

# NORMAN WISDOM FALLS F

TVT



by CHRISTOPHER KENWORTHY

Norman Wisdom is renowned for his knockabout comedy and you'll see why in next week's *Music Hall*. But for his love of the highways in zippy, economical style his choice of car is a Singer Chamois Sport—which he has 'Wisdomed'. This week he becomes a member of the exclusive TVT Gemini Car Club. Why not become his motoring



Racing steering wheel is an extra added to the nifty Singer Chamois



Top speed of around 90 m.p.h. delivered by the rear-mounted twin-carb engine means that Wisdom has more than enough speed for Britain's roads



Smart rear-view of the bonnet lowered ready for

# FOR A SINGER

comedy,  
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The name "Singer" has been discontinued in the home market since April. The equivalent model to Norman Wisdom's Singer Chamois Sport is now the Sunbeam Sport.

Price: £789 10s. 10d. (with tax).
Top speed: 86-90 m.p.h.
Acceleration: 0-50 in 12.4 sec.
Miles per gallon: 36 to 43.
Length: 11ft. 7in.
Width: 5ft. 0½in.
Engine: 875c.c.
55 b.h.p. at 6,100 revs. per minute.

**N**ORMAN WISDOM looked cagey. "Am I a fast driver?" he repeated. "Well... I don't hang about. But I don't want to do 180 m.p.h. either."

"I already own the most beautiful car in the world—a Bentley Continental 1956 two-door Mulliner fastback. And I have a Singer Chamois Sport, which gets me from garage to garage."

Norman Wisdom off-stage has little in common with Norman Wisdom on-stage. He's a compact, quiet man with a very quiet voice. He's inclined to dry understatements.

His Bentley—he refers to it as "the sporting man's Rolls-Royce"—is his hobby, and a special tone comes into his voice when he talks about it. But his "fun car" is the little Singer Chamois, which has made its own corner in his affections.

"I think it's the perfect little run-around car," says Wisdom. He chose it for its compactness, its easy manoeuvring, and its sporty performance. The twin-carb engine delivers a top speed of around 90 m.p.h., so there's more than enough speed for Britain's roads. But Wisdom maintains that the zippy acceleration has turned out to be its most useful feature.

"It's nice when the flag goes down at the traffic lights and you can see other cars shrink in the rear-view mirror," he explains.

The Singer is by no means the basic

car. It has been "Wisdomised". Special seats, with built-in seat belts and headrests to guard against whip-lash injuries in case of an accident, have been fitted in the front. Push the headrest forward and the whole seat tips.

The steering was already precise and direct, but Wisdom decided on rather more specialised shock absorbers and lowered suspension to help on corners and in high cross-winds. In order to get more rubber in contact with the road, sculptured alloy wheels with wider tyres were also fitted.

And—rather more important than many people realise—a racing-size padded leather steering wheel. Wisdom was so delighted with this particular innovation that he is to have a special one made for his Bentley, to tone with the grey upholstery. The extra control and sensitivity it gives him, he says, is well worth the expense.

"The only criticism I have of the Chamois at all, and that's only a minor one, is that it could do with a little more soundproofing," he says.

One of the reasons for choosing the Singer was the amount of storage room the car would provide when only two people are riding in it.

"You can open up the back window, put the rear seats down, and it's surprising how much you can get in there," Wisdom explains.

Off the set, Wisdom is unassuming. He is still surprised by his own popularity, both at home and abroad. His television series, *Norman*, he mentions casually, went to number six in the ratings within a couple of weeks. A little grin of delight suddenly transforms him into a small boy surprised by success.

In Argentina, there is a cinema named after him. Argentinians flock to see his films—again the slightly embarrassed smile of pleasure—as do the Persians.

Wisdom's colleague, David Lodge—the one who was always pushing Wisdom around in his films—tells of the day Wisdom telephoned from Persia to report on his reception there, which was ecstatic.

"He said they took things very seriously out there. I said should I come over? Norman replied: 'No, don't come for Heaven's sake. They'd tear you to pieces!'" reports Lodge.

Once again the talk turns to cars. Wisdom enthuses wildly about his Bentley, which he says is a classic in the motoring world. Bentleys, however, do tend to be heavy on petrol. But the Singer is an economical car to run.

"I use five-star petrol, but I get around 38 miles per gallon out of it," Wisdom says. "Just shuttling up and down between London and Sussex."

It seemed the final word of praise for the ideal run-around car.



Singer with  
for the road

## DO YOU OWN A SINGER CHAMOIS SPORT?

If you do—and if you would like to be considered as Norman Wisdom's Gemini Club twin—fill in this coupon. Below are 12 basic reasons for buying a car. Choose the six which most appeal to you and number them from 1 to 6 in the squares provided to indicate the order of their importance in making your choice. Norman Wisdom will select as his motoring twin the reader who most closely matches his own set of preferences.

- Driving position and visibility
- Steering and roadability
- Luggage capacity
- Resale value
- Passenger comfort
- Legibility of instruments
- Braking
- Performance and relative economy
- Heating and ventilation
- Engine accessibility
- Safety features
- General appearance and choice of colour and trim

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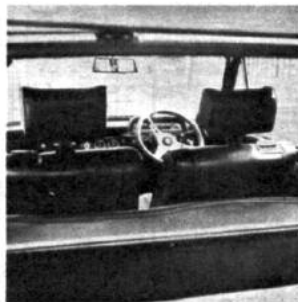
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Send this coupon to Gemini/Singer TVTimes, 247 Tottenham Court Road, London, W1P 0AA.



Headrests on specially fitted seats protect against any sudden jolts

Comedian Norman Wisdom had a penchant for Imps – in a later magazine article he jumped for joy at owning a Stiletto! (Anyone got a copy?)