

Yugo Sana 1.4



TAKE A FIAT TIPO AS YOUR BASIS, organise a facelift by someone as distinguished as Ital Design, then build it in Yugoslavia. Result: a thoroughly modern Escort-sized family five-door at a price hardly any supermini can match. Yes, there's one Uno that's cheaper – but no Fiesta.

When they step inside this attractively styled car, we suspect that most people who are sceptical about 'East European cheapos' will promptly find details to criticise. There's a nail-breaking bonnet release and seat adjusters, as well as hard, noisy plastic that frets at low engine speeds; our car also had several irritating trim squeaks.

However, there's plenty to praise as well, as greater familiarity on the road acquaints you with the roominess, excellent seating (up front especially) and versatile load-lugging abilities. It rides surprisingly well and handles with a dull but dogged stability – its turgid steering is the greatest deterrent to having fun at the wheel.

There are no starting problems, however, and the engine warms up without any fuss, thanks partly to a clever anti-stall device on the Weber carburettor. Anyone who remembers earlier Comecon cars, with their truck-like gearshifts and wobbly clutches, will be amazed how 'normal' the Sana feels to drive. And when it comes to stopping in a hurry, it does a

lot better than some of the Westerners in this class.

Being a 1.4 litre with just 70bhp, this roomy five-door's performance is not going to be a major plus point. However, it's quicker than both its Skoda rival and the 1.3 Samara – it takes the 1.5 to outpace it. Neither does it have to apologise in terms of petrol costs – 38mpg overall is class-average, even if the Sana does prefer the dearer 98 octane unleaded sort.

When driving the Sana in town, there's good parking vision and a pleasant gearchange; the facia displays are quite neat and tidy, too. The minor switches are not to everyone's liking, but you could learn to live with them after a while and only lanky drivers will find any real cause to complain about the driving position.

Out on the open road, the engine sounds rather fussy because of the low overall gearing, but the resonant hum that surfaces between 60 and 70mph is not too bad. In country lanes or town streets this translates into pleasing flexibility – the Sana pulls evenly from as low as 25mph in fourth, at which point a facia vibration says 'no lower'.

Living with the Sana must be frustrating for a knowledgeable DIY type because it looks quite easy to work on, yet the warranty currently precludes your right to do this sort of thing.

Until now, we couldn't honestly recommend any Yugo, despite the keen prices. The Sana still has its

Living with the Sana . . .

faults and irritations, but it looks reassuring enough and drives pleasantly enough to deserve serious consideration.

Whether you're better off buying a used Tipo, or something similar, for the same price as a new Sana is open to argument. But the Sana certainly offers surprising room, civility and vice-free road manners at a bargain price.

At the Wheel

Driving position

Legroom isn't over-generous – which seems silly because there's plenty behind. There's not much else to complain about regarding the seat, however – it's very comfortable with good spinal support. Oh yes, there is one serious problem – the fore-and-aft adjuster is impossibly stiff to work – and that's after you've discovered it!

Controls and displays

There's a touch of the Ibiza and Uno about things like the paddle switches – we don't really like them, but concede that the Sana's are less stiff and awkward. The major controls are fine – we got on well with the gearchange, and the clutch is well mannered, too. The steering wheel, like the rest of the driving stance, is quite upright and the instruments are tidy if somewhat vaguely marked. Unusually, the odometer under-read by 3¹/₂ per cent – which meant that fuel economy was better than it appeared to be. An ambitious 'systems check' display (supplied by Lucas, apparently) effectively monitors fluid levels and other functions, but we wonder if this sort of thing is really appreciated by buyers at this end of the market.

Vision

We would have preferred twin wipers and better quality door mirrors – the single sweep means both short and tall drivers have to dodge the unswept bits, and the nearside mirror's flat glass gives

too restricted a view – the mirrors' adjusters don't work very well either. Also, the sun visors are too slim to contend with a low sun – or a short driver. Beam trimmers are incorporated in the headlamps – a sensible feature.

Space & Comfort

Seating

Not only the driver but passengers, too, receive a good deal of room and civility in this Yugo. Being a Tipo derivative with its 'build 'em tall' approach, means that the Sana inherits clever space utilisation which could well have been squandered in the restyling exercise. The result is an outstanding amount of rear leg-stretching space for two people and luggage. The rear backrest (which has a centre armrest) is difficult to snuggle into, and there's not quite as much hiproom as in the Fiat.

Luggage and oddments stowage

The one-piece back seat folds forward in proper estate car fashion to give excellent load length, and the lined seat base prevents damage, as well as acting as a protective barrier to those at the front. We were very impressed by both the well-carpeted load area and the rear load cover, designed to slot erect behind the rear backrest, if needs be. Oddments boxes on the doors and facia are useful (but unlined) and the facia-top shelf in slippery plastic needs a Rover-style anti-skid mat on it.

Getting in and out

There's no problem here with this five-door, especially as it's built tall with door apertures curving round into the roof panel; there's even a rear roof lamp and rear door switches as well. Getting out isn't so easy because the interior releases are stiff and obscure – just like the seat adjusters. The tailgate has a clever button release that's protuberant only when it's

unlocked and it works smoothly on gas struts. There's a sill that's more prominent than the Tipo's, but a proper spare wheel is provided beneath the rigid load floor of the Sana without any detriment to the load height.

Interior trim and equipment

This version of the Sana has most of the things that the modern family motorist expects – the absence of a split/folding back seat is the only obvious shortcoming. Most items work reasonably well, although there's an almost obsessive use of plastic inside, some of it hard and unpleasant. Not so the fabric and carpets, however – these are first class and fit well. The radio is not particularly good and the gear knob feels shaky, but the wheel rim is quite pleasant to handle.

Heating and ventilating

As with so many vents, you can't persuade the Sana's to blow cold while the heater is blowing warm at the same time. These vents don't point low enough and the fan is needed a lot to ginger things up. The system's only saving grace is that the controls are easy to use.

Safety

Accident avoidance

The test car came on Traylor radial tyres and we noted some imbalance at higher speeds. They contributed towards an excellent set of brake test results, however – the servo-assistance is just about ideal, providing real control, especially in a panic stop. The car's cornering stability is fine, too, although the weighty, ponderous steering response deters the driver from any enterprising cornering.

Injury prevention

There's plenty of absorbent material at head level and the front head restraints and seatbelts fit well, although the front clasps are a long stretch down behind the

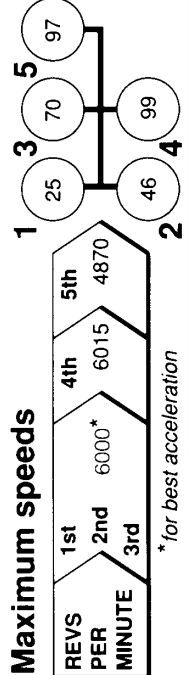
PERFORMANCE

Acceleration time in seconds

STANDING START	0-30mph 4.0	0-60mph 12.7	1/4 mile 19.2
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THROUGH THE GEARS	30	40	50	60	70
		2.1	5.0	8.7	13.5
IN 5TH GEAR		6.4	12.8	19.9	28.3
IN 4TH GEAR		4.9	9.7	15.0	21.0

20 mph	30	40	50	60	70
5TH/4TH SPEED RANGES		13.7/10.2	12.8/9.7	13.5/10.1	15.5/11.3



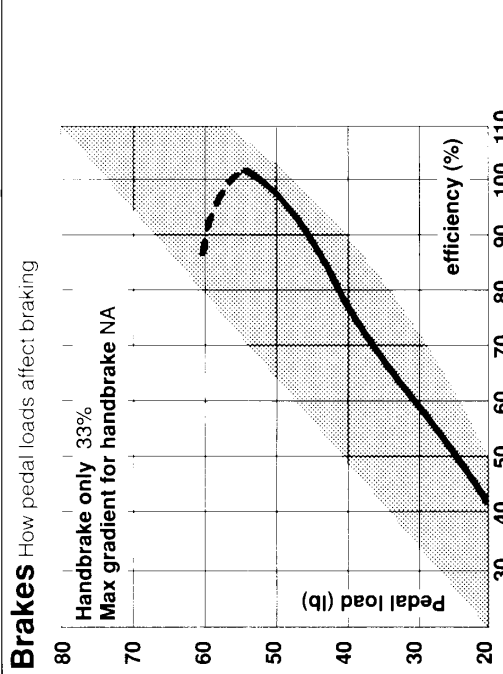
FUEL CONSUMPTION

Fuel grade for tests: Super Unleaded/98 octane

Normal range	mpg
Hard driving, heavy traffic	30 1/2
Short journeys in the suburbs	29 1/2
Motorway - 70mph cruising	38
Brisk driving, mixed roads	38
Gentle driving - rural roads	45
Typical mpg overall	38
Realistic tank range*	43 litres/360 miles

* based on gauge/warning lamp and filling station experience

SAFETY



Safety check list

Steering true 'feel' of the road?

Brakes powerful?
 sensible effort?
 fade resistant?

Seatbelts front - effective?
 convenient?
 rears - effective?
 convenient?

Head restraints front-effective?
 rear - effective?

Interior thoroughly padded?

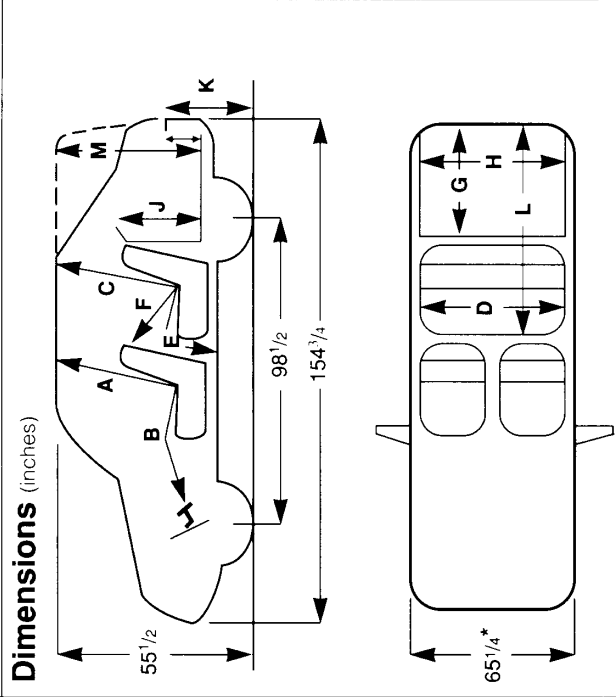
Fuel shielded filler?
 protected tank?

Fade test
 How hard use or water affects braking. (Ideal brakes show no change.)

Pedal load needed for 75% stop (lb)

At start of test	37
After constant use	37
After severe use	55
After watersplash	NA
Number of stops to recover	NA

MEASUREMENTS



Kerb weight in lb (full of fuel) 2016

Inside (inches)

A Front headroom	38	G Load length	29 1/2
B Front legroom (min - max)	36-41 1/2	H Load floor width (min - max)	37-52
C Rear headroom	37	J Load height	21 1/2
D Back seat width (between armrests)	50 1/4	K Sill height (inner/outer)	12/29
E Typical rear legroom	39 3/4	L Load length	54 1/2
F Typical rear knee room	30 1/2	M Load height (to tailgate hinge)	35 3/4

* 'Typical' represents the mean measurement behind the driver's seat set at 39in legroom and the passenger's seat set at 41in

handbrake. The under-facia padding appears less convincing and the front seatbacks are not reinforced.

Security

Though both keys fit either way up, you still need two of them for the Sana – the new GL has central locking, but not this one. The back seat latches are in the boot area so the load cover in situ prevents easy access to them – and hence the boot's contents. The fuel cap is threaded and ours needed a clean and grease before it would screw on properly and prevent fuming.

Money Matters

Value for money

This is written all over a Yugo price list, and in this case it looks convincing because the reflected glory of the Tipo continues to shine largely unabated – yet at £2500 less. Yugo also has a commendable reputation for low-priced spares, but some of its other offerings have not proved particularly reliable or easy to work on. The Sana promises to do better mechanically.

Servicing

This is quite onerous – there's an old-fashioned rigour about the schedule that averages 2³/₄ hours of labour every 6000 miles. What's more, the warranty terms are restrictive – if you don't let the Yugo dealer service the car, it threatens to restrict your rights. However, Yugo tells us that it intends to soften the wording to line up with its day-to-day treatment of claims. Incidentally, the full warranty cover lasts for only 12 months – the second year covers the power-train only, unlike Lada.

Warranty terms apart, it's no hardship to work on the Sana.

Fuel economy

Not surprisingly, the Sana achieved near-identical mpg results in our standard tests as the Tipo 1.4 we tested recently. As such, it produces class average results for this size of car. However, the handbook does indicate a clear preference for 97 octane fuel – which means that the dearer Super Unleaded here in the UK seems to be the best proposition. A reliable low-level warning lamp makes the range between forecourt stops equally generous, even though the tank is smaller than the Tipo's. To make the most of it, just wait until the lamp remains on permanently.

Durability

Build quality

We suspect that time and heavy use might cause a few breakages inside – some of the plastic looks and feels stiff and brittle. Another unknown quantity is the degree of success the Yugoslavians will have in manufacturing their own version of this engine – something that could well happen in the near future. Our car's rustproofing looked better than on previous Yugos and, sensibly, there's no brightwork, just plenty of plastic at both ends.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

ENGINE

Type and size front-mounted, transverse 4 in line; water-cooled. 80.5mm bore x 67.4mm stroke = 1372cc. Iron block and alloy head; 5 main bearings

Compression ratio 10.3:1

Valve gear belt-driven overhead camshaft actuating two valves per cylinder via bucket tappets – shim adjusters

Fuel system one Weber twin-throat carburettor (with manual choke but automatic fast idle device) fed by mechanical pump from 48-litre (10¹/₂-gallon) tank – low-level lamp provided. Fuel required: leaded or unleaded, 97 octane minimum

Ignition system coil and breakerless distributor with mechanical advance

Max power (DIN-net) 70bhp at 6000rpm

Max torque (DIN-net) 78 lb ft at 3000rpm

TRANSMISSION

Clutch diaphragm-spring,

dry plate; cable-operated.

Pedal load/travel: 31 lb/6¹/₂in

Gearbox 5-speed (all synchromesh) and reverse. Ratios: first 4.09, second 2.24, third 1.47, fourth 1.04, top 0.86 and reverse 3.71:1

Final drive 3.76:1 to front wheels

Mph per 1000rpm 19.92 in top; 16.46 in 4th

Rpm at 70mph 3515 in top gear

CHASSIS

Suspension front: independent MacPherson damper/struts with integral coil springs and an anti-roll bar. Rear: torsion beam (dead) axle with trailing arms and coil springs. Dampers: telescopic all round

Steering unassisted rack and pinion with 3.4 turns between full locks. Turning circles average 34¹/₂ft between kerbs, with 58¹/₂ft for one turn of the wheel

Wheels 4¹/₂in steel with 165/70R13S radial tyres (Trayal on test car)

Brakes plain discs front, drums rear with vacuum servo

HOW IT COMPARES

	Engine cap/power (cc/bhp)	Max speed (mph)	30-70mph through gears (sec)	30-70mph in 5th/4th gears (sec)	Fuel overall (mpg)	Brakes best stop (%g/lb)	Maximum legroom – front (in)	Typical leg/kneerom – rear (in)	Steering turns/circle (ft)	Overall length (in)
Yugo Sana 1.4	1372/70	99	13.5	28.3/21.0	38	102/55	41 ¹ / ₂	39 ³ / ₄ /30 ¹ / ₂	3.4/34 ¹ / ₂	154 ³ / ₄
Fiat Tipo 1.4	1372/72	100	14.3	29.7/21.0	38	98/35	42 ¹ / ₄	40/29	3.5/34 ³ / ₄	155 ³ / ₄
Skoda Favorit 136LS	1289/63	90	15.6	40.0/24.3	38 ¹ / ₂	97/45	42	39 ³ / ₄ /27 ³ / ₄	3.7/33 ¹ / ₂	150 ¹ / ₄
Lada Samara 1.5SL	1499/75	99	12.4	28.6/20.3	38	103/55	40	39 ¹ / ₄ /27 ³ / ₄	3.7/34 ¹ / ₂	157 ³ / ₄
Rover Maestro 1.3 Clubman	1275/69	94	15.4	44.6/25.9	39	97/37	40 ¹ / ₂	39 ¹ / ₄ /27 ¹ / ₂	4.5/34 ¹ / ₂	157 ¹ / ₂