

Looking at Auto Union's history to explain how this car came about. The conglomerate came into being in 1932, as a merger of the German firms of Zschopauer Motorenwerke J S Rasmussen (more snappily known as DKW), Horch, Audi and Wanderer; four marques, hence the four rings of the logo. The name became famous before the Second World War for its rear engined F1 racing cars known as the Silver Arrows. The factory after the war was in control of the communist East Germany and production got going in 1950 using the DKW name.

The resultant DKW F89 displayed the basic rounded appearance and mechanical layout of what would become the Auto Union 1000 some years later, albeit its 684cc two stroke engine had only two cylinders. It gave a heady 23bhp, allowing a top speed of 62mph or just 59mph in the estate. Small wonder then that the F89's successor, the DKW 3=6 of 1953 - also known as the Sonderklasse, the F91 and eventually the 900 - upped the ante somewhat with a three-cylinder 34bhp unit, meaning over 70mph was now possible. The rotund lines were also reworked.

The Auto Union 1000 of 1958, essentially a mild upgrade of the DKW. The change of branding was down to Daimler-Benz, who took over in 1958 and decided to bring the pre-war name back. Aside from the four-ringed logo on the grille instead of the previous DKW badge, the only real change was the adoption of a larger 981cc engine (hence the 1000 title) that gave 44, 50 or 55bhp depending on the model. The most powerful variants were now capable of 87mph, on a good day at least. The range encompassed two- and four-door saloons, a two-door 'pillarless' coupé (as here) and a three-door estate. There were also a two-seater sports versions, in convertible and hard-top form, with a more angular, modern appearance.

The 1000 continued to be built until 1963 in West Germany, although the sports variants persisted until 1965, and Argentina constructed the models under licence until 1970. The 1000's successor saw the brief revival of the Auto Union name cease, for the very different F102 reverted back to being a DKW, and later revived the Audi moniker for the first time since 1938.

## The Vehicle

In 1958, this 1000 headed, to South Africa. And there it stayed until very recently.

One bonus is that, being from South Africa where they drive on the right - i.e. left - side of the road, the Auto Union is right-hand drive, unlike a lot of imported classics. That will make it easier to pilot on the highways of Britain.

Being a pillarless coupé, this variant is somewhat rarer than the saloons, and it's also a Saxomat, denoting an automatic clutch.

## On the Outside

This is a lovely looking car, with its voluptuous curves so redolent of German styling of the immediate pre- and post-war era - you can see echoes of the Volkswagen Beetle, the larger BMW 501 and Mercedes-Benz 300 in its make-up. The colour scheme is very evocative of the time too; a gorgeous burnt orange main shade complemented by a white roof and wheels, and chrome/stainless steel embellishments such as the rear wing guards. It's an eye-catching car and, being so rare, bound to turn heads wherever you venture in it.

The bumpers have a smattering of rust and tarnishing, with a small hole in the rear mounting panel, on the nearside. The chrome hubcaps have also suffered over the years; they look fine from a distance, but up close, you will find some surface corrosion. The rest of the brightwork is quite well-preserved, but the driver's side door mirror isn't fixed to its arm - you'll find it loose inside the car. And the gutter trim above the same door is a little kinked.

## On the Inside

Although the 1000 was a relatively compact car, it was a cut above similar-sized cars such as the Volkswagen Beetle. Thus the interiors were quite well-specced. With its brown and white upholstery, nicely set off by door cards in the same colour scheme, white steering wheel and metal areas painted the same hue as the exterior.

The interior has survived well. That the seats and door cards are in such good order and show few signs of fading, despite years of exposure to the South African sun, may hint that they've been re-done at some point. But there's still a nice patina to them that matches the ambience of what surrounds them.

The grey-painted seat frames do have rust marks in-keeping with a sexagenarian German vehicle. Rubber floor mats are fitted, and although they show the passage of decades in places, they're standing up well to, well, being stood on a lot. Underneath the mats, the floor appears solid, albeit with patches of surface corrosion.

The metal dash has a few areas of wear, most of it around the column-mounted ignition barrel where the paint has been rubbed off by keys. The three gauges behind the steering wheel display the speed, time, fuel and water temperature. There's also a further, more recent auxiliary temperature gauge bolted under the centre of the dash. The white steering wheel has a few cracks, two of the bigger ones around the hub, but it still seems very secure -and no issues were noted during the MOT.

It has a Blaupunkt Hannover I push-button radio, which is original, is fitted. But there's also a newer Supersonic AM/FM unit, tucked away under the middle of the fascia.

Not that it will be delivering stereo, as there's still just the single speaker fitted, behind a chrome grille in the dashboard's centre.

Turning to the boot, the floor is wooden, with a hinged section covering the spare wheel. There are a few marks, but not much considering how much stuff must have been carried over 60-plus years. It's all pretty tidy. The spare wheel is a General-branded crossply.