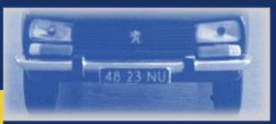




PEUGEOT



79-BF-57

#255
Peugeot
204 Break
(1974)

Norev
472450

Period: 1965-1976
Built: 1,604,296

Engine: 1.1-litre 4-cyl.
Power: 60 PS
Top speed: 140 km/h
Price: fl. 8,290 (1971 saloon)

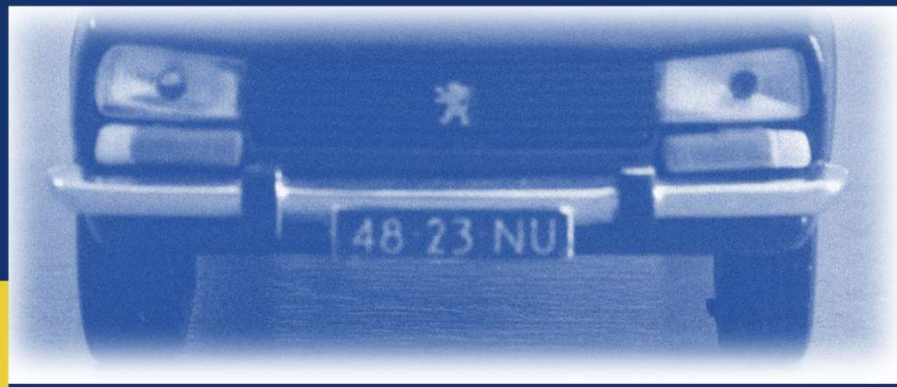
Predecessor:
Peugeot 203
Successor:
Peugeot 304

Date acquisition:
26/02/2018

Approx. first plate Approx. last plate
EM-49-85 **41-MN-93**



PEUGEOT



"Friendly" face on 204 evolved in "angry" face on the 304.

The French back catalogue of charming cars is quite extensive, but in my view the 204 should definitely feature high on the list of French automotive triumphs. Perhaps not as iconic as a Renault 4 or Citroen Ami, yet the 204 epitomizes what French charm in a car is all about: basic but forward-thinking engineering, simple but gracious exterior design, and a utilitarian purity that comes out best in the long-lived yet worn-out 204s that graced the streets of French countryside villages until well in the 1990s.

The 204 was introduced in 1965 and for Peugeot was its first venture into the small-vehicle class (the 203 was a substantially bigger car). It wasn't the first car to have front-wheel drive and a transversely mounted engine – or disc brakes and an independent suspension – but it brought all these features together in an innovative and modern package, and as such set the template for Peugeots for decades to come. The 204 also counts as the first vehicle in the small car class that was available with a diesel engine, a first-mover advantage that Peugeot was able to retain for many years given the tremendous success it had with cars such as the Peugeot 205 Diesel.

The exterior design was created by the Pininfarina studio. The sculpted bonnet and downward sloping boot (on the saloon) give the 204 the typical Pininfarina understated elegance; it is not in any way an evocative design but – through its apparent simplicity – exudes a certain elegance. Apart from the saloon and the Break (shown here), the 204 was available as a coupé and convertible, as well as a Break-based van.

The 204 changed very little over the course of its production run. This Norev model car is a 1974 Break in a chic dark shade of green called "Antique Green" that combines very well with the brown interior. I personally like the very simple steel wheels and the expansive chrome grille that covers most of the frontal area and surrounds the headlamps and indicators neatly. The concave bonnet line in combination with squared-off headlamps as first seen on this 204 would become a hallmark feature of Peugeot design for many years. On cars such as the 304, 504 and 505 it seemed to convey a subtle angry look; given the expansive chrome grille the effect on the 204 is the opposite, as it seems to have a fairly friendly face.



The 204 with some of its contemporary rivals: Opel Ascona, Citroen GS and Renault 12.



The Peugeot 204 co-existed for many years alongside its successor – the 304 – here in coupé form.