351C.I. FAIRLANE 500 / DATSUN 1000 FASTBACK / CORONA 1900 S.L.

MOTOR MANUAL

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TEST 115MPH ROVER. V8!

THREE THOUSAND FIVE

SMOOTH, DIGNIFIED AND SILENT motoring has always been a hallmark of Rover cars.

But coupled to this aura of plush comfort has been a gentlemanly rate of progress geared more to the leisurely pace of living of 30 or 40 years ago than to the jet set do-it-now mood of today.

It's doubtful that the Rover company (now part of the giant British Leyland Motor Corporation) has ever received many owner complaints about lack of power in any of its models, but as a concession to modern trends, it was decided in 1967 to do something about updating the traditional olde-world Rover image.

This updating took the form of a lightweight 3.5 litre V8 engine developed by General Motors of America, but scrapped because it was too expensive.

However, the Rover company decided that it was in a position to do something about absorbing the extra cost involved in producing the all-alloy V8 and subsequently bought all manufacturing rights from the American company.

The engine first appeared in the Rover 3.5 and being both lighter and more powerful than the previous in-line cast iron six, it provided instant benefits in both performance and handling.

But although the smooth, free-revving powerplant made all the difference to the big and bulky top-dog Rover, it was not until it was slotted into the sleek, up-to-date body of the 2000 that its true benefits were to be appreciated.

Claimed to be identical in weight to the straight four powerplant of the 2000, the V8 has the sort of torque and power required for today's motoring conditions.

It lifts the solid Rover bodywork along in effortless fashion, yet does not upset the balance of the car to any great degree. All the traditional dignity is still there, but the gentle push in the back and the swiftly moving horizontal speedometer ribbon indicate that this is Rover motoring for the seventies.

Borg Warner three speed automatic is the only transmission available in the Three Thousand Five, but apparently the company at one time was toying with the idea of a manual five speed ZF box, an idea which sadly seems to have been rejected.

However the Borg Warner unit is competently handled by the motor's 184 bhp and its 226 ft./lb. of torque, the only noticeable point where any power is lost being during initial acceleration.

By comparison with some of the larger-capacity V8-powered cars around today, the Rover retains a certain amount of dignity when getting off the line and there is simply no technique known which can be used to induce wheelspin. The car simply gathers pace at an ever-increasing rate, swallowing up the bitumen in deceptively rapid fashion. No road noise, virtually no wind noise—only a deep muted growl from the engine compartment to give any indication of just how fast the car is travelling.

It is in this department that the Three Thousand Five comes out in front of both the 2000 SC and its slightly hotter stablemate, the 2000 TC.

Some ground is lost in handling and roadholding, but the extra poke makes the V8-engined car faster from point to point.

"Rover motoring for the seventies"

THREE THOUSAND FIVE

Like the 2000, it is an understeering car, but this characteristic is more pronounced, tending to be magnified by the low-geared steering. Steering action is light enough, even at parking speeds, to warrant a slightly smaller rim (the wheel currently used is enormous by modern standards) and such a move would be a decided improvement.

Notwithstanding, the 3500 has both handling and roadholding of standards that would put most similarly-sized cars to shame.

Shod with imported Avon radials, our test car pounded through fast corners with the feeling of security that comes from well-designed and properly-balanced suspension. Body lean was quite noticeable from outside the car but the superbly shaped seats held passengers securely in place.

As cornering speeds increased, so too did the understeer, there being virtually nothing that could be done as a countermeasure.

Obviously, the car is set up to respond predictably to the equally predictable panic reactions of the slow-reflexed middle aged drivers to whom most 3500 sales will go. The good thing about the car's behaviour under extreme conditions is that it doesn't develop any of those nasty traits which tend to get so many drivers into trouble.

Apart from the slight loss in handling finesse, the car feels virtually the same as its smaller-engined brother.

Brakes, for instance, are the same excellent all-disc setup, with those at the rear mounted inboard to reduce unsprung weight and to improve cooling.

Seating arrangements are identical, with firm, but well-shaped buckets at both front and rear and the front backrests are designed to collapse backwards in the event of the car being hit from behind.

The only giveaways on the instrument panel are the 140 mph speedometer and the V8 insignia on the central radio speaker grille.

All switches are mounted so they can be reached without fumbling and despite their seeming complexity it is quite easy to familiarize oneself with the various operations.

Unlike the 2000, the 3500 boasts full-flow ventilation, air being vented into the interior through slots on the leading edge of the dashboard and extracted through hidden vents in the rear quarter panel.

The selecter lever for the automatic transmission is located on a central floor console which, shamefully, is not illumunated at night. It is designed to allow the driver to shift gears "manually" or to provide fully automatic operation. Position "1" selects and holds first ratio, position "2" locks the transmission in second and "D" leaves it to sort things out for itself.

Actually, our test car was tending to upshift far too early even when full kickdown was being used and we found that it performed much more satisfactorily when we made full use of the manual over ride.

The driving position was excellent, what with the fully-adjustable seating and the steering wheel that could be moved on a vertical plane to suit the most fastidious and peculiarly-shaped driver, and, as happens every time we step out of a Rover, we found ourselves being over-critical of lesser cars.

And, indeed, there are a good many cars that fall into this category.

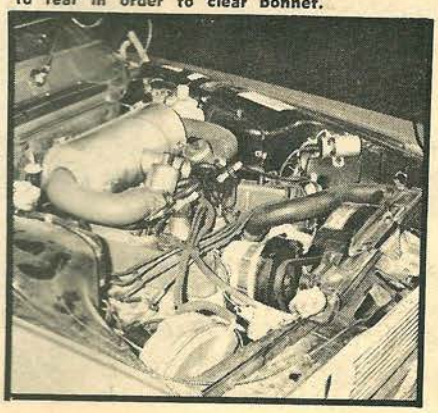
The Rover 3500, at just under $6000, falls short of the "poor man's Rolls" classification that the marque once enjoyed, but one gets a lot more for the money today.

The V8 motor brings the car right up to 1969 standards—the chassis engineering and body design is still way ahead of the pack.

Above: Driving position is excellent, although wheel is somewhat larger than it need be.

Left: Body lean on fast corners is less noticeable from inside car. Note how de Dion suspension maintains camber of outside rear wheel.

Below: V8 engine has aircleaner mounted well to rear in order to clear bonnet.



MOTOR MANUAL ROAD TEST

ROVER 3500

CAR FROM: Regent Motors, Sturt St., South Melbourne.
PRICE AS TESTED: $5970 (plus radio).
OPTIONS FITTED: Radio.

ENGINE:
Type .... Alloy V8 OHV
Bore and stroke, 88.9 mm x 71.12 mm.
Capacity .... 3528 cc
Compression ratio 10.5:1
Power (gross), 184 bhp at 5200 rpm
Torque, 226 ft./lbs. at 3000 rpm

TRANSMISSION:
Three-speed Borg Warner automatic.
Floor-mounted lever.

CHASSIS:

Wheelbase	103.4 inches
Length	178.5 inches
Track F.	53 inches
Track R.	51.7 inches
Width	66 inches
Clearance (minimum)	6 inches
Test weight	2862 lbs.
Fuel capacity	15 gallons

SUSPENSION:
Front: Independent, McPherson strut type, with horizontal coil springs; telescopic shock absorbers.
Rear: Independent, De Dion tube with coil springs and telescopic shock absorbers.

BRAKES: Power assisted
Front: Disc.
Rear: Disc (inboard).

STEERING:
Type: Worm and roller.
Turning circle: 31.5 feet.
Turns lock to lock: 4.5.

WHEELS/TYRES:
Ventilated steel wheels, with 185 x 14 Avon Radial ply tyres.

PERFORMANCE:
Zero to:

30 mph	4.1 seconds
40 mph	5.7 seconds
50 mph	7.7 seconds
60 mph	10.1 seconds
70 mph	13.4 seconds
80 mph	17.7 seconds
90 mph	NA
100 mph	NA

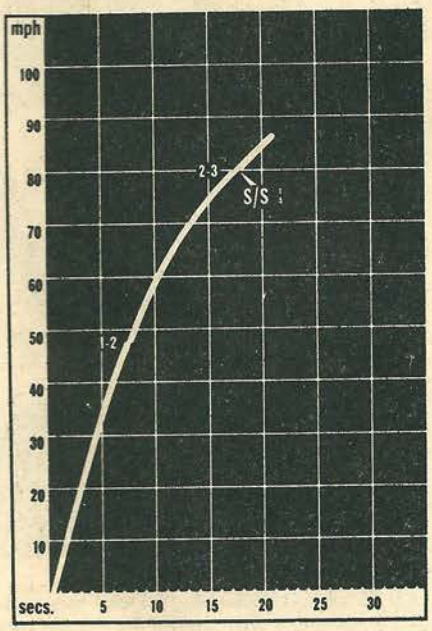
Standing quarter mile, 17.7 seconds.
Fuel consumption on test, 21.4 mpg on super fuel.
Fuel consumption (expected), 22-26 mpg.
Cruising range, 360 miles.

SPEEDOMETER ERROR:

Indicated	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Actual	30	40	50	58	68	76	NA	NA

MAXIMUM SPEEDS IN GEARS:

1st	48 mph
2nd	80 mph
3rd	114 mph



ACCELERATION

DRIVER COMMENTS

ENGINE:

Starting	Very good
Response	Good
Vibration	Nil
Noise	Low

STEERING:

Effort	Moderate
Response	Very good
Road feel	Very good
Kickback	Nil

SUSPENSION:

Ride comfort	Very good
Roll resistance	Good
Pitch Control	Very good

HANDLING:

Directional control	Very good
Predictability	Very good
Resistance to sidewind	Very good

BRAKES:

Pedal pressure	Moderate
Response	Excellent
Fade resistance	Very good
Directional stability	Very good

CONTROLS:

Wheel position	Excellent
Pedal position	Very good
Gearshift position	Very good
Panel controls	Very good

INTERIOR:

Ease of entry/exit	Very good
Noise level	Low
Front seat comfort	Excellent
Front leg-room	Very good
Front head-room	Very good
Rear seat comfort	Excellent
Rear leg-room	Good
Rear head-room	Very good
Instrument comprehensiveness	Fair
Instrument legibility	Very good

VISION:

Forward	Very good
Front quarter	Very good
Side	Very good
Rear quarter	Very good
Rear	Very good

CONSTRUCTION QUALITY:

Sheet metal	Very good
Paint	Very good
Chrome	Very good
Upholstery	Excellent
Trim	Excellent

GENERAL:

Headlights, highbeam, ...	Very good
Headlights, lowbeam	Good
Parking/signal lights	Good
Wiper coverage	Fair
Wipers at speed	Good
Maintenance accessibility	Fair
Luggage space	Fair