

Rover Montego 2.0DLX Turbo

What's new . . .

Two-stage fuel injection delivery to improve mechanical refinement, plus lower gearing to benefit lower-speed driveability. It's a greener diesel now, too.



This Montego nowadays sits alongside the Maestro D and the 218/418, to give Rover buyers a choice of three types of diesel power. The Maestro is, of course, a non-turbocharged version of the Montego's Perkins-developed direct-injection engine. The 218/418, on the other hand, is an indirect-injection unit bought in from Peugeot-Citroën.

Greater efficiency

As we said before, direct injection promises better combustion efficiency and with it, improved mpg; the struggle is to control noise and harshness. By introducing the fuel more progressively, the diesel knock is better quelled and burning is more complete. This helps to reduce tail-pipe pollutants, including sooty smoke – the visible offence that puts a lot of people off diesels.

The latest Montego still feels noisy and rough first thing in the morning, until it has got into its stride after the initial half mile. Thereafter, however, it now mounts a serious challenge to indirect-injection rivals

from Ford and Volkswagen; the Peugeot unit is arguably still more refined. Nevertheless, it can't match this Montego/Maestro's fuel economy. With or without a turbo, 50mpg remains impressive for a 2.0-litre diesel, even if 3mpg has been sacrificed in the quest for better refinement and response.

Lower gearing

In fact, the shorter-legged stride of the latest Montego DLX suits it well on British roads. It's still only cantering at the 70mph limit, yet fifth and fourth gear acceleration prove much more useable. The all-important 30–70mph fourth gear time is down from 27½ to 22sec – and the difference is no less than 10sec-plus in top. We detected a slight loss of acceleration when revving through the gears, but it needs a stopwatch to really notice it.

The academic 4mph loss in top speed is due to the new matching of gearing with the governed engine speed – the latest car's 98mph is achieved in fifth, not fourth, so top gear can be used much more without

over-stressing things. A comparison of the performance tables reveals all.

Ageing with dignity

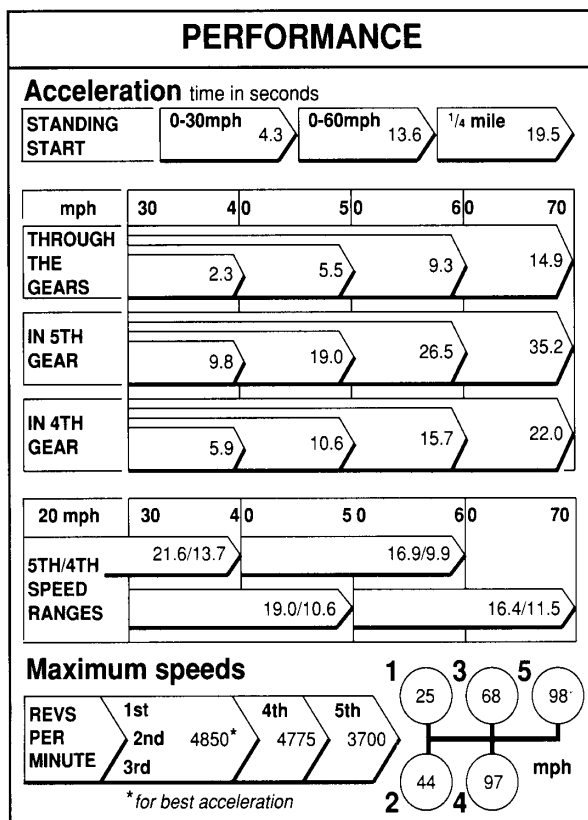
You're hardly likely to buy a Montego diesel in an attempt to improve your image. The model looks pretty long-in-the-tooth and the Rover 218/418 is still much better at turning heads. However, disinterested passengers love the back seat while you, the driver, can relish the model's reluctance to consume fuel. Even Rover's inability to make the best of tank range by providing alarmist fuel gauges on all its cars, still can't alter the fact that you travel a long way between forecourt stops in this diesel.

VERDICT

There are swifter diesels and there are quieter ones – even the possibility of one or two that can match the Montego's present level of fuel economy. What's clever about the Montego, however, is that

it now delivers an impressive mixture of these three attributes.

With a showroom price that's now closer to the petrol version's than was formerly the case, the DLX Turbo establishes a strong, feet-on-the-ground argument in its favour. It's a sound buy for people who are more interested in the substance than the image.



FUEL CONSUMPTION

Fuel grade for tests: diesel

Normal range	mpg
Hard driving, heavy traffic	38
Short journeys in the suburbs	44
Motorway – 70mph cruising	47
Brisk driving, mixed roads	52
Gentle driving – rural roads	60
Typical mpg overall	50
Realistic tank range	40 litres/440 miles

*based on gauge/warning lamp and filling station experience

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Same as for Montego 2.0DL Turbo (see R8952) except for:

ENGINE

Fuel system direct-injection diesel, with mechanical two-stage injection pump and turbo-charger – no intercooler. 50-litre (11-gallon) tank and low-level warning lamp. Fuel required: diesel

TRANSMISSION

Gearbox 5-speed (all synchromesh) and reverse. Ratios: first 3.25, second 1.89, third 1.22, fourth 0.85, top 0.65 and reverse 3.00:1

Final drive 3.94:1, to front wheels

Mph per 1000rpm 26.6 in top, 20.3 in 4th

Rpm at 70mph 2630 in top gear

CHASSIS

Tyres Goodyear GT65 on test car

HOW IT COMPARES

	Engine cap/power (cc/bhp)	Maximum speed (mph)	30-70mph through gears (sec)	30-70mph in 5th/4th gears (sec)	Fuel economy (mpg)	Brakes best stop (%g/lb)	Maximum legroom – front (in)	Typical leg/kneerom – rear (in)	Steering † turns/circle (ft)	Overall length (in)
Rover Montego 2.0DLX Turbo	1994/81	98	14.9	35.2/22.0	50	101/48	42 ¹ / ₂	41 ¹ / ₂ /29	3.5/36	175 ³ / ₄
Ford Sierra Sapphire 1.8TD	1753/74	100	16.5	28.8/20.6	40 ¹ / ₂	100/45*	41 ¹ / ₂	38 ¹ / ₂ /30	2.8/35	176
VW Passat 1.6CL TD*	1588/80	101	16.9	46.4/30.6	51	96/45	42 ¹ / ₂	43/32	3.3/33	180
Peugeot 405GL TD	1769/91	108	13.4	26.6/17.5	47	93/40	43	40/32 ¹ / ₂	3.3/35 ¹ / ₂	173 ¹ / ₂
Rover 418SLD Turbo	1769/87	104	14.7	31.4/19.6	45	86/40	42 ¹ / ₂	39/28	3.4/34	172

* Estate version

* with ABS

† all power assisted