



arrived at his Silverstone base to find him and his team hard at work on a bunch of AC 3000MEs — also turbocharged by Rooster. First acquaintance with the SS1 gave us no clue to its modified nature. There is not so much as a boost gauge or a single, solitary 'Turbo' legend to distinguish the Rooster car from its standard counterpart.

This can be frustrating at first, the boy-racer in us all wanting to let the rest of the traffic-light starting grid know that this is no ordinary nobby car. However, it soon becomes clear that the performance on its own is enough to bring some very puzzled looks to the faces of the would-be hot-shots. Then it is quite fun pulling away from them without undue effort and leaving them to wonder just what has gone wrong with their sporting wonder.

As befits a good tuned engine of any sort, this blown unit starts and runs, hot or cold, without any sign of temperament. The 8:1 compression ratio is still high enough to produce respectable power levels without the turbocharger in play, so that the SS1 does not hobble embarrassingly away from the line and then leap forwards just as it is time to lift off for the next obstacle.

Maximum boost is available from 3000rpm upwards, but this does not appear with any sudden surge. There is a steady build-up of power and our figures show the car to be substantially quicker than it actually felt. The lack of fuss belies the potential, but this was brought clearly to our attention on a couple of occasions.

On the first of these, a hard-revving hooligan sat alongside at lights in his Escort RS 2000, grinning and waiting to show us just what his elderly Ford would do. The answer was 'very little'. A screech of rubber and the most hurried cog-swaps could not enable him to keep pace with the leisurely surge of the Reliant.

Later on we encountered an MGB GT, whose owner's pride clearly demanded that he should keep his machine ahead of this plastic upstart on a dual-carriageway. This he accomplished by sitting steadfastly in the outside lane of the otherwise empty road. Eventually he was coaxed out of the way by unsubtle use of the horn and lights and the SS1 simply left him standing.

In damp conditions and with due deference to the car's private ownership our acceleration figures were highly impressive. The magic 60mph figure came up in 8.4 seconds, compared with a dry time of 11.7 seconds for the standard car. Most impressive of all are the increments in the

gears. For instance, 50 to 70mph in top takes just 6.8 seconds in the turbo, against 12.3 in standard trim. The fourth-gear run from 30 to 50mph takes 5.8 seconds compared with 9.6.

It is the sheer consistency of the incremental measurements that highlights the efficiency of the Rooster conversion. The power and torque bands are broadened to make driving easy. There is no need to switch the slick gear lever back and forth, although this can still be advantageous when hustling the car quickly through twisting byways, a condition which really finds its element.

The neutral handling present in the standard machine remains, but the extra power can bring some snatchiness to the tail, accentuated by the subdued but unavoidable delay in the build-up of boost. The quick steering makes the car easy to catch in these circumstances, to the extent that there is a temptation deliberately to

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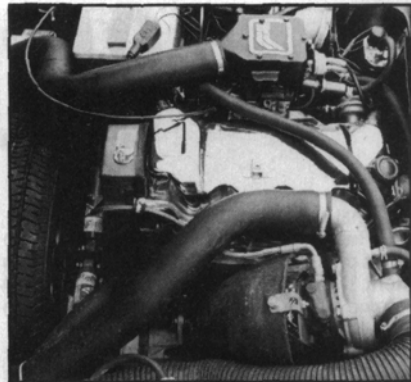
provoke instability — just for fun.

With our quite-hard-driven test fuel consumption worked out at 24mpg, but gentler, higher-gear driving with less use of the boost can take this up to 30mpg.

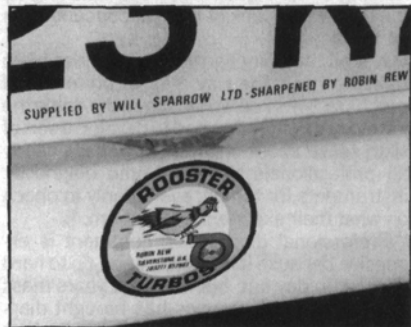
There's no doubt that the boost from Rooster turns the SS1 into the sort of sports car that should be as standard. Maybe Robin Rew could talk the factory into making his conversion a standard option; it should work wonders for flagging sales.

At £1495 plus VAT for the system fitted, the turbo conversion adds quite a slice to the £7795 of the standard car, but it certainly brings the missing performance element to complete the fresh air/crisp handling package that already exists in the SS1. For those who can't run to this, Robin Rew also offers a twin Weber carburettor set-up, complete with special water-heated inlet manifold, for £450 plus VAT, fitted. This brings the power level to around that of the injection engine.

If you would like more details, Rooster Turbos are at Workshop Unit 12, Silverstone Circuit, Towcester, Northants; tel 0327 857903. ■



The high-mounted turbo is neatly installed



Sticker and legend the only turbo clues

Reliant SS1 Rooster Turbo £9290

SPECIFICATION

Engine	
Type	Longitudinal front-mounted in-line water-cooled four-cylinder
Capacity	1596cc
Bore/stroke	79mm x 96mm
Compression ratio	8:1
Valve gear	Two valves per cylinder operated by single belt-driven overhead cam with hydraulic tappets
Fuel system	Twin-venturi carburettor and turbo-charger
Power	140bhp (DIN)
Torque	140 lb ft (DIN)
Transmission	
Gearbox	Five-speed manual in unit with engine. Rear-wheel drive
Final drive	3.92:1
Mph per 1000rpm in top (fifth)	19mph
Construction	
Body/chassis	Steel space frame on fabricated steel centre tunnel with glassfibre and polyurethane body
Running gear	
Front suspension	Independent by double wishbones, coil springs and anti-roll bar. Transversely mounted damper units
Rear suspension	Independent by semi-trailing arms with concentric coil spring damper units
Steering	Rack and pinion. 2.9 turns lock to lock
Brakes	Disc front (8.9in dia) and drums rear. Dual hydraulic circuit. Servo assisted
Wheels	Alloy 5.5 x 14in
Tyres	Goodyear NCT 185/60R14 82H
Dimensions	
Length	153in
Width	62.3in
Height	48.8in
Wheelbase	84in
Weight	1900lb
PERFORMANCE	
Acceleration	0-30mph 3.0secs 0-40mph 4.6secs 0-50mph 5.9secs 0-60mph 8.4secs 0-70mph 10.8secs
Standing ¼ mile	16.6secs
Maximum speed	120mph
Fuel consumption	24mpg (driven hard)