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Rover: simply luxurious

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Rover 3500 V8
5-door hatchback sedan
\$19,990

Leyland Australia is poised to capture a major share of the luxurious car market with the Rover 3500 V8.

This car won the European Car of the Year Award in 1976 when it was released. It's been a long time coming to our shores, but that should not detract from its sales appeal.

The engineer responsible for the new Rover, Mr Spen King, was in Australia for the local launching and defended the design changes it incorporates.

The new car is a strong visual and conceptual break from the model it replaces.

The body styling has gone from a conventional three-box design to a more streamlined five-door hatchback.

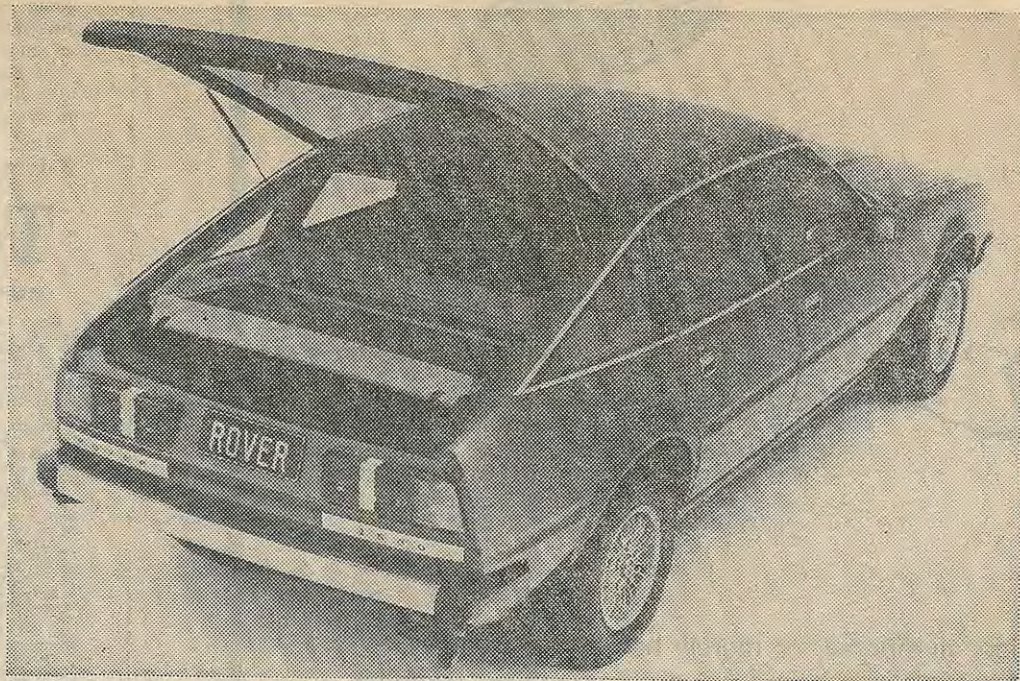
And under the skin the new car is much simpler in several respects.

But as Mr King said: "Some people may well compare the new Rover with the old P6 (the Rover 2000-3500 series) and say it is not so 'technical' in its specification."

This is absolutely true and it is quite deliberate. With the P6, in an age when people set great store by impressive specification, engineers enjoyed themselves using quite complex solutions to achieve the design requirements.

"On the new car we had to use much more subtlety and more intensive development to get equally impressive results from a 'simpler' design which would offer easier servicing, better reliability and generally better cost-effectiveness."

The simpler design solutions include replacement of the previous inboard rear disc brakes with self-adjusting large diameter drum brakes and fitting a live



The Rover 3500 ... a streamlined five-door hatchback.

rear axle and coil springs in place of the De Dion set-up for the P6.

Mr King has a right to feel proud about the results.

The car handles and brakes as well as it ever did.

It is a large and roomy vehicle with stylish "gran turismo" lines.

It is being sold in Australia in one specification — automatic transmission, power rack and pinion steering, air-conditioning, electrically powered windows, full instrumentation, AM/FM radio and stereo cassette player, Pirelli P3 steel belt radial tyres and central door locking.

The 3.5 litre V8 engine — an all-aluminium unit originally designed and used by Buick in the USA — offers good performance and reasonable economy.

It develops a maximum 120 kW power at 5,000 rpm and a maximum 245 Nm torque at 3,000 rpm. It is quiet, flexible and powerful and links well with the Borg-Warner 65 three-speed automatic transmission.

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With a final drive ratio of 3.08 to 1 the large and fairly heavy (1,428kg) car runs from rest to 100km/h in 11 seconds and covers a standing 400 metres in just under 19 seconds.

It handles and rides well.

The power-assisted rack and pinion steering needs only 2.75 turns lock to lock for a turning circle of 10.4 metres.

The Rover is a natural under-steerer at higher speeds but is responsive to throttle and steering commands. One unfortunate problem is the tendency of the Pirelli tyres to squeal noisily even when the car is being cornered at moderate speeds.

The suspension — front McPherson struts and rear live axle and coil springs — is a delightful compromise between comfort and control.

The new car is versatile, too.

Its large fifth door lifts well out of the way on gas struts to reveal

a large flat-floored and carpeted luggage area. If more bulky items are to be carried, the flick of a lever drops the rear seat back flat to floor, just like a station wagon.

The four passenger doors open wide to reveal an ultra-modern fashionably colour-keyed interior with soft fabrics and moulded plastic.

The new car is pleasant to drive. It's a little slow off the mark initially but it builds up speed impressively and is in fact fully capable of 160 km/h cruising.

Taken as a whole the new Rover is a car that offers buyers in the \$20,000 bracket more than any of its rivals. It's as well equipped in every regard, but its more versatile and attractive body design and V8 engine performance increase its competitive edge.

PRICE: \$19,990 (excluding registration, pre-delivery, options etc.)

ENGINE: Aluminium head and block V8 of 3,528cc developing a maximum 120 kW power at 5,000 rpm and maximum 245 Nm torque at 3,000 rpm. Bore and stroke 88.9mm x 71.2mm. Compression ratio 8.3 to 1.

TRANSMISSION: Borg Warner model 65 three-speed automatic with centre console-mounted stick shift.

STEERING: Power-assisted rack and pinion type with 2.75 turns lock to lock and 10.4m turning circle.

BRAKES: Power-assisted front discs of 1,370 sq cm and self-adjusting rear drums of 820 sq cm. Pressure-limiting valve between front and rear circuits.

SUSPENSION: Front: Independent by McPherson struts and anti-roll bar. Rear: Live axle, coil spring/damper units, radius rods, transverse location by Watts linkage with self-actuating ride-levelling units.

DIMENSIONS: Overall length 4.698m, width 1.768m, height 1.345m, wheelbase 2.815m, tracks front and rear 1.500m x 1.500m, ground clearance 155mm, kerb weight 1,428 kg. Wheels and tyres, 6J x 14 5-stud cast alloy wheels with 195/70 HR 14 tyres.