

Rover 75 Tourer

Featured model: 2.0CDT Club SE Automatic



THE 75 IS THE OFFSPRING OF A failed marriage. A lot of BMW money and know-how went into its development and, indeed, this diesel version uses an engine that's also seen (with more power) in the current BMW 320d.

The 75 Tourer follows Audi's A4 Avant, however – it's not a serious load carrier, but exudes the opulence, together with the versatility, that no four-door saloon with a boot can manage. A shallow load deck hinges, with gas strut assistance, to reveal more space for odds and ends beneath it – especially if you remain content with the standard "space-saver" spare wheel; long objects can be fed through a separately opening tailgate window.

Everywhere is impeccably trimmed – for passengers and luggage – and there are no rattles; indeed, unless you look over your shoulder, you would never know this was an estate car. This applies to its road manners as well, which are always relaxing and dignified.

In this respect, our car's automatic gearbox suited the 75 to a tee, because it's unobtrusive and sensibly throttle-sensitive in D, without ever becoming frantic. It coasts (or freewheels) below 42mph on the overrun and the S (Sport) position inhibits its fifth gear until past 60mph. There isn't much to lament until you visit the fuel forecourt – this kind of 'box is as short on mechanical efficiency as it's long on user-friendliness.

The 75 is a gratifying car to drive, but not if you're looking for sharp responsiveness. It's absolutely faithful to the original Rover

tradition of the "gentleman's carriage". A walnut dash and parchment-coloured dials confirm the intention, but think twice before going for leather seats – this Club's cloth seats are more enveloping and supportive. The brakes, too, have an old-fashioned, more gently graduated response than many counterparts'. A 22kg (50lb) pedal pressure to attain an excellent emergency best stop is heavier than many these days, but it enhances proper progression and control, once you're used to it.

All the equipment and options work effectively and are simpler to fathom than most; our trip computer was well-nigh accurate, the cruise control precise and the easy-to-work audio system had a rich sound. But at the price, too much equipment is on the options list. The climate control is standard, however, and works effectively (and in most situations automatically), with plenty of cooler fresh air when required.

VERDICT

The 75's mixed parentage has produced a modern car that's both well built and full of individualism. It feels as British as its forbear, the Rover 2000 of the sixties. The Tourer treatment enhances its utility without detracting one jot from its dignity. More power and parsimony from this diesel are all that we were left hankering after.

AT A GLANCE

considering size, price and rivals

Overtaking ability	☆☆○○○
Space/practicality	☆☆☆☆○
Controls/displays	☆☆☆☆○
Safety	☆☆☆☆○
Handling/steering	☆☆☆☆○
Comfort	☆☆☆☆○

SPECIFICATION

engine 1951cc, 4-cylinder, diesel; 116bhp at 4000rpm, 192 lb ft at 2000rpm; chain-driven double overhead camshafts, 16 valves

transmission 5-speed automatic, front-wheel drive; 30.9 mph/1000rpm in 5th, 22.7 in 4th

suspension front: independent damper/struts, integral coil springs, sub-frame mounted Rear: Z-axis with coil springs, trailing and transverse links

steering hydraulic power assistance; 3.2 turns lock-to-lock; 11.35m diameter turning circle between kerbs (17.5m for one turn of the wheel)

brakes ventilated discs front, solid discs rear, with electronic anti-skid (ABS) and brake force distribution

wheels/tyres 6in alloy with 215/55R16W tyres (Continental Contact on test car); temporary spare

LIKES ...

easy-to-fathom stalks and switches
lot of cooler face-level air all round
opening window within tailgate
plethora of oddments spots

and GRIPES

auto tailgate heating below 10°C
no "proper" spare wheel
many good features cost extra
doors/seat height awkward for elderly

THE RANGE

size and type upper medium (premium priced) estate car

trim levels Classic/SE, Club/SE, Connoisseur/SE

engines petrol: 4 cylinder/1.8 litre/120bhp, V6/2.0/150, V6/2.5/177; diesel: 4/1.95/116

drive front-wheel drive, 5-speed manual; (5-speed stepped automatic with torque converter available on all versions)

OVERTAKING ABILITY			☆☆○○○		
<i>Not a swift performer; redeems itself by being subdued (inside especially) and totally free of lower-speed vibration – in automatic form at least. Selector lacks proper sequential manual mode</i>					
acceleration in seconds	auto shift – 4250rpm		manual hold to 4600rpm		
20-40mph	4.2		4.2		
30-50mph	5.4		5.7		
40-60mph	7.0		7.2		
50-70mph	9.2		9.5		
30-70mph	14.6		15.2		
max speed in each gear (*using autoshift/4250rpm for best acceleration)					
gear	①*	②*	③*	④*	⑤
speed (mph)	24	42	66	96	112½

SPACE AND PRACTICALITY ★★☆☆			
<i>Lacks load height, but more stowage room below the deck and sensible, lined trays and cubbies abound. Self-folding mirrors (extra) worth having</i>			
<i>in centimetres (5-door estate)</i>	inside († with sunroof)		
outside	front - legroom 86-114		
length 479	- headroom 91-98†		
width - inc mirrors 197	rear - typical leg/ 105/		
- mirrors folded 187	kneeroom 80		
height (+ roof bars) 143(+5)	- headroom 94		
load sill height 0/	- hiproom 131-132		
(inside/outside) 58	load space (all seats in use)		
steering	(litres/cu ft) 390/13.7		
turns lock-to-lock 3.2	load length 100-78		
turning circle (metres) 11.35	full length to fascia No		
easy to park/garage?	load width 96-122		
★★★☆☆	load height (to shelf/ 35/		
	to top of aperture) 67		

CONTROLS AND DISPLAYS ★★☆☆	
<i>Long cushions can give shorter types excessive thigh support. Otherwise, good (albeit low) seating, easy-to-fathom minor controls and lots of legroom all round</i>	



HOW THE ROVER 75 TOURER COMPARES										
	engine cyl/cap/power (no/cc/bhp)	revs at 70mph (rpm)	30-70mph through gears (sec)	30-70mph in 5th/4th gears (sec)	fuel economy (mpg)	brakes – best stop from 50mph (m/kg)	maximum legroom - front (cm)	typical leg/ kneeroom - rear (cm)	steering turns/ circle (m)	overall length (cm)
ROVER 75 2.0 CDT	4/1951/116	2260	14.6	auto	38½	27/22	114	105/80	3.2/11.35	479
BMW 320d (man) †	4/1951/136	2400	9.5	22.8/14.7	49½	24/17	112	98/74	3.3/10.6	447
Peugeot 607 2.2 HDi	4/2179/136	2350	14.5 ^(e)	auto	38	NA	112	102/76	3.2/11.3 ^(m)	487
Volvo S60 2.0 TS (p)	5/1984/180	2880	8.4	20.0/15.3	30	25/16	115	98/73	3.0/11.5	458
Citroën C5 1.8 5 door (p)	4/1749/117	3210	10.9	26.9/20.9	37½	26½/22	109	99/77	3.2/10.7	462
Audi A4 Avant 2.0 (p)	4/1984/130	3170	9.9	25.4/16.9	34	25/18	112	97/70	2.9/10.8	455
† previous (2000) version (p) petrol version			^(e) estimated			* with ABS			^(m) maker's figure	

SAFETY ★★☆☆	
<i>Room for improvement to security – especially to load area – but excellent safety in both accident and injury prevention</i>	
braking	dry road stopping distance
pedal feel ★★☆☆	from 50mph (with standard ABS)
in emergency ★★☆☆	pedal load distance
handbrake ★★☆☆	unhurried 10kg 39m
	sudden 22kg 27m best stop
	+4kg ie 26kg 27½m

EURO NCAP CRASH TEST RATINGS – June 2001			
front impact	88%	side impact	89%
overall	88% ★★☆☆	pedestrian rating	★★☆☆

SECURITY FEATURES			
central locking ✓		deadlocks ✓	
remote control ✓		alarm ✓	
auto window closure ✗		immobiliser ✓	
		luggage security	
✓ standard	0 factory option	✗ not available	

HANDLING AND STEERING ★★☆☆	
<i>Steady-as-she-goes steering belies underlying stability and grip. Poised and always dignified in its responses</i>	



COMFORT ★★☆☆	
<i>The 75's forté – very comfortable, absorbent ride, superb noise control and heating/ventilation that gives side-to-side (as well as up-and-down) variation. No sign of estate car uncouthness</i>	

FUEL ECONOMY ★★☆☆	
<i>Typically, the user-friendly automatic plays havoc with diesel's frugality – Rover's figures admit to a 16 per cent penalty. Does best on main roads; gentle driving around the lanes unrewarding. Good filler and range</i>	

type of use (air conditioning off)	AA test (mpg)
urban (17mph average/heavy traffic)	23
suburban (27mph average/6.4 miles from cold start)	29
motorway (70mph cruising)	45
cross-country (brisk driving/20 miles from cold start)	38
rural (gentle driving/20 miles from cold start)	40
typical mpg overall	38½
realistic tank capacity/range	58 litres/490 miles
official mpg (urban/extra urban/combined)	28.3/54.7/40.9
CO ₂ emissions 190 g/km	car tax band D