



photography by Patrick Byrne

Style and speed

Four cylinders, 16 valves, injection — and it flies

by Ewan Kennedy

ROVER'S NEW 416i, which was released in Australia in May, is a sophisticated, high-speed cruiser in the tradition of the long established British car company.

It's a thoroughly modern design with a twin cam, 16-valve engine coupled to a five-speed manual or four-speed automatic transmission which drives the front wheels. If the Rover company's founders were alive today they would be delighted with it but horrified to find it is built by the Japanese.

The five-door hatchback Rover is a re-badged Honda (the three-door version of the car, the Integra, is sold here by Honda, and we described that car in detail in Modern MOTOR, July) although it has some engineering input from Rover.

We recently covered a quick few hundred kilometres in a five-speed 416i. The car is a gem — far better than the old Rover (Honda) Quintet which it replaced. The 1.6 litre engine puts out an amazing 90 kW; that's 56.6 kW per litre.

If Ford's 4.1 litre fuel-injected engine worked as efficiently it would have an output of 232 kW or 310 bhp . . . instead of merely 121 kW.

Drag strip acceleration runs were marred by a slightly slipping clutch but we still managed a best standing 400 metres of 16.8 seconds, and a zero to 100 km/h of 9.8 seconds. In day-to-day driving there's no sign of clutch trouble but the engine needs extra revs to get off the line cleanly — a common problem with four-valve engines.

The transmission is smooth with precise changes and well-chosen ratios. Clutch pedal effort is light and the movement is easy but at times some testers found the side of their clutch foot getting caught on the underside of the left footrest momentarily.

Suspension is by struts and torsion bar springs at the front, and independent at the rear with a beam located by trailing arms and a Panhard rod. Anti-roll bars are fitted at both ends of the car. Ride comfort is good if a little on

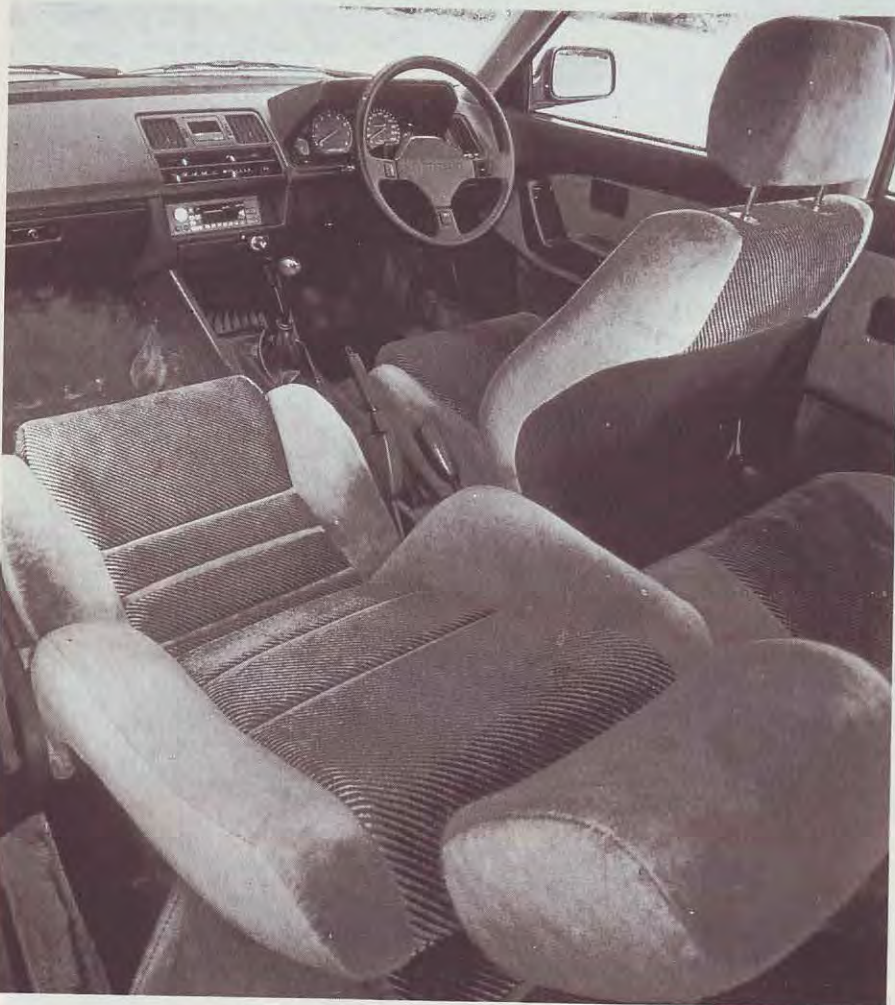
the firm side in the interests of handling. The Rover understeers moderately when the car is pushed and there's some roll oversteer when peddling very hard. The car is thrown off line, badly at times, if it hits bumps mid-corner. Throttle control over the handling attitude is precise, as it should be with the available power. There's some torque steer squirming when accelerating hard in rough conditions.

Brakes are disc at the front and drum at the rear — unlike the Integra which has four discs. The 416's brakes showed no sign of fade in testing.

The five-door Rover's body has a drag coefficient of 0.33 and offers plenty of comfort for four adults — although rear seat kneeroom is marginal if the four are tall. Rear headroom is adequate but only just. The front and rear seats are comfortable on a long trip.

The boot's depth is limited by intrusion of the spare wheel and we couldn't even fit the Correvit (our electronic timing machine) carrying case in prop-

ROVER 416i



erly – yet it fits comfortably into cars like the Civic and Corolla. A peculiar mistake from Honda.

The instruments are big and easy to read except the markings on the speedo make it difficult to tell at a glance if the car is doing 90 km/h or 100 km/h. Long-term owners would, presumably, get to know the needle's position and so assess the speed from that.

There's a host of standard equipment in the Rover 416i: power steering, electric windows, central door locking and electrically-adjusted outside mirrors.

The only major items which don't come as standard are air conditioning which costs \$1500, a sunroof at \$430 and metallic paint at \$460.

The sound system consists of a radio with stereo reception on both AM and FM, and a quality cassette.

Sound reproduction is good but we were surprised to find radio reception in weaker signal areas suffered more than in most cars tested recently.

The Rover is an extremely pleasant car to drive with a willing and responsive engine which even when driven hard on test still only used fuel at an average rate of 8.9 litres each hundred kilometres. The engineers at Honda have done their work extremely well.

At \$24,950 in manual form and \$26,910 with a four-speed automatic transmission with a lock-up torque converter, the Rover 416i is good value for money in today's market of inflated prices and makes an ideal family or personal transport. It should sell well against the likes of the BMW 318i, Citroen BX and Volvo 360, not to mention the Honda Accord . . .

ROVER 416i 1.6 litre, five-speed manual

ENGINE

Location	Front, transversely mounted
Cylinders	Four, in-line
Bore x stroke	75.0 x 90.0 mm
Capacity	1590 cm ³
Induction	Electronic fuel injection
Compression ratio	9.3 to 1
Fuel pump	Electric
Valve gear	Cog-belt driven dual OHC
Claimed power	90.0 kW at 6500 rpm
Claimed torque	142.0 Nm at 5000 rpm
Maximum recommended engine speed	7000 rpm
Specific power output	56.6 kW/litre

TRANSMISSION

Type	Five-speed manual
Driving wheels	Front
Clutch	Single, dry plate

Gearbox ratios

Gear	Ratio	km/h 1000 rpm	Max Speed	At (rpm)
First	3.181	8.3	58	7000
Second	1.944	13.7	96	7000
Third	1.347	19.7	138	7000
Fourth	1.033	25.7	180	7000
Fifth	0.878	30.2	196	6500
Final-drive ratio				4.066 to 1

SUSPENSION

Front	Independent by struts with torsion bars and anti-roll bar
Rear	Independent by trailing arms located by beam and Panhard rod with coil springs and anti-roll bar

Wheels	Alloy 5.0J x 13
Tyres	Michelin MXV 185/70 HR13

BRAKES

Front	242 mm discs
Rear	200 mm drums

STEERING

Type	Power assisted rack and pinion
Turns, lock to lock	3.6
Ratio	Variable to 1
Turning circle	9.8 metres

DIMENSIONS AND WEIGHT

Wheelbase	2520 mm
Front track	1420 mm
Rear track	1415 mm
Overall length	4350 mm
Overall width	1665 mm
Overall height	1345 mm
Ground clearance	165 mm
Kerb weight	1050 kg
Weight to power	11.7 kg/kW

CAPACITIES AND EQUIPMENT

Fuel tank	50.0 litres
Cooling system	4.6 litres
Engine oil system	3.5 litres
Battery	12V 60AH
Alternator	60 amps

CHECKLIST

Alloy wheels	Yes
Adjustable steering	Yes
Air-conditioning	(optional) Yes
Carpets	Yes
Central door locking	Yes
Clock	(digital LED) Yes
Intermittent wipers	Yes
Laminated screen	Yes
Petrol-filler lock	Yes
Power steering	Yes
Power windows	Yes
Radio	Yes
Tape player	Yes
Rear-window wiper	Yes
Remote outside mirror adjustment	(two, electric) Yes
Sun roof	No
Tachometer	Yes
Cruise control	No
Trip computer	No

FUEL CONSUMPTION

Average for test	8.9 litres/100 km
Best recorded	8.2 litres/100 km
Worst recorded	9.7 litres/100 km
AS 2877 City/Highway	8.0/6.8 litres/100 km

ACCELERATION

0-60 km/h	4.49 seconds
0-80 km/h	6.73 seconds
0-100 km/h	10.21 seconds
0-110 km/h	12.37 seconds
0-120 km/h	14.86 seconds
0-130 km/h	17.79 seconds
Standing 400 Metres	(128.8 km/h) 17.14 seconds

The above are averages of runs in opposite directions
Standing 400m, best (134.3 km/h) 16.82 seconds

Figures by Datron Correvit L3 digital electronic equipment

LIST PRICE	\$24,950
PRICE AS TESTED	\$26,910
Includes options: Air conditioning \$1500, metallic paint \$460	