

HISTORICAL SAAB - An article in VIPS (Vi på Saab) No 5, 1962, Page 9

Compiled and translated by Ray Beaufoy, September 2020.

Saabs New Roller test – Rural and Highway driving performance test inside the factory.



One of the team of test drivers checking a new vehicles performance on the new rollers.

A car driver who does not have his eyes focussed on the road ahead, and hands firmly on the steering wheel, could be considered rather careless and very inconsiderate driver! Should he then be also suddenly forced to brake the car then there is every possibility that an accident might occur!

However, this isn't the case whilst driving a car on Saabs new Rolling-Road inside the factory; here it is safe for the driver to perform numerous tests watching instruments at the side of the car and also concentrating on noting test results on each individual cars test report. Here the driver can release his hold of the steering wheel without anything happening, even though the wheels are rotating at high speed under power from the engine.

It is here that all new Saabs are driven directly after they have rolled off the production line and where the cars performance levels are checked i.e. Engine, Gear-box, Brakes , Chassis, Interior heating , Instruments and general noise and vibration levels etc.

Saabs new Roller test facility inside the factory has been required for several reasons:

The increased interest for Saab cars has meant that the original roads around the factory, where cars were earlier tested were now needed to make way for new buildings and many existing stores and workshops being extended close to the paint shop and production lines etc .

With an increase of new cars rolling off the production line, a more standardised test procedure was also needed, furthermore, testing of every new car could now be done inside the factory - unaffected by winter weather conditions. Testing could now be performed under one roof - advantageous for the company and also for the workers involved in building and testing vehicles.

Our VIPS reporter was curious to learn from Saabs Test engineer and manager Hugo Frykner if:

- All new cars underwent a full road-test as they did prior to the roller test being installed.
- And, did testing also include high speed open road / highway driving?

Hugo replied:

The answer to the first question was simple to answer: Yes, all new cars are given a standard road test both before and even after any large repairs are needed to be done to the cars i.e. a noisy gearbox has to be replaced. Cars are then often re-test again just to make sure all is functioning correctly.

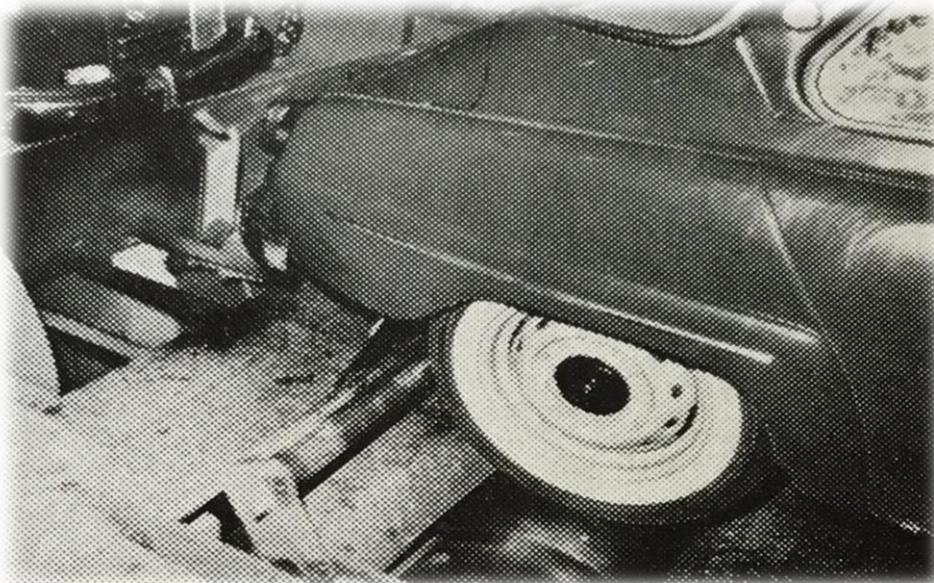
The answer to the second question is a little more complex: - It is obvious that the amount of time spent testing each car must be aligned to the rate of cars rolling off the production lines. We have set testing times accordingly so as to avoid any hold ups and bottle necks in the production area. The new roller test is a step towards a more efficient production facility.

As production increases we will also have to invest in more dyno-rollers, plans for this are already in place which will also see the roller test being performed in a more quieter enclosed environment. This will also help testers to identify for example any noise related faults with the car.

It is impossible however once production is at full flow to have cars spending a unnecessary time on the roller test - so we have taken a decision to test only 5-10 % of the weekly production volume at high speed. This is done on open roads outside the factory. That way we can also establish if tests performed on the rollers coincide with tests on normal roads. We plan to continue to test Saabs at high speed just as they have always been.

We are striving for better quality throughout the company and the rollers have certainly improved matters.

A further question was raised from the VIPS reporter: As if there was a possibility for dangerous exhaust fumes to be released inside the factory?



Exhaust fumes being extracted from the surrounding area via a deflector cowl and powerful extractor fans.

To this question Hugo also replied: The new rollers are also included with a special deflector cowl which opens once the car has been positioned on the roller. Under the car several high-powered fans then draw down into the ventilation system and is then filtered out into atmosphere. To further ensure that the air quality around the test area is within safe working levels our laboratory staff takes regular measurements in the vicinity of the vehicles on test.

One final question to Hugo: Do other car manufacturers have such equipment in their production areas?

To which he replied: Yes indeed, many of the larger high-volume car manufacturers have installed similar test equipment, Saab is not alone on this.