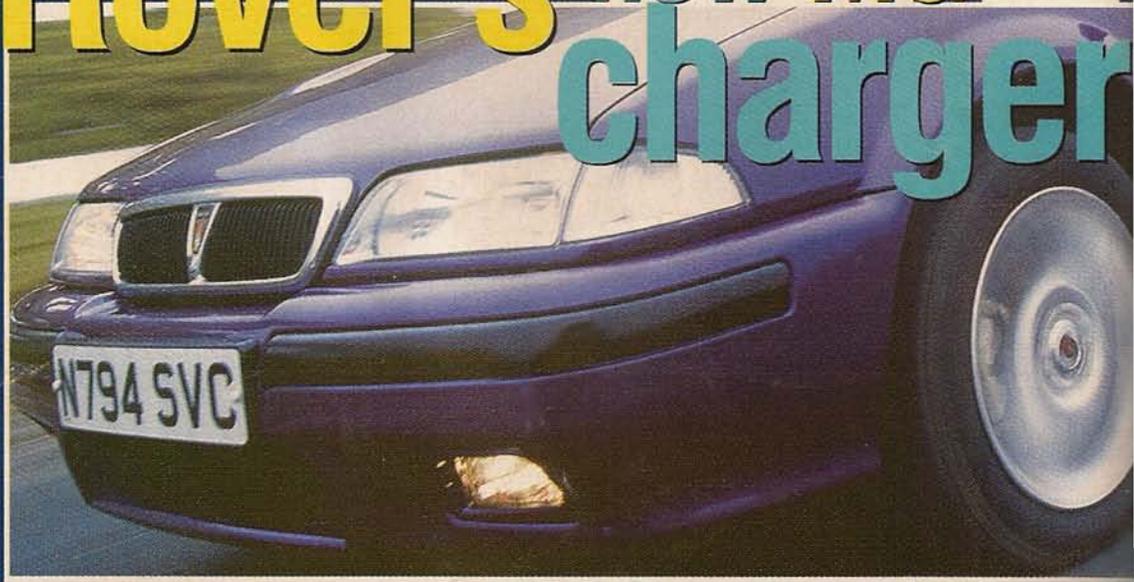


Auto Express

Rover's new MG charger



406 Coupé scoop



World picture exclusive



Airbags

safety myth exploded

Mmmmm Mégane

UK first drive

Supermini Shoot-out

Is new Corsa Sport on the pace?



Hot metal



Peugeot's secret

Spy picture exclusive

LOOK what's just around the corner from Peugeot – a stunning coupé that will have rivals going green with envy.

Revealed for the first time ever in these exclusive pictures, the new 406 coupé will be launched in a blaze of publicity next year.

It was already set to be one of 1997's most exciting new cars, and these shots confirm that Peugeot has a potential class leader waiting in the wings.

The 406 saloon is one of the best-looking family cars you can buy, but the coupé goes one step further and takes Peugeot's style

rating sky high. The basic look of the saloon is there, especially at the front. The sleek nose and distinctive slanting headlamps are clearly visible but Peugeot's designers have fine tuned it to give a more aggressive, sportier appearance.

At the rear, it's a similar story. The wrap-around light clusters and kicked-up edge of the boot have been highlighted to reinforce its image.

But these are only elements of the design – it's the whole car which to our eyes is a real winner. The slippery shape and heavily

curved roofline set the coupé apart from the saloon. Unlike the highly stylised Toscana concept on display at the recent Geneva Motor Show, the real thing is subtle and sleek.

With no pictures of the interior, it's not possible to show just how radical Peugeot is prepared to be, but expectations are high for a sports interior to differentiate the coupé from the saloon. We predict sports seats, different trim and racing-style instruments.

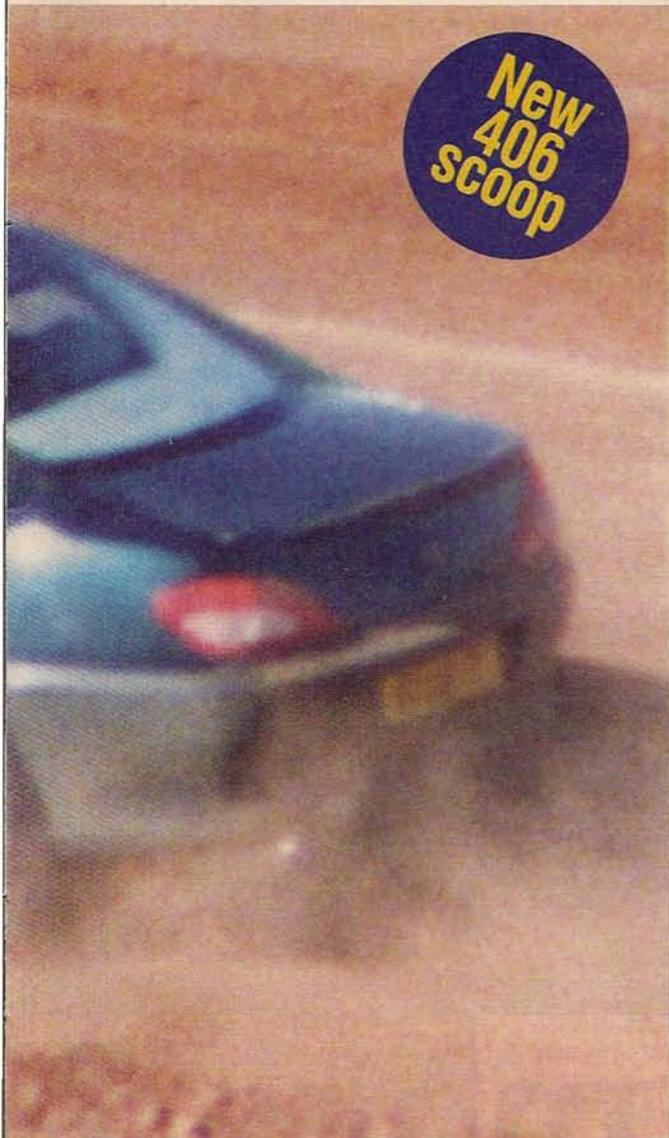
The coupé completes the 406 range – an estate is due at the end of this year – and promises to be the icing on the cake.

With no performance saloon in the new range (the Mi16 model

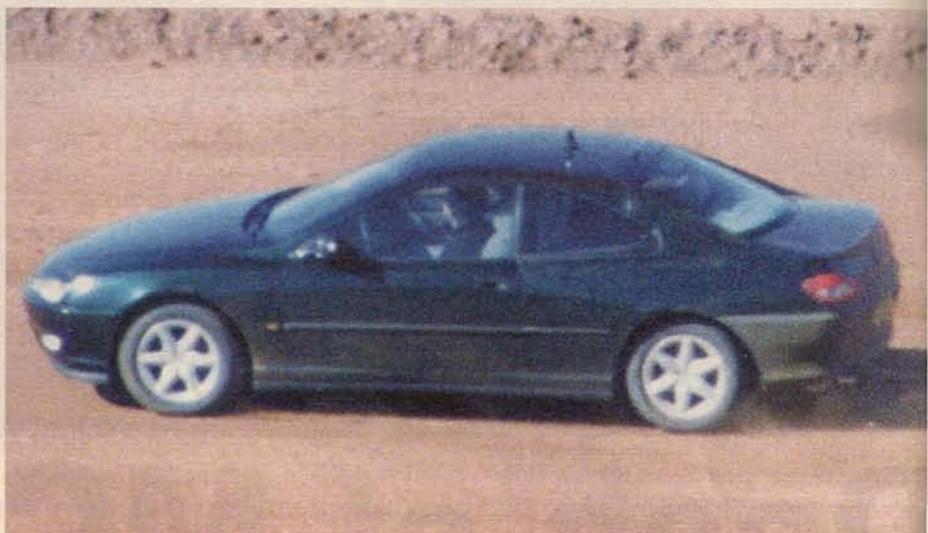


Coupé shares the saloon's sweeping nose and slim headlights

**New
406
scoop**



The difference between the coupé and its four-door cousin is most striking from the rear end



Flowing lines and curvaceous roofline give the coupé a sportier and more aggressive stance

coupé

has not been continued on from 405 into 406) the coupé will have the responsibility of attracting more enthusiastic and demanding drivers. The coupé is based on the same platform as the four-door and shares the same suspension and running gear, but is likely to offer even better handling.

There's also the promise of something special under the bonnet. The 1.8 and 2.0-litre engines in the saloon are obvious choices, but there are several possibilities for a more powerful 2.0-litre unit, if not a larger capacity engine altogether. Peugeot could rely on a version of the 2.0 from the 306 S16, tuned to produce around 170bhp, or opt instead for a

turbocharged motor giving even more power and excitement. Whatever the final choice – and we won't know that until next year – the coupé will carry Peugeot's sporting torch, so we can expect great things.

With the big names in this sector of the coupé market falling off the pace – Vauxhall's Calibra is relying on its striking looks to cover up less than impressive ability, and the Ford Probe never really set the world alight in the first place – Peugeot looks well placed to strike a killer blow.

Paul Chadderton

Rover's new coupé p16



Peugeot's heavily stylised and exaggerated Toscana concept car had no influence on the coupé

At a glance

- Striking new 406 coupé
- Joins range next year
- Calibra, Probe and BMW 3-Series rival
- Based on the saloon platform, sharing same suspension and running gear
- Two-litre, turbo or 3.0-litre engine
- Emphasis on driving enjoyment



The coupé is built on the 406 saloon's chassis