



CITROËNET

PASSENGER CARS	UTILITY & COMMERCIAL VEHICLES	PROTOTYPES & CONCEPTS
NON-FRENCH VEHICLES	PHOTO GALLERIES	MISCELLANEOUS
LATEST ADDITIONS	SPORT	PUBLICITY, ADVERTS & BROCHURES

Made in South Africa/Vervaarding in Suid-Afrika

GS AND GSA

South African assembly of the DS began in 1959. The idea was not just that the cars could be constructed more cheaply, and priced more competitively that way, but that they could also be made in a form more suitable for local conditions.

South African assembly of the DS began towards the end of 1959 at Natalspruit in the Transvaal, in a building that was formerly a school. Cars were built in both left and right hand drive form using a CKD system of assembly similar to that then being followed at [Slough](#). In other words, complete caissons and body units, engines, transmissions and hydraulic systems were imported direct from France to be fitted together in South Africa, with the cars then being painted, trimmed and finished using the maximum possible amount of locally-sourced componentry and contents.

Precise production figures have been lost, but sales figures show that in 1959 407 DS models were sold in South Africa, most of them presumably coming from the Natalspruit plant, which was operated not by SA Citroën but by Stanley Motors, a South African owned company.

Production of the DS19 continued until 1965 when the semi-automatic model was replaced by the ID19 on the Natalspruit lines. In 1967 the ID19 was in turn replaced by the DS19M manual gearbox model. By 1969, after 10 years of South African assembly, sales of D series cars had reached around 7,300 units, although not all of these vehicles were necessarily built in South Africa as it is known that small numbers of Break, Prestige and Pallas models were imported from France as special orders.

That year, South African production moved to the old Jeep factory at Pretoria. But this was merely on a temporary basis as the following year it relocated again to the former Rover factory at Port Elizabeth in the Cape Province. By then just the DS20 and DS20M were being produced; no DS21 was ever built in South Africa, although many dealers or agents converted DS20 engined cars to DS21 specification by modifying the cylinder head and camshaft. One such conversion was the DS21 Plus Power, which resulted in a faster top speed than the BMW733i currently being sold in South Africa.

In 1972, the DS 20/5 manual car was introduced, and in 1973 the DS23 in Pallas trim. In 1972 also, the Citroën subsidiary company Citroën South Africa pty was formed in Johannesburg, to take over full responsibility for manufacturing and distribution in English-speaking south and east Africa.

As a result of this initiative, in 1973 the GS 1220 went into local production at another Citroën South Africa facility located at Pretoria. This proved to be a very popular car. Known affectionately as "the little Citroën", around 19,382 units were built, the last being sold in 1980.

The final South African built DS rolled off the Port Elizabeth production line in 1975, which was then promptly closed. By this point, the local content had reached 64%. To the end, the South Africans followed British specifications in the manufacture of the Déesse, except in minor matters such as the seats. These were always trimmed in vinyl using foam rubber cushions produced to French specifications - even on the DS23 Pallas versions which was the only option available during the final two years of production.

Altogether some 30,327 vehicles (10,944 of them Déesses) had been built by the time that South African assembly of Citroën finally stopped in 1979 and Citroën South Africa ceased trading. But small numbers of vehicles built in France continued to be imported for many years and numerous examples of the CX, 2CV, Dyane, Ami and Méhari are still in evidence there, together with a surprisngly large number of Tractions and Déesses. Needless to say, all these cars are lovingly cherished by that small band of South African motorists who learned to drive at the wheel of a Citroën and who remain steadfastly loyal Citroenistes, refusing to own any lesser make of car.

[DS20/5 advertisement](#)

[1974 GS1220 brochure in English and Afrikaans](#)

[1975 G Series brochure in English](#)

[GS advertisements](#)

[May 1974 review of the GS in The Motorist](#)

[Stef Sep's 2CV PO](#)

[1968 Car magazine test of the 3-DS](#)

[1971 Car magazine test of the DS-20](#)

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