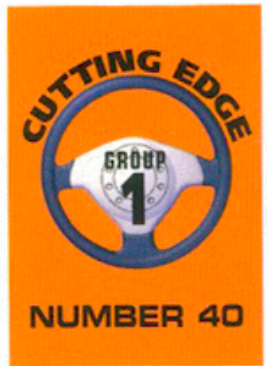




SWEDEN 1978-1980



# Saab 99 TURBO

With one stroke, Saab turned the rather unoriginal and boring 99 into the cult car of the early 1980s. All it took was the addition of a Garrett turbocharger and an extra 30 bhp and the 99 became a 120-mph rocket.

Produced by Saab Automobile AB, Trollhattan, Sweden



## VITAL STATISTICS

Top speed:	120 mph
0-60 mph:	9.1 sec.
Engine type:	In-line four
Displacement:	1,985 cc
Max power:	145 bhp at 5,000 rpm
Max torque:	174 lb-ft at 3,000 rpm
Weight:	2,715 lbs.
Gas mileage:	22 mpg
Price:	\$16,850



*"...the handling is a surprise."*

*"You might expect the 99 Turbo to be heavy and clumsy, but it isn't. It's heavy all right, but that helps give an excellent ride while the handling is a real surprise. The Turbo turns sharply and, although the unassisted steering really requires effort at parking speeds, once you are on the move it is a delight. This is matched by impressive acceleration, especially once the turbo spools up. The 99 remains a solid, comfortable car."*

*Leather seats were a factory option in Europe's trend-setting turbo.*



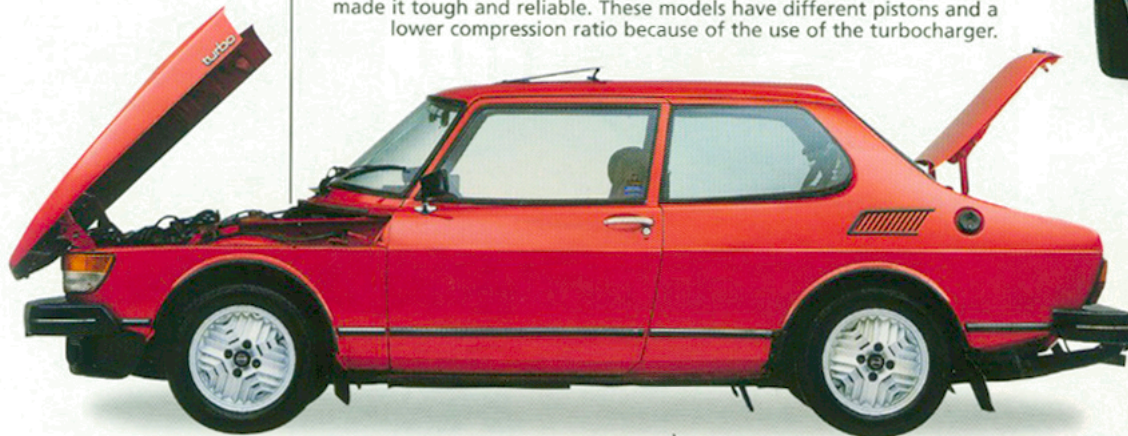
# Saab 99 TURBO

Although the 99 first appeared in 1968, Saab managed to make the 99 Turbo look impressive by adding special wheels and making the cars exclusively red or black.



## Four-cylinder engine

Saab worked wonders on the British-designed slant-four engine and made it tough and reliable. These models have different pistons and a lower compression ratio because of the use of the turbocharger.



## Front spoiler

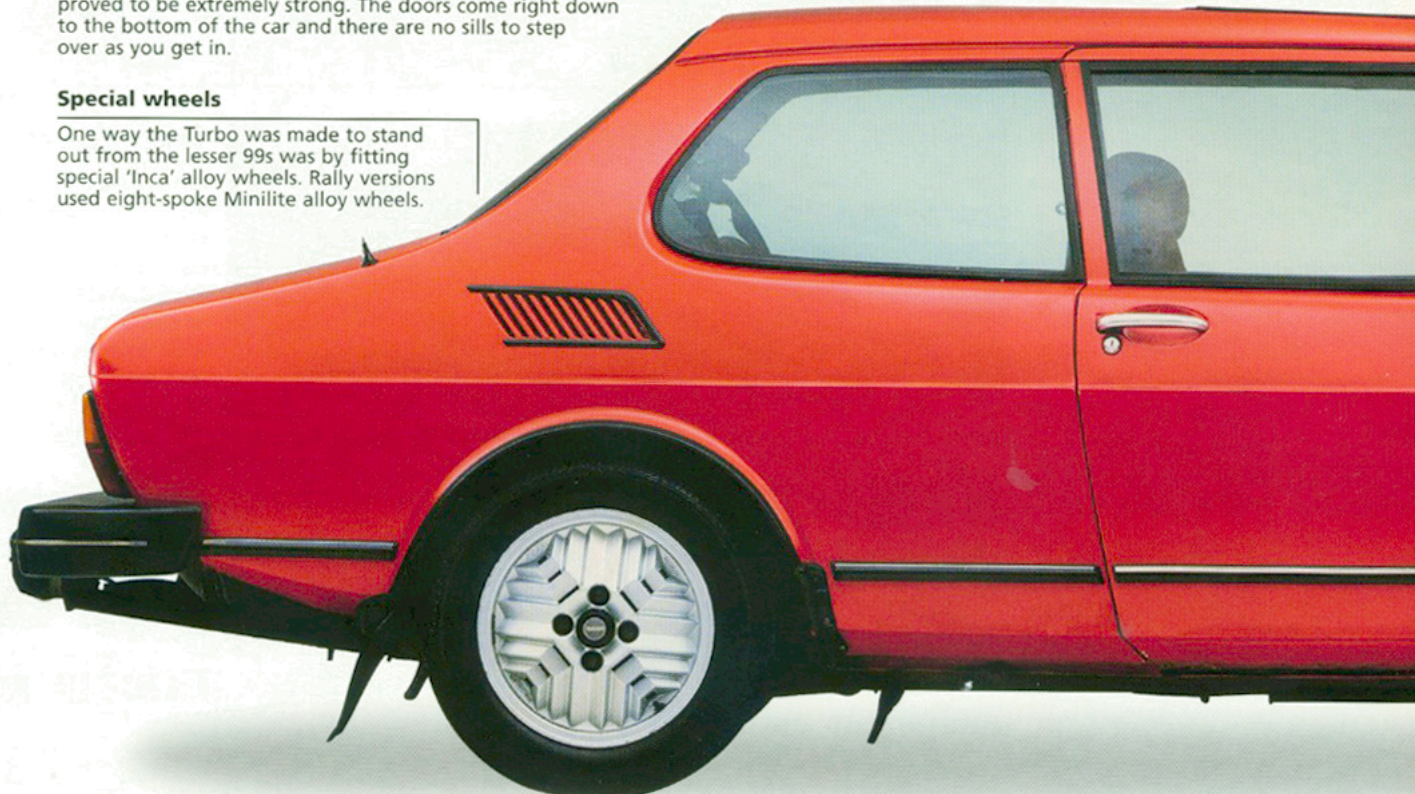
The ordinary 99 had excellent ground clearance—useful in Swedish winters. Although the Turbo wasn't lowered for its performance role, it was given a deep front spoiler to prevent excess air from getting under the car at speed.

## No rocker panels

Part of the strength of a conventional modern monocoque design is in the door sills. The Saab did without and still proved to be extremely strong. The doors come right down to the bottom of the car and there are no sills to step over as you get in.

## Special wheels

One way the Turbo was made to stand out from the lesser 99s was by fitting special 'Inca' alloy wheels. Rally versions used eight-spoke Minilite alloy wheels.





### Rack-and-pinion steering

All the 99s use rack-and-pinion steering. Surprisingly for such a heavy front-wheel drive car there is no power assistance. The steering wheel is therefore unusually large to give enough leverage.



### Front-hinging hood

Extending all the way to the cowl, the hood can be slid forwards and then hinged forward at the front for access to the engine.



# Specifications

## 1978 Saab 99 Turbo

### ENGINE

**Type:** In-line four-cylinder

**Construction:** Cast-iron block and alloy head

**Valve gear:** Two valves per cylinder operated by a single chain-driven overhead camshaft

**Bore and stroke:** 3.54 in. x 3.07 in.

**Displacement:** 1,985 cc

**Compression ratio:** 7.2:1

**Induction system:** Bosch fuel injection with Garrett T3 turbocharger

**Maximum power:** 145 bhp at 5,000 rpm

**Maximum torque:** 174 lb-ft at 3,000 rpm

### TRANSMISSION

Four-speed manual

### BODY/CHASSIS

Unitary construction steel monocoque two-door sedan or three-door hatchback body

### SPECIAL FEATURES



Vents on the rear quarter panels are a feature of all 99s.



Big black bumpers are fitted to all later 99s; early cars use chrome bumpers.

### RUNNING GEAR

**Steering:** Rack-and-pinion

**Front suspension:** Double wishbones with coil springs, telescopic shock absorbers and anti-roll bar

**Rear suspension:** Beam axle with coil springs, Panhard rod, trailing arms and telescopic shock absorbers

**Brakes:** Discs (front and rear)

**Wheels:** Alloy, 5.5 x 15 in.

**Tires:** Pirelli P6, 175/70 HR15

### DIMENSIONS

**Length:** 178.3 in.    **Width:** 66.5 in.

**Height:** 56.7 in.    **Wheelbase:** 97.5 in.

**Track:** 55.1 in. (front), 55.9 in. (rear)

**Weight:** 2,715 lbs.

# Milestones

**1978 After 100 prototypes** have covered over three million miles between them in a typically Saab thorough approach, the production Saab 99 Turbo makes its debut at the Frankfurt Motor Show.



Saab's 99 remained in production for 20 years.

**1979 Saab quickly puts the 99 Turbo** into action in the World Rally Championship as a replacement for the existing normally-aspirated 2.0-liter EMS. When Stig Blomqvist wins the Swedish Rally (for the fifth time), it is the first ever win for a turbocharged rally car.



Saab still carries on the tradition of turbocharging its cars, including the larger 9000.

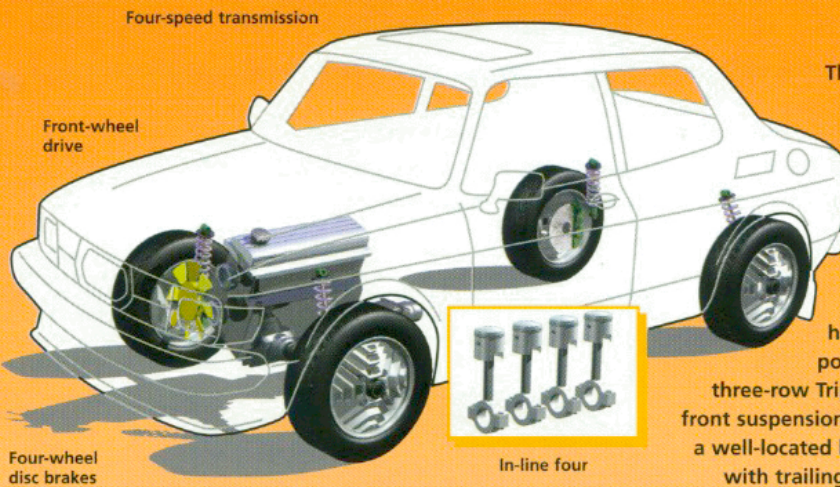
**1980 Even with turbo power** the 99 is becoming outdated in world rallying, where it's up against purpose-built rally cars. With the launch of the 900 Turbo, the 99 is discontinued in early 1981.

## VALUE GUIDE

ORIGINAL PRICE	
1978	\$16,850
CURRENT VALUE	
\$2,000-\$4,000	

Saab Turbos cost more than the opposition but are now classics.

## UNDER THE SKIN



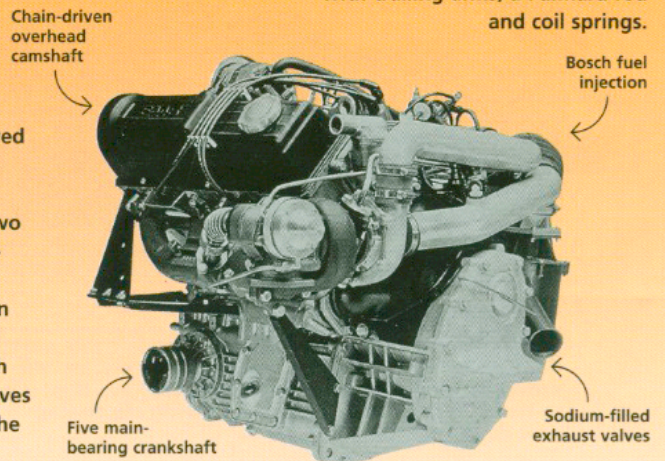
### Unusual

The Saab 99 is unusual in having the engine mounted longitudinally and turned 180 degrees, with the timing cover facing the rear. The four-speed transmission harnesses the engine's power through a tough three-row Triplex chain. Wishbone front suspension is complemented by a well-located beam axle at the rear with trailing arms, a Panhard rod and coil springs.

### THE POWER PACK

### Bettering Leyland

Saab's four-cylinder engine is an improved version of the British Triumph Dolomite unit. The slant-four has an iron block, topped by an alloy cylinder head and two valves per cylinder operated by a chain-driven overhead camshaft. For turbocharging, Saab dropped the compression ratio down to a low 7.2:1 and fitted a Garrett T3 turbocharger as well as Bosch fuel injection. Sodium-filled exhaust valves are used to handle the extra heat and the cam timing is softened as usual.



Because of their rarity, enthusiasts prefer the two-door 99 Turbo sedan.

### Two doors

Although the three-door hatchback version is the most common, the two-door sedan models are more desirable because of their rarity (only 1,000 were made) and because they are lighter and therefore faster. All were either red or black.

## NOSE TO NOSE

BMW 2002 Turbo • Ford Escort RS2000 • Saab 99 Turbo

TOP SPEED	0-60 mph	POWER	WEIGHT	RIVAL CARS
130 mph	7.6 sec.	170 bhp	2,381 lbs.	BMW 2002 TURBO
108 mph	8.7 sec.	110 bhp	2,035 lbs.	FORD ESCORT RS2000
120 mph	9.1 sec.	145 bhp	2,715 lbs.	SAAB 99 TURBO