

1986 900 turbo flatnose convertible determination

By Ewout Braad

Sometimes, a 1986 fabulous flatnose has been rebuilt to a post-86 convertible model – or contrary: a post-86 model has been converted to a flatnose model. How to tell what is the real deal?

There are some more or less obvious characteristics to tell a true model year (MY) 1986 flatnose convertible from a MY 1987 convertible – even if the flatnose front is not present anymore. This document helps to determine if you are dealing with a true Fabulous Flatnose.



Real... or conversions?

In this document, 2 primary characteristics and 10 secondary characteristics are enrolled to tell a real flatnose convertible (model year 1987) from the others (model year 1987 and on). The primary characteristics cannot be changed over the years; the secondary characteristics may well have been altered at some point in time. It is wise to check more than one element.

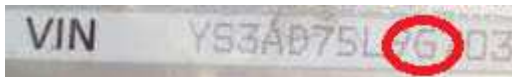
Primary characteristics

1. Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)

The best way to tell MY1986 from MY1987 is the VIN. The VIN can be found both in the car's documents and directly behind the windscreen in front of the left dashboard speaker:



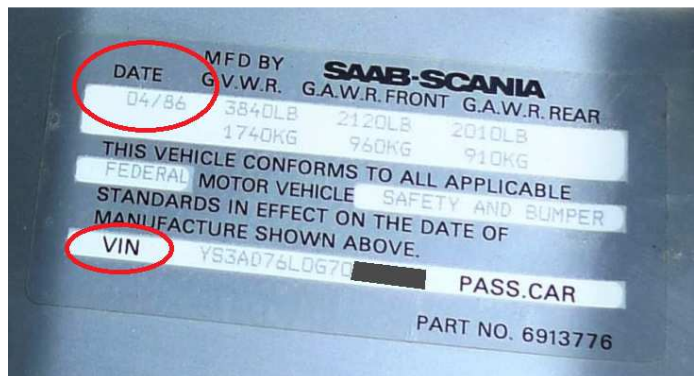
The tenth digit of a true MY1986 is a G. From MY1987 up to MY1993 the tenth digit shows respectively H, J, K, L, M, N or P.



Also, the preceding 'D7' and 'L' should be present, indicating a 900 turbo convertible with the B202 16v engine. For more information on VINs, see the document 'Fabulous Flatnose Factsheet'.

2. Door jamb sticker

In the left door jamb of the convertible flatnoses is a sticker (part number 6913776), stating both VIN and building date:



Of course, the building date will give you more insight in the exact model. The sticker may have been removed, possibly due to a paint job, but can never be altered.

Note: the last true flatnoses were built in July 1986 >> 07/86!

Secondary characteristics

1. Front and grille

A MY1986 convertible obviously has a flat front and grille, whereas a MY1987 (and on) has a sloped front:



2. Bumpers

The bumpers of a MY1986 convertible are small and straight (see above). The MY1987 bumpers are more bulky and wraparound, see also the above pictures. A distinctive element is the visibility of the body underneath both the front and rear bumpers of the MY1986 model:



Unless of course an Aero bodykit has been added later, in which case no body can be seen there:



3. Spoiler

Until MY1992, the convertible had a short spoiler or 'collar'; afterward it got longer, both in forward direction as in rear direction:



4. Dashboard

From MY1988 on the dashboard had a thick fringe, before that it was small:



Also, the MY1986 convertible had the chrome brim around the dashboard fascia (see left picture).

5. Engine

The true MY1986 flatnose convertible (production car) only came with a 16 valve full pressure turbo engine (175 BHP) and the characteristic flat exhaust pipe:

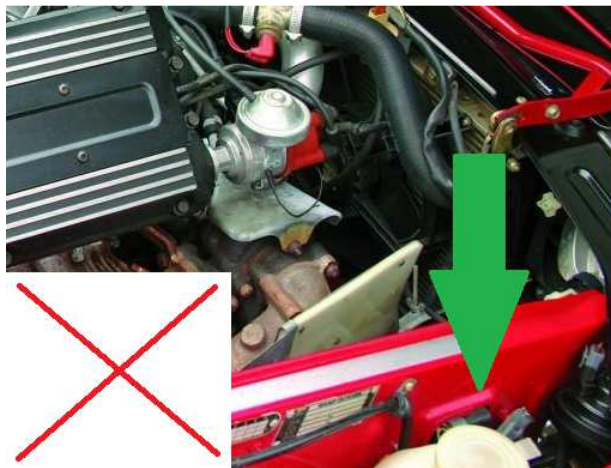


Original T16v engine



Original exhaust (left) versus non-original (right) – a part that will have been replaced a few times through the years, of course

While looking at the engine also make sure there are no airbag sensor holes in the inner fenders, as these only came after MY1992:



Also, ABS was not introduced until MY1990:



6. Colours

The MY1986 convertible only was available in silver metallic clearcoat with buffalo grey (E33) leather seats, although the SAAB Museum claims a few red and white cars were delivered. Check for the colour codes:

172B Silver Metallic Clearcoat

127H Cherry Red (possibly)

153B Cirrus White (possibly)

The MY1987 was available in the following colours:

200H Silver Metallic Clearcoat (note the different colour code number compared to MY1986 Silver Metallic)

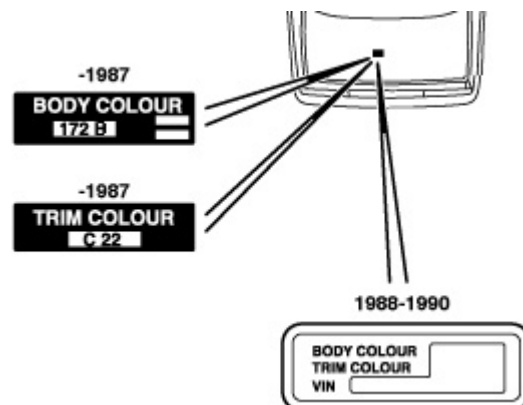
127H Cherry Red

153B Cirrus White

158G Edwardian Gray Metallic Clearcoat

170B Black

Later, more colours were available on the convertibles. You can find the colour code on a plaquette under the trunk floor:



7. Wheel lugs and nuts

The wheel lugs and nuts on the 900 flatnose convertible measure 4x114.3 mm (4x4.5 inch) with 71 mm centerbore. On the MY1988 convertibles (and on), that is 4x108 (4x4.25 inch). Visually, the wheels from MY1988 on have a wheel centering pin behind the center cap that the older models lack:



Correct (left) and newer (right) wheel

8. Seats

The seats changed from MY1991 on. The early type seat is recognizable by three features:

1. The handle to flip the back rest is mounted on the lower part of the seat instead of halfway the back rest.
2. The lever to move the seat back and forward is a one-hand lever on a stick instead of a bar close to the floor.
3. The height adjustment is done by a clip close to the floor instead of a lever on the side of the chair.



Old type seat (left) and new type seat (right)



9. Parking brake

The flatnose convertibles have the parking brake on the front wheels, while from MY1988 on, it was on the rear wheels. If you are not a true technician, this may be hard to check. Ask the owner or the garage for proof, if necessary.

10. Sidelining

All the original flatnoses were equipped with decor strips on the side. If it lacks, the car may be repainted or may not be an MY1986 (or even USA delivered) car.



Lacking decor strip



Original decor strip