

V For Victory

Words: Peter J Robinson



A BREWERY AND A JAUNTY CAR, THIS IS THE STUFF OF LEGEND, MAKE MINE A BARREL.

The last time I was close enough to touch tarmac, I was in a 1933 Riley 9hp 'Brooklands Special'. It's a visceral experience to be that close to the asphalt, to hear the stones dashing up against that beautifully finished royal blue exterior. To watch the rain evaporate on that flawless 744cc Moto Guzzi engine and feel the crackling heat when you pull over the cover. It's theatre in the truest sense of the word. Those rakishly thin tyres provide the risk and a power-to-weight ratio of 175 bhp per tonne - a vast reward when mastered. Oh yes,

the Pembleton 3 wheeler is here, and sure, the world has changed yet some truths remain universal. Nothing feels quite as special as open top, ground hugging, goggles-on motoring.

I give you The Pembleton V Sport. Take a bow. Nestled in the quaint Malvern Hills village of Bayton, a small and dedicated team led by Guy Gregory crafts an automotive experience the likes of which I have never encountered. The Pembleton V-Sport is a two-seat, three-wheeler fueled by a 744cc Moto Guzzi engine, boasting a compression ratio of 9.4:1 and a max torque of 60NM at 4900rpm. It's accompanied by front

and rear disc brakes and a Magneti Marelli electronic ignition system. This charismatic chariot boasts a top speed of 110 mph and can accelerate from 0 to 62 mph in 7.2 seconds. A veritable delight to drive, the V-Sport offers a vastly refreshing counterpoint to the monotony of mass-produced motoring. It might be worth mentioning at this point that I have never driven a three-wheeler. Was I ready for the experience? Yes. Do I want one immediately? Dear god, yes I do.

Phil Gregory created the Pembleton after his wife observed that bikes and three-wheelers were exempt from ferry fees. Phil, an experienced

vehicle builder, used Citroën parts to construct the first cyclecar, ultimately selling over 500 kits to enthusiasts who sought a fun, straightforward mode of transportation. Fast forward to today, Phil's son, Guy, has taken the reins and revamped the design, collaborating with local engineering companies to create an updated model.

The six-member team, including Phil and Guy, has poured countless hours into perfecting the design of this petite, nimble three-wheeler car. Akin to the Triking and Morgan, it's a unique fusion of automobile and motorcycle design. The V Sport cleverly pairs a brand-new Moto Guzzi V7 III engine with a Citroën 2CV gearbox, providing a car-like gate-style gearchange with front-wheel

V-Sport stands out for its diverse array of unique models. However, the motorcycle influence is evident, particularly with the air-cooled Guzzi engine positioned at eye level, and a weight of just 298 kg — less than a fully loaded BMW R1200GS. This lightweight feel is immediately noticeable once you hit the road. The lack of any ABS, lane assist or traction control make it as visceral a driving experience as any I have undertaken. I wonder if there should be a 'Pass Plus Vintage' addition to the UK driving test. It would certainly separate those in need of further education from the pack. Quips aside, the rawness of the experience only adds to the V-Sport's allure. 'Head-turner' doesn't cover it.

Ensure you have done your homework before stepping out in the V-Sport - everyone and their dog's going to flood to it like catnip for petrolheads. Be warned, and be sure to know your stuff.

I was caught unaware by a group of American tourists when parked outside Donnington Brewery, camera in hand. Expect to allow people to pose for pictures perched next to its

LEFT: IN SEARCH OF THE MOST REMOTE ROADS THAT EVER WERE PAVED IN THE COTSWOLDS. RIGHT: THE MORNING AFTER THE PISS UP IN A BREWERY AND ALL IS WELL IN THE WOLDS



“The interior, a harmonious marriage of form and function, is as minimalistic as it is practical and thoughtfully designed”

drive. Having driven a handful of 2CVs and DS in my youth, it took a little time for the grey matter to kick in. But once it does, you'll fully enjoy the harkening back to a bygone era of motoring. I even dusted off my grandfather's flying goggles to avoid another assault on the eyeballs, due to a miss-timed drive in the rain.

Historically, cyclecars were seen by the motorcycling press as an affordable alternative to traditional vehicles. The V-Sport's front-wheel drive configuration allows for ample space and a flat floor, with the 2CV gearchange emerging from the dashboard. Though it may not be ideal for hauling cargo (tried and tested), it offers enough room for passengers and a rear rack if needed.

The modern V-Sport features a steel frame with elegant aluminium bodywork reminiscent of early aircraft design, riveted together for added style points. The engine delivers about 50 horsepower, sufficient to power the French gearbox without overburdening it. Though most low-volume car manufacturers offer customization options, the





resplendent chassis. This is par for the course, though anyone unwilling to share in the cult of machine gets blackballed, I am afraid. If you have the passion to purchase one of these fine machines, you must go forth and preach from the Haynes manual. This means children, irrespective of their jam-covered mitts, must be given at least the CliffsNotes on what it is exactly they are sat in. Share the good word - "hit the road, Daddy, leave your common-law wife, spread the religion of the rhythm of life".

The interior, a harmonious marriage of form and function, is as minimalistic as it is practical and thoughtfully designed, with aluminium surfaces and an eye-catching custom Pembleton steering wheel. The bench seat is comfortable as a daily driver and clad in a durable, easy-to-clean leather-effect vinyl material. For added security, a hidden removable immobiliser key and removable steering wheel feature are included. The boot, accessible through the bench seat, offers ample storage space for necessities, and it might even stretch to a weekend shop, sans passengers. Ear plugs for the non-mechanical are optional. The open cockpit obviously amplifies the engine sound, providing an auditory treat with every gear change and roar of acceleration.

When I finally found an open stretch of road and settled myself into the mechanics, It surpassed any open-top motoring experience I had experienced. Bam, into the stratosphere at mach 10. Okay not quite mach ten - you might be doing 40mph, but given the proximity to the tarmac and the power-to-weight ratio, you might as well be mounted to a solid rocket booster. Did I mention how fond of it the motoring public are? Having driven an array of precious metal, be it modern, pre-war, post-war, vintage and retro, I was a little taken aback by the forgiving nature of the locals around the Cotswolds. To avoid first gear and keep the new girl rolling was generally the name of the game, and as such I did my level best to approach junctions, roundabouts and alike at a rolling speed. Irrespective of right of way or general road going etiquette, I was dumbfounded by the amount of drivers that waved me through. "How old is it? What a beauty," one chap asked, craning out of the driver's side window as he waved me through, "I should say about 2000 miles, many thanks". This was my preferred answer to that particular question. It seemed to sound better out loud than, "made a year or so ago".

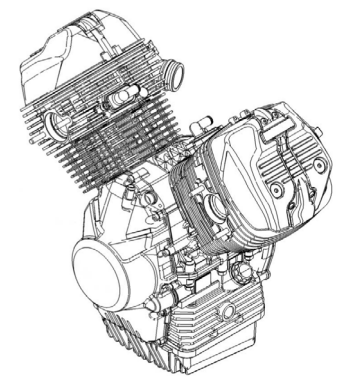
The V-Sport tackles corners with aplomb, thanks to its skinny tires, limited power, and a wooden-rimmed steering wheel that channels the spirit of a classic Spitfire. The suspension remains compliant, contributing to a dynamic cornering experience reminiscent of a motorcycle.

I had hoped that on an overcast Sunday, I might

have been able to leave the V Sport parked outside Dormy House for all to appreciate. The British weather quickly put paid to that idea as the heavens opened, so we sprinted out to quickly cover the V Sport with an unflattering tarp. To say it's a statement piece sells it somewhat short and at this price range, I think most could afford to keep one in their permanent collection.

Irrespective of temperature, conditions or traffic, it is near impossible not to smile and revel in the sheer joy of the ride. Indeed, it is hard to imagine any other automobile providing more enjoyment or generating as much earnest appreciation.

The Pembleton V Sport is more than just a car; it is a testament to the passion and dedication of the team that crafts it. An unforgettable driving experience, this hand-built three-wheeler is perfect for weekend getaways and leisurely drives through the countryside. To truly appreciate the labour of love that is the V Sport, you must visit the workshop where these magnificent machines are brought to life, and meet the artisans who create them. The Pembleton V Sport is not just a sports car; it's timeless, thrilling, and we want one. Its classic style, simplicity, and handcrafted design make it a standout choice in a world increasingly dominated by high-tech features. And while it's enjoyable to chat with passengers, the engine's captivating symphony often steals the show. ■



Specifications

ENGINE: 750cc fuel-injected V-Twin
HORSE POWER: 175bhp per tonne
MAX TORQUE: 60 Nm at 4900 RPM
0-60: 6-7 seconds
LENGTH/WIDTH/HEIGHT: 3200m, 1600mm, 1020mm
WEIGHT: 298kg
GEARBOX: Transaxle 2 Speed & Reverse
ASPIRATION: Bi-Turbo
CHASSIS: Tubular Steel Space Frame