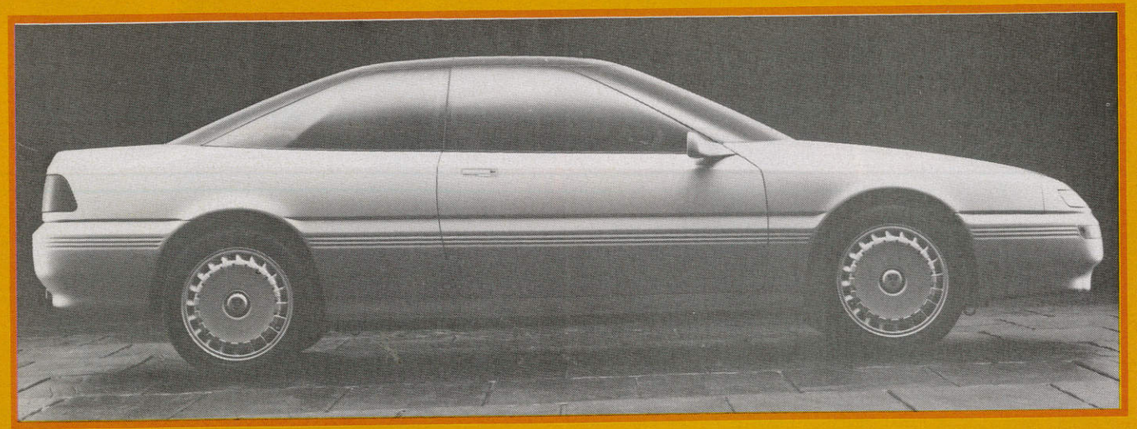
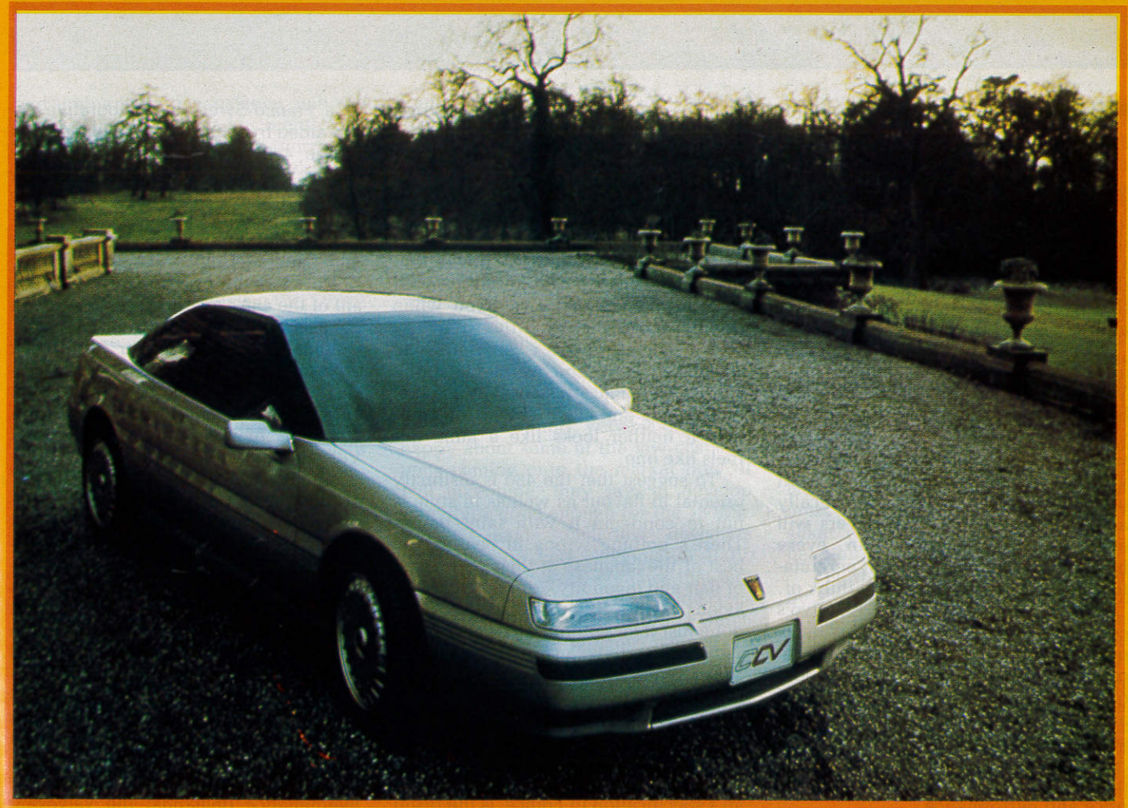
If you've got it, show it



Rover rising

Officially, Rover's show-stopping Coupe Concept Vehicle (a star of the Turin show) is just an eye-catching styling exercise. Another winner from the team that last year unveiled the striking MG EX-E, the CCV isn't intended for production. That's the stock answer. However we understand that the CCV, or a close copy, is in fact going to reach British showrooms in 1988. That's because Rover knows that if the imminent 800 is to fulfill its great potential, especially in the US and many other markets, the sedan must be supported by a coupe. The CCV show car, based on the 800 chassis and running gear, with 2.5-litre V6 engine, is therefore very much a market- feeler.

The CCV is both an extraordinarily handsome car by today's standards, and also a clear pointer to the future. The main body is slightly wedge-like with a waist line that rises along its length. The smooth, flush-glazed canopy is typical of what can be expected on many upmarket models in the '90s. It's topped here, as on the MG EX-E, by a ceramic-coated polycarbonate roofpanel over a steel frame. The slippery yet entirely practical shape has a predicted drag factor of only 0.28 and design chief Roy Axe believes that it could be translated intact to a proper working version. The doors, locked with a coded plastic card, open to a full four-seat cabin trimmed in leather and burr walnut. Thus despite the car's obvious modernity, Rover is playing heavily on what are seen by many people as traditional British qualities. And why not? The buyers love it. There's plenty of high-tech too, including variable height suspension and adjustable spoilers, both monitored on the LCD dash panel in either analogue or digital display according to taste. Compact disc and video cassette players and a mobile 'phone are other features of this design which bodes well for variants on the 800 theme and for Rover's sense of style. □