

# TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION: TVR S2

## ENGINE

Compression ratio	Front-mounted, water-cooled V6 with cast iron block/alloy head
Capacity	2,933cc
Bore/stroke	93/72mm
Compression ratio	9.5:1
Valve gear	Two valves per cylinder operated via pushrods and rockers by a single central camshaft
Fuel system	Bosch L-Jetronic injection
Power	168bhp/6,000rpm
Torque	172lbft/3,000rpm

## TRANSMISSION

Gearbox	5-speed manual
Final drive	3.64:1
Mph/1000 in top	23.4

## CONSTRUCTION

Body/chassis	Glassfibre body over steel tubular framework chassis
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## RUNNING GEAR

Suspension - front	Independent, unequal length wishbones, coil springs,
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	shock absorbers, anti-roll bar
- rear	Independent, semi-trailing arms, coil springs, shock absorbers
	Rack and pinion
	Servo-assisted, dual circuit
- front	Ventilated discs
- rear	Drums
	Alloy 7x15in
	Bridgestone RE71 205/60 VR15

## Steering Braking

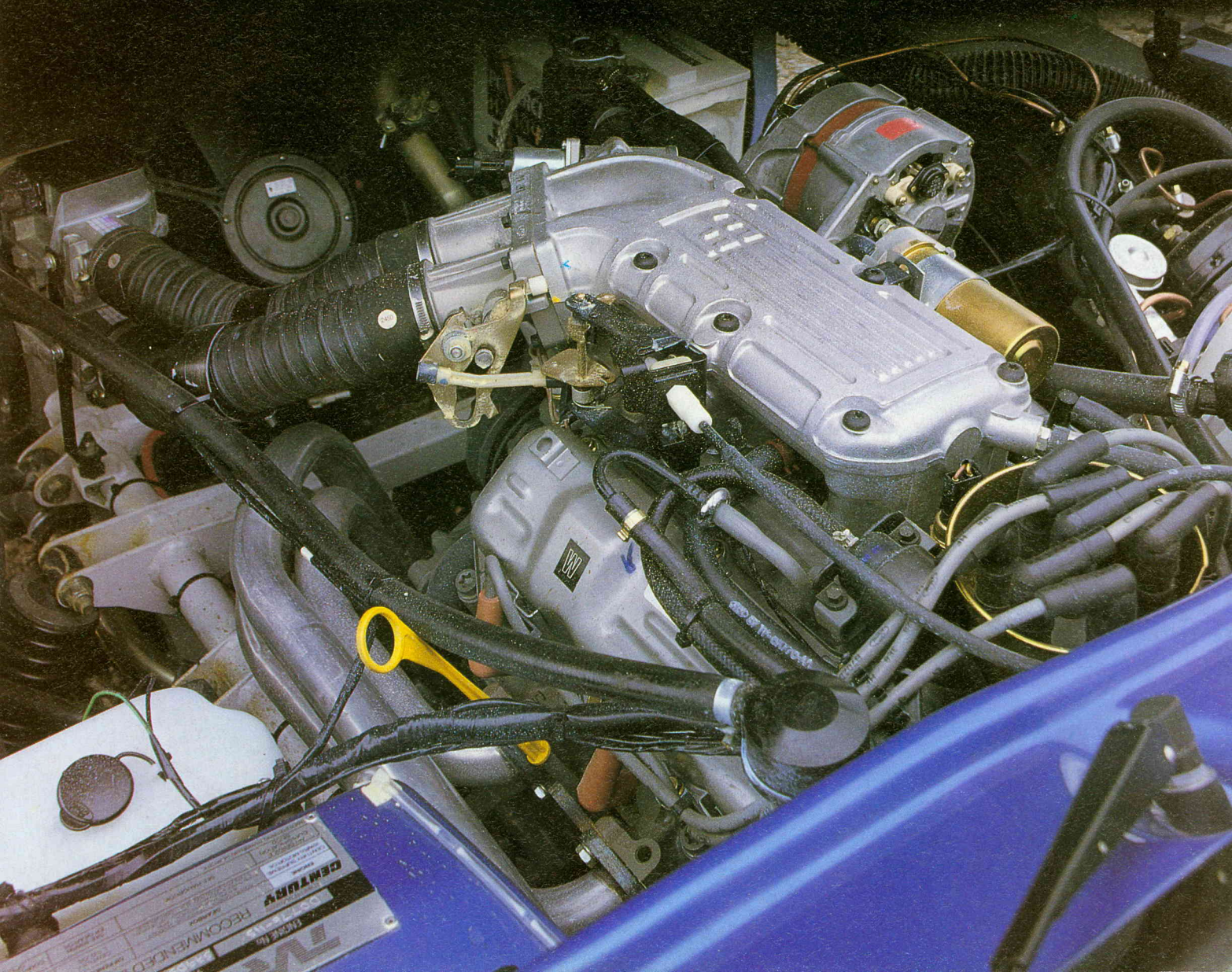
## Wheels Tyres

## DIMENSIONS

Length	13ft
Width	57in
Height	44in
Wheelbase	90in
Weight	2072lb

## PERFORMANCE

Max speed	135mph
0-60mph	7.5seconds
Fuel consumption	25.8mpg





# BEHIND THE WHEEL AT TVR



***TVR's S2 has plenty of character***

***– and so does the car company's***

***boss and saviour, Peter Wheeler.***

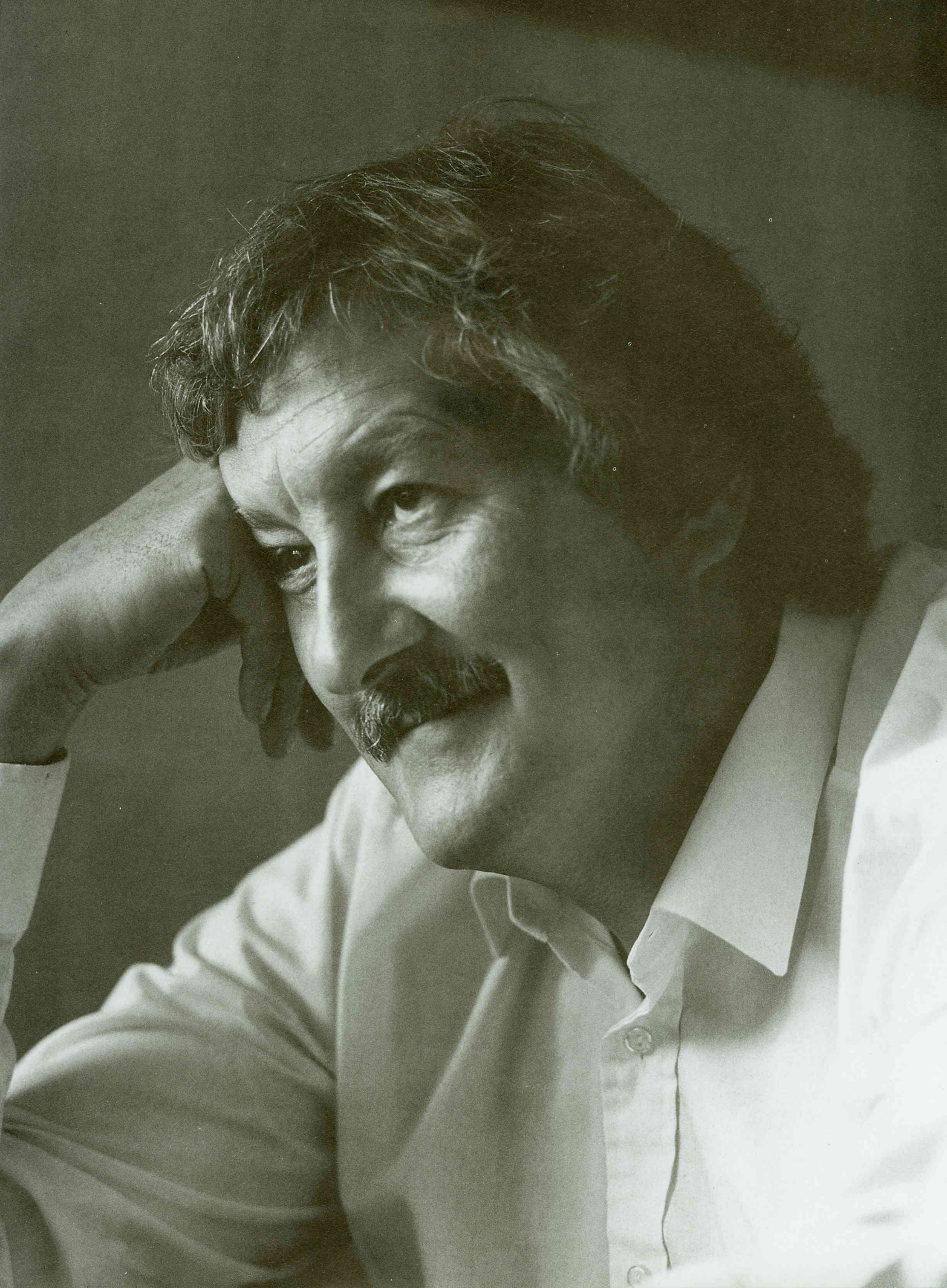
***Interview by PETER WILLIAMS***

**L**eaning back in one of the soft, black-leather lounge chairs in his office, Peter Wheeler, the interview and camera-shy chairman and managing director of TVR Engineering, admits rather casually that he's not worried about the arrival of the new Lotus Elan to the specialist end of the sports car market. Predicted to go on sale at about £18,000 from next January, the Elan's price compares poorly with the £16,645 currently charged by TVR for its entry-level S2. 'If the Elan comes out more expensive than the S2, then that will be amazing – especially if Lotus is trying to sell 3,000 a year,' says Peter.

'It suits me fine if somebody is trying to sell a front-wheel-drive, four-cylinder sports car at around the same price as the S2. I can't see it doing us any harm at all.'

He is looking forward to comparisons between the Elan's specification and the TVR's 2.9-litre, ►









## BEHIND THE WHEEL AT TVR

► rear-driven Ford V6, which pumps out 168bhp and allows the car to top 135mph.

Of course, the other important aspect of the S2 is that it has bags of character. In fact, it has it in abundance (see Road Test, page 19). Was that something TVR set out deliberately to achieve? 'We have tried to maximise the advantages – which are very few – in building our type of car,' he says.

'It was by accident the S2 got its louder exhaust. We were restricted on the 2.8-litre by Ford's head design on the unit. You could only improve it on the inlet side of the engine. With the new cylinder head of the 2.9-litre, because only the exhaust side of the engine needed freeing off.

'The whole basis of the "S" was the fact that we were trying to do an entry-level TVR. It arrived in a strange way, in that all the chassis work was done, but we couldn't make a sensible decision on what

shape the car should take. Then someone suggested we looked at the previous M-series cars...'

But what was most important about the original S was an easier, cheaper build construction to make it a true entry-level model – streets ahead of the old Tasmin 200, which flopped because, in Peter's opinion, it was under-powered.

### ***Affectionately***

Currently, more than half of TVR production is S2s – more than eight a week – with the remainder made up of the old, wedge-shaped V8 'Tasmin-series,' as it is still affectionately known in-house.

That is about to change. A factory extension, on the cards since 1985, is about to be commissioned. With it will come greater production efficiency – the main changes centre on the bodyshop, which is currently limited to 15 shells a week – and some important model changes, due at October's London Motorfair.

'We will go to 20 cars a week in one jump, and then we'll see where demand is,' says Peter. Currently, we're selling nearly all our cars on the UK market.

In 1988 TVR produced 701 cars, a useful increase over the 580 of the previous year. With model changeovers in the offing, it will not do many more this year, but Peter is adamant that 'if we made the

same number of V8s as the S2, we could sell them all'. In fact, the more different types of models TVR has available, the more it can make, he points out.

It's a far cry from the days of his immediate predecessor, Martin Lilley, when, with the introduction of the Tasmin at the 1980 Brussels Show, TVR went from a six-model range to, at best, a two-model one in less than a year. It was from the depths of despair that Peter Wheeler's purchase rescued the company in November 1981. Today, it's thriving.

### ***Modest***

He is modest about his apparent success. He has brought TVR from production of fewer than 300 cars a year, during the UK's early-Eighties recession (a figure Panther hasn't matched for the past four years), and the company doesn't even need the North American market – so important to others.

During his ownership, there's been a steady expansion of the model line-up,

***‘ We will go to 20 cars  
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began with the 1983 introduction of the 350i V8. This car was, surely, the turning-point for TVR Engineering, building on it with further derivatives that today gives us the 400SE, 450SE and the special-order 450SEAC.

These models get a major revision at the Earl's Court London Motorfair. It means an all-new chassis to accommodate catalyst-equipped engines, including TVR's own version of the new 3.9-litre EFi, built by Land Rover for the 1989 model year, US-destined Range Rovers. 'Land Rover builds engines to our specification,' he says. These changes will mean that only the 450's 4.5-litre will be a special build off LR's line.

Known at TVR as the Series 3 – although he has a habit of calling it the 'Tasmin' – it started as a 350i facelift and has ended up with the whole range being revamped, although the styling will remain Tasmin-like. So TVR will have two identifiable ranges of cars – the wedge-look 'Tasmin-series' and the rounded, 'classically styled' S2 and Tuscan.

'The new car will change a

***‘The new ‘Tasmin’ will look quite different, but we’re keeping the same screen angle’***

lot,' says Peter. 'But we're keeping the same screen angle – a very flat, big screen, bigger than before – while the rest of the car has been smoothed out. It does, in fact, look quite different.'

### **Accused**

Even down to the door handles, which TVR can call its own, instead of being accused of using Ford Cortina items. We prefer to say they're Aston Martin items,' he says. Furthermore, the new range has had to go through the full type-approval process.

Traditionally, specialists such as TVR have been accused of being little more than 'kit' car assemblers, but

Peter contests that has changed.

'What we do is what every other similar manufacturer does nowadays, use components from other vehicles,' he says. 'But those you can identify off other cars we'll replace with our own.' It's a process that has been going on for a few years. Each model launched since the 350i has had its own rear light assemblies, for example.

It is also important to note that the last revision to the V8 Tasmin series was three years ago, for the 1986 NEC Motor Show, employing some lessons learned from the development of the S's chassis, and notable for the arrival of the production-spec SEAC.

Most of the chassis work

was done at the rear of the V8s with a suspension change. Out went the trailing arms and hub carriers. In came four-point mounted wishbones, running from the differential carrier to the hub carriers in conjunction with a torque reaction arm – the driveshafts acting as the upper link.

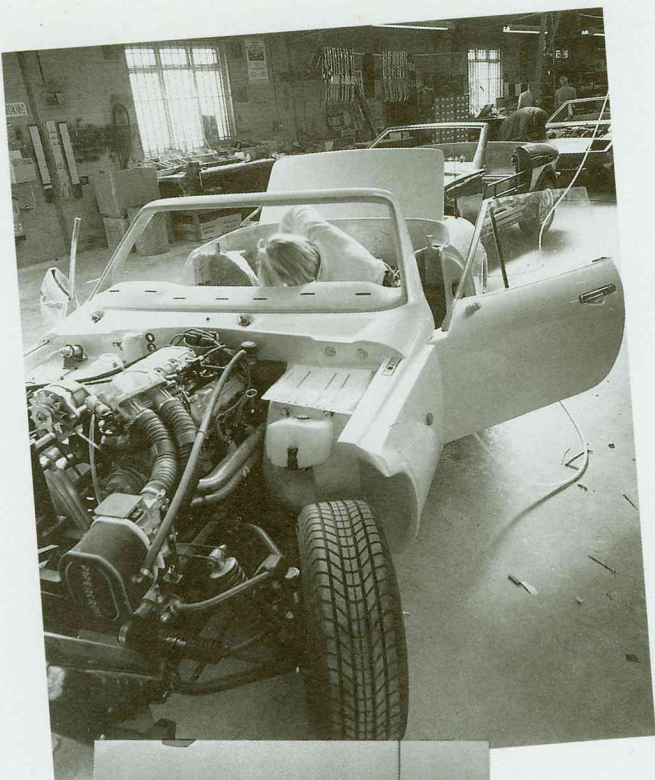
Not only did this help the tail to put the car's power down better, but it was simpler to build, and the desire to offer a roomier four-seat model – displayed that year at the Motor Show – was being kept in mind.

Without doubt, 1987 was the most significant year in the company's recent history. It had already made key, under-the-skin changes to take it into the Nineties, the S was put into production and future engine options were looked at.

These ideas were developed through a version of the S, the ES, which included the possibility of using the Sierra-Cosworth engine, an enlarged Ford V6 variant and a complete new – to TVR – unit, sourced from General Motors-Holden of Australia. ▶



## BEHIND THE WHEEL AT TVR



**The latest S2 is followed by two V8s in assembly. The body-shop can make 15 a week – soon to rise**



► Instead, TVR has persevered with the Rover V8 and will continue to develop its own versions – upwards of the 3.9-litre Rover now offered. The ES spawned the Tuscan and the idea of running a one-make/model race series, the highly successful TVR Tuscan Challenge – meeting Peter Wheeler's criteria of building cars suitable for racing, the 420SEAC being the first – plus a neat route to mark the 40th anniversary of the TVR marque.

Sired from the Tuscan racer is the road car – virtually another new model in its own right and also debuting in production form at Motorfair (although a road-trimmed shell was shown at last year's NEC Motor Show).

Furthermore, the first 40 will be special '40th anniversary' liveried cars. 'When we developed the racing Tuscan, we kept its dimensions near the ideal for that purpose, although it is a fairly large car for track use,' says Peter. 'For road-going use it needs a larger exhaust system, so we've got to enlarge the car, just to take that alone.'

It's a similar situation for the catalyst-equipped Tasmin-series cars. Larger all round than their predecessors, each is wider and lower. There's a suggestion here that the Tuscan and the new Tasmin-series will share a lot in common – other than the powerpack.

'The Tuscan is at the top of the range with the 450SEAC,' says Peter. 'Whereas the SEAC was an obvious development of the Tasmin series, the Tuscan was designed from scratch as a completely new car.'

'We're developing two parallel ranges of cars. We have the new, rounded style typified by the S2 and Tuscan, and the wedge-shaped

Tasmin-series.'

The most interesting aspect since the launch of the S, in particular, has been the reason for purchase. You'd expect real TVR aficionados to buy it for the modern interpretation of the old M-series's rounded looks. Not so.

'The majority of customers who go for the S don't even think of the old 3000S – it's purely the rounded shape they're after,' says Peter. If anything, that's confirmation of TVR's dominance of the old, hairy-chested British sports car market slot once populated by the likes of the Big Healeys and Triumph TRs – as against the effeminate philosophy of Lotus.

Will TVR build the 'saloon' it displayed at the NEC Motor Show three years ago? 'It's something we're always thinking about but have never got around to...but, of course, it would completely alter the marketplace for TVR,' says Peter.

### **Pointless**

'It doesn't make sense building cars the way we do at more than a absolute maximum of 2,000 a year. Thus, it's pointless in doing a car which has a much wider appeal. In the end, we've always fought shy of it, but I'm not saying that it's not on the cards...'

If, for the 420 Sports Saloon, Peter Wheeler holds the deposits that he claims he has – 'one very persistent Belgian gentleman turns up at each show, asking when we are going to build his car' – TVR could clearly launch a new fixed-head, and soon. 'We still have all the moulds and chassis jigs for the Tasmin fixed-head,' he says. 'We could make fixed-heads tomorrow if we wanted to.' ■