny P.1800 gear-lever to get the best results, as the engine is unwilling to lug at low revs. The ride of the normal 122 is firm and the Ruddspeed mods have made it slightly stiffer, which is still not objectionable, although the standard seats tend to be rather springy, so that occupants bounce around on rough roads; competition seats would probably get around that.

The main penalty in getting extra performance is in the fuel consumption, and the test car returned 20.4 m.p.g. over a distance of 500 miles, which is some 5 m.p.g. worse than the standard 122 can achieve.

Tuned cars are often fun for a short while, but then the pleasure begins to pall with the onset of mechanical troubles. With a basically strong car like the Volvo this problem should not rear its ugly head, and the Ruddspeed car should be good for many miles of 100-m.p.h. cruising.—M. L. T.

Performance :			
0-30 m.p.h. . .	3.5 sec.	0-70 m.p.h. . .	15.4 sec.
0-40 " . . .	6.1 "	0-80 " . . .	20.0 "
0-50 " . . .	8.1 "	0-90 " . . .	26.4 "
0-60 " . . .	11.4 "	s.s. ¼-mile . .	18.0 "



(Left) The Volvo engine with twin 42DCOE Webers. (Centre) The twin exhaust system, and (Right) the cockpit showing the rev.-counter above the facia.