

What Car?

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M E T R O L I N E



12,000 miles by Metro

**Modified Metros — we try coachbuilt luxury conversions and
turbocharged high performers**

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Metromania!

Just like the Mini, the Metro has spawned a host of special versions. We try a variety of converted models



Top row (l to r): Fraser Tickford, Rapport MetroSport. Above: Tickford interior, Turbo Techniques, Janspeed. Left and below: Laser Metro and its interior. Far right: Turbocharged engine of Janspeed conversion. Below right and centre: Wood and Pickett Metro Plus





RAPPORT METROSPORT

Rapport are one of the few specialist builders to offer a convertible Metro. Theirs is called the MetroSport and Rapport normally carry out the conversion work to customers' own cars. They do sell complete cars too, with the standard BL 1.3S engine and a turbo unit can also be specified. Our model was the normal A Plus engined car with a further option of wider wheels.

The folding roof operates in much the same way as a pram top, folding on hinges onto the boot lid. This boot lid is the only other obvious concession to open-topped motoring that Rapport have carried out; doing away with the hatchback but keeping the split-folding rear seat so that large objects can be pushed through to the loading bay.

Obviously strengthening has had to be carried out to the body. Rapport strengthen the back of the car, the B-pillars and a roll-over bar is fitted above the driver and passengers' heads to aid stiffening as well as give maximum open topped safety.

On the road, the MetroSport is obviously as powerful as any 1300cc Metro but it handles slightly differently; there is quite a lot of bumping through the steering and overall the car feels a lot lighter than a standard Metro.

Although the folding roof works well, the finish leaves something to be desired. The numerous screws and aluminium edging around the headlining look decidedly cheap – though that is not reflected in the quite high cost of the conversion. With the roof down rear seat passengers will be buffeted quite severely and with four-up we found that even on the slightest bump in the road the large tyres fouled the bodywork quite dangerously, presumably because of the extra weight caused by rear strengthening. With standard Metro tyres this presumably will not happen, or so we must hope.

A further anxiety comes not from the Metro's handling – always excellent – but from the lack of attention paid to safety in the car's interior. Sharp edges, bolt-heads and studs abound, and though already-registered cars do not have to comply with regulations, we feel that Rapport could have made more effort in this area.

It's a professional enough conversion all right, but with the excellent Volkswagen Golf convertible costing only a few pounds more, we cannot see the Rapport Metro's appeal extending beyond the eccentric fringe.

Armalite, Standard Rd, London NW10. Tel: 01 961 1676

Conversion: Soft-top, optional turbocharger

Price: £2133 (soft-top only)

Performance: 0-60 mph, 13.0 secs, top speed, 97 mph