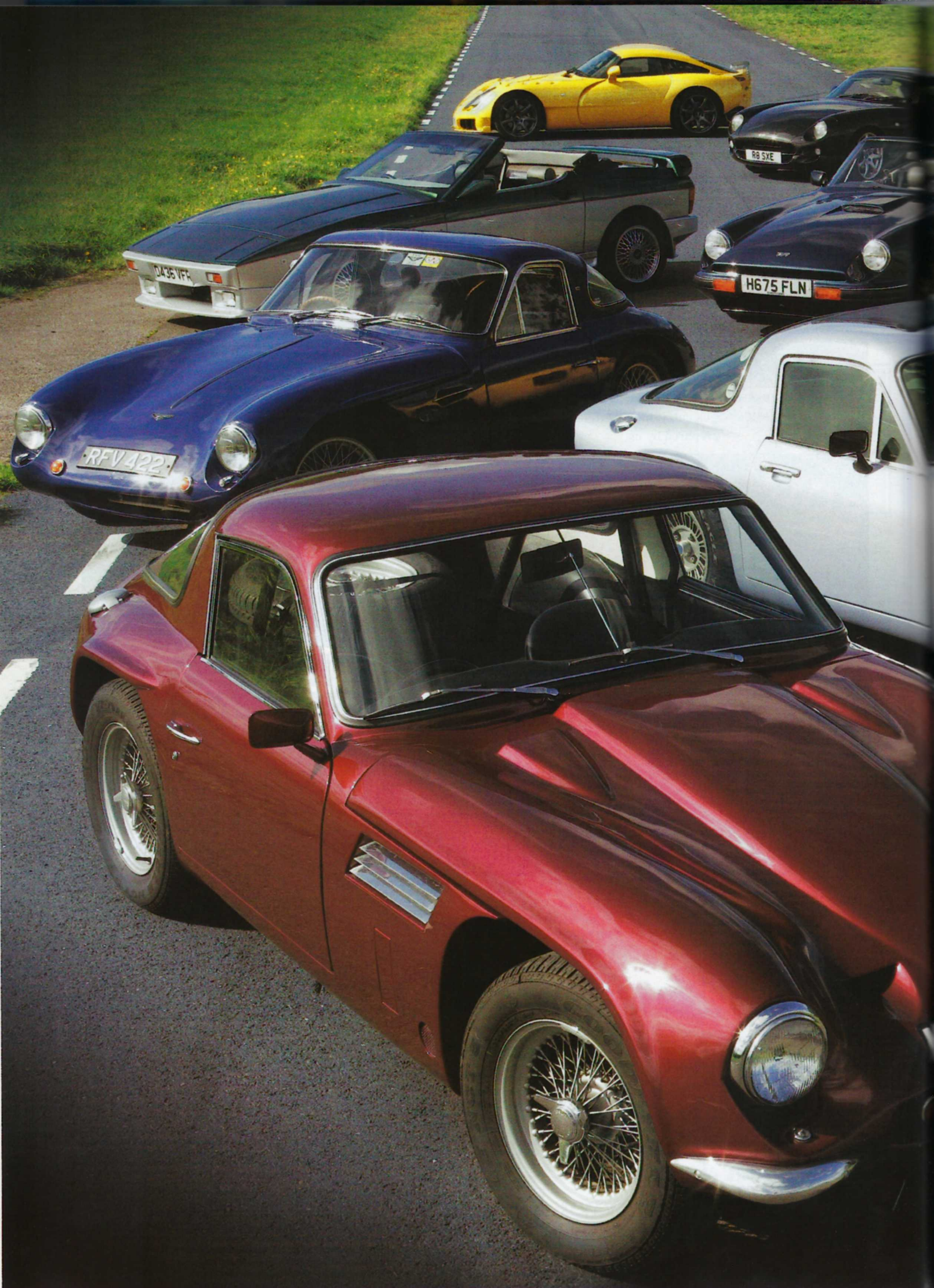
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Blackpool PEERS

Love them or hate them, TVRs have polarised opinions for almost 60 years. **Alastair Clements** charts the marque's history and samples eight of its finest cars

PHOTOGRAPHY TONY BAKER

Glassfibre body bonded to chassis on early cars. Right: B-series shared with MGA; tail-lights inset on MkIs, moved outboard to fins for MkII

Brett Langford
1959 GRANTURA

1489cc MG in-line four, 68bhp, 77lb ft, 0-60mph in 11 secs, 100mph+

Brett Langford is more interested in involvement than ever-increasing power: "My brother had a wedge and I bought an S1 in '96. I swapped it for a Griffith but hardly used it so decided to get something I could tinker with and that you don't see every day. I found this in Carlisle, fell in love with it and drove it home the same day. It's bumpy, noisy and hard work but great fun. It's one of the oldest in the club and I haven't seen another on the road."

For any other company it would spell disaster. The news on 18 October 2006 that, after 59 years in Blackpool, TVR would be moving production abroad should threaten the very essence of this most individual of marques. But TVR thrives on bombshells and its Blitz spirit has seen it though a factory fire, bankruptcy and ownership changes – the last, in '04, taking it out of British hands for the first time.

And you get the feeling that, if its new owner remembers what's important, it'll get through this, too. Because with TVR it's as much about the people as the cars. The people who love them in spite of the cars' foibles. The people who build them, with a passion – if perhaps not always a level of quality – matched only by the craftsmen of Malvern or Newport Pagnell. And, above all, the people who have steered the good ship TVR through often choppy seas, injecting the cars with a unique character that comes across as strongly as the whiff of resin and matting.

To celebrate 60 years since Trevor Wilkinson lopped three letters from his unglamorous Christian name to form TVR Engineering in 1947, *C&SC* gathered selected highlights from the firm's eventful history. It began – though you soon find that with TVR there's always more than one truth – with an Alvis Special constructed in an old wheelwright's workshop in Blackpool. Wilkinson's first chassis followed in 1949, with sidevalve Ford power and clothed in simple metal panels. TVRs 2 and 3 followed a similar formula, before Wilkinson discovered glassfibre and mated an RGS Atalanta body to his revised chassis to create the TVR Sports Saloon.

A new, all-independently sprung chassis came in 1955 and Wilkinson found the backers to fund TVR's move into a former brickworks on nearby Hoo Hill Industrial Estate. An open sports car came first, with both front and rear bodywork taken from a Rochdale rear-end mould, followed by a notchback GT that evolved into the first true 'production' TVR in 1958: the Grantura.

Brett Langford's Grantura MkI demonstrates a precedent that survived into the new millennium: hand-laid, lightweight glassfibre body; multi-tubular steel chassis with independent suspension; front-mounted, volume-production engine driving the rear wheels. Get past the tiny door aperture and, once you've squeezed into the bucket seat behind the big, thin-rimmed wheel and tall dash, it's fairly roomy. Langford's car is powered by a 1489cc B-series MG engine but Granturas also came with Ford or Coventry Climax power, giving up to 110mph for minimal outlay in kit form. Mated to an MG-sourced gearbox with lovely short throw and tight gate, the B-series offers lively throttle response and lots of torque accompanied by a rasping, slightly flatulent exhaust note. The inverted steering box provides far sharper response than its Ford Anglia donor and the tiny wheelbase gives an agile feel: the little TVR darts into tight bends and squirms its way out. On skinny rubber (later radials replace the original crossplies), the Grantura likes to steer from the rear – thank the rubber mounts for the Beetle-sourced trailing arm suspension for that – but is hugely entertaining around a tight Curborough Sprint Circuit. Fortunately the surface here is smooth: even the smallest bumps upset its firm springing, giving a vintage feel compared to the Lotus Elan that appeared just four years later.

After a name-change to Layton Sports Cars, and later to TVR Cars Ltd, the firm continued to evolve the Grantura, but its increasingly marginalised founder departed in 1962 and by the end of the year the factory gates had closed. Reborn as Grantura Engineering, TVR production was restarted and an approach from US-based dealer Jack Griffith in 1963 instigated its most exciting car yet: the Griffith. With a 289cu in Ford V8 shoehorned into a Grantura MkIII chassis it yielded up to 271bhp and 160mph. But shipping strikes limiting exports – and the collapse of the stunning Trevor Fiore-designed Trident project – cost the company dear. By the summer of 1965, the receivers had been called in once again.

This time bankruptcy would prove a blessing in disguise, because it put enthusiasts back in charge – automotive engineer and Griffith owner Martin Lilley plus his father and financial backer Arthur – and brought a return to the old

TIMELINE

TVR 1/2/3 1949-'51

Sports Saloon 1954

Grantura I/II/IIA/III/ 1800S 1958-'67

Griffith 200/400 1963-'67

Trident (prototype) 1965

Tina (prototype) 1966-'67

TVR Engineering name. The Lilleys' first job was to improve quality with the MkIV 1800S and Cortina-powered Vixen. When revival of the Trident proved impossible, and the rear-engined (also Fiore-designed) Tina foundered, Lilley reverted to the Griffith formula with the more luxurious Tuscan V8 in 1967. A 4½in wheelbase stretch (to 7ft 6in) followed months later, which makes hopping aboard the Ian Massey-Cross Tuscan a doddle. With small, fat steering wheel and a whopping great V8 sat over the front wheels, piloting the Tuscan isn't the fingertip operation of the Grantura but some of that car's delicacy remains, plus a dose of precision from the new rack-and-pinion set-up. But proceedings are always dominated by the sledge-hammer-in-the-back unleashed by a prod of the throttle. There's a delicious cackling rumble – notably different to later TVR V8s – at low revs, but drop a cog in the meaty Toploader gearbox, let the revs rise and the performance is staggering – at 13.8 secs for 0-100mph the Tuscan was the fastest-accelerating car *Motor* had tested. Add the still hyper-sharp turn-in, short wheelbase and Triumph-derived Girling brakes that are truly extended by the overwhelming pace, and it makes for a concentration-focusing drive – but an incredibly rewarding one.

'With hyper-sharp turn-in, short wheelbase and brakes extended by the overwhelming pace, it makes for a concentration-focusing drive'

Adding 4in to the width of the Tuscan for the US market, plus a Ford 'Essex' V6 for British buyers in 1969, laid the foundations for the firm's most significant new model launch in 1972. The M-series was built in the new Bristol Avenue works, which TVR had moved into two years earlier, and boasted a new chassis designed by Mike Bigland for comfort, rigidity and ease of production, fresh bodywork derived from the wide-body Tuscan and a trio of engine options: Ford 1600, Triumph 2500 and Ford V6 for the range-topping 3000M.

After a few sweaty-palmed laps in the Tuscan V8, Pietro Abate's beautiful 3000M comes as something of a relief. Its steering, though low-geared, seems light and fluid; the timber-faced dash – peppered with familiar-looking borrowed switchgear – and small, three-spoke wheel give a familiar British feel and the corduroy-covered seats are comfortable. It's not particularly spacious though and there is some ergonomic unpleasantness – it's near-impossible to heel-and-toe and the gearlever cranks awkwardly forward making it hard to judge 'changes through the four-speed Ford 'box. With half the horsepower of the Tuscan, performance was always going to be rather down on its fire-breathing ancestor but there are no complaints about the way the hearty 2994cc V6 delivers its 192lb ft of torque. The revised chassis is a gem too, neutral tending towards oversteer but without the power to make that a perilous state.

For red-blooded males, the M-series and its spin-offs – the spectacular 230bhp Turbo (which

Ian Massey-Cross
1967 TUSCAN V8

4727cc Ford V8, 271bhp, 314lb ft, 0-60mph in 5 secs, 160mph

With a 200,000-mile Taimar daily driver and his first Grantura at 225k, Ian Massey-Cross has a long history with TVR. "I met the Tuscan in '83 when Paul Weldon brought it to a TVRCC meet," he says. "Paul race-prepared it and I started looking after it in '85 – with four Webers it had 415bhp and won its HSCC class twice. It last raced in '90 and I got it in '95. You grow horns when you drive it but I treat it with respect – it's 300bhp and less than a tonne!"

Detuned former racer still boasts more than 300bhp. Left: much-modified cabin more luxurious than Griffith; Cortina MkII rear lamps

Vixen S1/2/3/4/ 1300/2500 1967-'73

Tuscan V8/V8 SE/V6 1967-'71

Tuscan V8 wide body 1968-'70

Zante (prototype) 1971

1600/2500/3000M/ Martin 1972-'79

Turbo/Taimar Turbo 1975-'79

M-series chassis balance is good, but it lacks thrill of V8-powered cars. Left: torquey V6; comfy cabin; Federal-spec MGB donated side repeaters

was a British car first), the limited-edition Martin (built to celebrate ten years of Lilley TVRs), the hatchback-equipped Taimar and the 3000S (the first production TVR convertible) – will always be inextricably linked with barely clad *Men Only* models. An idea dreamed up by playboy Lilley to ensure his 1971 Motor Show cars attained maximum column inches in the press, the bonnet-mounted nude proved a highly successful '70s marketing tool. But for 1979 the cars created enough of a stir on their own. Penned by Oliver Winterbottom, the stylist responsible for the '70s Lotus Elite and Eclat, with an all-new chassis by fellow Lotus man Ian Jones, the Tasmin range was something of an anomaly as the only car – 1971 SM Zante prototype aside – to deviate from TVR's traditional curves. It was an anomaly that would last: 2618 'wedges' were produced over 12 years before the last 400SE left the Bristol Avenue works in '91.

Launched as a short-tail coupé, Tasmin convertible and Plus Two versions soon followed – the latter, the firm's first four-seater, boasting a different bodyshell with shorter nose and longer tail which was soon adopted for the fixed-head two-seater. The familiar TVR recipe was unchanged, but under the skin the chassis had been completely redesigned and there were new engines – Ford 'Cologne' 2.8-litre V6 and four-pot 'Pinto' 2.0-litre – and an automatic option for the first time. Unfortunately the new car's rumoured £500,000 development costs – and the lack of immediate sales success – would plumb the depths of the Lilleys' pockets and late in 1981 the duo handed control to another marque enthusiast, Peter Wheeler. The chain-smoking, straight-talking Wheeler somehow epitomised the marque's politically incorrect image as it blasted through the 1980s and '90s, and he would become its longest-serving and most successful custodian.

Pietro Abate

1979 3000M

2994cc Ford V6, 142bhp, 192lb ft, 0-60mph in 7.6 secs, 124mph

After 12 years, Pietro Abate remains passionate about his first sports car: "I love the shape and I have lots of fun in it – it feels just right, not too outrageous. I was looking for a wedge but fell in love with this. In '96 someone keyed it; with my friend Justin's help I restored the whole car in eight months. I could have left it in the garage but I rebuilt it to drive – I've done 50,000 miles. I'd like a Vixen but couldn't get rid of this – there's bits of me in there!"

Wheeler's influence was immediate and had an enormous impact. First came a return to the American market, followed by a search for more performance. Abandoning Lilley's Tasmin Turbo concept, Wheeler turned to the tried and tested Buick-derived, Rover-built all-aluminium V8. In fuel-injected SD1 Vitesse form the compact unit boasted 190bhp (later 197bhp) and gave the 1983 Tasmin 350i the performance to live up to the junior supercar looks. And, as Dan Rogers' two-tone Convertible proves, it sounded fantastic: a symphony of cylinders, pushrods and valves undiluted by convoluted exhaust systems. The small-capacity V8 spins more freely than bigger, torquier applications, its urgent song accompanied by genuinely thrilling acceleration – try 0-60mph in just 6.6 secs. The introduction of the 275bhp, 150mph 390SE in 1984 signalled the start of the wedge's evolution into ever more extreme incarnations – culminating in the ludicrously bespoilered 420SEAC – but the 350i remains the sweet-spot of wedge production. All too often detractors focus on the door-stop TVR's looks rather than its ability: with a longer (7ft 10in) chassis and 3in wider track than the M-series the 350i feels brilliantly planted and its wishbone front/trailing arm rear set-up is better-damped than its predecessors – remember, this chassis managed to cope with more than 300bhp in later life. Shame

TIMELINE

Taimar 1976-'79

3000S/Turbo 1978-'79

Tasmin Coupé (short tail) 1979-'84

Tasmin/280i Convertible 1980-'87

Tasmin 200 Coupé/ Convertible 1981-'84

Tasmin Plus Two/S2/ 280i Coupé 1980-'87

the optional overlight power steering robs some of the confidence the chassis imbues: albeit heavy, the unassisted Cortina rack makes the car easier to place and trust. But the wedge's cubist cabin is a disaster. The innovative roof design (removable panel and fold-down roll bar) that would survive until the Chimaera affords useful stowage space aft of the seats, but the ceiling is low, the driver's buttocks are pinched, the wheel sits down on his thighs and the footwell is surprisingly tight for such a large car.

Nonetheless the wedge sold well, particularly in 350i form, even though its styling was always an acquired taste and its price tag hefty. What Wheeler needed to boost sales was an entry-level car, and it arrived in 1986 in the shape of the S. Pre-dating by a decade the modern trend for nostalgia-trip styling, the S mated a 280i drivetrain to the late-'70s 3000S shape and a bargain sticker price. There was some cost-cutting – manual windows, drum rear brakes, cloth trim – but buyers weren't put off and TVR production doubled to meet demand. Slip into Sam Moody's S3 and you find it's not just the styling that's retro. The revised dashboard is more coherent than that of the S/S2 with a traditional but slightly unfinished feel – corner enthusiastically and your knee starts adjusting the electric mirrors via a switch mounted on the inside of the transmission tunnel. But fire up the 'Cologne' V6 – stretched to 2.9 litres for the S2 – and any doubts are cast aside. This was created as a classic sports car in the then-defunct TR/MG mould: simple, good-looking and a riot to drive. The steering gives an ideal balance between weight and response, making it feel light and chuckable. Like the 3000M before it, the S chassis with its semi-trailing link rear end allows for a certain amount of tail-out hooliganism, but this time there's the power to exploit it should you feel so inclined – all the while accompanied by a cultured V6 thrum. And, again like the 3000M, you imagine it must be great to live with and travel long distances in: without the fear factor of the V8 cars, but also losing some of their thrill.

Attempts to restore that excitement were made with the Tuscan, which never hit the road but spawned a successful race series, and the 1991 V8S. A 3.9-litre, 240bhp Rover V8 and disc brakes all round were enough to ensure that the V8S effectively killed off the last V8 wedges and paved the way for the forthcoming new generation of TVRs, spearheaded by the gorgeous Griffith. First shown at the 1990 motor show, the Griffith caused a sensation and yielded a flurry of orders. But customers had a three-year wait while the model was re-engineered, the show car's V8S underpinnings ditched in favour of a heavily modified Tuscan racer chassis.

Available initially as 240bhp 4.0-litre or 280bhp 4.3, the Griffith was joined after just a year by the Chimaera which offered slightly softer suspension and a bigger boot to appeal to a wider audience. The more civilised car soon became a best-seller, but never achieved the reverence that the Griffith generates among fans. And that's why we asked Rob Pack to bring his car. It's not any old Griffith, but the ultimate incarnation: the 340bhp, 5-litre run-out 500. Few will argue that the Griff was the best-look-

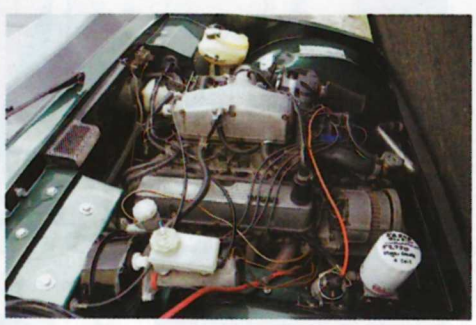
Dan Rogers

1986 350i CONVERTIBLE

3528cc Rover V8, 197bhp, 220lb ft, 0-60mph in 6.6 secs, 136mph

Living on a local dealer's test route led to Dan Rogers buying his TVR a decade ago – before he could drive: "It was a factory press car that was left standing for years. I couldn't insure it until I was 21 and it had no trim until I restored it last year. It's peanuts to run – I've averaged 30mpg over 1500 miles around Europe. Most people hate the wedges but I like the shape, it's so '80s. It's extreme, politically incorrect and sounds great; I'll never sell it."

Above: factory test mule wears 350SE alloys and two-tone paint. Right: small V8 makes glorious noise; Rogers made new interior from scratch



'All too often detractors focus on the door-stop TVR's looks rather than its ability: this chassis coped with 300bhp in later life'

TIMELINE

Tasmin Turbo (prototype) 1982

Tasmin 350i/350i/ SX350/350SE Convertible 1983-'90

350i Coupé/Plus Two 1983-'87

390/420SE 1984-'88

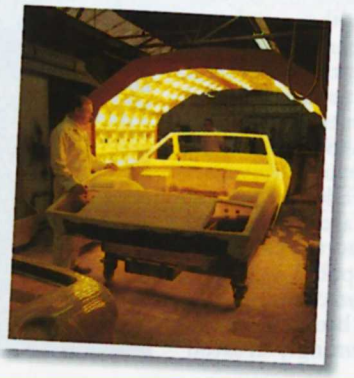
420/450SEAC 1986-'89

420 Sports Saloon (prototype) 1986

S3 has classic British sports car feel and was a sales hit. Left: 'Cologne' V6 out to 2.9 litres from S2; 4in longer doors aid entry to S3/S4 interior

ing TVR yet – many (myself included) reckon it has yet to be bettered – its voluptuous shape uncluttered by such practicalities as door handles or bumpers. The curves continued within, where swooping lines and quirky details dominate a cabin that gives British craftsmanship without being cheesily retro.

Not that you'll notice: you'll be too busy concentrating. Like the Tuscan, this Griffith demands full attention at all times and delivers dollops of terror and excitement in tandem. Grip and braking take a massive leap forward as you might expect, but the Griffith also feels heavier and more physical than its potent ancestor. There's a touch of understeer on turn-in, but this TVR is set up to wag its tail at every opportunity and you need to be ready to wind on opposite lock if you consider doing anything with the pedals mid-corner – no wonder they're such a handful on a circuit. Performance is huge and the fat twin tailpipes provide a simply epic soundtrack – a stirring bassline overlaid as the revs rise by an overture that would drown out all three tenors in full cry. Almost certainly a wearing day-to-day companion, the Griffith nevertheless remains a deeply involving and joyful machine. If TVRs are all about drama, noise and fury, then surely the Griffith defines the marque.



But, with the 500, TVR reached the limit of economically viable power boosts for the push-rod Rover V8, so in 1992 Peter Wheeler revealed the prototype for the firm's first engine: the AJP8. Designed by Al Melling, whose initial joins those of John Ravenscroft and Peter Wheeler in the motor's codename, the new unit was planned for launch in the Griffith. So when TVR announced its new Cerbera two-plus-two in 1993, it was supposed to appear with Rover power. Yet by the time the new engine reached buyers in 1996 – after extensive running in the Tuscan Challenge in an effort to dispel reliability fears – the plans had been swapped: the Griffith got a bored-out Rover unit and TVR's 4.2-litre V8 was slotted into the Cerbera. And the all-alloy, dry-sump unit is a monster. Nicky Thompson's brooding Storm grey Cerbera needs nothing more than a whiff of throttle in any gear to dispatch Curborough's tiny straights, yet this engine achieves its incredibly elastic punch without resorting to clever valve gear (there's just two per cylinder) or heads (there's a single cam per bank). Like modern Ferrari V8s the AJP8 uses a flat-plane crank and, instead of a classic V8 burble, acceleration is accompanied by a deafening, obnoxious blare – it's hardly pretty, but seriously addictive. The Cerbera's big boot and kid-friendly rear seats make it a car you could justify using, but as usual there are compromises. The steering is super-light and terrifyingly fast – yet the lock is awful. Only when you stand beside a Cerbera do you realise just how low it is – which makes entry and exit a singularly inelegant process – and, despite the long wheelbase, the handling is very senior indeed. Relax behind the odd two-spoke wheel at your peril.

Having finally got its own motor to market

Sam Moody
1990 S3

2935cc Ford V6, 170bhp, 172lb ft, 0-60mph in 7.1 secs, 130mph

"I had a Midget and a Porsche 944 before," says Moody, who has enjoyed his S3 for the past four summers. "The Midget was great but had no oomph, the 944 lacked the raw feel of a British sports car and its roof didn't come off. I prefer the S1/S2 dash but wanted the longer doors of the S3 – and now I would only swap it for a Griffith 500. I love the noise and the smile it puts on your face – plus its retro styling won't date like some modern TVRs."

S/ES/S2/S3/S3C/S4C 1987-'94

'White Elephant' (prototype) 1988

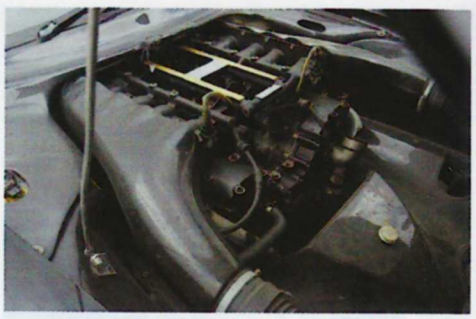
400/450SE 1988-'91

Tuscan racer 1989-'92

Speed Eight (proto) 1989-'90

V8S/V8SC 1991-'94

Gorgeous Griffith is a riot to drive. Below: venerable Rover V8 bored out to 5 litres for its last application; cabin previews future TVRs



Rob Pack

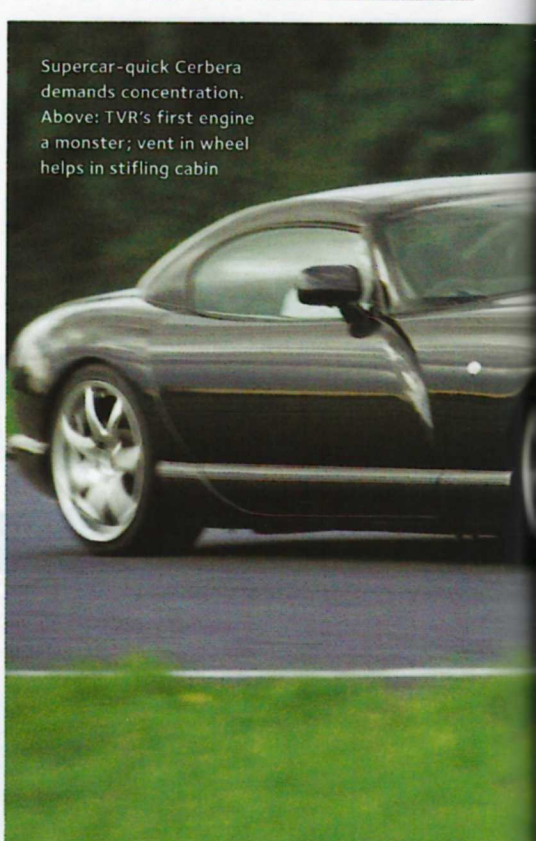
1996 GRIFFITH 500

4997cc Rover V8, 340bhp, 360lb ft, 0-60mph in 4.1 secs, 160mph

Rob Pack's decision to buy a TVR was prompted by practicality: "I looked at Boxsters, Elans and Z3s but couldn't fit in – there's plenty of room in the Griff. You don't see many on the road and it's a lovely shape. My first, a 4.0, was British Racing green and blended into the background. I spotted this car in the local dealer two years ago, I use it daily while the weather's decent and do several track days – the 'Ring and Spa last year. It's been completely reliable."

TVR didn't sit back to see how it performed, but instead raced ahead with further engine development. First the V8 was stretched to 4.5 litres, then another four cylinders were added for the simply barking Speed 12. One bank of the V12 became the Speed Six, now the sole engine option in the TVR range. The second revival of the Tuscan name in 1999 signalled the dawn of a new TVR design language, and remains the staple while TVR experiments with a bewildering array of variants based around the same six-pot powerplant. But it is the Sagaris that has made the breakthrough as far as the motoring press is concerned: finally, the road test eulogies have begun to lose their 'for a TVR' provisos.

Mating the T350 chassis with the Tuscan's 4-litre engine, the Sagaris still requires a firm hand but allows the driver to take liberties once turned into a corner that would send you off into the scenery in a Cerbera or Griffith. And you can't deny it's distinctive. In Halcyon Midas gold, Ray and Pauline Frost's Sagaris stands out even in this spectacular company. Inside it's just as dramatic. Some 85% of the Sagaris is made in-house and the controls look to have come from NASA's parts bin rather than that of Ford or Leyland. With 406bhp propelling just 1078kg, performance is brutal, though the straight-six needs working much harder than the Cerbera's V8 to achieve that pace, plus the brakes and balance are leagues ahead of its predecessors and inspire real confidence. TVR's persistent refusal to accept servo assistance and ABS means a brake pedal that – though hugely effective – feels near-solid on first contact. Thankfully the steering geometry has been revised to account for road driving and it's exceptionally accurate, if light. But perhaps the biggest disappointment is the noise. The soul-stirring mechanical cacophony of earlier cars' V6s and V8s has been replaced by an artificial soundtrack seemingly created



Supercar-quick Cerbera demands concentration. Above: TVR's first engine a monster; vent in wheel helps in stifling cabin

TIMELINE

Griffith 4.3/4.0/500 1992-2001

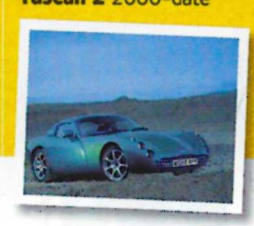
Chimaera 4.0/4.3/ 4.5/5.0 1993-2001

Cerbera 4.2/4.5/ Speed Six 1996-2006

Griffith/Tuscan Speed Six (proto) 1996-'97

Speed 12 (prototype) 1997

Tuscan/Tuscan S/ Tuscan 2 2000-date



From straight-six (left) to styling, Sagaris is all drama. Below: exquisite cast ally hinge; tuned exhausts; digi dash adds to other-worldly feel

Nicky Thompson
1997 CERBERA 4.2

4185cc TVR V8, 350bhp, 320lb ft, 0-60mph in 4 secs, 185mph

"A Griffith spun in front of me at the lights and I thought it was beautiful," says Nicky Thompson. "I followed it to find out what it was and bought myself a Chimaera for Christmas! I'm on my second Chimaera and got the Cerbera last year – then took it to Le Mans two days later. It has opinions and I'll never master it, but I think we've acquired a mutual respect. The Chimaera is my love, the Cerbera my affair – it's so exciting that I can't be without it."

Ray Frost
2005 SAGARIS

3996cc TVR in-line six, 406bhp, 349lb ft, 0-60mph in 3.9 secs, 185mph

"I've had a Lotus Elite, Elan and +2 but hankered after a TVR," says Ray Frost. "My son told me to 'get the biggest and fastest or you'll only trade it in' – he knows me better than I know myself!" A Cerbera 4.5 came first, but wife Pauline – TVRCC mid-Essex regional organiser – hated it: "It was an animal. The Sagaris is friendlier but it'll go round the outside of any other TVR on a track."

entirely by exhaust tuning. Nonetheless, the Sagaris must surely banish TVR's reputation for 'so nearly great' cars. Get used to the looks – a not entirely easy task – and you'll discover a sports car of exceptional competence.

Just because TVR was founded by a Lancashire lad called Trevor rather than an Italian called Enzo, favours raw performance over practicality, and lacks the Grand Prix-winning history of its similarly unglamorous Norfolk cousin, the marque lurks on the periphery of the sports car mainstream into which Ferrari, Porsche and Lotus are readily accepted. Though respected for their performance-per-pound and aural and visual drama, TVRs have long been seen at best as an individual or 'brave' choice, at worst as the brunt of jokes. With the latest rumours emerging from the mill that future Tuscans and Sagaris will be assembled by Bertone in Turin, with powertrains produced in Britain, perhaps those Italian suits will give TVR some of the credibility it deserves while its heart continues to beat in Blackpool. Let's hope so. The world would be a rather less colourful place without it. ■

Cerbera Speed 12 2000

Tamora 2001-'06

R/T400R/T440R/ Typhon 2002-'05

T350C/T350T 2003-'06

Tuscan Convertible 2005-date

Sagaris 2005-date