

1965 VANDEN PLAS PRINCESS SEDAN

1965 Vanden Plas Princess Sedan, Model 1100

Owners: Bernie and Janice Taulborg Collection

Original cost: \$2,646.00

Previous owner: Owner from Omaha 1972 – 1985.

Number made: 39,000, 1963 – 1975, Vanden Plas Princess 1100/1300

Engine, etc.: 1098 cc (1.1 liter); 55 bhp, 67 cid; 93.5" wheelbase; about 2,000 lbs.

The Princess was originally sold in the U. S. as the MG Princess 1100 with 154 sold in 1964. (With a left-hand drive, ours was made for U. S. export and is both unusual and rare.)

Production began in 1963.

The British Motor Company saw a market for a compact luxury car and for its size the Vanden Plas Princess 1100 was outstandingly luxurious. It featured a polished walnut dash, with reclining backs, special upholstery and head liner, and polished fold-down tables for rear seat passengers.

Vanden Plas originated in Belgium though the name comes from the Dutch (Van der Plas). The workshops of Vanden Plas in 1870 made wheels, then axle units for carriages.

The first Vanden Plas Limited company in England was formed in 1913, building car bodies under license from Vanden Plas in Belgium. In 1946 Vanden Plas became a subsidiary of Austin Motors which merged with Morris in 1952. The company made standard and limousine-length cars. (In 1954 a long wheelbase limousine, supplied to a Sheik, was painted scarlet with all the bright metal parts plated in 22 carat gold.)

The primary market for the Princess model was the United States. Unfortunately Rolls Royce/Bentley dealers were not interested in a "compact" car when they could build the brand name by selling large expensive models. The cars were pushed onto an existing dealership of Jaguar, Triumph, MG, and Austin dealers. The cars were extremely successful in Britain but bombed in the U. S. Americans did not appreciate "miniaturized luxury" and the relatively high price limited sales.

In the end, a small number of old line British car vendors who sold many brands in one location ended up as the only foothold in the U. S. market. They sold nearly 4,500 cars before the car was discontinued due to meager support from dealers. Production ended in 1974.

Sources:

1966 Car and Driver Yearbook (original cost)

<http://classics.honestjohn.co.uk/reviews/vanden-plas/princess-11001300/>

<https://www.vpoc.info/princess-1100>

http://uniquecarsandparts.com/heritage_vanden_plas.htm

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