

1948-1955 Standard Vanguard Vans, Utes And Estates

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This subject took shape when my friend Paul Kelly in Beenleigh, Australia sent me an Ebay link to an interesting looking Standard delivery van that was up for sale. I had seen similar looking vans in England.

Paul responded that Australian tax & importation laws required that much of the car had to be made domestically and these vans and some Utes were the result. Even more unusual is the fact that the Australian versions were built by a number of different companies, so there were slightly different designs, so body parts which didn't always interchange. Few examples remain today.

I did more research on that 1955 Australian Standard Vanguard Van (pictured at lower right) and what was available down under and in the UK in those years. Some basic information is below and included are some photos of these interesting cars & vans.

PHOTOS:: The first are two pictures of Vanguard saloons (sedans) for reference - Then we have two shots of the light blue Australian built van with the square edges.

On the following page, at the top is a shot of a restored UK-built van. The next two shots are of a bright blue Vanguard Estate and the final shot is of an Australian ute.

The final page is a montage of an amazing customized Vanguard Van built in the UK back in the 1990s that has been made into a classy Rover V8 powered Woody. Outside of the contemporary dash, it could have been a factory concept design.

Basic Standard Vanguard Information:

With post-war modern, beetle-back styling, the Vanguard model replaced Standard's entire range of tired prewar offerings and introduced the world to their tough new wet-liner, four-cylinder engines.

The Vanguard, in its earliest fastback form, was produced by the Standard Motor Co. in Coventry, UK between 1947 and 1955. This model was announced in July of 1947 and was Standard's first post WW II car and had little left over from prewar Standards. It was also the first model to feature the new Standard badge, a stylized representation of the wings of a Griffin.



After the War, potential buyers, many who had recently experienced military or naval service, would relate to a military themed name that had been in the news. A name related to the British Navy was just the ticket.

The name Vanguard was chosen because it would recall the HMS Vanguard, the last and largest of the Royal Navy's battle cruisers that was launched in 1944 amid much media attention. Permission to use the name required Standard to have extensive negotiations with the British Navy!

The new car was a full six-seater with a split windscreen. The styling of the new car was said to resemble the prewar US Army Plymouth sedans that were a regular sight around the England just after the war. The estate model was introduced in 1950. All got a lower hood (bonnet) line and sedans got a larger rear window starting in October 1951.

The same engine was used throughout the range during this period. It was an overhead valve unit of 85 mm (3.3 in) bore and 92 mm (3.6 in) stroke with single Solex downdraft carburetor. The compression ratio was 6.7:1. Wet cylinder liners were fitted. The engine was very similar to the ones made by Standard for the Ferguson tractor that they were making in large numbers and what would be sports tuned for the popular Triumph TR roadsters.

The transmission was by a three speed gearbox with synchromesh on all forward ratios. The Vanguard was also available with an optional overdrive that made a big difference to fuel consumption.

Standard Vanguard Specifications

Production: 184,799
Price at launch: £544

Performance:
0-60mph: 22 secs
Top speed: 78mph
Power: 68bhp
MPG: 23mpg

Chassis::

Suspension Front: Independent, coil springs
Suspension Rear: Beam axle, leaf springs

Dimensions:

Length: 4216mm
Width: 1753mm
Height: 1626mm
Weight: 1188kgs
Wheelbase: 2388mm



