

# How much? You must be joking, mate



*Alex Darkes takes a look at the values of DAFs in the UK and suggests buying now before prices rise...*

The whole psychology of buying and selling is complex and there are countless text books and commentaries on the subject. In the world of widgets, the cost of production, packaging, marketing, transport and profit margins all come into play, but at the end of the day, if the buyer isn't prepared to pay the asking price, a sale won't take place.

time selling. My father has always insisted that something is worth what someone else is prepared to pay and he also reminds me that whatever car you're selling, you only need one buyer who is happy to pay your price! If you're a wheeler-dealer, you undoubtedly reckon to buy cheap and sell expensive!



Cutting to the chase, the price of a classic car depends on a whole series of variables, including: availability, desirability, condition, originality, number of owners, supporting paperwork, mileage, paintwork colour, model variant, provenance, factory fitted bells & whistles and also the state of the market; if there's no demand, you're going to have a hard

The price of DAFs has occupied some air time at recent committee meetings and the general feeling has always been that our vehicles appear to be somewhat undervalued. However, we decided that hunches were insufficient to make a case, so Steve Bidwell kindly did some analyses in which he compared the current prices of our cars, with those produced around at the same time which might well be considered to have been competitors – principally in the 1960s and 1970s.



His key analysis takes useful variables into consideration: principally launch price, production numbers, and residual values for excellent, good, average and project vehicles. For comparison purposes, he's benchmarked values with those which have recently appeared in *Octane* magazine and we've also looked at some of the fascinating price guides which are easily available on the news shelves.

Chairman, Paul Nieuwenhuis's desirable white 55 coupé 1400, has been handsomely modelled in one of them for their 'example' DAF photograph!



It's dangerous to make generalisations, but it seems that over the last five years or so there has been an ever-widening gap between vehicles in excellent condition and those considered to be projects. This might well be something to do with provenance and originality in the case of the top end of the market and sizeable restoration costs for projects, where expensive hired-in labour is used. After all, a budget re-spray is now well over £1,000, with many spending two or three times that amount.

We certainly agree that desirability and availability has quite a lot to do with price; a straw pole at the last committee meeting saw us all agreeing that there might well be longer queues for the 55 and 66 coupés, with similar attendant desires for the Marathon models. But these are also quite unusual cars which were a technical *tour de force* in their time alongside stable mates such as the Citroën 2CV, Citroën Traction Avant, Panhard Dyna and NSU Ro80, all of which seem to attract sharp elbows in the arena of buying classic cars.

Who else apart from DAF had a robust, reliable and technically advanced transmission which always ensured that the drive-train employed an ideal ratio? If you wanted a small automatic during the time our cars were produced, there was not much other choice if you didn't want the BMC transverse-



engined automatic which used the car's engine oil in the torque converter and hydraulic control.

So enough posturing and chatter; what are the facts? If you bought a Citroën Dyane (two cylinder air-cooled boxer motor, just like our DAFs) in the late sixties, it would now be worth 578% of its launch price (£779) if you went out to buy an excellent example, so you need to dig deep at £4500. Interestingly, nearly 2.5 million examples were produced, so by no means rare by comparison with the DAF 33, which only reached about 132,000. Another high flier is the NSU 1000 which is worth £4,250 in excellent condition: a heady 341% of its launch price in 1965. Now to the DAF 33: a top-notch example is £2,500 which is only 279% of the launch value and a DAF 66 222% of its launch value. The desirability bit plays its part only slightly, as a Marathon Coupe makes 261% of launch value. The capable but greatly underrated comfortable and civilised hatchback DAF77 which got badged as the Volvo 343 under its new owner sadly doesn't look like the gold standard, being worth only 53% of its launch value

So, because we feel comfortable with others inside a Michelotti body, let's look at the ubiquitous Triumph Toledo which bears comparison with the DAF 44, launched in 1967 with the new airy and light DAF B-body which was the work of Michelotti; (the A-body of the 600 right through the daffodil, 32 and 33 being an in-house design). The Toledo was produced in similar numbers to the 44: 120,000 (Toledo) plays 168,000 (DAF 44) Both are worth similar percentages of their launch costs at a mean of 227%, which initially makes us feel a bit more comfortable until we dig deeper.

So back to Steve's analysis. Taking 16 comparable saloons from the same two decades of production with models as diverse as the Austin 1100, Citroën GS, Renault 8 and Vauxhall Viva HC and doing the maths, we find that the mean percentage value of original cost comes out at 352%; significantly higher than our DAF 66 at 222%, DAF 55 at 226% and DAF 33 at 279%.

So folks, our little gems are seriously undervalued. Bag one now while you still can and before the price guides catch up with the reality that there should be some bigger numbers against the price of our cars.

**Alex Darkes**

