



FULL TEST ROVER 3500

“Flattering but to deceive...”

Disappointing performance makes the new Rover 3500 a lesser car than we first thought, but in other ways it's impressive. Paul Harrington investigates.

SORRY FOLKS! You can cancel our supposition that Leyland's new Rover 3500 might be the "Poor Man's Jaguar".

Boy! Were we ever wrong!

Apart from a speedo that might just as well not be there it's so inaccurate, the car accelerates much more like a sick Kenworth than a Jaguar.

It was a very big disappointment really as we expected far better from a car of this type. Unfortunately the ADRs and all the weight of the luxury appointments have conspired to turn the Rover into a superbly luxurious slug.

All this may appear a little unfair, and indeed, it hardly reflects well on the car's real worth, it's just that it LOOKS so quick just standing there in the roadway. It exudes a subtle sophisticated vitality that just cries out to be used. It flatters but to deceive.

That's just about the only real criticism we have of the Rover following our extended

road test. In all other respects we found it a joy.

And while it may not flash up to cruising speed in a rubber shredding burst of power, once it gets there it becomes a fine, even long legged touring car that consumes kilometres quietly, safely and even greedily!

We described the car in detail in our last edition, so here we will confine ourselves to its utility and performance.

There are few cars in the Rover's class that can boast so much useable space inside. Even with the boot used as such, rear seat room, with the front seats well back on their runners, is approaching Ford LTD class. And the seats themselves appear to provide excellent support in all areas, making for tireless long sittings at a time. Perhaps the squab could be a touch wider front to rear.

Careful attention to internal coloring — all in quiet soothing coded shades, has enhanced the feeling of peace and tranquility, even when the vehicle is moving at very high

speeds. For the nervous passenger, this machine is a true tonic. Hitting a curve at high speed results in little more than a slight amount of body roll, and those Michelin tyres just track true all the way, literally as though the car is on rails.

Though the suspension design is nothing to get excited about, combined with the effectiveness of the tyres it provides the sort of surefootedness reserved for high performance sports cars, rather than for luxury models of this type. The same applies to overall handling.

Power assisted rack and pinion steering provides sufficient feel for the driver to know exactly where he is going, and over rougher surfaces there's even a measure of kickback to let him know the car is alive. And alive it feels — not lively, just alive.

It's initial steering response is as good as any we've driven, and the complete feel is there all the way to whatever lock is needed. For such a long wheelbase chassis, it's un-

