

# Rover V8 History 1961/1967-2004

**V8 SPORTS CAR LEGENDS**

One engine, five different approaches as Morgan takes on MG, TVR, TR8 & Marcos

**PLUS**  
V8 REBORN:  
ROVER 75  
MEETS MG  
SV & ZT

haymarket  
9 0  
1 629 16 9 207 4 6

The image shows a collection of five sports cars parked on a paved road in a rural setting. In the foreground is a green Morgan sports car with license plate VHX 379G. Behind it are a red MG sports car (KDB 27), a red TVR sports car (D269 XNP), a red TR8 sports car, and a dark green Marcos sports car. The background features a grassy field and trees under a blue sky.

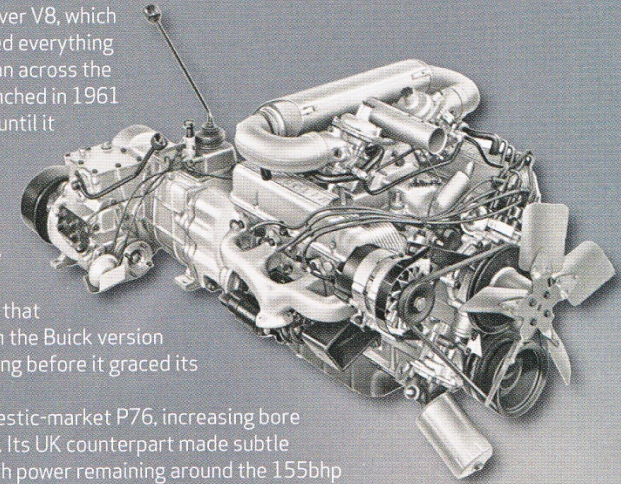
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## ROVER V8: A FEAT OF ENDURANCE

Few engines have matched the longevity and versatility of the Rover V8, which has been in production in the UK since the mid-1960s and powered everything from luxury saloons to off-road racers. But its story actually began across the Atlantic with the introduction of the 'BOP 215', an all-alloy V8 launched in 1961 that powered a number of Buick, Oldsmobile and Pontiac models until it fell out of favour – and then production – in '63.

The story would have ended there were it not for Rover's managing director, William Martin-Hurst, who saw promise in the lightweight and compact V8 and eventually convinced GM to sell both rights and tooling. The American firm agreed in 1964, and by 1967 Rover had launched its own 158bhp version of the engine – with a capacity of 3528cc and a bore and stroke of 3.5in x 2.8in – that immediately found a home in the P5B saloon. Though heavier than the Buick version at 170kg, it was lighter than most cast-iron 'fours', and it wasn't long before it graced its first sports car this side of the Atlantic – the Morgan Plus 8.

Leyland of Australia experimented with the engine for its domestic-market P76, increasing bore and stroke – and thus capacity – to 4414cc and power to 200bhp. Its UK counterpart made subtle improvements to its engine in 1976 for the arrival of the SD1, with power remaining around the 155bhp mark and capacity staying at 3.5 litres until 1990, when an increase in bore to 3.7in brought the venerable V8 to 3.9 litres. This version of the engine graced everything from the MG RV8 to the Range



Rover Classic, before subtle tweaks in 1995 took power output towards 200bhp, coming up at 190bhp.

Of all the firms to pick up the Rover V8, TVR ran with it longest, producing several performance variants ranging in capacity from 4.3 to 5 litres to power its flagship Griffith and Chimaera models. In its final stroked form, the 4997cc V8 produced a dizzying 340bhp, comfortably double the power output of the 1967 original. A version of this engine powered the Bowler Wildcat off-roader until 2006.

Above: the all-alloy unit proved lighter than four-pot rivals and endured for four decades. Left: Land Rover Defender-based Bowler Wildcat produced 218bhp and 295lb ft of torque in 4.6-litre form



**Morgan +8 1968-2004**