

CANADA

# TRACK & TRAFFIC

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## ROAD TESTING THE NEW ROVER 2000





## ROVER 2000

□ The introduction of this completely new car in England last year was accompanied by a good deal more tub-thumping than usually associated with the somewhat staid Rover Motor Company. We are happy to report, on the basis of our road test, that the Rover 2000 is well worth most of the publicity superlatives with which it was launched. In brief, what the Rover firm set out to do was to design, engineer and produce a product aimed specifically at the growing sports sedan market, one in which they were not particularly competitive. In so doing, they have put together a robust bit of car royalty that is not only chock-full of the traditionally-excellent Rover workmanship and appointments but owns sporty speed and maneuverability . . . all of it set in arm-chair comfort. It is essentially a four-door, four-seater sedan, with graceful lines which hint at a combination of both sports car and saloon. Rover officials, in announcing the availability of left-hand drive 2000s for the North American market, hope the car will lure some buyers away from the two-seater sports car class. At the suggested price (about \$4,000 in Canada) it may well give such other luxury makes as Jaguars a run for their money.

### coachwork

Body design of the 2000 is styled closely to that of the Rover prototype T4 gas turbine car developed in 1962. It has a low-dipping hood that provides wide-ranging visibility and carries a roof line that is rather reminiscent of a Citroen. Four headlights in horizontal alignment serve as book-ends for a tight little grille. An advanced feature in construction is that the doors, panels and roof are all "hung" on a base unit only after it is completely prepared - including electrical and running gear - and the skeleton car factory-tested. The body components can be lifted off easily, and separately, for repair.

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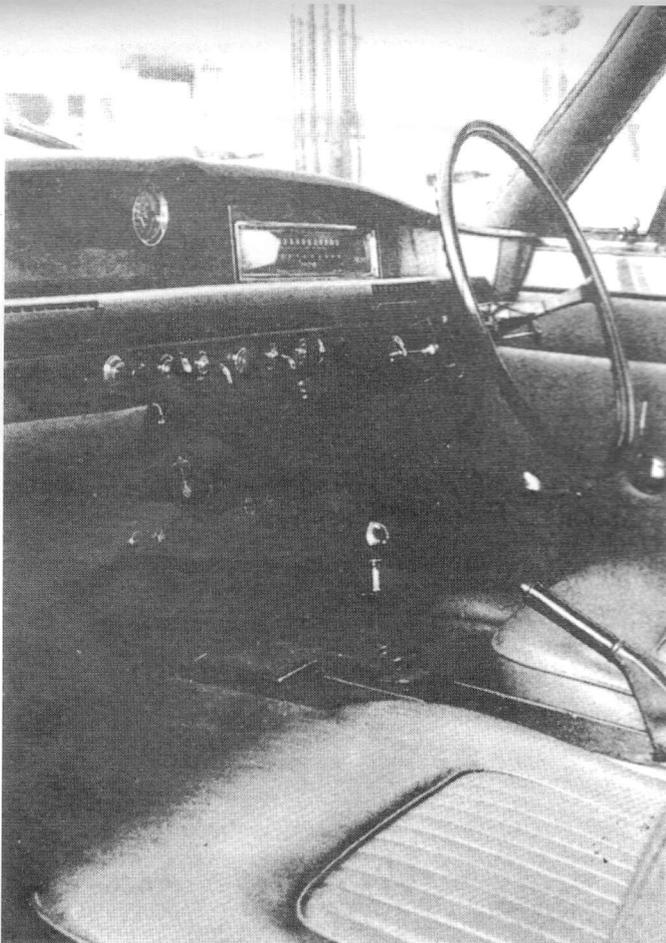


# ROVER

## 2000 *(continued)*

### interior

Luxury, comfort and safety are inescapable features to be noted upon climbing into a Rover 2000. The upholstery is of prime leather, with African walnut grain panelling the dashboard facia and window sills. Front bucket seats give excellent leg-room adjustability and the squabs can be raked back to a fully-reclining position. Rear seats are also of arm-chair design - with centre-arm rest - but will hold three passengers with the rest at rest, although we would not look forward to a cross-country trip under these circumstances. Padding abounds all around, including sun visors, parcel bins in front of the driver and front seat passenger, and the back side of the forward seats. The two-spoke steering wheel also can be adjusted for rake to suit individual needs and the rim is designed to "give" upon impact. Window space is of generous proportion and provides panoramic visibility. A steady supply of fresh air is available from special vents inset in the dashboard.

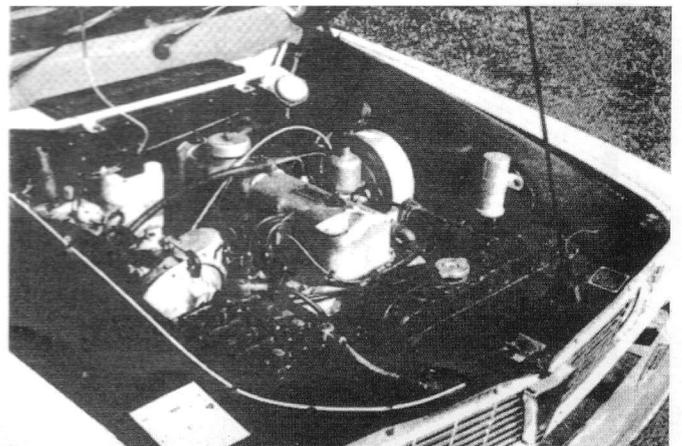
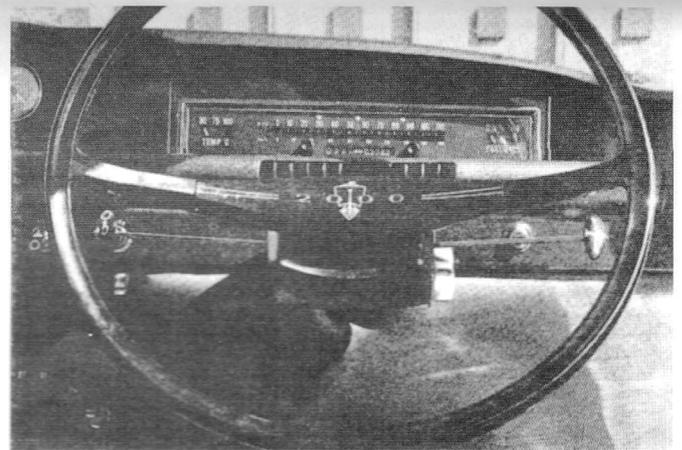


### instruments

Simplicity of design, operation and information is the keynote of the Rover's instrumentation. All the essential readings are contained in a single, strip-like panel set far enough in front of the driver's eyes to assure easy readability, in terms of switching from short-to-distant vision. These include the speedo, temperature and fuel gauges, general and trip odometer, turn signal indicators and warning lights for oil pressure, ignition, high beam headlights, emergency brake and starting choke. Switches for interior, parking and headlights, windshield washers and wipers are set horizontally along the facia rail.

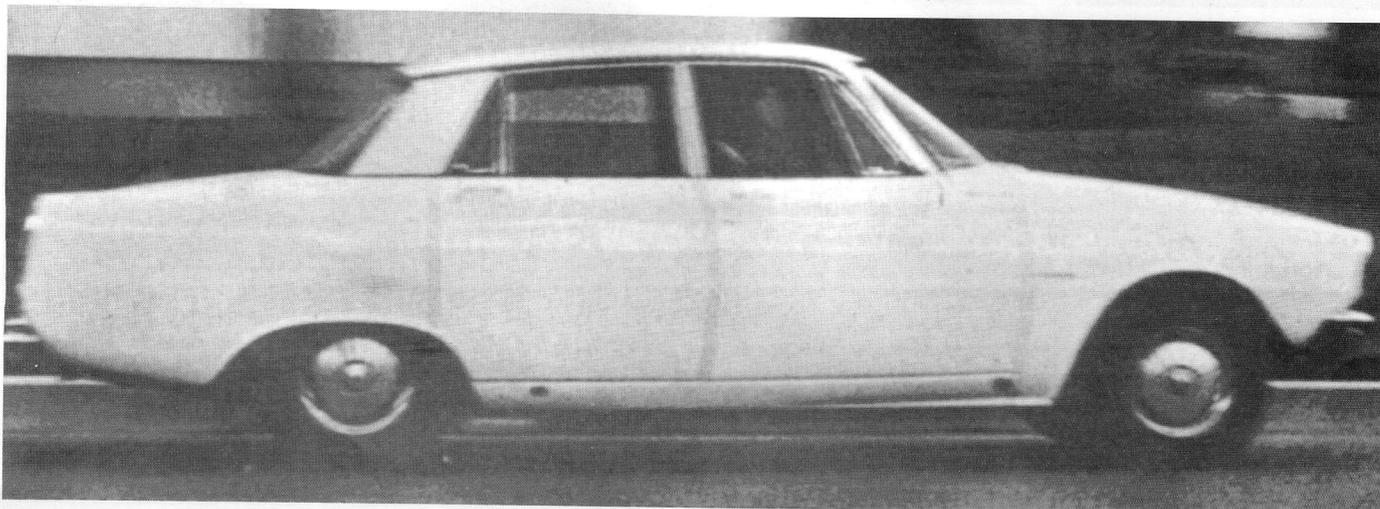
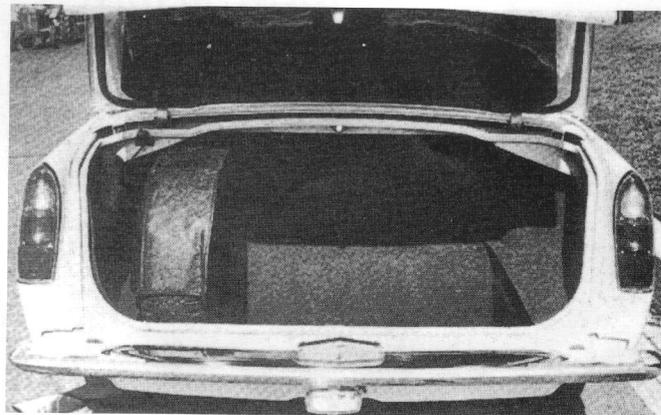
### engine

Rover engineers have developed an entirely new engine for the 2000 . . . a tough, four-cylinder, overhead camshaft power plant running smoothly on five large, copper-lead-lined crankshaft bearings. It puts out 90 bhp at 5,000 rpm, has a capacity of 1,978 cc and is 100 pounds lighter than any other Rover engine of comparable size, largely as a result of an aluminium head and the ohc lay-out. The engine is more than adequate for the car - especially zippy in the higher speed ranges - and fires up to maximum output with barely a murmur. One of the keys to its smoothness and efficiency is that combustion chambers are formed, not in the cylinder heads, but by hollow, rounded crowns in the pistons, all unhampered by valve heads.



## trunk

There is ample space (over 16 cubic feet) hidden in the deep-set trunk to accommodate the most clothes-conscious of travellers. The compartment is lined in rubber-plastic trim and includes a spare wheel cover and an interior light. The spare may be stashed in either upright or horizontal position and, as an option, an extra fitting is available for mounting it on the outside of the trunk lid, Continental-style. Indicative of the careful workmanship in the Rover is the fact the trunk lid is so closely fitted it cannot be slammed shut, but should be pressed down gently to prevent building up inside air compression.



## handling

The Rover people have done wonders developing a suspension system of exceptional road-holding ability that also provides a limousine-like ride. It is, to a great extent, revolutionary, especially the front end mountings. Suspension is independent at all four corners, the back wheels (always parallel) attached to a de Dion system with a sliding tube, a device developed by Rover engineers. An unusual feature up front is that the normal upright positioning of coil springs has been discarded in favor of horizontal mountings. In this arrangement, the coils are attached directly to the box-section steel bulkhead between engine and front seats, thus shifting road stresses and wheel reaction to the solid central base unit. The ride is incredibly shock-proof and the navigation of corners and curves is of sports car quality. Handling throughout all speed ranges is light and positive, the Rover being a particularly even-keeled creature with a fast-responding steering gear that offers a 3.75 lock-to-lock turning ratio.

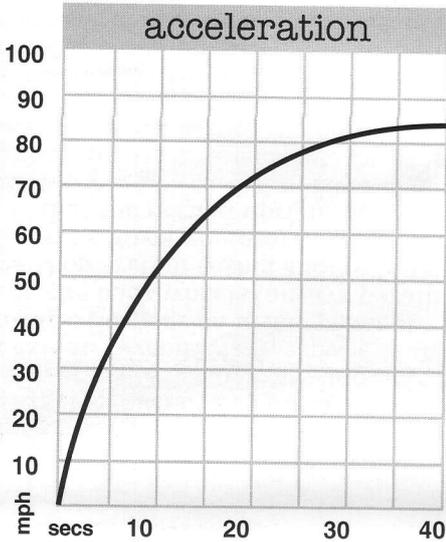
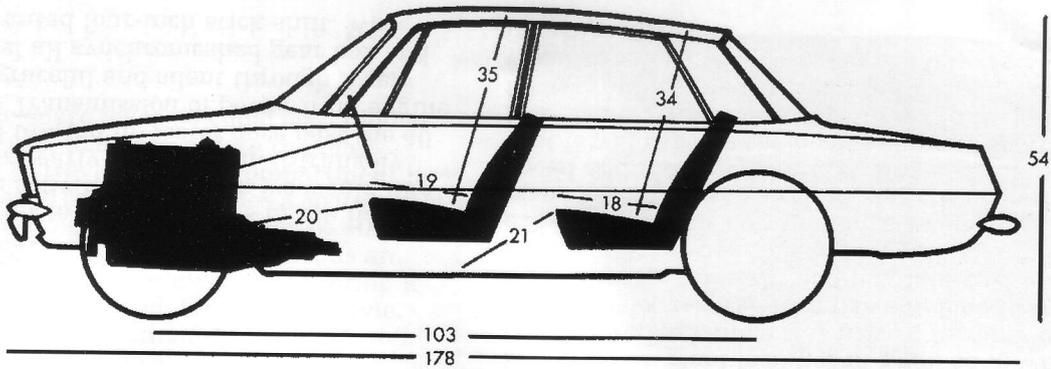
## performance

It is very difficult to pick any holes in the Rover 2000 performance activities, although we would like to see a shade more early acceleration. (Strangely enough, it seemed to wind up faster once past the 40 to 50 mph range.) Transmission of power from engine to rear wheels is graceful and silent through a very compact four-speed all synchromeshed gear box and a sporty, floor-mounted four-inch stick shift. We

ran the 0-60 mph acceleration test in 13.2 seconds and climbed to 80 mph in a fraction over 28 seconds, which is the type of agility that should satisfy all but the most rabid speed appetites. The brakes are outstandingly effective, being of hefty disc variety on all four wheels. We pitched to a full stop in 5.1 seconds from 80 mph and there was no indication of fade or distortion during the entire braking trials. Another surprising feature of the 2000 is its economy of fuel consumption, considering its size, weight and speed - up to 35 mpg in the 50-60 mph range and 25 to 30 mpg even at 70-70 mph! It will shoot up to around 105 mph and offers great comfort of cruising at 90 mph.

## summary

The Rover Company has spent around \$32,000,000 building new plant facilities in England in which to produce and assemble this newest member of the family. Obviously the firm has not done so without a good deal of foresight and planning and now must look to market popularity of the 2000 to justify the expenditure. It is our opinion, considering the car's many fine features - such as suspension and stability, speed and safety, comfort, styling and luxury - that it will capture the hearts of many sports sedan lovers and give other competitive makes good cause for regrouping their marketing forces. For those who can afford the price, the 2000 is well worth investigating.

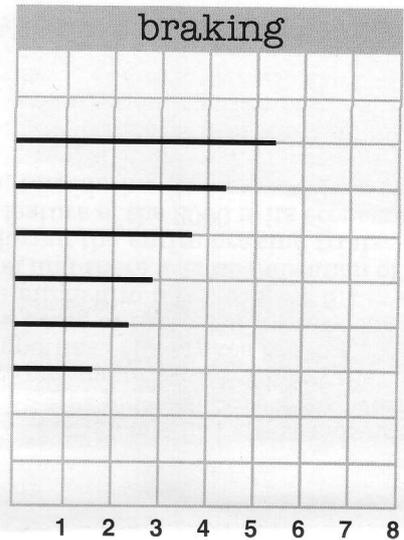


**performance**

**ACCELERATION**  
 0-30 - 4.8 seconds  
 0-40 - 7.3 seconds  
 0-50 - 9.2 seconds  
 0-60 - 13.2 seconds  
 0-70 - 19.1 seconds  
 0-80 - 28.2 seconds

**SPEEDS IN GEARS**  
 1st - 29 mph  
 2nd - 52 mph  
 3rd - 81 mph  
 4th - 105 mph

**PASSING SPEEDS**  
 30-50 - 5.6 seconds  
 40-60 - 7.7 seconds  
 50-70 - 9.2 seconds  
 60-80 - 12.1 seconds



## ROVER 2000

TEST CAR COURTESY  
 THE ROVER MOTOR COMPANY OF NORTH AMERICA LTD.

**ENGINE -**  
**Location:** front  
**No. of cylinders:** 4  
**Head type:** OHC  
**Compression ratio:** 9:1  
**Carburetors:** one, SU type HS6  
**Cooling:** water  
**Bore:** 3.375"  
**Stroke:** 3.375"  
**Displacement:** 1,978 cc's (120.8 cu. in.)  
**BHP:** 90 SAE @ 5,000 rpm  
**Torque:** 113.5 lb. ft. @ 2,750 rpm

**TRANSMISSION -**  
**No. forward speeds:** 4  
**No. syncro:** 4  
**Gear ratios:** 1st: 3.625; 2nd: 2.133; 3rd: 1.391; 4th: 1.0  
**Axle ratio:** 3.54:1

**DIMENSIONS -**  
**Wheelbase:** 103"  
**Track f and r:** 53.3"/52.5"  
**Length:** 178.5"  
**Width:** 66"  
**Height:** 54.75"  
**Ground clearance:** 8.5"  
**Hip room (front):** 56.25"  
**Hip room (rear):** 55.5"

**Fuel capacity:** 12 imperial gallons  
**Weight, curb:** 2,767 pounds

**Weight distribution**  
**front:** 53.7%  
**rear:** 46.3%

**Tire size:** 165 x 14

**STEERING -**  
**Type:** worm and roller  
**Turns lock to lock:** 3.75  
**Turning circle:** 31.5 feet

**SUSPENSION -**  
**Front:** independent, leading top link, transverse bottom link, coil springs  
**Rear:** independent, de Dion sliding tube, Watt's linkage, coil springs

**BRAKES -**  
**Front:** disc  
**Rear:** disc  
**Total swept area:** 436 sq. in.

**STANDARD EQUIP.-**  
 back-up light, power-assisted brakes, reclining front bucket seats, adjustable rake on steering wheel

**PRICE AS TESTED -** \$3,985

[Only \$3885\* And We'll Throw In The Body]



## THE ROVER 2000 SPORTS SEDAN AS SHOWN ABOVE WILL DO EVERYTHING BUT SHINE AND SHED WATER.

**D**ON'T TAKE OUR WORD, take three neighbors and test drive it - at 100 m.p.h. if you live on the Bonneville Salt Flats - and do it brilliantly if breezily.

The 2000's unique suspension (de Dion rear, independent front) is built around revolutionary radial tires. This makes the ride soft and smooth and the road-holding and cornering good; it may be the best-handling production car made. And there are power-assisted disc brakes all around.

Having amazed your friends you can then please their eyes (and hairdo's) by having the outside body - 19 fitted panels - bolted on.

Why did we take it off in the first place? We didn't. What you see above is the 2000 *before*, as it is built. The overhead members are, as you can see, akin to the "roll-bar" of a racing car.

(Note also that the steering wheel is not mounted on a javelin aimed at your vitals. Gloomy features, perhaps, but they are there.)

The point is, that while the 2000's exterior body is certainly sturdy, you aren't utterly dependent on it any more than you'd depend on wallpaper to hold the ceiling up.

If you'd like to know more ask a Rover Dealer or write us at any of the below.

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\*\$3985 West Coast. For places in between the price is in between.

