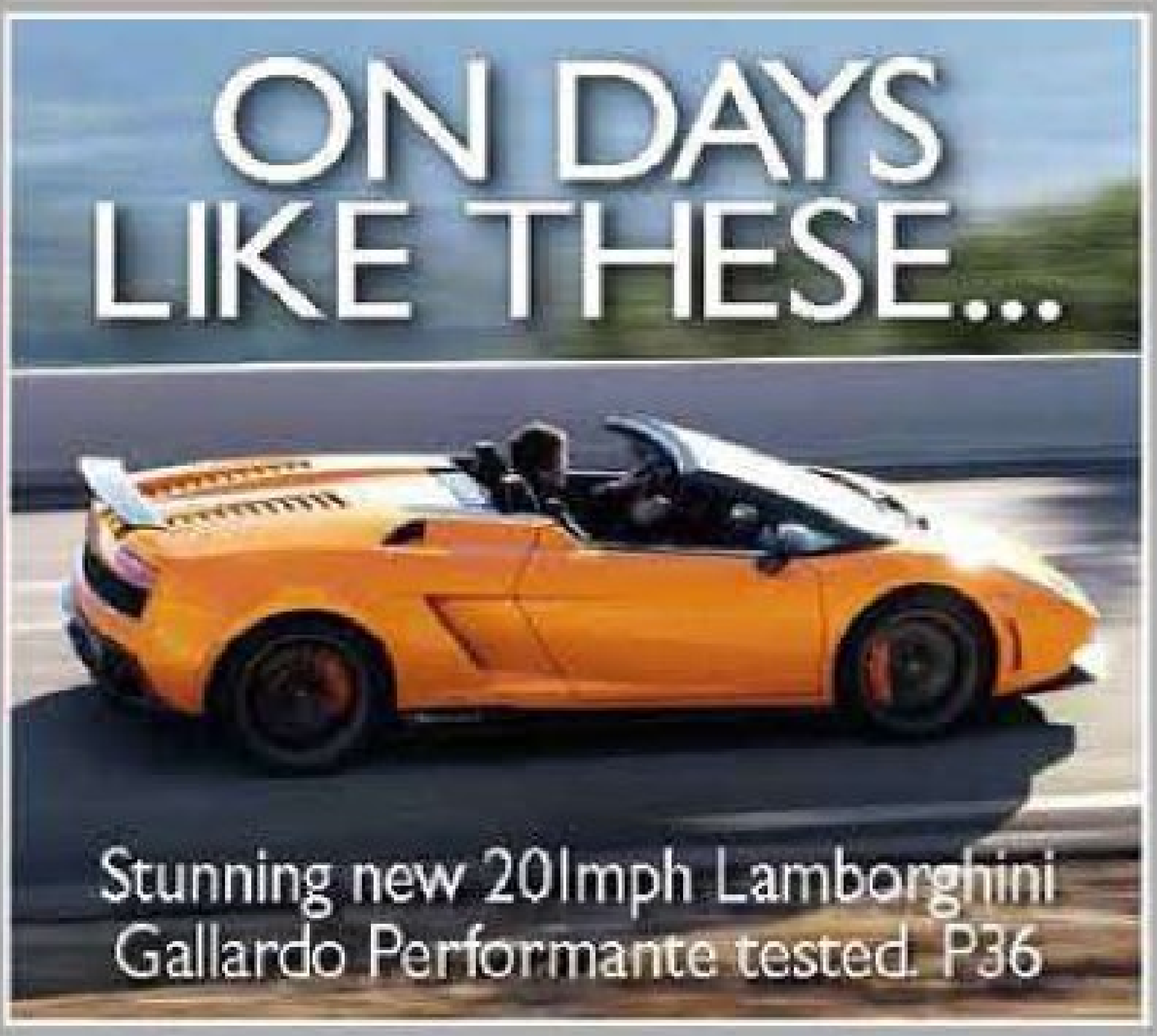




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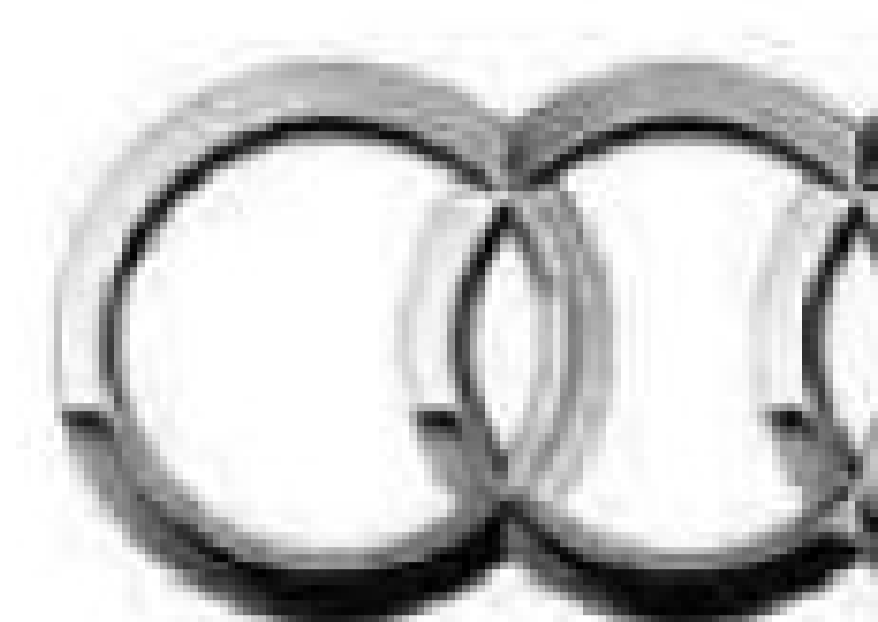
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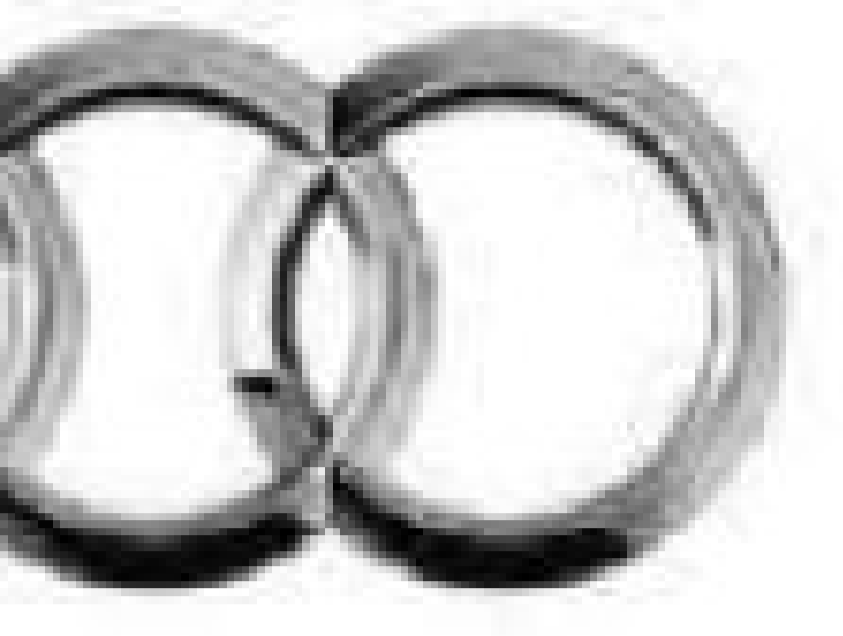
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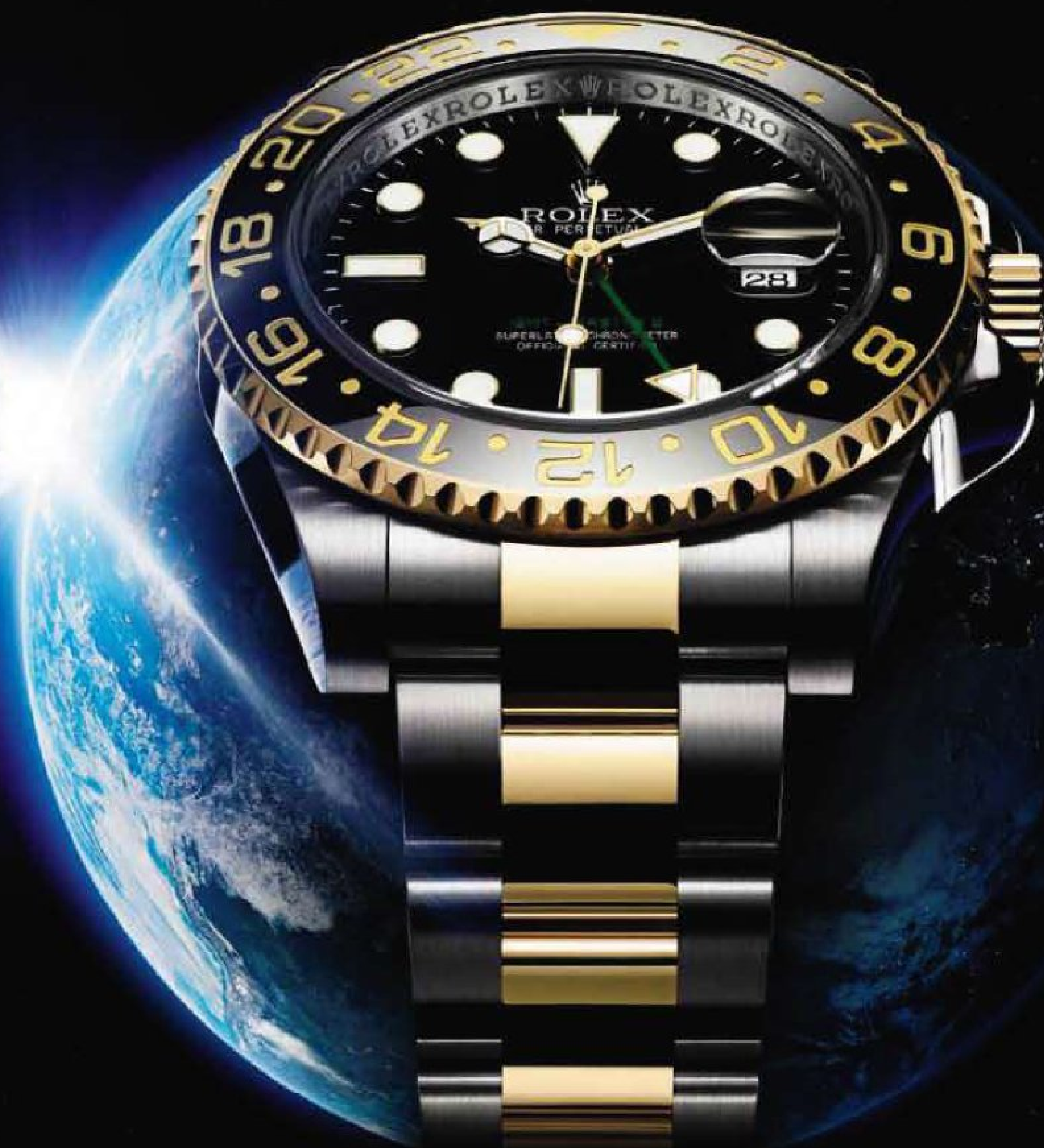
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THE GMT-MASTER II



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- CITROËN DS3 RACING
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ED SPEAK

The most exciting car in this issue? The BBR Mazda MX-5 Turbo on page 88. Have I consumed too much Xmas eggnog? No, I'm serious! In an issue featuring the reborn Stratos and Quattro and the Lamborghini Performante, the BBR MX-5 is small in size but huge in significance – arguably more so now than when it was first launched 20 years ago. Here's why...

The BBR Mazda MX-5 should be seen as a car of today. It is small, light, fast, fun and inexpensive. BBR has added a turbocharger, an intercooler, uprated suspension and a LSD, but here's the trick – the car has sacrificed nothing in the process. Tuning specialists often use the word 'improved' to describe their products but few achieve it. BBR has. And some.

The BBR MX-5 is also significant because it's a sports car that exists comfortably in an age of austerity. Its efficiency is delivered by its lack of mass and its CO2 impact is negligible because the largest proportion of its emissions were spat out 20 years ago when the car was originally manufactured. And let's not forget that while the mk1 MX-5 is two decades old, BBR will build you a complete, refreshed car for well under £10K. That's simply epic value for money for a 220bhp, rear-wheel-drive sports car that does 0-60mph in 5.5 seconds.

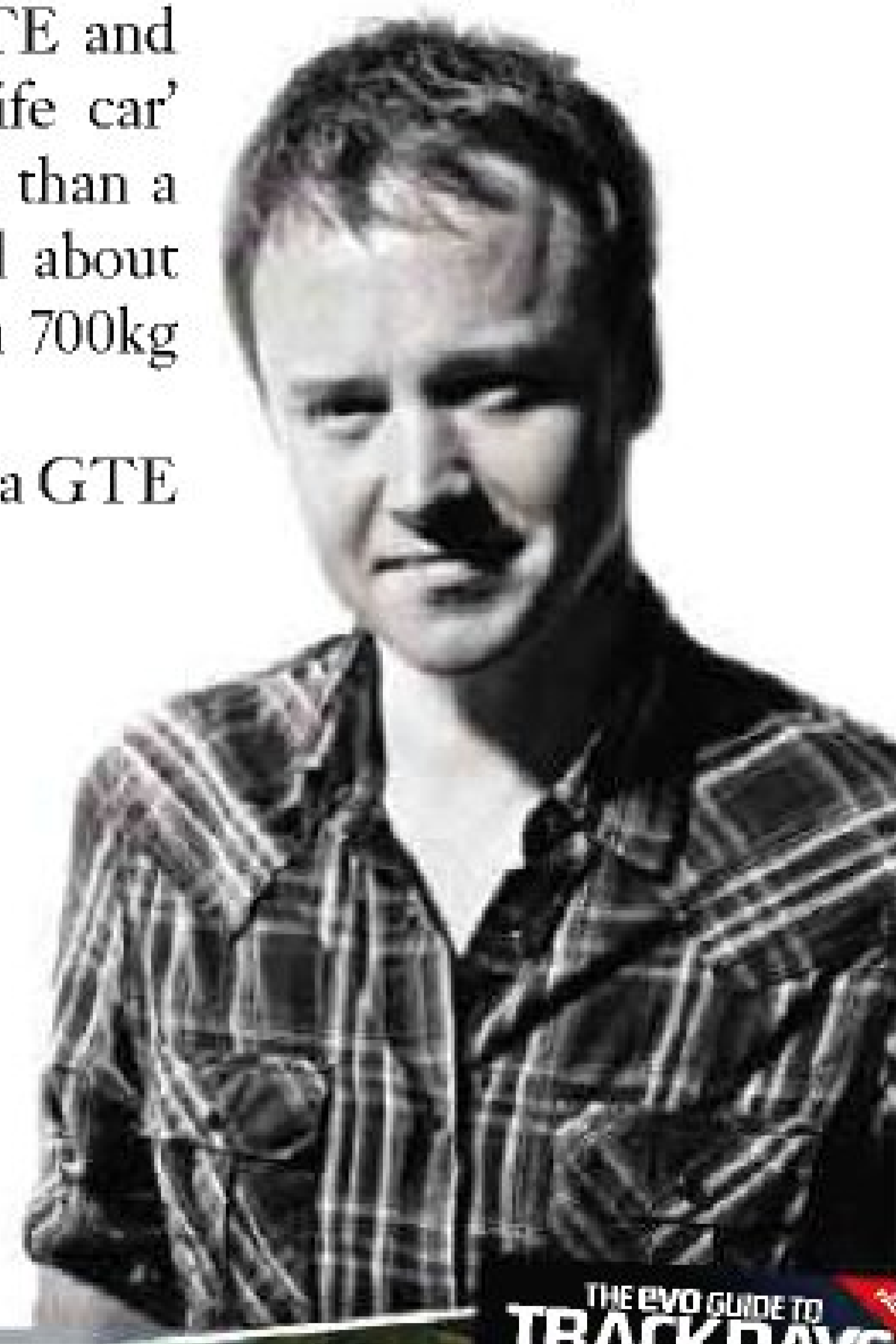
There's something tremendously exciting about the very notion of a refreshed and updated car – the mechanical version of a software update or a plug-in. Are we talking about simple car modifying and tuning? Sort of, but for me the appeal of the BBR MX-5 is that you can buy a turn-key car or you can deliver an existing (and cheap) donor machine and for a few grand get a car that's comparable with modern machinery and, crucially, built and warranted by a specialist. It's a kind of 'life car' – a vehicle that returns once a year to a specialist to be updated, renovated and maintained. The key, as Road Test Editor John Barker pointed out when we batted this idea around the office, is that you don't lose the essential character of the car in your quest for improved performance.

I've been thinking about the BBR MX-5, and I have to admit that I'm tempted. Problem is, inevitably I've been distracted by thinking about other cars you could apply the 'life-car' philosophy to. My list currently looks like this: Peugeot 205 GTI 1.9, first-gen Subaru Impreza Turbo, E30 BMW 325i Sport, Opel Manta GTE and Lotus Carlton. My only problem is that my dream 'life car' already exists, and I own it. My Clio V6 is nothing more than a re-imagined Renault 5 Turbo 2. I'm also hugely excited about Gordon Murray's idea for a modern Sprite (**evo 150**) – a 700kg spider costing £11,000-12,000.

Saying that, I can't get the thought of a modernised Manta GTE out of my head. Must be the eggnog...



Nick Trott, Editor



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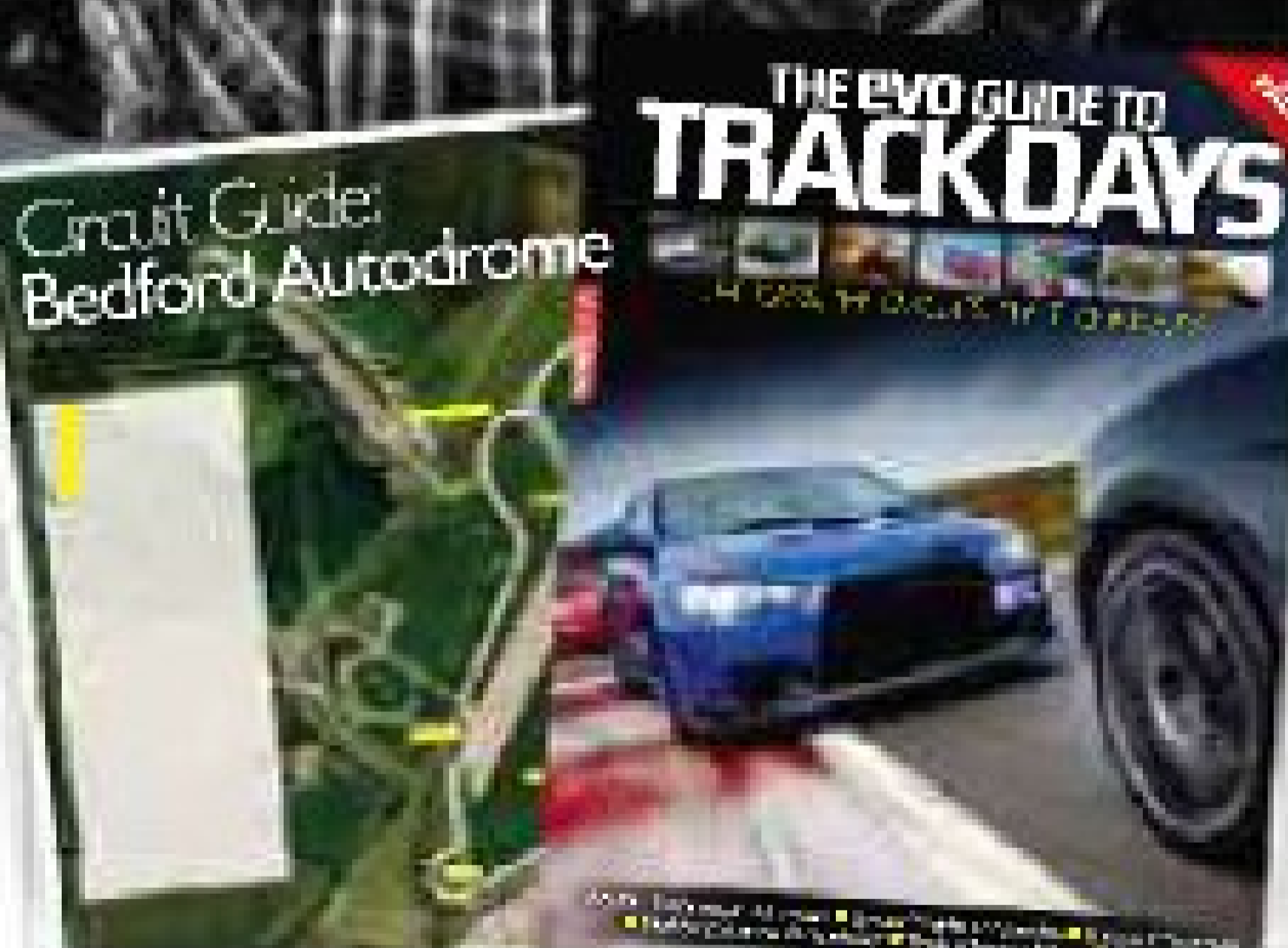
VIDEOS ON EVO.CO.UK

■ Brilliant videos on evo's website this month include a drive of the Veyron Super Sport and an in-car lap of the Caparo at the Ring.



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HERO OF THE MONTH

MICHAEL STOSCHEK

■ What do you do when you step back from the everyday running of a large, successful automotive systems company? Happily for Stratos fans, Michael Stoschek decided to spend around £3m creating a fabulous modern interpretation of the iconic Lancia rally weapon. Pininfarina was employed to realise the project, but it was Stoschek's uncompromising eye for detail and quality that has ensured this Ferrari-based, carbon-bodied, 21st century Stratos has turned out as brilliantly as it has. Top man.



NEXT ISSUE

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We lap Ascari in the incredible 739bhp, track-only Pagani Zonda R



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Honda Civic Type R GT	201	193	6.6
VW Golf GTi	210	280	6.9

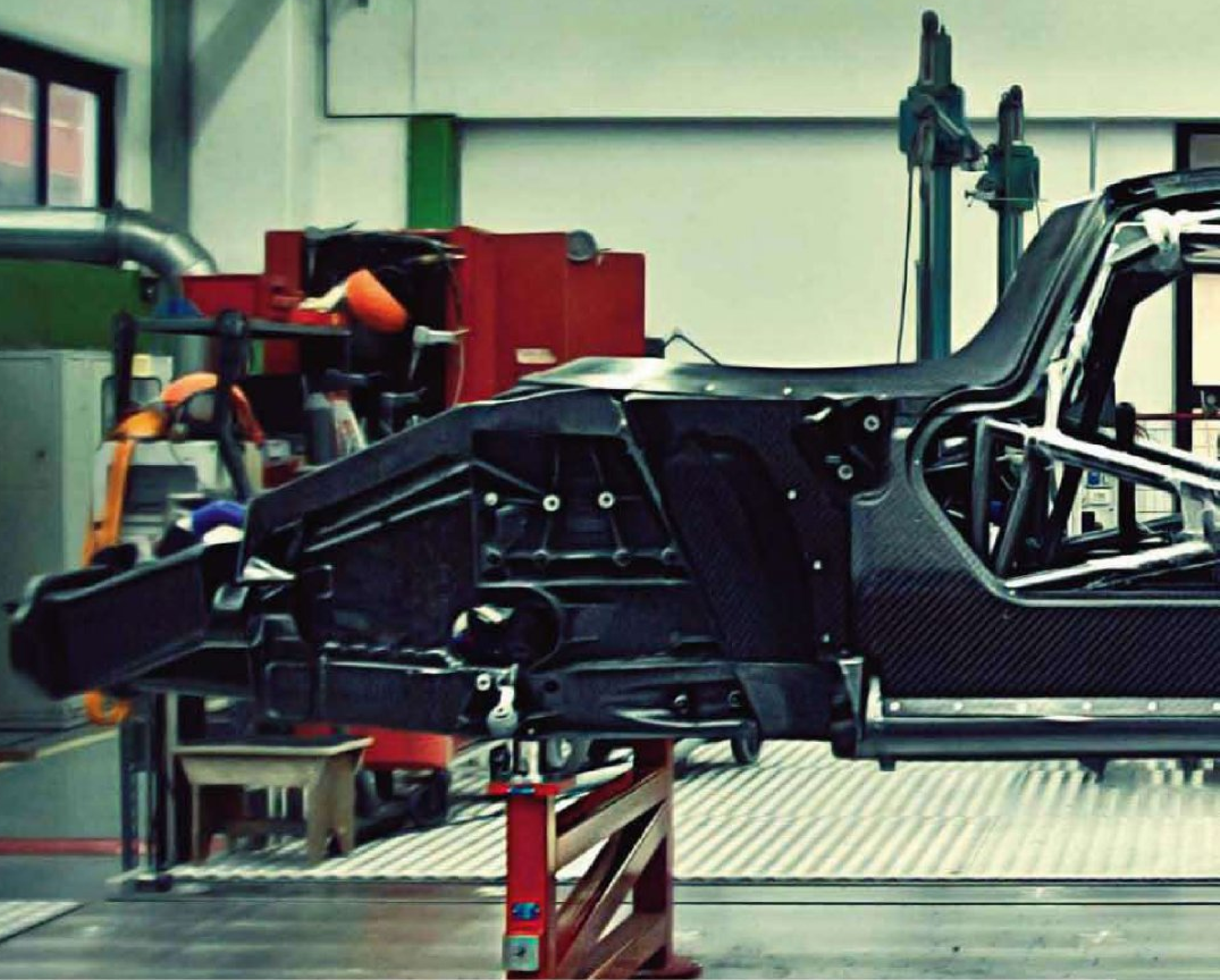
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REBIRTH OF A

A LEGENDARY '60s ENDURANCE RACER IS BEING



It's hard to tell what it is right now as it sits in a Turinese workshop devoid of bodywork. There are clues: the roll-cage and carbon panels point to it being a racer of some description and it's clearly mid-engined. It's unique too, a total one-off, which is bound to make identification trickier. We bet you'd recognise it if the gorgeously curvaceous panels were attached, though.

So here's a big clue to its identity. Does the name James Glickenhaus mean anything to you? If it does, we guarantee it'll be for the stunning and unique Ferrari P4/5 supercar that he commissioned from Pininfarina, inspired by the beautiful Ferrari P3 and P4 endurance racers of the 1960s.

Based on an Enzo and first presented at Pebble Beach in August 2006, Glickenhaus's P4/5 was a stunning piece of design by Jason Castriota – so much so that a certain

Luca di Montezemolo agreed to let it wear the Ferrari badge. Its proper name is Ferrari P4/5 by Pininfarina.

Now Glickenhaus is taking his Ferrari passion to the next level. His new creation, currently taking shape, is the P4/5 Competizione and the plan is to take it racing. At the Nürburgring.

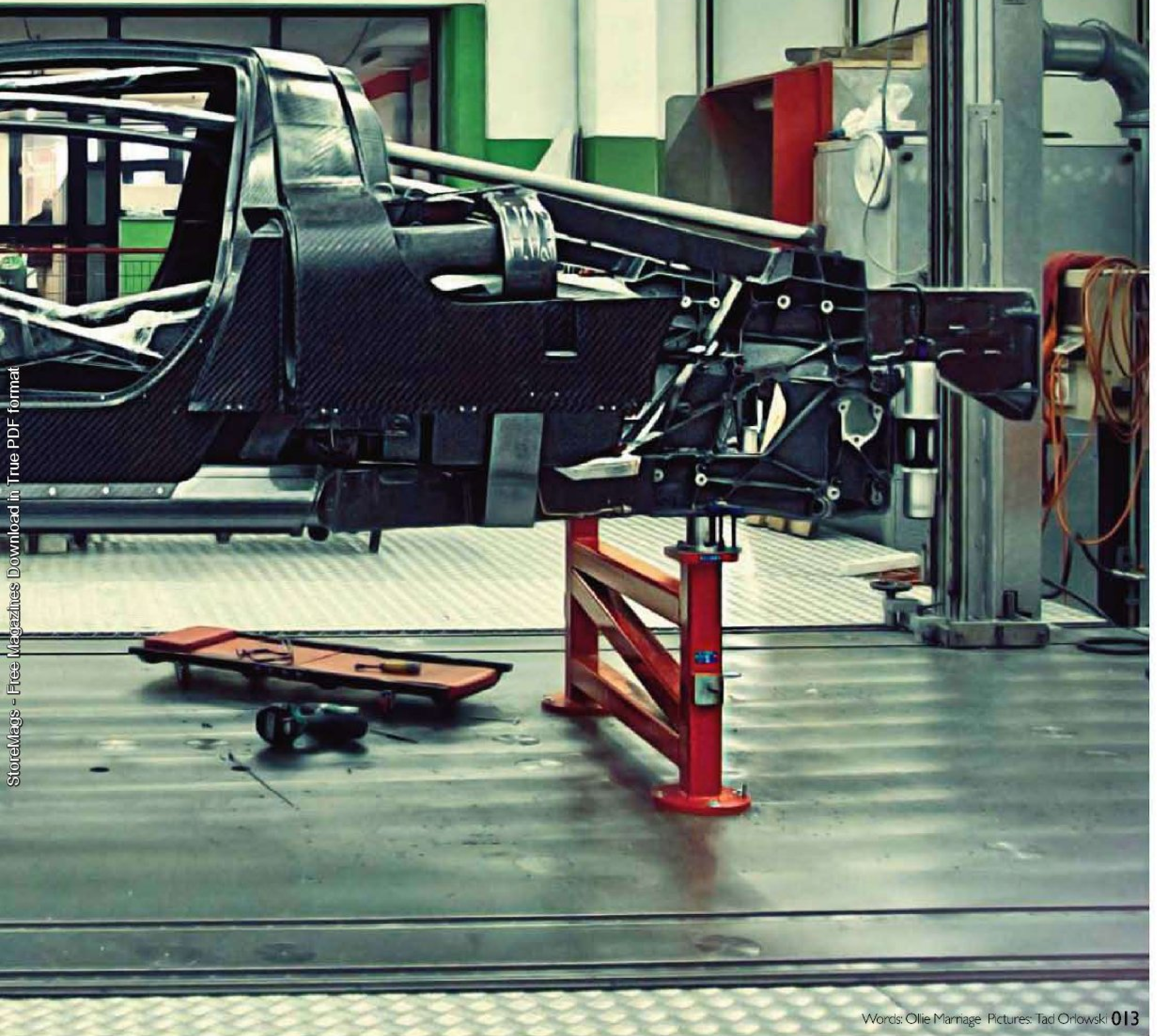
Racing the P4/5 has been a long-held ambition for both Glickenhaus and the man responsible for creating his original car when he was Pininfarina's

head of special projects, Paolo Garella. A few years ago they'd talked about doing Le Mans, and then got talking to the organisers of the Nürburgring 24hrs. 'The guys at the Nürburgring were so enthusiastic and supportive,' Glickenhaus recalls, 'but the question was how we could go about it.'

The problem? 'The P4/5 is based on an Enzo, which has a road-car carbon tub, which isn't allowed under their regulations, and we weren't sure anyway as the V12 is very, very thirsty

RACING ICON

RECREATED FOR THE NÜRBURGRING 24 HOURS



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and in long-distance races, economy matters. So we explored a couple of other avenues – the Maserati MC12 and then the Ferrari 333 SP. I was keen on the 333, but the FIA and scrutineers were nervous about it due to the age of those tubs [the last 333 SP stopped racing seven years ago].

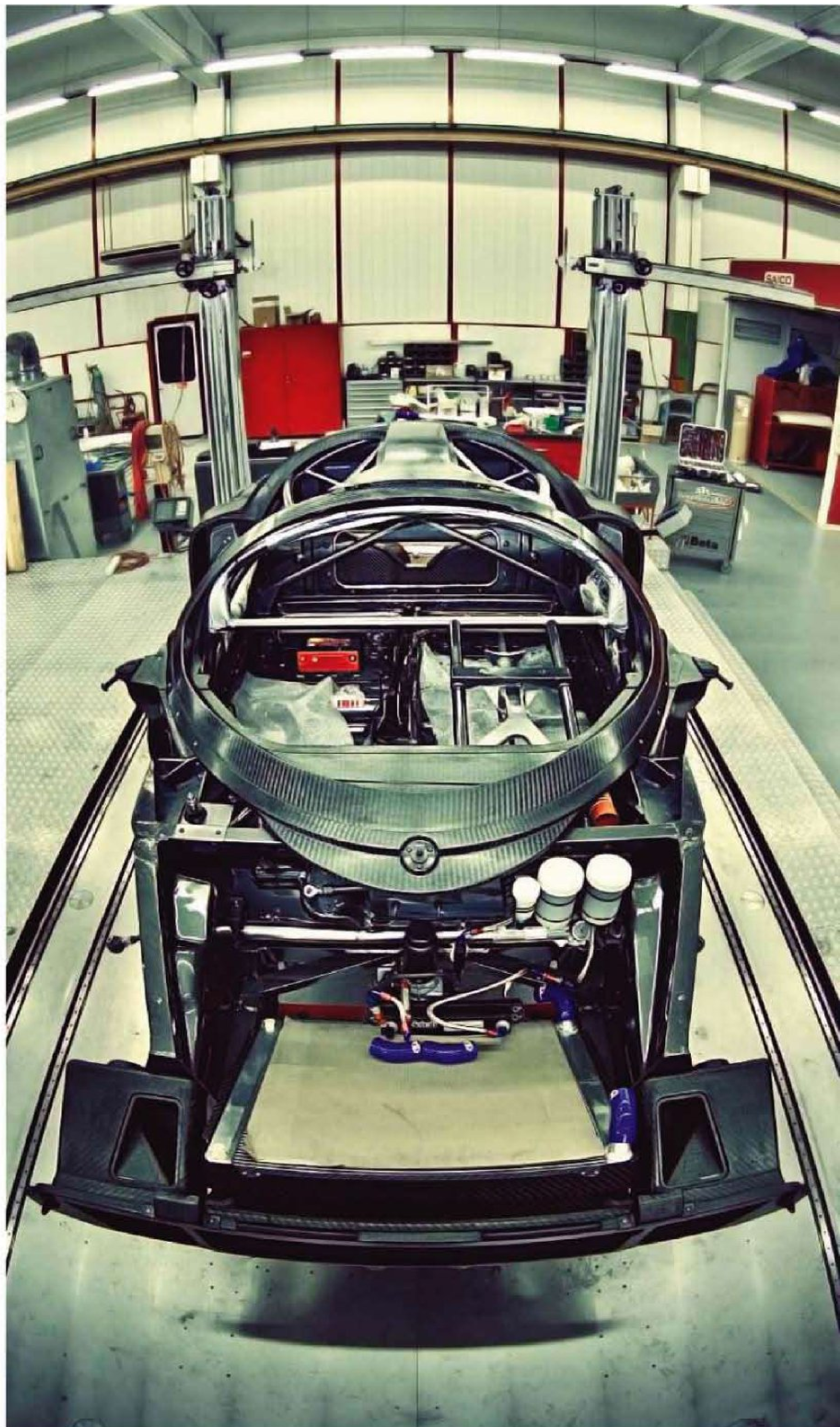
'What I hadn't realised,' Glickenhaus continues, 'is that the Ring has a special EXP1 experimental class with more lenient regulations [the Porsche GT3 R Hybrid competed in it in 2010], so that led us to starting from scratch with a donor car.'

Or two. Glickenhaus acquired a racing team that had been running a Ferrari F430 GT2, which came with a full set of spares including an extra engine and gearbox. Surely rebodging that to look like the P4/5 would be enough of a project? Not for Glickenhaus: 'I wanted the car to be road legal, so we bought a US-spec 430 Scuderia road car with all the correct numbers and legal documents.'

This allows Glickenhaus to use the Scud's chassis (and hence keep the car road-legal), but wed it to the GT2's proven racing running gear and then cloak the lot in a drop-dead gorgeous body. It won't be identical to the Enzo-based car, not least because the 430 is smaller, but Garella, together with LM Gianetti (the company that is building it) and N.Technology (who will be running the car at the 24hrs), are convinced it has real racing potential.

To comply with GT2 regulations the car uses a shorter-stroke version of the F430's 4.3-litre V8, reducing the capacity to 4 litres and power to around 435bhp. This drives the rear wheels through a triple-plate clutch and a six-speed sequential gearbox. Double-wishbone suspension all round, ceramic brakes (380mm front, 330mm rear) and cast magnesium alloy wheels help peg the P4/5C's racing weight back to 1230kg.

Garella, who left Pininfarina to work for himself in July 2009, is in charge





Left: fabulous 1960s Ferrari 330 P4 was the inspiration. New P4/5C is being built at Turin-based race specialist LM Gianetti. Right: many of the bespoke parts bear the car's name. Far right: carbonfibre is used extensively in the car's make-up, but there's a beefy roll-cage too



'THE GOAL IS TO SURVIVE – HAVE FUN, PUT ON A GOOD SHOW AND HOPEFULLY NOT WRECK THE CAR TOO BADLY'

of overseeing this new project. So what have been the biggest challenges? 'Without a doubt it's been reshaping the bodywork for a different chassis,' he says. 'No stylist has been involved, so the work is all engineering – the cockpit and doors are identical, but inspired by GT2 regulations we've modified the lower part of the body, and the front and rear sections are now shorter. The F430 has very different track widths to the Enzo, too – wider at the front, narrower at the back – so those differences have had to be incorporated.'

Will it be competitive at the Nürburgring? 'The race has such a

high profile and has become a real reference for manufacturers such as Audi, BMW and Porsche, so it's very competitive. But don't forget that last year [2010] an F430 GT2 finished second, so I think we have a good chance to do well. Budget limitations mean you can't do huge development, so that makes things quite even.'

The car is due to be running within the next month or two, giving time for testing ahead of the 24hr race on June 25-26. Glickenhaus himself won't be driving. 'This is a serious effort,' he says, 'especially since it's at the Ring, so we've lined up four professionals: Mika Salo, Nicola Larini, Fabrizio Giovanardi,

and Luca Cappellari. The goal is to survive – I really don't think we can win, but we will have fun, put on a good show and hopefully not wreck the car too badly. I want to use it on the road afterwards!'

Surely Glickenhaus isn't serious? 'Of course I am. I use all my cars. My P4/5 has now covered 8000 miles. I've driven it in Bahrain, taken it on holiday to France and Italy, done the Targa Florio. It's had a new clutch, tyres, rear wheel bearings and been driven in the rain.' At this point it's worth remembering that his P4/5 is the only one on the planet and is alleged to have cost him around £3million.

But what of the P4/5C? Will its appearance at the Ring be a racing one-off? 'As far as we know it only complies with regulations for this one race,' says Glickenhaus, 'but we are going to meet with officials from the ACO [Automobile Club de l'Ouest, the Le Mans organisers] about maybe running there in 2012. If that happens then I guess there's nothing to stop us taking it to the other Le Mans Series races at Daytona, Sebring and Spa.'

One thing's for sure, if it looks half as tasty as the road car, it's going to draw crowds wherever it goes. We'll be keeping a close eye on its progress over the coming months.



Left: the P4/5C mid-build; basic chassis is from a road-spec 430 Scuderia; carbonfibre frame for the new, heavily curved windscreen is already in place. Top left: lightweight AP Racing pedal set. Right: renderings show how the finished car will look; proportions have been carefully adjusted to fit the F430 chassis (earlier P4/5 road car was Enzo-based), while cooling slats, front splitter, rear wing and rear diffuser are all new





BABY M-CAR REVEALED

1-SERIES M COUPE SHEDS ITS DISGUISE. £40K PRICE TAG, 335BHP AND 0-60 IN 4.9SEC

We may have already driven it (see issue 151), but until now we weren't 100 per cent sure what the baby M-car looked like.

Well, now we know and we're pretty happy. Big flared arches give it a great stance, and they're packed out with 19-inch wheels and hugely increased track widths – up 71mm at the front

and 46mm at the rear. In short it looks squat and muscular.

But it definitely won't wear the M1 tag – not officially at least. Instead, as suspected, it will be badged 1-series M Coupe and will be priced from £39,990 when it goes on sale here in the spring.

It will also go head-to-head with the recently announced Audi RS3, which is £90 cheaper and features absolutely identical power and torque figures –

335bhp and 332lb ft. The 1495kg BMW is 80kg lighter than Audi's entry-level RS model, but can't match its 4wd rival's claimed 4.6sec 0-62mph time, lagging by 0.3secs. However, it's capable of hitting 124mph from a standstill in just 17.3sec, and can apparently lap the Ring in 8min 12sec, which makes it quicker than the current E60 M5, but around 7sec slower than the M3.

It has elements in common with

that car, most notably the suspension and brakes. The 3-litre twin-turbo straight-six is taken from the Z4 35iS and the six-speed manual is from the 135i – albeit modified. The M Coupe will not be offered with double-clutch transmission, nor will it feature adaptive damping. The idea is that this is an M-car stripped of fripperies – the M button on the steering wheel controls throttle response alone.



NEW VXR8 NUDGES £50K

REVAMPED VAUXHALL MUSCLE-CAR
GOES HEAD-TO-HEAD WITH M3

Not for shrinking violets: the newly facelifted VXR8



This month sees an old favourite return to our shores as Vauxhall unleashes the new VXR8. We're not convinced by the chrome moustache topping the grille – in fact the glitz has been laid on a bit thick – but all the important bits we know and love remain.

The 6.2-litre LS3 V8 from the previous model is retained, producing 419bhp and 405lb ft of torque – enough to thump the new saloon to 60mph in a claimed 4.9sec. You can choose between six-speed manual and automatic gearboxes, both driving the rear wheels through a traditional mechanical LSD.

The facelifted VXR8 also features the Corvette ZR1's Magnetic Ride Control (MRC) suspension system which adapts

to road conditions and driver inputs, making alterations up to 1000 times a second. The damper units are filled with magnetic particles that react when an electric current is passed through them, altering the viscosity of the damper fluid.

Gadgets include EDI (Enhanced Driver Interface), which shows real-time data (G-force, power and torque, lap times, even drift angles) on a five-inch monitor. Full leather trim, special HSV performance seats and iPod and Bluetooth support are all standard.

However, the basic price has shot up to £49,500 (the last generation car started at a little over £35,000), bringing the VXR8 into close competition with the likes of the BMW M3 and Mercedes C63 AMG.

BRIEFS



■ DAGGER GT

314mph. That's what TranStar Racing claims will be the top speed of its 2500bhp Dagger GT (above), which the American company plans to have on the road by 2014. The proposed supercar is to be powered by a 9.4-litre twin-turbo Nelson Racing V8 engine, although there will also be a supercharged 836bhp 7-litre for the more environmentally aware... Other claims for the drag racing-inspired GT include a standing quarter-mile time of 6.6sec at a peak of 204mph.



■ MINI PACEMAN

BMW is milking the Mini brand for all it's worth at the moment. At this month's Detroit motor show it will unveil the Mini Paceman concept (above). It's basically a three-door Countryman, which Mini says starts a whole new sector – the small Sports Activity Coupe. It might also give more ammunition to critics who accuse Mini of having lost sight of its roots...



■ PIRELLI CALENDAR

At a glitzy Moscow launch, Pirelli unveiled its 2011 calendar. This year it's been masterminded by fashion guru Karl Lagerfeld and shot in his Paris studio, taking mythology as its theme. Fifteen female models (including actress Julianne Moore) and five males (!) feature in 36 pictures. We do wonder if Pirelli tyre depot staff share Lagerfeld's sensibilities – this is a very different calendar to recent more 'risqué' editions...

Q&A

We talked to M Vehicles product manager Christoph Smieskol.

evo: What rivals have you benchmarked the car against?

CS: At the very beginning it was tough because there's not much around like the 1-series Coupe. But then a few days ago Audi announced RS3! When we were developing the car we looked closely at the TT RS and also at the Porsche Cayman S. We also looked at the Golf R and Focus RS.

Why don't M-cars have run-flats?

Most people think it's to help the ride comfort, but that's not the case – although it is a benefit we're happy with. No, the main reason is that the hard sidewalls don't flex and that makes the steering response too wooden.

Why no carbon roof?

We did look at it, but there were a few reasons not to do it. This is the entry ticket model, and the carbon part would be too expensive and on a compact car it doesn't save much weight. Also we only got board approval last December, which is quite late compared with the intended launch date, so there was not the time to produce the tool and make the crash tests we would need.



1-series Coupe gets the M treatment inside and out, including bigger wheelarches, new front and rear bumpers with sculpted vents, and quad tailpipes. No paddles inside; M Coupé is available only with a conventional six-speed manual gearbox. Below: with its spiritual forebear, the classic E30 M3

'WE DON'T FIT RUN-FLATS BECAUSE THEY MAKE THE STEERING TOO WOODEN'



LOTUS V8 FOR NEW ESPRIT?

BOSS WANTS IN-HOUSE-DESIGNED ENGINES FOR FLAGSHIP

Lotus's new Esprit will get its own, Lotus-built engine – so long as the business plan stacks up. 'Buyers have been telling us that a £100,000 supercar can't have a Toyota engine,' said Lotus CEO Dany Bahar, 'and we have the knowledge to make our own because we already design engines for clients.'

'We're doing the sums now, and we'll know by the end of January. If we go ahead, the new Esprit [due in 2013] will have our own V8, and a V6 engine will be derived from it. There will be an element of hybrid drive, because a Lotus has to be efficient. In fact all the new Lotuses will have a degree of hybrid technology, from simple stop-



New Esprit (left) is due in 2013. It had been expected to use a Toyota engine, but that looks less likely now

start and energy recovery in the Elise to electric motors for the front wheels in the high-end cars.'

The current deal with Toyota, then, may not last. Already Lotus has hinted that 2015's new Elise won't be Toyota-powered, and Bahar doesn't deny that

Renault could be in the frame given the new F1 tie-up. He also confirmed there would be stripped-out, higher-powered 'R' versions of all new models, including a 950kg, 350bhp Elise, and future Lotuses would use a thinner, stronger, hydroformed aluminium structure.



GT5 IS GO!

RICHARD MEADEN REPORTS FROM THE LAUNCH OF *GRAN TURISMO 5* IN MADRID – AND TAKES THE GAME FOR A TEST DRIVE

So here it is. After more than five years of blood, sweat and tears, Kazunori Yamauchi's latest opus, *Gran Turismo 5*, has finally made it to launch.

It's a mark of the pent-up hunger for this game that *GT*'s servers – built to cope with 500,000 simultaneous players – are on the verge of meltdown on the day of the launch due to the sheer weight of numbers playing the game online. The system's capacity is rapidly doubled.

As you'd expect, *GT5* features a myriad of circuits, many of them new, plus no fewer than 1000 cars and, if you have the requisite television, 3D gameplay. Damage, both visible and mechanical, is something that gamers have been craving. *GT5* has the

capability, but it's not fully enabled yet, which some may find frustrating.

Yamauchi-san's obsessive quest for perfection is legendary, as is his creation's propensity for delays when it comes to launching new iterations. I get the feeling that *GT* has begun to transcend gaming and even simulation as Yamauchi continues in his efforts to create a parallel pixelated automotive universe. Critics identify this obsession as a weakness, and there's no question the level of detailing in some areas of the game far exceeds others, leading to a slightly inconsistent look to the graphics. Then again, it's Yamauchi's desire for forensic levels of detail that makes *GT* the phenomenon it is.

For example, each of the magnificent



Premium-level cars – of which there are currently 200, with more coming on-stream all the time – takes approximately six months to model and render. Likewise, adding damage to the game may seem like a simple task, but because the cars are able to roll and reveal their undersides, Yamauchi

has revisited them all to make sure they look exactly as they should.

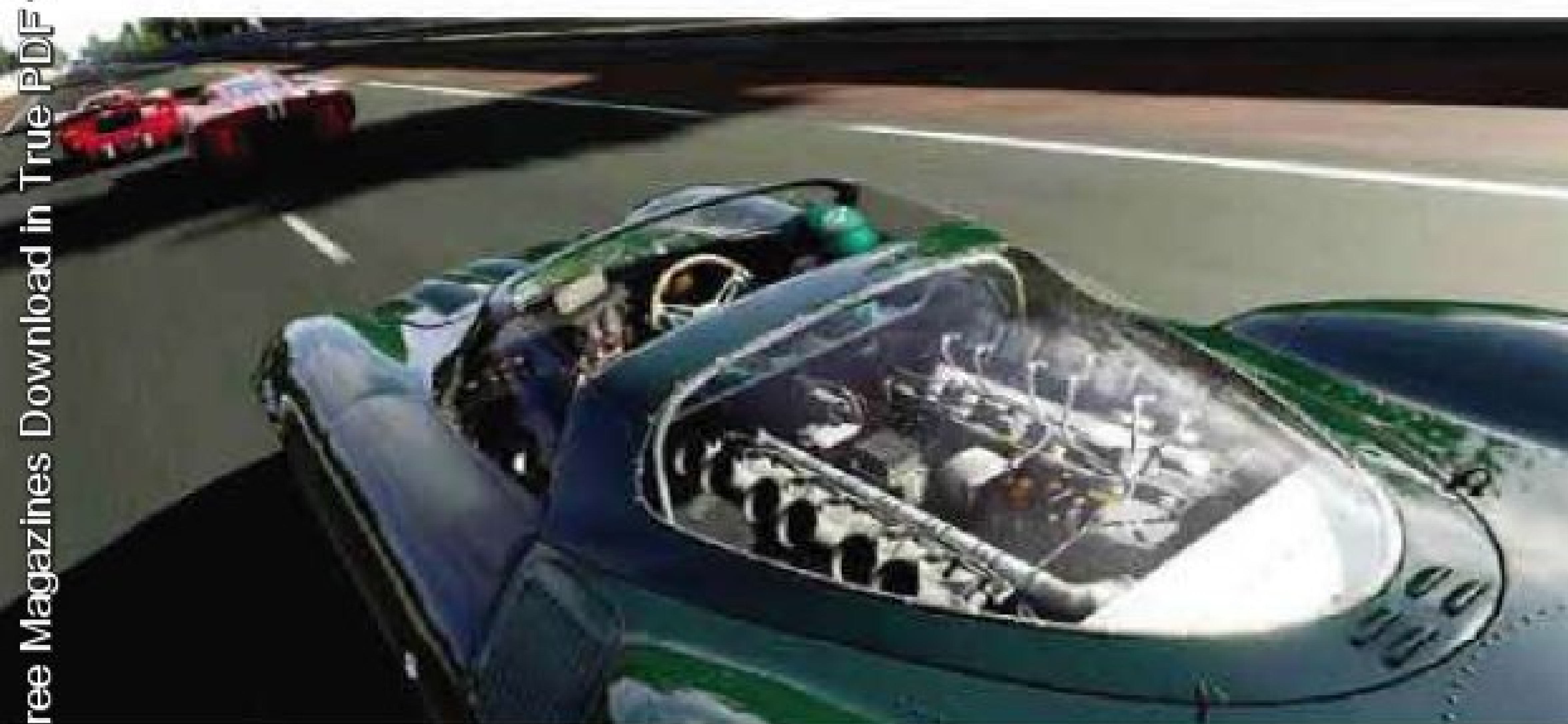
For months he has led his team of developers by example, working in stretches of 36 hours straight, with 12-hour breaks in between. In the final few weeks before launch, those 12-hour breaks were eroded with every passing day. Even on the evening of the press launch, he was working late into the night, responding to feedback from *GT*'s vast online gaming community.

Has it been worth the wait? For a diehard car enthusiast who also loves playing *GT*, the answer has to be yes, absolutely. Just a few sessions behind the force-feedback wheel had me hooked. Some hardened gamers may have been expecting more, but with the advent of online gaming, gone are the days when what you get in the box or on the CD is the finished article.

As Yamauchi said in Madrid, with a glint in his fatigued, scratchy eyes, 'GT will continue to develop and evolve. We have many updates planned. It has become a living creature that will grow and grow.'



Above: Kazunori Yamauchi, *Gran Turismo*'s perfectionist creator, has been working tirelessly to bring the latest instalment of his PlayStation epic to fruition. Top: our man Meaden tests *GT5* in 3D, and soon finds himself addicted



'EACH OF THE CARS TAKES SIX MONTHS TO MODEL AND RENDER'



Detail in *GT5*'s graphics is phenomenal, whether it's F1 cars, supercars or even one-off concept cars like the gorgeous Jaguar XJ13 (centre), which can finally go racing...

RED BULL X1 ON THE 'RING



■ Of all the cars in *Gran Turismo 5*, the one I really wanted to experience was the Red Bull X1. And of all the circuits I wanted to drive it on, the Nürburgring Nordschleife was top of my list.

Racing the X1 on this narrow and bumpy racetrack is utter sensory overload. The car is ridiculously rapid, as you'd expect, but despite the incredible acceleration, braking, top speed and cornering abilities, you do begin to get a sense of its behaviour.

Far from handling like a slot car, it does require corrections, albeit corrections applied at synapse-sizzling speed. Wearing 3D glasses,

you feel yourself being sucked into the screen, a bit like entering the Matrix without the bullets and black leather. If your hands don't sweat and your brain fizz after taking Schwedenkreuz and the Fuchsröhre flat in seventh gear at 260mph, you're not human.

During the launch, a gaming buddy of Jordan Tresson – the Frenchman who won last year's 'GT Academy', earning himself a drive in the 2010 European GT Cup – manages to lap the Nordschleife in the X1 in 3min 55sec, never hitting a barrier or putting more than two wheels on the grass in the process. An absurd and humbling spectacle.

THE MADRID CITY COURSE



■ One of the new circuits included in *Gran Turismo 5* is a Madrid City Course. As the launch for the game is being held in Madrid itself, I have the opportunity to experience the virtual circuit for real, piloting a new Tesla Roadster S around the crowded city streets.

Aside from learning that a Tesla makes a devastating weapon in a traffic-light Grand Prix, what the drive highlights is the utopian appeal of *GT5*'s gameplay. Where just minutes earlier I'd been sliding a Tesla

(and a Merc SLS) in a pixel-perfect driving environment, in the real world I'm boxed-in by taxi drivers and hampered by traffic lights.

Tempting though it is to nudge my way through, if there's one area where real life exceeds *GT5*'s capabilities it's in the realism of accident damage. After nearly losing my mirrors at least a dozen times, and then getting lost, I decide to return the Tesla to the launch venue where I can get back to some proper driving...



3D PRINTING: THE FUTURE OF CAR MANUFACTURING?

OLLIE MARRIAGE LOOKS AT A NEW WAY OF MAKING METAL COMPONENTS THAT COULD TRANSFORM CAR MAKING



Think about metal for a moment, or more precisely think about how it's constructed and shaped. There are three main methods familiar to all of us: casting (pouring it molten into a mould), forging (beating it into shape) and machining (carving from a solid block). Well, now you can add a fourth to that list: printing.

Sounds baffling, right, printing a 3D object in metal? But it's far from science fiction – in fact it's already being used by a number of F1 teams to improve the performance, reduce the weight and speed up the manufacture of certain parts. Given time it's likely to find its way into low-volume car production, but for the time being it's the aerospace industry that's leading the way in what's known as ALM – Additive Layer Manufacturing.

'In aerospace, funding research was going more towards composites [carbonfibre etc.], and metallics were taking a back seat, but the possibilities

with ALM are huge – it's a game-change in manufacturing.' So says Andy Hawkins, lead engineer for ALM at EADS (European Aeronautic Defence and Space company), the firm that builds everything from the Airbus A380 to satellites and helicopters.

So how does it work? Well, the technology has developed hand-in-hand with CAD, so once something is designed on the computer, it can be sent straight to the printer – just as you would at home with a photograph or document. The printer is obviously the clever bit here.

You start with a fine metal powder – any metal that can be welded, but most often titanium since it's difficult to machine and costly to process. The powder sits in hoppers (large containers) and a single layer around 20-30 microns (0.02-0.03mm) thick is spread on a platform by a recoating arm. Using the CAD data, a precision laser then 'draws' an outline in the powder, melting/welding the first layer. The platform then drops 20-30

microns, another layer is spread out and the laser goes to work again. And repeat many times over – the piece bearing our logo that you see here is just 6mm thick, but is made up of 200 layers and took an hour to construct.

It's fascinating to watch as the 0.5mm-wide laser dances and zaps over the powder, throwing sparks into the inert argon gas chamber in which the whole operation is contained and leaving an impression behind that's then covered up by the recoating arm. The laser itself penetrates beyond a single layer, bonding the layers to each other. At the end of the process the welded piece is removed and the

excess powder dusted off.

The advantages are manifold, as Hawkins points out: 'There's no wastage. Often with machining, 90 per cent of the material is wasted – for instance on the A380 there's a strut that's machined from a 4kg block of titanium and ends up weighing just 100g. Here unused powder is fed back into the hoppers.'

Besides that are the precision, strength and weight-saving opportunities that ALM offers. An engine-cover hinge on the A380 that used to be cast was redesigned using CAD to analyse the load paths and stresses, then remade using ALM. It

Skeletal hinge for an Airbus shows how ALM can be used to produce a lighter piece with equal strength to a cast part



'THE BEAUTY IS THAT COMPLEXITY DOESN'T COST ANYTHING'



now weighs 65 per cent less.

'The beauty is that complexity doesn't cost anything,' says Hawkins. 'The metal is worked at a molecular level, and the laser can draw any shape you like. We've even made chain-mail and interlocked rotating wheels to show what can be done. One of the guys here had his wedding ring made this way, including the engraving on the inside!'

There are limitations: EADS's largest machine has a chamber that measures a foot square by two feet deep, so that's the maximum component size – and if you were to build something that big it would take around 50 hours. But while component size and cost are restricting ALM to being mostly a prototyping technology at the moment, Hawkins points out that the way pieces are being constructed is already changing and the chamber may not be a limiting factor for long: 'We could blow powder into a laser beam and build the part upwards, perhaps using a robot arm.'



Above: ALM in action.
Below: examples of the complex shapes that can be made

It's fascinating stuff (you can see ALM in action at evo.co.uk) and has practically limitless potential. 'F1 is a sweet spot for the technology as they use high-value, low-volume parts,' says Hawkins. Force India and McLaren are believed to have used the technology already, and since Daimler is a major shareholder in EADS, several parts of the 2011 Mercedes GP car are likely to be built using ALM. Give it a few years and, as the cost comes down, things could really open up. A printed Pagani? Surely only a matter of time...

THE A.L.M. CATERHAM

■ When will ALM be seen on the road? It's already out there. Graduate engineers from Airbus and supplier Hyde Group Engineering worked together on a project to redevelop part of a Caterham Seven. They chose the front suspension wishbones (pictured), the idea being to equal or improve their strength and performance while reducing weight. The one-off hub and end fittings were manufactured in ALM titanium, featuring a lightweight lattice internal structure that reduced weight from 1.64kg to 0.91kg – a 44.5 per cent saving over the standard Caterham part.



MATERIAL FIRSTS

Radical advances in material use and technology are rare. Here are our favourites.



BUGATTI EB110 1991

■ There was something of a rush to create the first carbonfibre-chassis'd supercar. The honour went not to the Ferrari F50 (1995), nor the McLaren F1 (1992), but the Bugatti EB110. French aerospace company Aerospatiale made the chassis.



LOTUS ELISE Mk1 1996

■ So familiar is the Elise now that it's hard to remember just how radical it was back in 1996. It wasn't just the extruded aluminium tub, but the fact that it was glued together rather than bolted, reducing weight and increasing strength.



MERCEDES BIOME 2010

■ Now for something properly far-fetched. The product of fevered imaginations at Mercedes' advanced design studio in California, the 394kg Biome is made from 'BioFibre', which grows from seeds, and at the end of its life can be composted.



AN INTERVIEW WITH... MICHAEL SCHUMACHER

EVO'S **HARRY METCALFE** TALKS TO THE SEVEN-TIMES CHAMP ABOUT THE 2010 SEASON, PRE-RACE NAPS, AND BRACKLEY

In the eve of his Nations Cup-winning performance with fellow German Sebastian Vettel at the 2010 Race of Champions, *evo* met up with Michael Schumacher to discuss his thus-far rather less successful return to Formula 1 and why he thinks 2011 will be better.

Why do you think you had such a below-par season in 2010?

We definitely have not been great on the aerodynamic side. Our development was not quick and precise enough during the season and, in the respect of this, we have made modifications and restructured the team. Things look a lot better already and I am confident we will see this improvement continue into next year.

After a season with Mercedes, how does Brackley compare with Maranello?

The thing I miss most is Mamma Rossella's restaurant in Maranello, the

Montana. Something similar doesn't seem to exist in Brackley! Luckily, winning is not about having a good restaurant, it's other subjects that make the difference.

How often do you visit the team in Brackley?

I regularly visit the team in Brackley, especially now in the closed season. I need to help with all the fine informations, to keep in touch with the engineers' needs during the development process. That, in the end, is what makes the difference.

Are you finding racing in F1 as exciting as when you first started?

I think so. For example, my heartbeat is the same now as it was before. I always had a low heartbeat number. My Brazilian teammate before Felipe [Rubens Barrichello – Felipe Massa's predecessor as Ferrari's number two driver] used to average 186 per minute throughout the race, with peaks of 200. In the same race I had an average

of 138 and peaks of 150. In similar tests in Brazil this year, my heartbeat was the same. Part of this is training, part is emotions and the rest, I think, is character.

Can you beat Vettel next year?

I will certainly try, as that's what I'm here for. He certainly knows this too!

What are your views on bringing back KERS to F1?

I don't care if its KERS or not KERS in F1 – it's the rules and it's the same for everyone, so you just have to deal with it. I feel if you make changes, although you try to save costs by introducing these changes, any changes of rules create costs anyway. This is the contradiction.

What do you do to keep focused before a race?

Everyone is different. For example, my teammate [Nico Rosberg] likes to play soccer before a race, as he likes to be active. Myself, I like to have a little

sleep and relax to calm down and then be full of fire for the race.

What car do you drive to work?

Naturally it's a Mercedes and, er, it's a nice toy, the C63. It's good fun!

Do you own any classic cars?

I'm not really an 'old-timer' fan and I've sold many of my older cars, including my Bugatti EB110SS. I prefer cars with all the latest technology fitted; they are more 'me' than older cars, although I still have my little Fiat 500.

You used to help Ferrari during development of its road cars; will you do the same for Mercedes?

I have a long partnership beyond racing with Mercedes and helping out with developing future road cars is what is perceived for the future.

Did you ever think during the 2010 season, 'this isn't for me'?

I have a three-year contract with Mercedes so why would I? My aim is to

**'MY AIM IS
TO WIN THE
CHAMPIONSHIP
AGAIN,
ABSOLUTELY'**



evo's Harry Metcalfe (right) caught up with Schumey at an event for watchmaker Audemars Piguet where it was announced that the F1 racer has become an ambassador for the firm

win the championship again, absolutely. But I knew in the winter, stepping into the car for the first time, this was not the car to win the championship with, so straight away you focus on how you can do this – that is what all the work I have been putting in recently has been. I would be pretty dumb not to now take the fruits of what is coming up in the future.

No regrets, then?

No, no. It was a well-thought-out decision to return to F1 and I enjoyed myself. Well, partly, not all of the time!

Like when you were suddenly facing the wrong way on the opening lap at Abu Dhabi and the Force India car of Liuzzi hit you head-on?

That's all part of this business. I've faced much worse situations! But which job in the world is full of enjoyment, one hundred per cent? I expect to have a much better time in 2011, though. I can't wait!



A postcard from... the Portuguese Spa

EVO'S ROGER GREEN CO-DRIVES TO A GT4 CLASS WIN AT THE STUNNING AUTÓDROMO DO ALGARVE RACETRACK

Who designed this circuit?' I need to know because after a morning testing a GT4-spec BMW M3 at the Autódromo do Algarve in southern Portugal, I've come to the conclusion that this track is up there with the best, comparable with the likes of Spa, Brands GP and even the Nordschleife. 'Me,' comes the somewhat surprising reply from my new team-mate. 'The whole thing was my idea; it took me eight years to secure the funding and then just another eight months to build it.'

I've been invited to share the M3 in a pair of hour-long Portuguese GT races, and although I was aware that Paulo Pinheiro had played a major part in turning this racetrack project into an FIA-spec reality, I had no idea it was the fulfilment of his dream. Unsurprisingly, he has driven many laps around the undulating twists and cresting turns since it opened almost two years ago, but this will be his first ever race. Let's hope it goes well, then.

It doesn't begin auspiciously – we fail to get to the grid on time so Paulo has to begin his first race on his own

track from the pit lane. He drives well, climbing to ninth before handing over. The M3 is hugely enjoyable; the balance is just about perfect, although as the front-left tyre begins to go off, understeer builds through the dramatic final Parabolica corner – taken flat in fifth gear, with just a lift at the apex where the road drops away beneath you.

There are no regulation turns here, nothing fits with normal textbook techniques. You have to drive it, experiment and discover what works for you and your car. The tyres and brakes may begin to wilt by the end but they remain consistent enough for us to finish fourth overall and second in class.

I'm relieved, Paulo is overjoyed – it's a result way above his hopes and expectations. It gets even better on the second day, where we again finish just off the overall podium but this time win the class, meaning Paulo gets to spray the fizzy stuff off the top step.

We will return, but for now all you need to know is that the Algarve is no longer the preserve of the sun-loving golfer, it's a track driver's paradise, too.



1. GT4 M3 racer uses standard car's 414bhp V8. 2. Pinheiro hands over to our man Green (yellow helmet). 3. GT competition is tough. 4. Algarve sunset over the Autódromo. 5. A class-winning partnership. 6. Pinheiro and Green on the podium



NEW RACERS FOR LE MANS



NEW AUDI AND PEUGEOT DIESELS GO TESTING; LATEST GT-SPEC PORSCHE REVEALED. **ROGER GREEN** REPORTS

It may be mid-winter but the intensity of competition at Le Mans is so strong that both Audi and Peugeot have already begun intensive test and development programmes with all-new cars. The most visually striking 2011 machine is undoubtedly the Audi R18 TDI (below), which features an enclosed cockpit for the first time on a Le Mans Audi since 1999.

It comes in response both to the speed advantage the enclosed Peugeots have enjoyed in the last few years and

changes in regs that put the emphasis firmly on aerodynamics. Engine power has been reduced for 2011, with V10s and V12s now outlawed in the LMP1 class, so the R18 will be powered by a 3.7-litre V6 turbodiesel rather than a V10, as used by the R15 it replaces.

Both the new Audi and its Peugeot rival – likely to be known as the 909 HDi FAP – feature a prominent fin on the engine cover, the primary role of which is to keep the car on the ground during a high-speed spin.

The Peugeot was the first of the

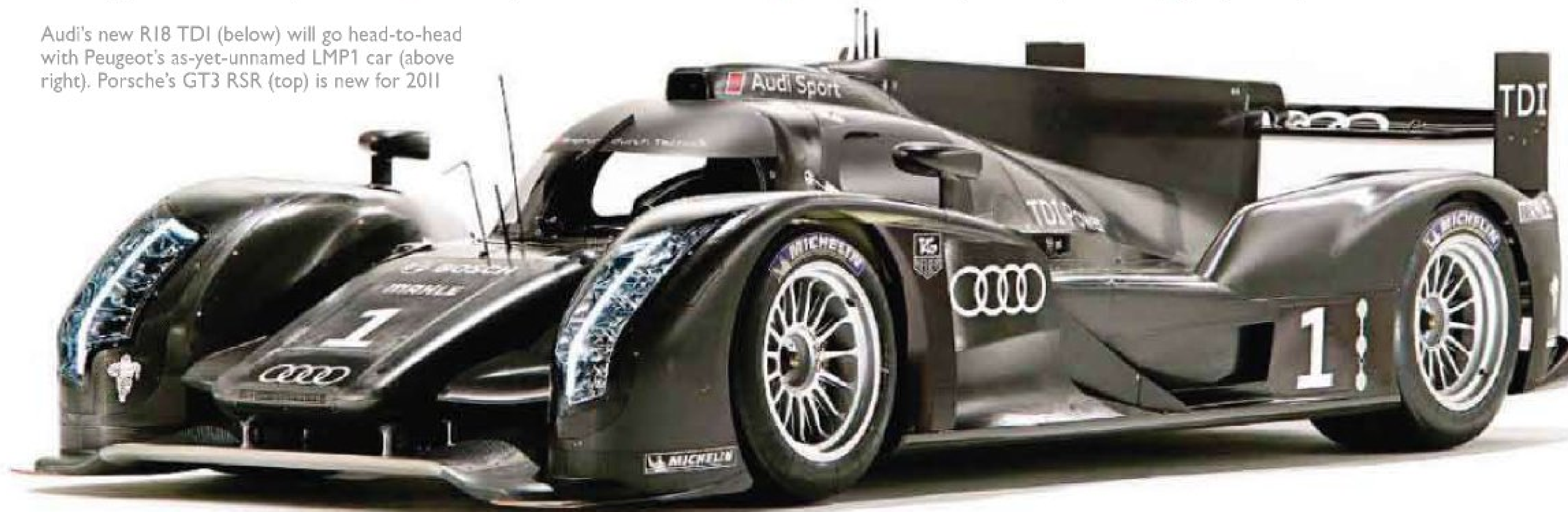
new cars to hit the track, already testing at the end of October. Expect the team to be focusing on reliability after all its front-running cars hit problems in 2010, allowing Audi to score its third 1-2-3 finish at La Sarthe.

Aston Martin, meanwhile, is bucking the trend with an open-cockpit Lola, while Toyota is re-entering the fray by supplying a 3.4-litre petrol V8 to the Anglo-Swiss Rebellion team. (The new rules are also likely to mean petrol

cars will be able to run closer to the dominant diesels.) Meanwhile, in the GT category, Porsche has unveiled its 2011 GT3 RSR (top), while the Ferrari 458 GT2 has been spotted testing.

It may be five months away, but the 79th running of les Vingt-Quatre Heures du Mans already looks like it's going to be epic.

Audi's new R18 TDI (below) will go head-to-head with Peugeot's as-yet-unnamed LMP1 car (above right). Porsche's GT3 RSR (top) is new for 2011



WIN A NOVICE TRACKDAY EXPERIENCE

GET ON TRACK AND RECEIVE TRAINING FROM EVO'S ROGER GREEN WITH CLUB MSV

One of the highlights of the 2010 trackday season was the emergence of the excellent Trackday Taster Sessions and Novice Only Trackdays from Club MSV.

Novice-only trackdays are the perfect way to sample the thrill of driving on track without having to worry about being blitzed by more experienced drivers or those in full-on track or race machinery. evo's Stephen Dobie sampled a novice-only trackday in 2010 and declared it an 'excellent experience for those who are wary of, or not familiar with, trackdays. It's a

relaxed atmosphere to boot.'

The good news is that Club MSV has announced the continuation of its novice-only trackdays in 2011 – and the even better news is that evo has teamed up with Club MSV to offer one lucky reader the chance to not only experience a novice-only trackday, but also receive tuition from Club MSV's instructors and our very own tame racing driver, Roger Green. You'll need to bring your own car to use on track, but we'll also have available one of our Fast Fleet cars for you to drive. We can't promise it'll be Harry's Zonda,

but it'll be something fast and fun...

The prize consists of two trackday experiences. The first is a taster session with instruction at a novice track afternoon at Brands Hatch, the second a full day at the Bedford Autodrome or Snetterton with more training. Both events will be attended by evo's Roger Green, who will chaperone and coach the driver.

Entrants must be trackday novices (no prior trackdays) and be free on February 14 and 26, 2011. For more information, T&Cs and to enter, head to competitions.evo.co.uk



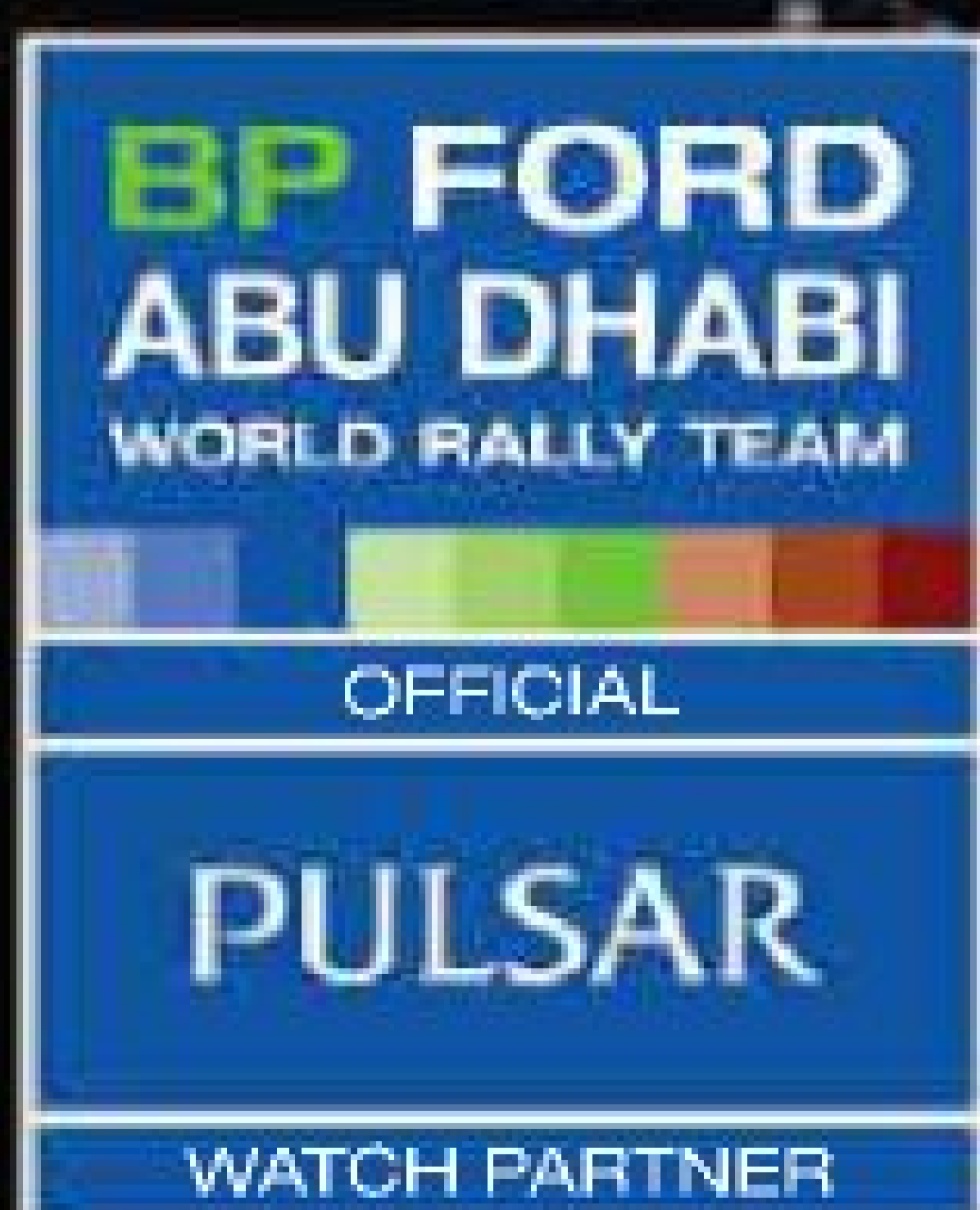
CLUB MSV
YOUR CAR. YOUR BIKE. OUR CIRCUITS.



PULSAR

Tell it your way

The 'Spirit of Istanbul' Collection: model PS6003X1



**1:18 scale Renault Clio Williams**Price: £35.00 From: www.renault.co.uk

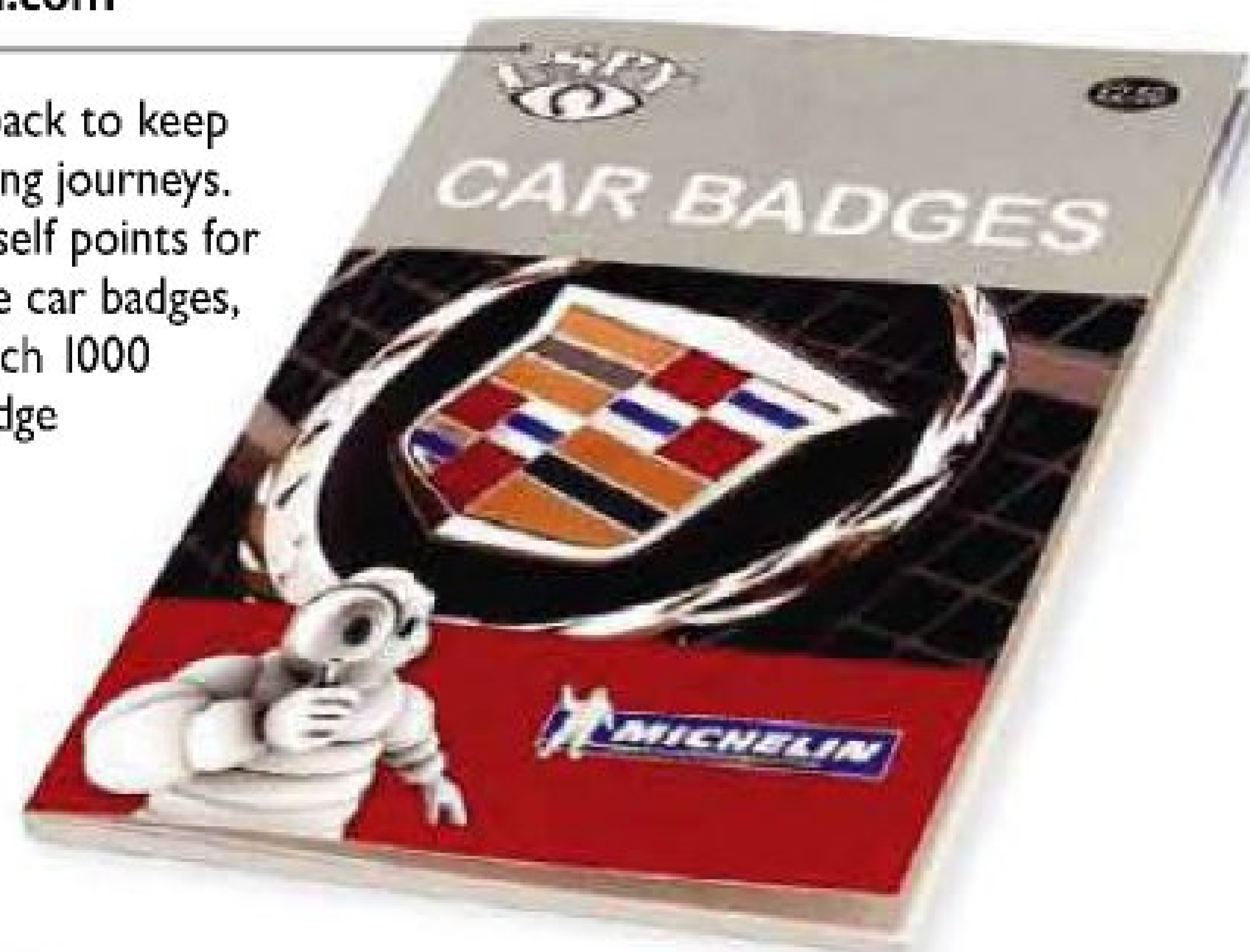
A die-cast model of your favourite supercar is all very well, but there's something cooler about a scaled-down version of your own car, like this 1:18-scale miniature of the latest old hot hatch on our Fast Fleet, the Clio Williams. This Norev model mimics the original 1993 car right down to a tiny gold plaque on the dash

**Nohands**Price: £9.95
From: www.gizoo.co.uk

Satnav on your phone is no use if you have to gaze down at your cup-holder every time a roundabout approaches. That's where Nohands steps in – a funky bit of rubber that will stick phones or small electronic devices to anything, dashboards included. We've got six to give away – visit competitions.evo.co.uk for the competition

**I-Spy Car Badges**Price: £2.50 From: www.ispymichelin.com

After a ten-year absence, *I-Spy* books are back to keep a whole new generation of kids quiet on long journeys. The rules are the same: simply award yourself points for each entry in the book you see (in this case car badges, from Abarth to Zagato), and when you reach 1000 points you can apply for a certificate or badge

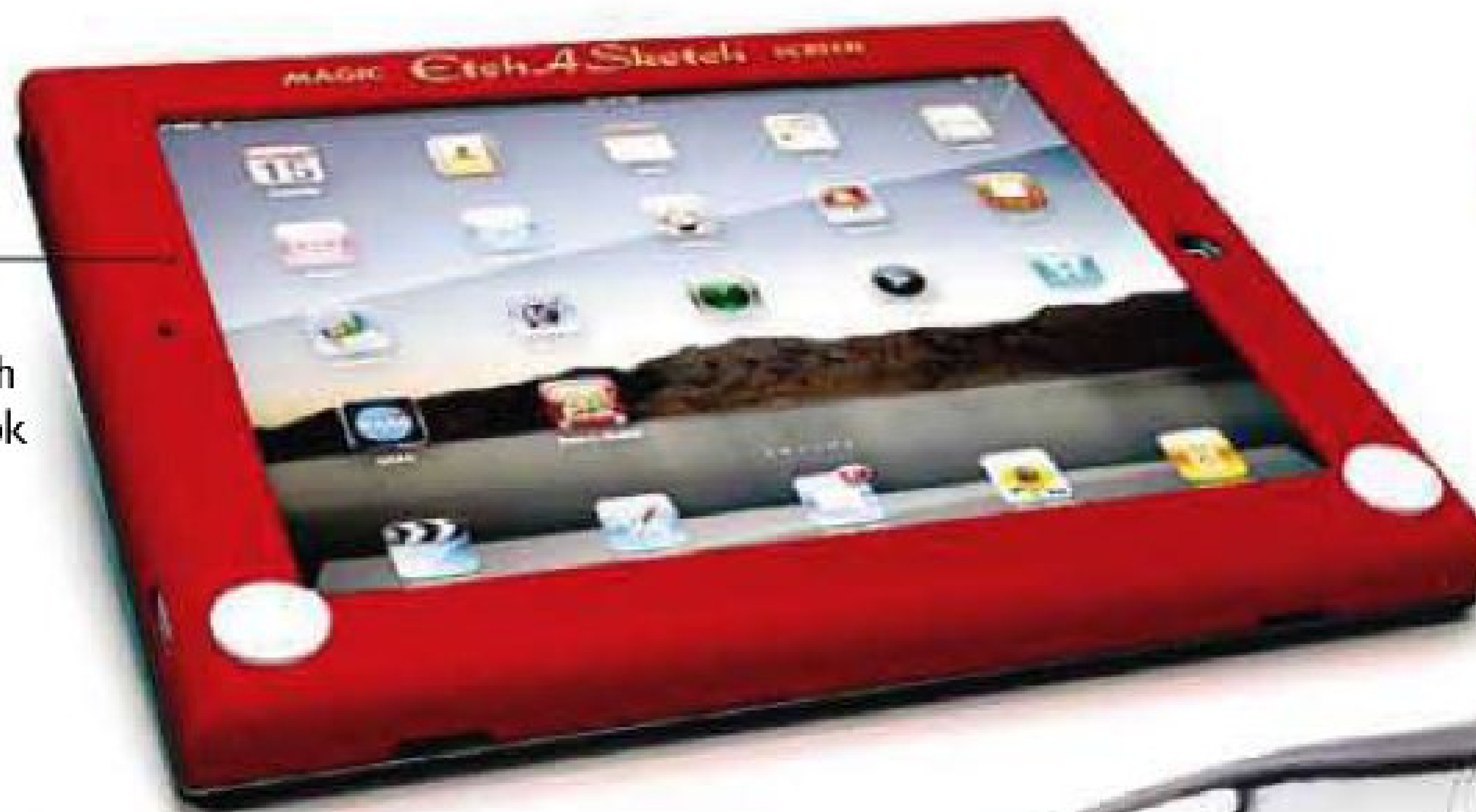


EVO ESSENTIALS

FROM A MODEL WILLY TO AN F1 EXHAUST TURNED ART, HERE'S WHAT'S CAUGHT OUR EYE THIS MONTH

Etch A Sketch casesPrice: c£25 (iPad), c£16 (iPhone)
From: www.getaheadcase.com

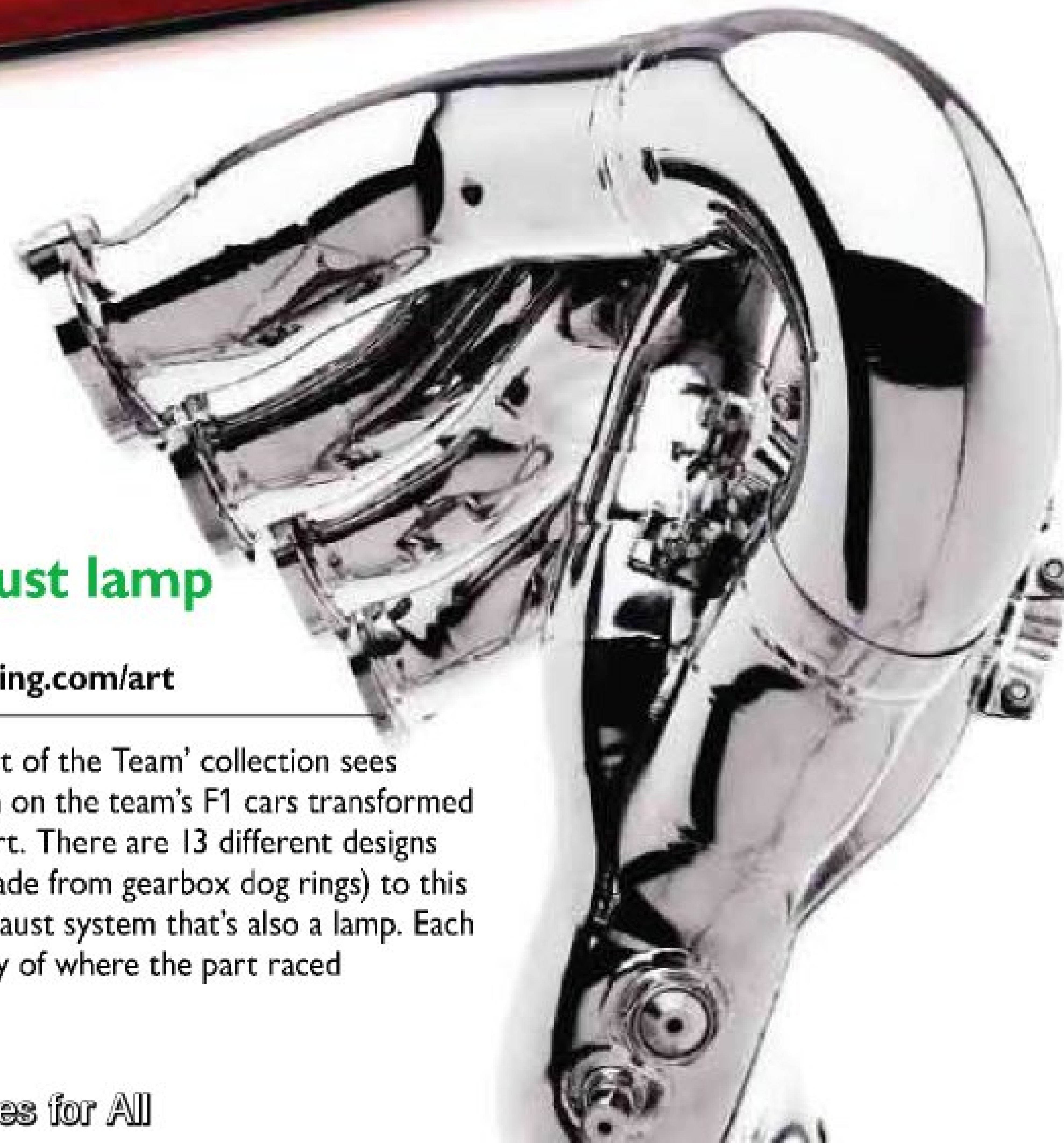
Tired of people making jokes about your iPad looking like an Etch A Sketch? Now you can have the last laugh with this protective case that gives your Apple the look of the iconic 1960s drawing toy. There's also a smaller version for the iPhone, and in case you're wondering, there is an Etch A Sketch app too

**Red Bull exhaust lamp**

Price: £14,400

From: www.redbullracing.com/art

Red Bull Racing's new 'Part of the Team' collection sees components that have run on the team's F1 cars transformed into functional pieces of art. There are 13 different designs in total, from coasters (made from gearbox dog rings) to this hand-polished Inconel exhaust system that's also a lamp. Each piece comes with a history of where the part raced





Who says hybrids can't be exciting?

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PLANET evo

WATCH ESSENTIALS

Inspired by Aston Martin

INNOVATIVE SWISS CHRONOGRAPH TAKES STYLING CUES FROM THE BRITISH SPORTS CAR MAKER. BY **SIMON DE BURTON**



Girard-Perregaux Fly-Back Chrono

Price: £7800

From: girard-perregaux.com

Both the automobile and watch worlds were saddened in late October with the news that Luigi 'Gino' Macaluso had died unexpectedly in his sleep at the young age of 62. Macaluso was a former professional rally driver who won the European rally championship for Fiat in 1972 and the Italian rally championship in 1974. He subsequently moved into the watch business and, having established himself as a distributor for Girard-Perregaux, eventually took control of the then 200-year-old company in 1992. Typical of his classical approach to design is the recently launched Fly-Back Chronograph, a quintessential drivers' watch that typifies the understatement and sophistication for which Macaluso was renowned.

Jaeger-LeCoultre AMVOX2 Grand Chronograph

Price: £22,050

From: www.jaeger-lecoultre.com

Official Aston Martin watchmaker Jaeger-LeCoultre wowed the horological world back in 2006 when it revealed the first 'push-piece-free' mechanical chronograph in the form of the AMVOX2. Instead of having to fiddle with a button every time you want to activate the chrono function, you simply prod the AMVOX2's crystal at the 12 o'clock position to start and stop the mechanism and at six o'clock to reset it. Among variations on the theme is the 'Transponder' model that can also unlock the owner's DBS from a suitably stylish distance. Now the larger, pink-gold Transponder case has been adopted for the new 'Grand' model. The electronic gubbins is dispensed with but the nifty chronograph mechanism remains, while the styling still draws inspiration 'from the power and aesthetics of Aston Martin's cars'. Just 200 will be made, and if you want to find out just how fiendishly difficult it is to put a mechanical watch together, enter our competition at www.evo.co.uk for the chance to win a place at a Jaeger-LeCoultre watchmaking masterclass.



Rebellion 'Predator LM24' Chronograph

Price: c£16,900

From: www.rebellion-timepieces.com

Fans of the Le Mans race series will be familiar with Rebellion Racing, the Lola-driving team that took second place in 2010's LMP1 Manufacturers' Championship and third in the Team Championship. The team is backed by, and named after, young Swiss watch brand Rebellion, which was launched in 2008 and concentrates on making high-end watches in small editions. The 'Predator' is Rebellion's first round-cased watch and has been seen around the world's racetracks on the wrists of the team's drivers, including Andrea Bellicchi and Nicolas Prost. Naturally, automotive imagery abounds in the design – conrod-shaped bridges secure the subdials, the main dial and bezel are made from carbonfibre and the case is titanium. Just 24 LM24 chronos are being made, but the Predator model is also available in other guises with a variety of case materials, including (pricy) red gold with steel or ceramic.



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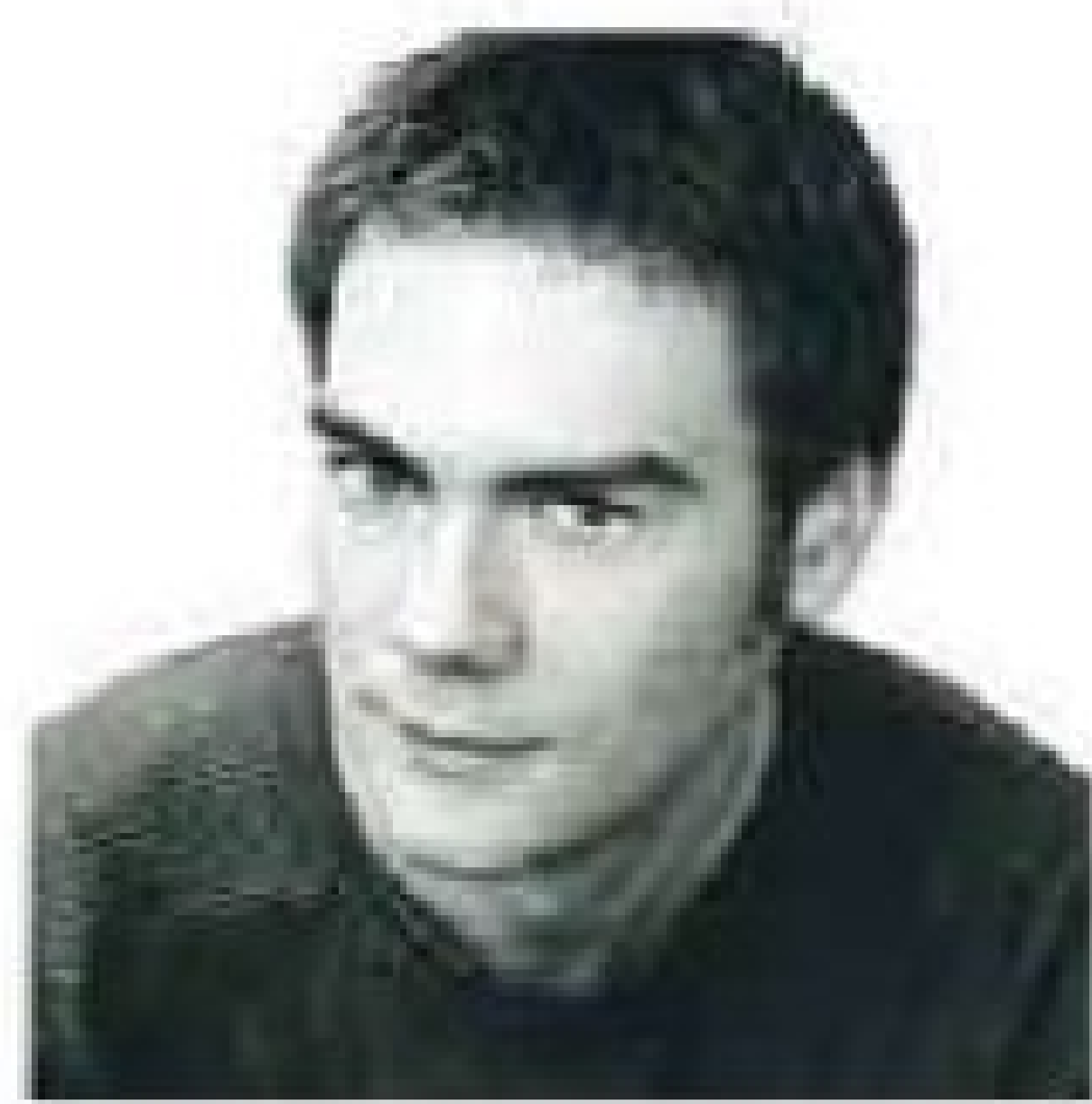
NEW YEAR, NEW RALLY SEASON

Peugeot are competing in the International Rally Challenge with the new UK Rally team, Guy Wilks and Phil Pugh. This is their Super 2000 Peugeot 207 along with the car it's based on, the beautiful 207. We wish them the best of luck in the opening event, the Rally of Monte Carlo on January 19-23rd.

PEUGEOT **207** Super 2000



PEUGEOT
MOTION & EMOTION



Petrolhead

Richard Porter

Porter has been reminded just how special luxury cars used to be by an encounter with an interesting old Mercedes

As an unexpected moment of smooth '80s cheese, this is like finding Tony Hadley hiding in your dishwasher. As it crunches into the evo office car park, everything else suddenly seems 85 per cent less interesting, and by the time it comes to a rest outside the front door, news ed Ollie Marriage and I have curtailed our idle chatter about Peugeot 306s, rendered almost speechless by the presence of something splendid.

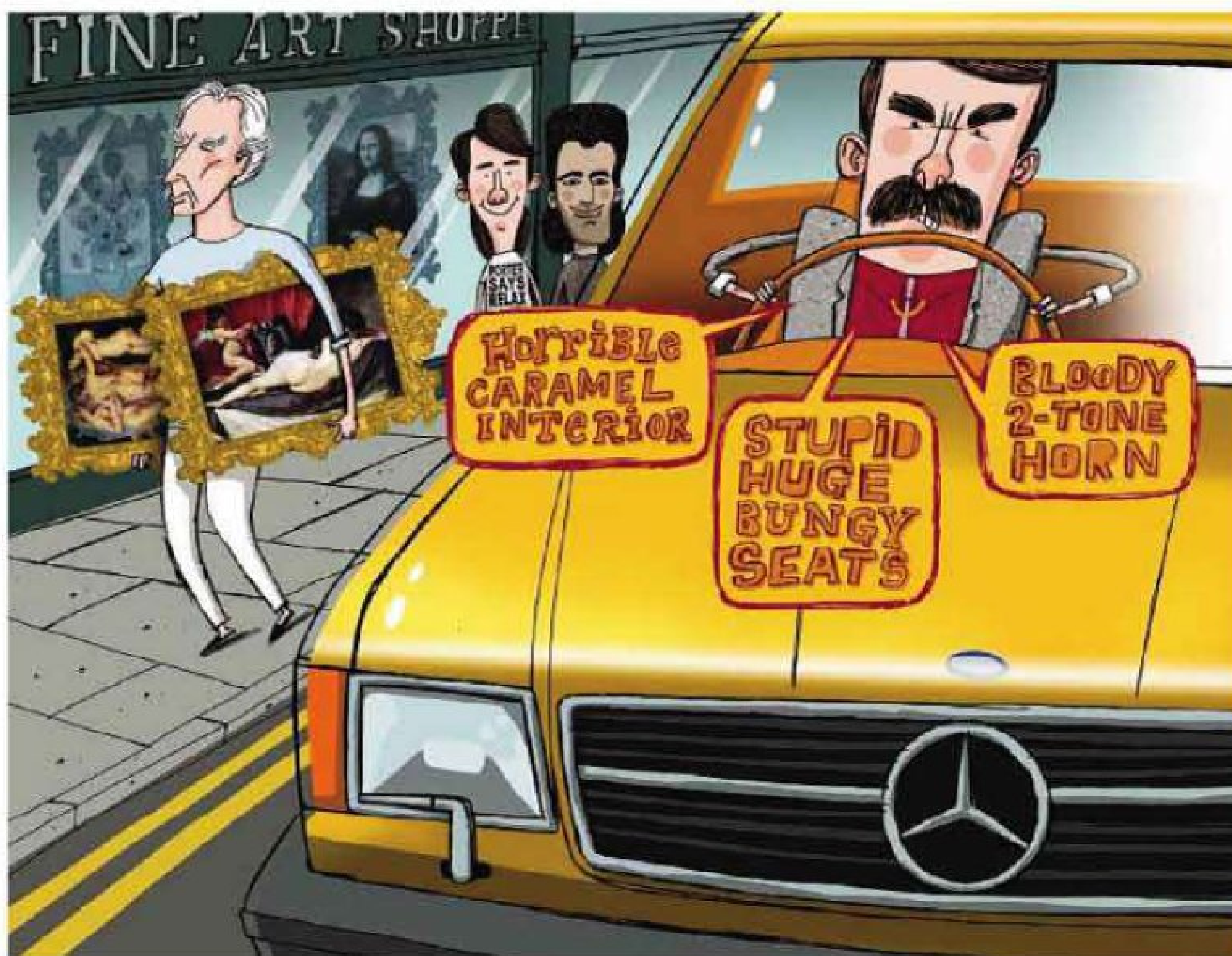
It is a 1987 Mercedes 560 SEC. In gold. Ergo, it's the single most Germanically '80s thing you will have seen in ages unless you share a flat with Nena.

Harry and Nick from the office step out of it. They're not actually smoking thin cigars, but in my mind they should be. Seconds later an affable chap called Rob emerges from the back seat. Rob works for Mercedes and has just bought this car on behalf of his employer. He fills us in on some of its interesting history, most notably that it was originally a gift from Mercedes-Benz to the moustachioed F1 legend Nigel Mansell. You can only imagine how much nasal moaning went on within that caramel-coloured interior.

After using the car for a while, Mansell donated it to a museum where it sat for many years before being dispatched to an auction at which, rather improbably, it was bought by the art critic Brian Sewell. You can only imagine how many immaculately inflected words have been purred within its elegantly leathery cabin.

Just recently Sewell, being almost 80, decided that the Benz was a bit much for him, which is how Rob came to find himself sitting in an elderly art critic's kitchen preparing to hand over some of Mercedes' money in return for an immaculate slice of SECs appeal. Now we're standing in a magazine's car park gently drooling over its cool and timeless shape. 'You can have a go if you want,' Rob says casually...

Ollie and I almost have his hand off for the keys and jump in. The first thing to note about this old coupe is that it has simply astonishing door-shuts. In



'YOU CAN ONLY IMAGINE HOW MUCH NASAL MOANING WENT ON INSIDE MANSELL'S 560 SEC'

fact, you could stand there repeatedly pushing the huge frameless doors closed for many hours without getting bored of the impeccably engineered way they *thunk* home. They really don't built 'em like this anymore.

And that extends to the interior, which provides an extraordinary contrast to the luxu-barges of 2010. Yes, there are a number of switches on the dash – Merc was very generous when it came to spec'ing Nige's freebie – but the interior still feels very simple, to the point of bare minimalism. Yet, at the same time, this old Benz has more of a sense of occasion and specialness to it than any current luxury car that I've driven.

Obviously there's a certain amount of novelty in driving a 23-year-old example of a car you've always admired, especially when the interior

gives you a marvellous sense of what it would be like to be trapped inside a huge block of fudge. Plus, it's hard to forget that your arse is parked on a seat variously occupied by a moany Formula 1 hero and a chap who, in the words of John Humphrys, 'makes the Queen sound common'.

But the real reason the SEC is truly more special than any current S-class is because its designers realised that genuine luxury isn't about how many buttons there are on the dashboard nor how many microscopically detailed settings there are within the control screen menus. Real luxury is about light and space and majesty, all qualities this aged coupe has in spades.

And, actually, it drives pretty well too, surging forward in an unfussed but adequately brisk way whilst the auto 'box smudges one gear into another as

smoothly as any of today's wafers.

What today's wafers can't match, however, is the comically massive steering wheel that just urges you to adopt the light, two-finger pinch of the true lounge lizard, nor the vast and open footwells that would prompt you to think twice about the style and quality of your shoes. Today's wafers also don't have huge and bumpy seats in which you can feel individual springs doing their job like in an old-fashioned mattress, and they certainly don't have a little switch in front of the gear selector that permits the driver to select between two horn tones, one for town, the other for country.

Basically, compared with this old 560 SEC, today's wafers just don't have enough class. Even if they were to be owned by Nigel Mansell and the art critic Brian Sewell.

Illustrations **Simon Cooper**

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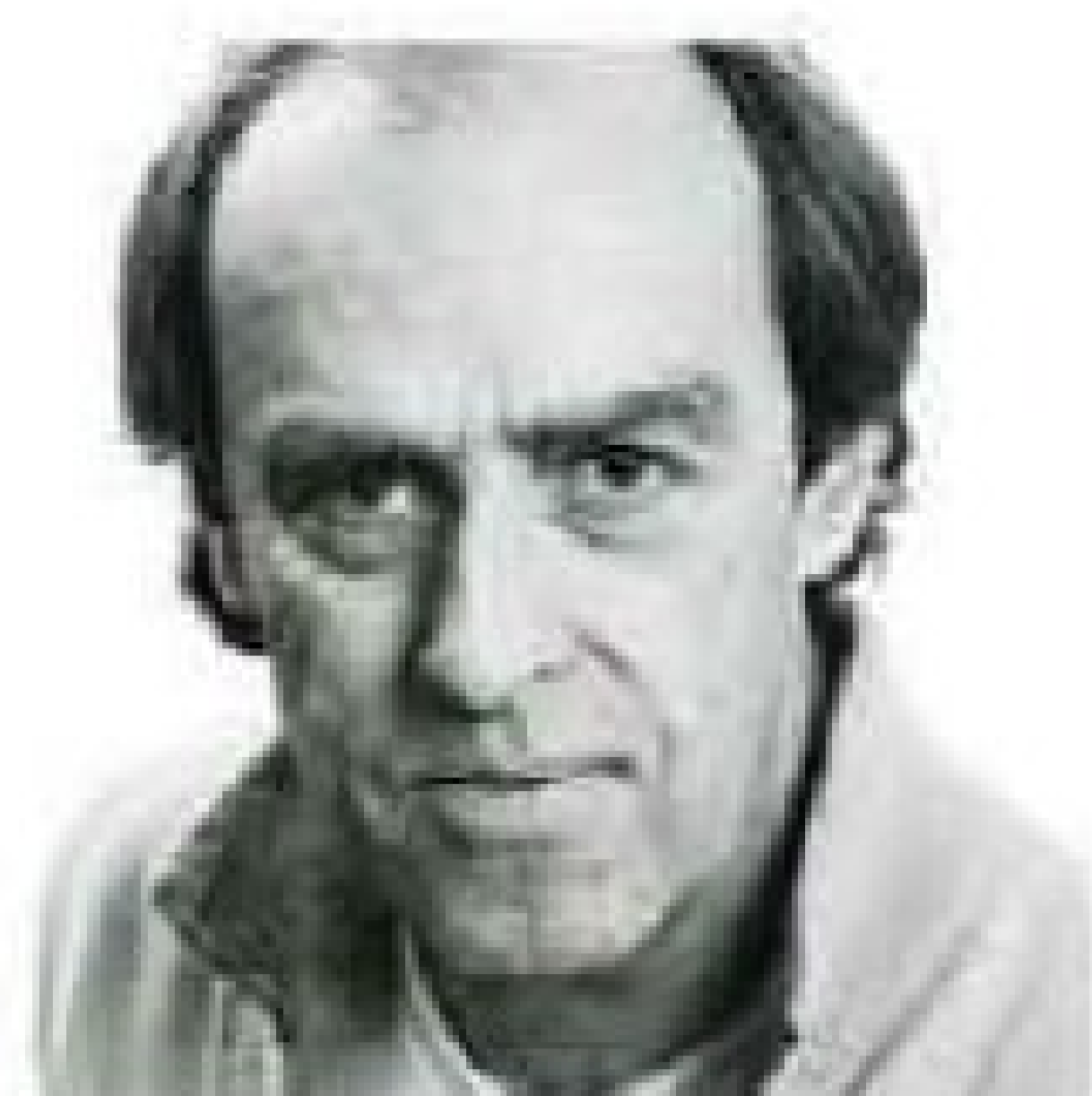
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The Insider

Harry Metcalfe

Metcalfe has spotted a huge gap in the luxury car market, but he doesn't think it'll be left unplugged for much longer

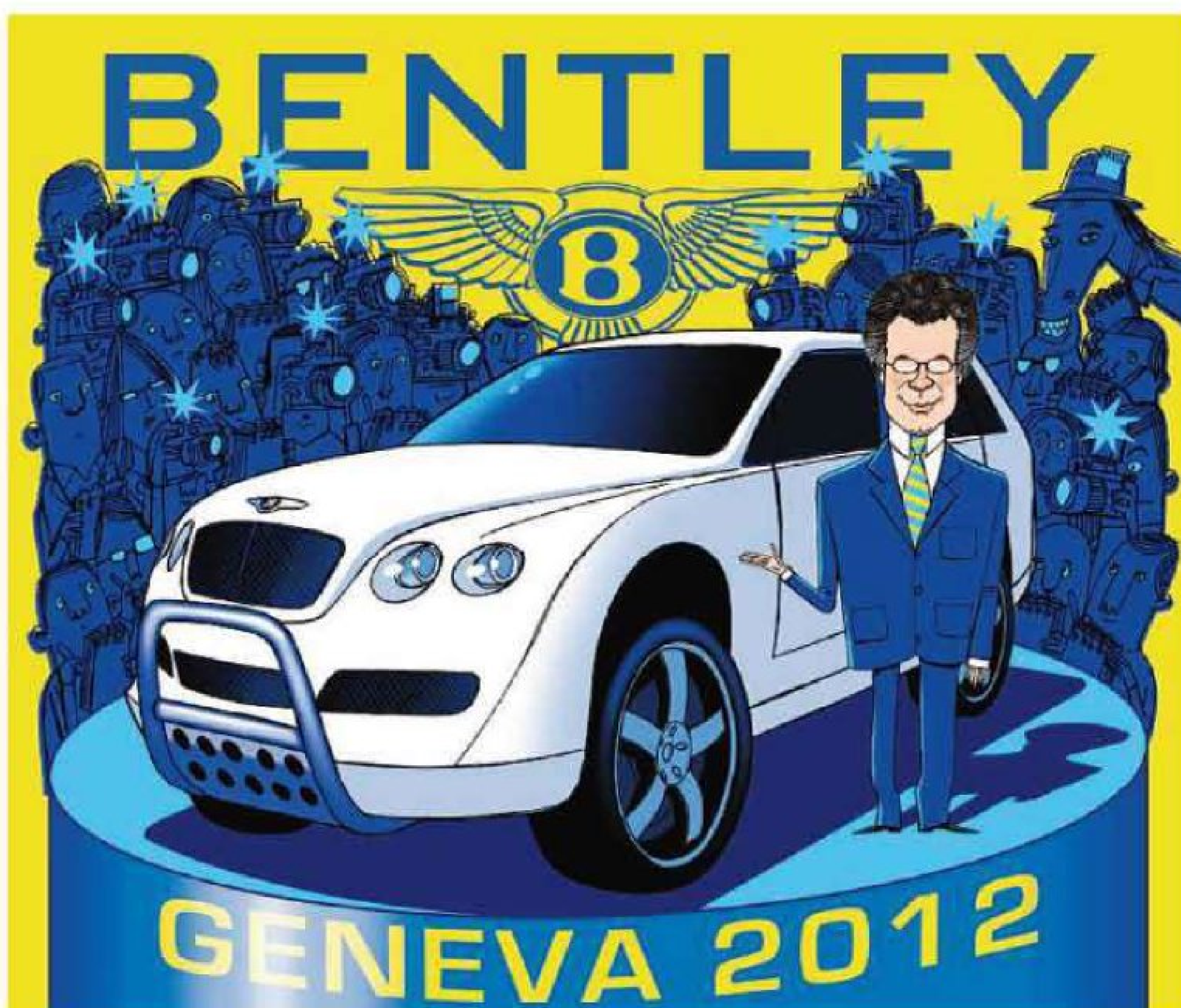
How we scoffed when the first images of the Porsche Cayenne arrived in evo's inbox back in 2002. It wasn't exactly pretty. We even joked that they should have left the camouflage on as it looked better that way. Porsche enthusiasts across the globe were aghast too. What damage was then Porsche boss Wendelin Wiedeking doing to their beloved marque by putting this horror into production?

Delivering the most brilliant piece of brand diversity the automotive world had ever seen, that's what he was doing. It wasn't long before over half of Porsche's sales were Cayennes, and did it harm the 911? Did it heck. If anything, it probably helped make the 911 even better, as there was now so much money sloshing around the company that engineers had the cash to develop ever more successful versions of Porsche's flat-six wunderwagen.

So why was the Cayenne so successful? Well, it all goes back to basic business principles. If you want to be really successful today, you need to be selling a specialist product with global appeal. Think of Apple. The iPod, iPhone and iPad are perfect examples of this principle – specialist devices with equal appeal to customers whether they live in the UK, USA, Japan or Australia, and that's why Apple is proving so successful today.

Now think about the Cayenne. Here was an SUV with a posh badge and more performance and better handling than anything else on the market. Whether you like them or not, there's no arguing that SUVs have global appeal, especially in newly emerging markets such as China, India and Russia, where rough roads and severe climate conditions make a conventional premium car almost a liability. And with these countries driving global car sales growth today, SUVs will continue to be a very big earner well into the future.

Yet if you want to buy a premium SUV you still only really have the Cayenne or the Range Rover to choose from, despite the runaway success both of these models have enjoyed over the



'DURHEIMER WAS BEHIND THE CAYENNE, SO DON'T BE SURPRISED TO SEE A BENTLEY S.U.V. SOON'

past decade. Buyers of these cars are extremely wealthy too. Seventy per cent of new Range Rovers are of Vogue SE spec or higher, and, according to recent Land Rover research, 22 per cent of RR buyers earn over \$500,000 per year, compared with 8 per cent of buyers for the Mercedes S-class.

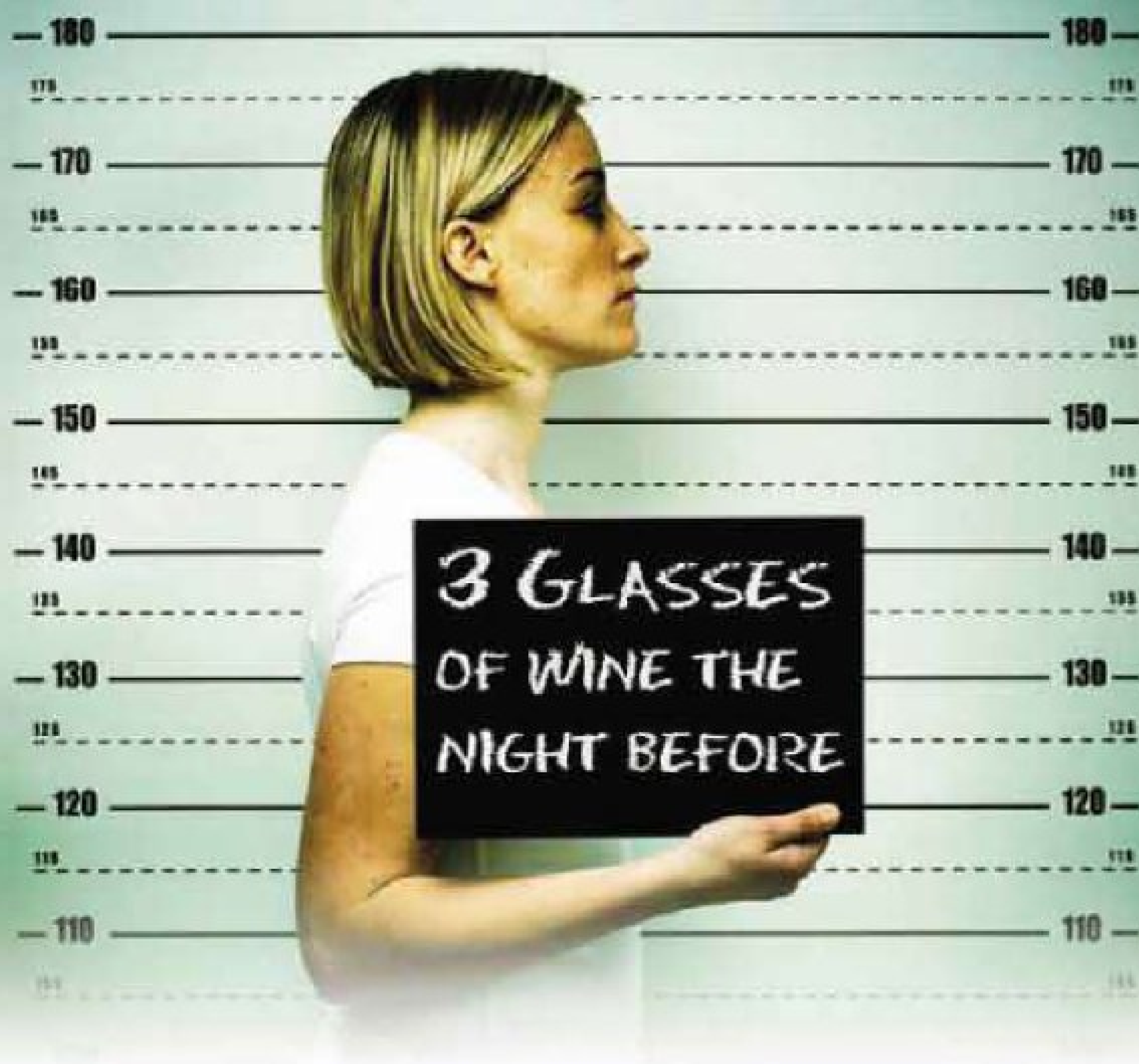
Now consider a friend of mine who drives a Range Rover almost by default. He's tried living with a Bentley Continental GT and a Rolls-Royce Ghost, but keeps coming back to a Range as he finds it so much more useful and prefers its high-up seating position. He'd happily pay £150,000-plus for an ultra-premium SUV but it doesn't exist. It's possibly the biggest gap in the car market still left unplugged.

This might be about to change, though. Maserati's Kubang SUV concept of 2003 never went into production as there was no suitable drivetrain within the Fiat group at the time. But now Fiat has access to all the Chrysler drivetrains, including those of Jeep, it has announced that a Maserati SUV will go on sale after all. Meanwhile, Aston showed a Lagonda Concept SUV in 2009 and, like it or not, the badge alone means it will sell if it makes production.

But the most obvious absentee here is Bentley. It already has a suitable four-wheel-drive drivetrain and a global dealer network, yet it seems to be stuck in a rut producing ever quicker (but ultimately pointless) versions of the Continental GT. Why? Surely, a

Conti styled like the Flying Star shooting brake (shown at Geneva in 2010) but with a tougher, off-road set-up, similar to an Audi Allroad, would have made a more enterprising proposition than the slightly daft two-seater Conti Supersports it launched instead?

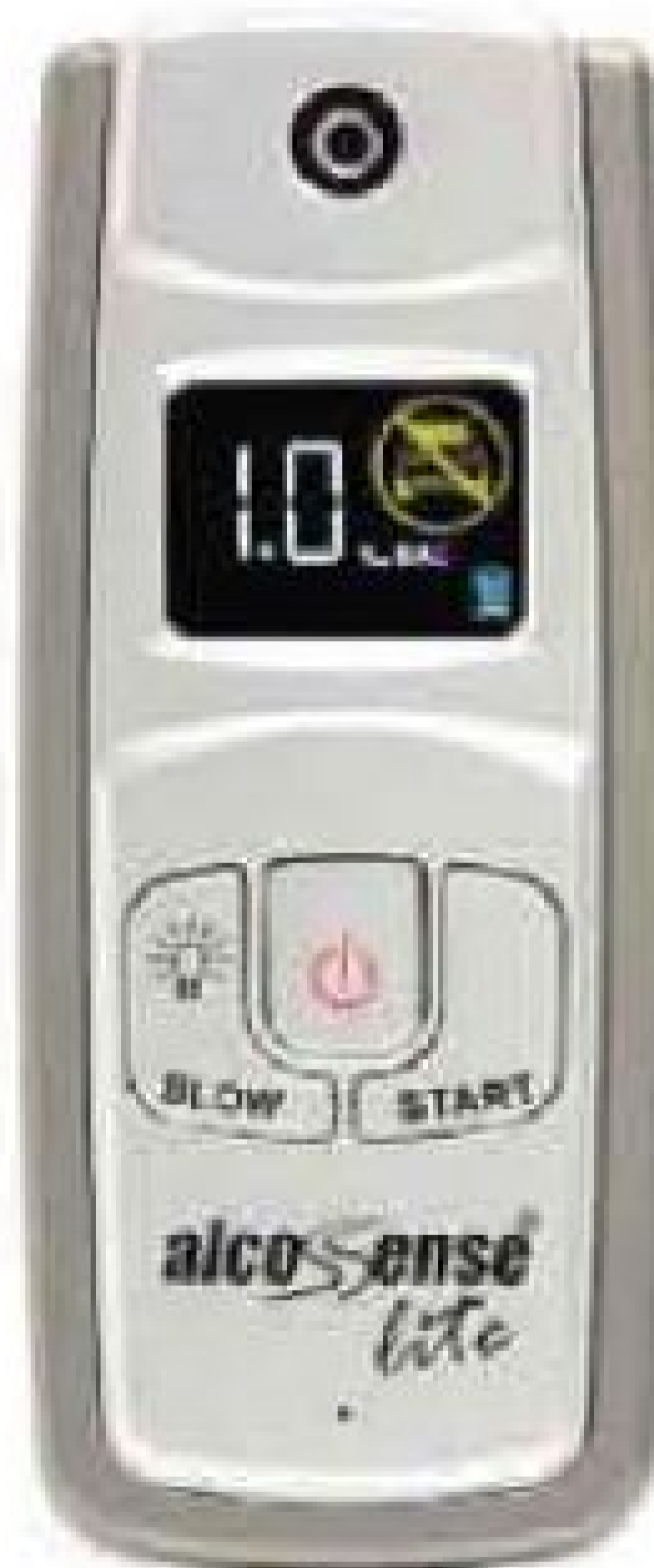
Help is at hand, though. Wolfgang Durheimer – head of product development at Porsche since 1999 – has just been appointed the new boss of Bentley, and as he was the person responsible for engineering the Cayenne, I wouldn't be at all surprised if a Bentley SUV concept appeared at a motor show in the near future. My wealthy friend will be at the front of the queue (with his chequebook in hand) if and when it does.



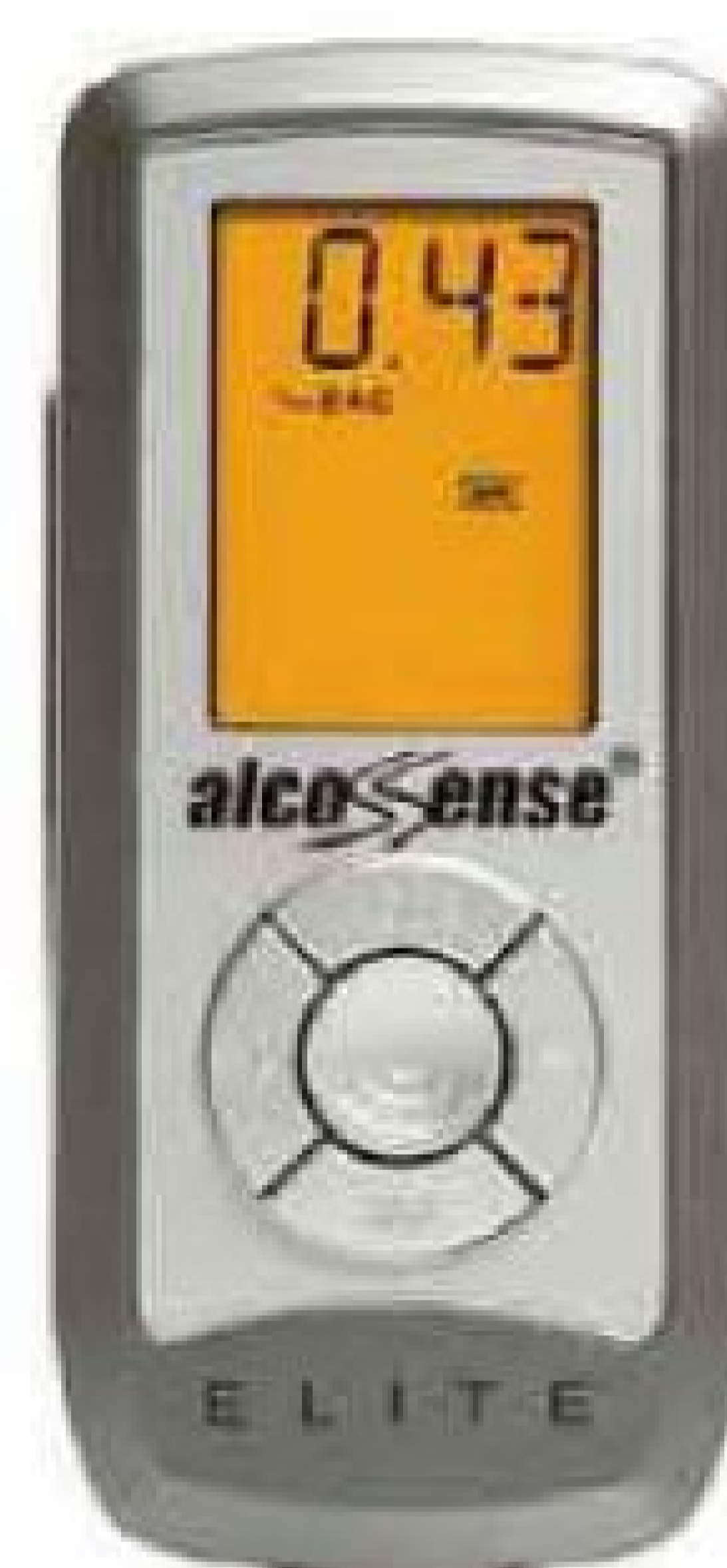
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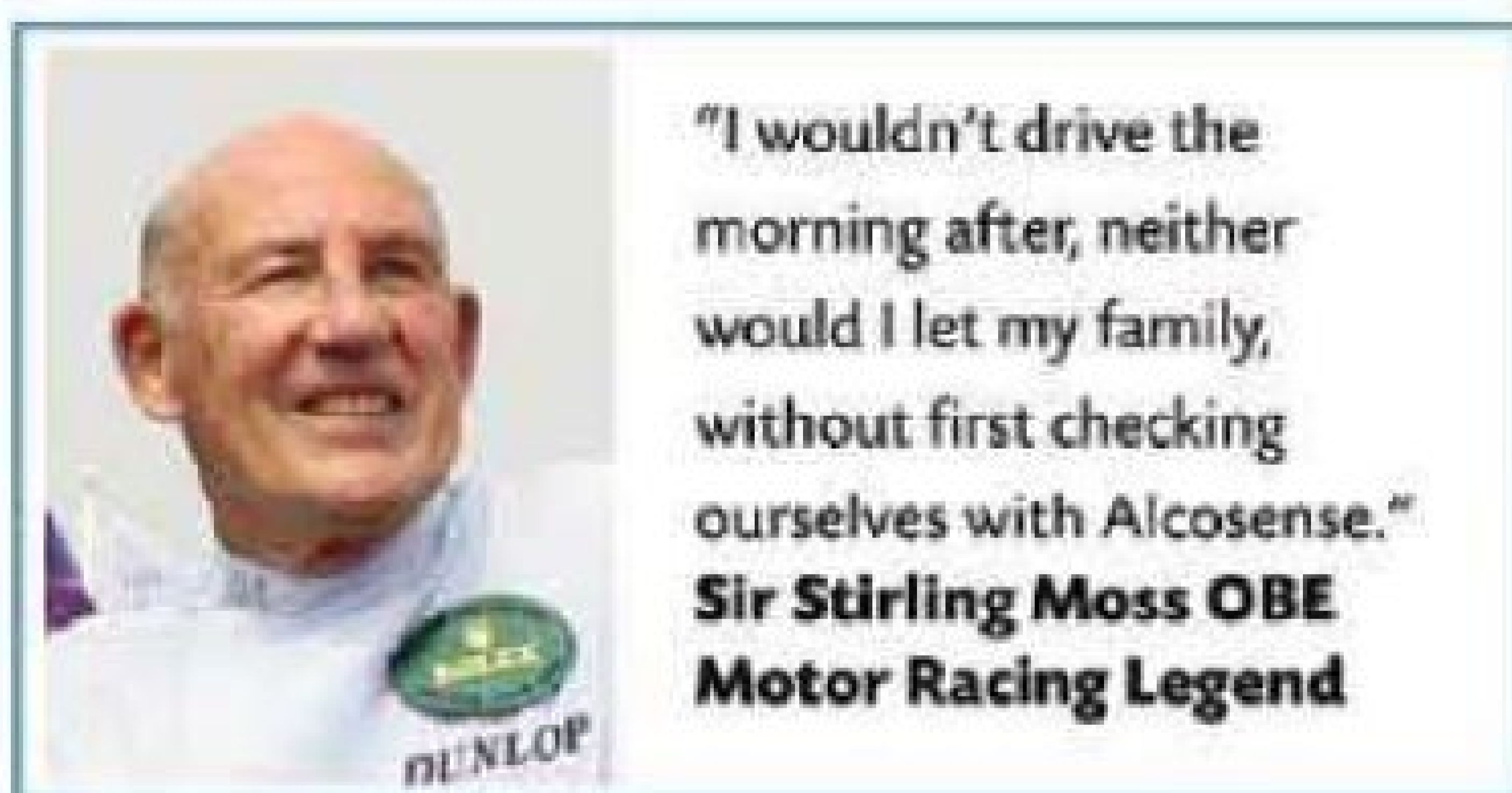


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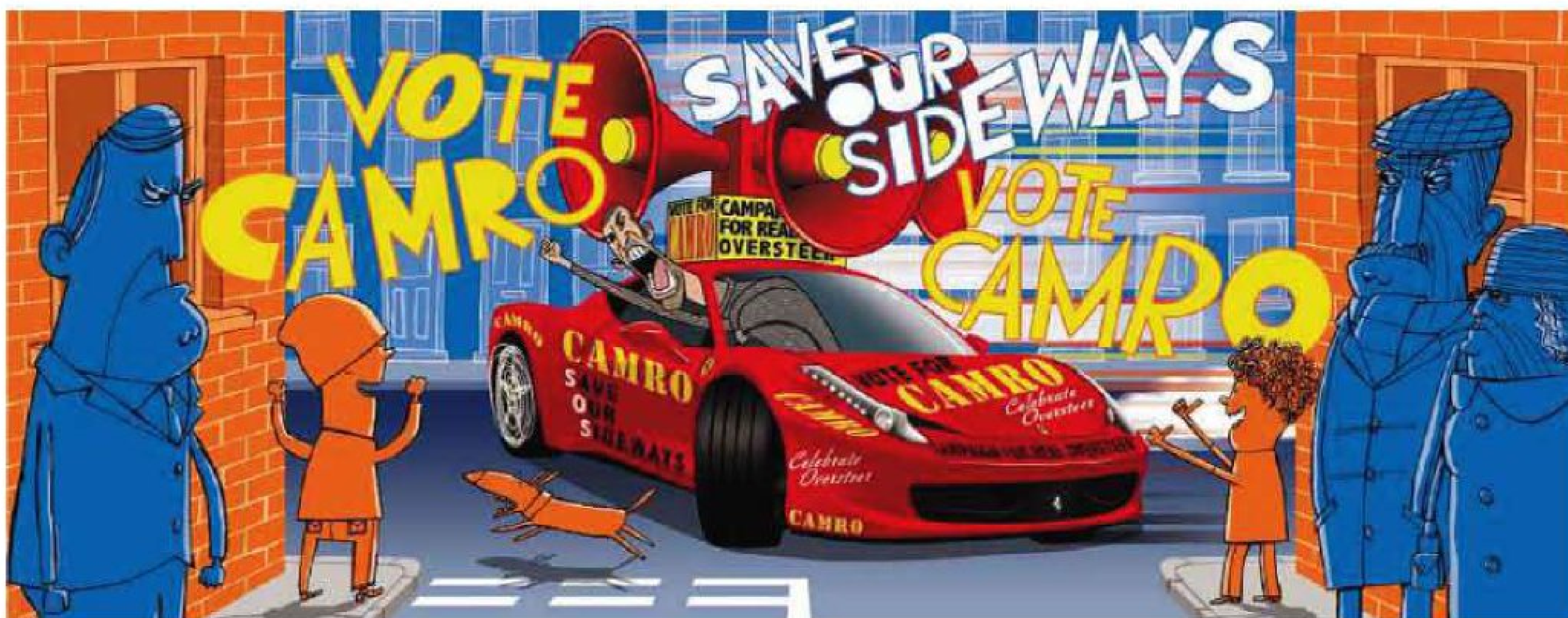




Crossed Up

Chris Harris

Harris is worried that oversteer is going out of fashion. But the fightback starts here, and he's looking for your support



Brother Harris sends an important message: oversteer is under threat. How has this come to pass? Ignorance and legislation. Can oversteer's death be averted? Yes, but we must act quickly to save oversteer for future generations. What can we do to help? Join the cause: CAMRO – the Campaign for Real Oversteer.

The erosion of good, British, sideways values has been slow but consistent. The cancer can be traced as far back as those black magicians at Citroën in the 1930s. The front-drive concept's claim of improved packaging and stability hid a darker secret – the eradication of throttle-propagated slip angles.

And so, through the Issigonis years, and Wolfsburg's callous abandoning of the rear-engined project, we arrived at the European hatchback. Never again would roundabouts be used as intended – a grabby slither on crossplies to send the girlfriend into a rage. Instead, in a bizarre development, they would connect two roads heading in different directions.

CAMRO isn't obsessed by the past, although it does acknowledge the countermeasures deployed by the able comrades of the PSA group in the 1980s and '90s, whose work to provide ever more alarming oversteer within the

'SIDEWAYS IS BIG AND IT MOST CERTAINLY IS CLEVER. SLIP ANGLES ARE TO BE WORSHIPPED'

confines of a front-drive package will always be appreciated.

Today, oversteer is mostly unloved – pilloried by communities who should worship at its feet. Take the video this member posted of his qualifying lap at the final round of the Porsche Carrera Cup Germany. The circuit was wet, the tyres were useless, but the resulting sideways-ness was a blast. The member publicly accepted that this wasn't the cleanest, fastest route around the circuit, but still people sent emails telling him that sideways wasn't fast. Or big. Or clever.

Well, CAMRO has a message for these dissenting voices: sideways is big and it most certainly is clever. And CAMRO doesn't care if it isn't fast. Oversteer isn't restricted to the grotty achievement of ends – the simplistic goals of 'lap times' and other trivial eventualities. Oh no, it is only concerned with the means through which a driving event happens. And in this respect, slip angles are to be worshipped. They are the plot to the novel, the Cobra to the curry, the excitement to the drive. CAMRO is a staunch defender of the experience, and in this it closely aligns itself with any title

that expounds The Thrill of Driving.

But where can we practise this noble art? It seems many of us need to learn it in the first place. Formative years wasted on wrong-wheel-drive; skills pampered by wide, grippy rubber – you know the story.

For those well-versed, is the public highway still the place for such activities? On reflection, possibly not, but no one should deny a believer the occasional disengagement of ESP and a flurry of opposite lock on the way home from work. This is grass-roots CAMRO activity; without it what are we – not wishing to labour the point – but primates? Or Priuses?

And what of those safe havens, the proving ground or the motor racing circuit? Not much, we fear. This member was recently working at a well-known disused runway and, on being observed rinsing the bejesus out of a Ferrari 599 GTB's Pirellis, was asked if he was 'attempting oversteer'. Of course he bloody was. Why else do we go to these places? To drool over a few thousand pre-registered Fiestas? What else does a man do with 61 lbhp, rear-wheel drive and a wet corner? Talk lap deltas and optimum grip lines?

Balls. He gets fantastically crossed-up and revels in the feelings of changing grip, managing the slide, perfecting the gather-up. Spinning the bugger if he has to, but trying it all the same.

At a trackday earlier this year, this member was also admonished for 'driving sideways' in a GT3. Why is it that trackdays are now considered a drift-free environment? Noise is an issue, but we fear a culture of resentment lurks within the trackday community at the slightest hint of slip angle. Should someone attack every single corner on the lock-stops, then CAMRO can see grounds for complaint. However, trackdays are about exploring you and your vehicle, and CAMRO feels strongly that this should include slip angles.

Accordingly, CAMRO actively seeks new members, and safe environments where oversteer can be appreciated.

Join now and help the cause!

PS: CAMRO also marks a word of caution to some of its restless, hard-line members keen to form a splinter group. Their working title, the Campaign for Armfuls of Real Oversteer, leaves them open to intellectual property action.

Message ends.

DRIVEN

- LAMBORGHINI PERFORMANTE P36
- CITROËN DS3 RACING P40
- FORD F-150 SVT RAPTOR 6.2 P44
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- BMW X3 xDRIVE 20d SE P46
- AUDI A1 1.6 TDI SPORT P46
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- DROP-TOP GALLARDO GETS SUPERLEGGERA TREATMENT
- POWER UP TO 562BHP ■ WEIGHT CUT BY 65KG

F

ew cars command attention like a Lamborghini, fewer still a Lamborghini finished in fizzy orange and resplendent with hugely flared air intakes, a carbonfibre rear wing,

stripes, tricolour graphics and an exhaust note to wake the dead. Truth be told, Lamborghini has been relying rather heavily on its tried and tested brand of shock and awe recently.

There was a time when the baby Bull stuck it to Maranello, but ever since the 360 gave way to the F430, the Gallardo's position of strength has been slowly eroded. Now, in the face of

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Ferrari's game-changing engineering advances in the shape of the 458 Italia, times are tough at Sant'Agata.

Still, there's reason to be optimistic, for there are new models on the horizon, starting with the Murciélago-replacing Aventador. The Gallardo, however, has to fight on for another 18 months, and that's a big ask for a supercar that's been with us for the best part of seven years.

This hasn't stopped Lamborghini from developing its junior supercar. Indeed the upgrades and enhancements continue apace. The styling has got sharper, borrowing elements from the mighty Murciélago LP670-4 SV, and in lightweight Superleggera spec the Gallardo has become quicker and more aggressive than ever. Now Lamborghini has given the Spyder the Superleggera treatment, shedding weight, boosting power and ramping-up the attitude to create the Gallardo LP570-4 Spyder Performante.



Navigating Nice on a Monday morning is not the ideal time or place to get acquainted with a £186,000 supercar. The Performante draws traffic like a magnet attracts ferrous metal, a swirling motorcade of taxis, mopeds and battered Renaults jostling for a better look. It's nerve-wracking stuff, but all part of the supercar experience. Thankfully the new model is rather easier to handle in urban surroundings than an old-school Lambo, thanks largely to the standard e-gear transmission (a conventional manual is available as a no-cost option).

Before long we've escaped the cloying traffic and arrived in Vence, a bustling town in the foothills of the Alpes Maritime. Beyond lies the legendary Col de Vence, which climbs 900 metres into the clear blue Provence sky and is a stern test of car and driver. It's a great road by normal standards, but far from the best in the region. It's a bit tight and not clearly sighted enough to really stretch the Performante's legs, so we're heading further into the mountains, to a village called Gréolières – an isolated jumble of pan-tiled roofs nestling comfortably beneath bleached mountain crags.

The Performante feels totally at home up here. Grippy, grunty and beautifully poised, it loves steep inclines and lives for punching out of tight uphill hairpins, summoning huge reserves of all-wheel-drive traction to hurl you out of corner after corner.

It's still early when we get into the heart of the mountains and the sun has yet to warm all the nooks and crannies of this amazing road.



Above: engine cover, diffuser, sills and mirror casings are all carbonfibre; the material is responsible for 40 per cent of the weight savings. Below left: front spoiler is painted version of Superleggera item. Below right: 19in wheels are from Superleggera too; optional carbon-ceramic discs (clamped by eight-piston calipers) work best when used hard



'GRIPPY, GRUNTY AND BEAUTIFULLY POISED, IT LOVES STEEP

Signposts warn of 'Verglas' – ice to you and me – and it pays to take heed, for we regularly happen upon heavily frosted corners lurking in the shadows. For once the ESP button remains untouched...

As the morning progresses, caution gives way to carousing, the Gallardo revelling in the dry tarmac and scintillating twists and turns. It's still cold – no more than 4 degrees – but it would be criminal not to stow the neat canvas turret roof, so the heater gets turned up and the roof gets folded down.

Many of the ascents have you squeezed against sheer rock faces, against which the V10's war-cry ricochets back into the cockpit then down into the valley below. In the closed-cockpit Superleggera the exhaust and engine noise are epic, but the open-top Performante takes things to another level, like experiencing surround-sound for the first time. Supercars sound no angrier or animalistic than this.

It's easy to pour scorn on the pure driving credentials of a convertible supercar, especially one derived from such a specialist machine as this. The spec sheet rather supports the sniffy stance, for despite employing the weight-saving measures employed by the Superleggera, the Performante can't redress the basic weight difference between coupe and Spyder Gallardos. In bald numbers the Performante is



Above: large carbonfibre wing is standard; a smaller version is an option. Left: seats feature carbon shells

65kg lighter than a standard Gallardo Spyder, but 145kg heavier than the Superleggera. That's a big chunk of weight to carry around, though, compared with other open-top supercars, at 1485kg it's still pretty light.

Does the convertible compromise matter? It should, but in all honesty it's hard to pick holes from where I'm sitting. The Performante's structure feels tight and the 562bhp, 398lb ft V10 is more violent and angry than ever. A Superleggera might make its weight advantage count in a side-by-side race up this mountain, but that's the stuff of video games. A 0-62mph time of 3.9sec versus 3.5sec for the Superleggera hints at the effect of the extra weight, but the reality is the Performante feels truly fast on





INCLINES AND LIVES TO PUNCH OUT OF TIGHT HAIRPINS'



these roads. Truly fast and supremely assured.

The Gallardo has never been a hyper-agile car in the style of a Ferrari F430 or 458, and while this can make it feel comparatively leaden on a track it does mean you can brake hard and deep into an unfamiliar corner, then lean on all the front-end grip without having to worry about upsetting the tail. Combined with Lamborghini's standard all-wheel-drive system, this means you can carry safe, confident speed more of the time, and when you encounter a clearly sighted corner you can get back on the power good and early. And, when provoked, it handles like it's rear-drive, which is fun.

If there's a potential chink in the Performante's armour it's the optional carbon brakes. In the

past they've been rightly criticised for being horribly grabby, especially at low speed. They've improved a lot since they were first introduced but they still lack that last ten per cent of polish. They seem at their best when used hard on these give-and-take roads. The trick is to be committed, pushing through the vague initial travel and into the meat of the stopping power. Driven thus, the Performante is effective and inspiring on the brakes, which allows you to make the most of its measured and tenaciously grippy front end as you turn in.

The e-gear transmission is rapidly being left behind by the latest-generation double-clutch technology, but it feels less clunky than it used to at low speeds. When you drive the Performante as Lamborghini intended, the shifts become increasingly brutal: in Corsa mode they are rapid but about as subtle as a punch in the face. You can finesse the upshifts by easing off the power fractionally, and while in theory this costs you time – whatever the relevance of that on the road – it does at least give you an extra sense of engagement with the car. It confirms that you are both part of the process and able to make a difference. That's not an excuse for the 'box's shortcomings, just an insight into how my mind works.

There's no doubt the Gallardo's age is starting to show, but it feels like less of an issue in the

Performante than it does in the Superleggera. On the road the dynamic differences between the two are slight but, crucially, being able to drop the roof or even just lower the neat electric bulkhead window behind your shoulders adds another dimension to the driving experience.

I found it hard to become hooked by the Superleggera on last month's eCoty test, so I was expecting to feel much the same about the Performante. I was wrong. Yes, the exposure to the elements and the maelstrom of noise is a distraction from the Gallardo's ultimate dynamic shortcomings, and yes, when Ferrari launches a 458 Spider it will be the quicker and more capable car. But at this level, once you get beyond a certain level of power, pace, grip and technology, sometimes it's the blood and thunder, and not the things you can measure with a stopwatch or G-sensor, that leave the most enduring memories.

Long in the tooth it may be, but Lamborghini remains determined to ensure the Gallardo grows old disgracefully. If that means more models like the Performante, that's fine by me.

Richard Meaden

EVO RATING



+ Total sensory overload

- Needs distractions to disguise its age

SPECIFICATION

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1598cc, turbo CO2 149g/km
 Power 204bhp @ 6000rpm Torque 203lb ft @ 2000-4500rpm
 0-62mph 6.5sec (claimed) Top speed 146mph (claimed)
 Price £23,100 On sale Now

C

itroën and Sébastien Loeb have dominated the World Rally Championship for what feels like a small eternity. Ford has pluckily taken the fight to them (with a much smaller budget) but mostly fallen short. Nonetheless it is the Blue Oval's road cars that have capitalised on the WRC link, specifically with ST and RS versions of the Focus. Citroën, meanwhile, hasn't even bothered to produce a properly sporty version of its production C4 (if anyone mentions the C4 'by Loeb' special edition at this point, please leave the room). All very bizarre.

Now, however, before the new DS3 WRC has even turned a competitive wheel, we have the DS3 Racing. It is the first road car ever to be developed by Citroën Racing (the same group of people that make Loeb's daily driver) and it looks absolutely fantastic. There are two colour schemes: you will probably by now be familiar with the Obsidian Black/Sport Orange combo that is in most of the pictures here, but I actually think the alternative Polar White/Carbon Grey choice is by far the better one. The reason (apart from the fact that the black and orange looks like it belongs on a 16-year-



Above: along with various other new bits of body trim, the rear diffuser is made from real carbonfibre. Right: engine cover is carbonfibre too, and proudly sports the name Citroën Racing – the team behind Sébastien Loeb's unprecedented run of seven WRC drivers' titles and six manufacturers' titles for Citroën



old's motor scooter) is that the white shows off all the beautiful real carbonfibre that Citroën has dressed the Racing with.

The arch extensions, front splitter, rear diffuser, rubbing strips and various other bits are all made of the black weave with a slightly matt finish. Inside it's more of the same, with part of the steering wheel, chunks of door trim and the entire centre console sculpted out of carbon. It might sound potentially tacky but it actually looks really good. The bucket seats are designed by Citroën Racing too and look great.



CITROËN DS3 RACING

- FRENCH FIRM'S HOTTEST HATCHBACK EVER
- CREATED BY CITROËN'S RALLY TEAM
- 204BHP TURBO 1.6 ■ £23,100 PRICE TAG



However, the air freshener in the dashboard looks more out of place than ever.

Underneath all the carbonfibre and optional decals (£410), the Racing has 30mm wider tracks front and rear and sits 15mm lower than the standard DS3 on new 18in wheels. The front brake discs have grown to 323mm in diameter (up by 40mm) and are now clamped by four-piston Brembo calipers.

The engine is the same 1.6-litre turbocharged bundle found in the Mini Cooper S but in the DS3 Racing it is tuned to a JCW-rivalling

'IT'S THE FIRST ROAD CAR EVER TO BE DEVELOPED BY THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE LOEB'S RALLY CAR'

204bhp and 203lb ft, which should see it sprint from standstill to 62mph in 6.5sec before going on to reach 146mph flat-out. Arguably even more impressive than those performance figures, however, is the CO2 rating of 149g/km and combined cycle figure of 44mpg.

Not that we will be replicating the latter today, because the launch for the DS3 Racing is taking place in the hills above Nice, which means the amazing Col de Vence is our playground. The crinkle-free tarmac is damp today and as we climb ever higher we plunge

into cotton-wool mist. Evidence of the road being used as a (probably not entirely legal) rally stage looms in the foglights with lines rubber-tattooed onto the tarmac in the braking zone for each corner. The Citroën is agile and accurate in its lines but the first thing I do is turn the ESP off (and it *is* completely off in the Racing) because the front wheels are struggling to lay down the power cleanly and the electronics are cutting in early rather than allowing a bit of slip.

Despite the traction issues, the engine doesn't feel like it's imbued with quite as much vim and eagerness as in the 208bhp Mini JCW, partly, I suspect, due to taller gearing in the DS3. It's in the corners, not on the short straights, that we're really hoping for good things, however. The DS3 Racing changes direction quickly and incisively and corners very flat, so you can link medium and fast corners together in really satisfying style, picking up clipping points and really flowing down a road.

However, in slower corners the electric power steering is too light and the front end just doesn't feel like it's keyed into the tarmac as you want. It feels like it needs a limited-slip diff. The Brembos are excellent, though, and on these smooth roads you can augment the front-end grip by trail-braking late and deep into corners, standing the car on its nose and getting the tail swinging controllably and entertainingly out of line. This isn't something you would often do on the bumpier roads of



the UK, but it could be interesting on track (we look forward to finding out).

The gearshift is light and slick but I'd like just a bit more mechanical resistance to make you feel more involved. It's the same story with the pedals, but the handbrake (there were hairpins – I couldn't resist) is everything you would hope for from a rally outfit, acting like a light-switch to snap the tail round. By the end of our few hours on the Col, the DS3 Racing had felt good, but never great. I love the lateral grip and



'BRAKE DEEP INTO A CORNER AND THE TAIL SWINGS





DRIVING THE DS3 RALLY CAR

Back in the summer I had a few laps in what is the DS3 Racing's closest motorsport cousin, the DS3 R3 rally car. It uses the same engine and has almost identical power, though a host of modifications boost torque to 258lb ft. Amongst other goodies, it gets a paddle-operated six-speed sequential gearbox (with a flat-shift system), a hydraulic handbrake and, more importantly, hydraulic power-assisted steering. Dealing with all the impacts are three-way adjustable dampers by French firm BOS, while a ZF limited-slip diff in the front axle takes care of traction.

If you've never driven a race- or rally-prepared front-wheel-drive car then put it on your list of things to do. It's extraordinary, because they are incredibly tail-happy and



DS3 R3 has been built to the FIA's Group R3T regulations. Left: stripped interior features roll-cage and Recaro seats

feel like they pivot around a point directly between the front wheels, the back instantly picking up a wheel and sliding around behind. You set it up to slide into a turn and arrive at the apex already pointing down the next straight, controlling the attitude of the rear with your left foot and the brake pedal. Have a look at the video on evo.co.uk.

As you can imagine, the R3 is huge fun and it has so far been very successful on the stages, but in my opinion as a rung on the ladder to the WRC it is far too expensive for most budding Sordos: a complete car with tarmac and gravel kits will set you back almost £90,000.

HC

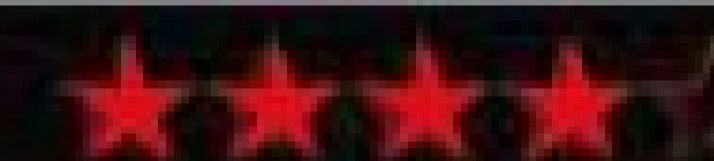
stability of the chassis in direction changes but the front end needs to find more purchase and the steering needs more weight and feel.

If you look purely at power, then the DS3 Racing has Renault's Clio 200 as a competitor, but in terms of price and dynamics, the Clio wins hands down. With the Citroën costing £23,100 – over *six grand* more than the Cup-chassis'd Clio – the more obvious rival for it is the £21,875 Mini JCW. Both have aesthetics that have been worked on hard, but each

has quite a different flavour to its driving experience. It will be interesting to see whether it's Citroën or Mini that comes out on top when they go head-to-head on the road, and on the WRC stages, in 2011.

Henry Catchpole

EVO RATING



- + Entertaining in the bends, looks the part
- Struggles for traction, light steering, price

ENTERTAININGLY OUT OF LINE'



Top right: Citroën Racing seats offer plenty of lateral support. Above: engine has an extra 50bhp over the DS3 1.6 THP. Right and below: carbonfibre can be found inside too. Below right: white with grey is the other colour choice

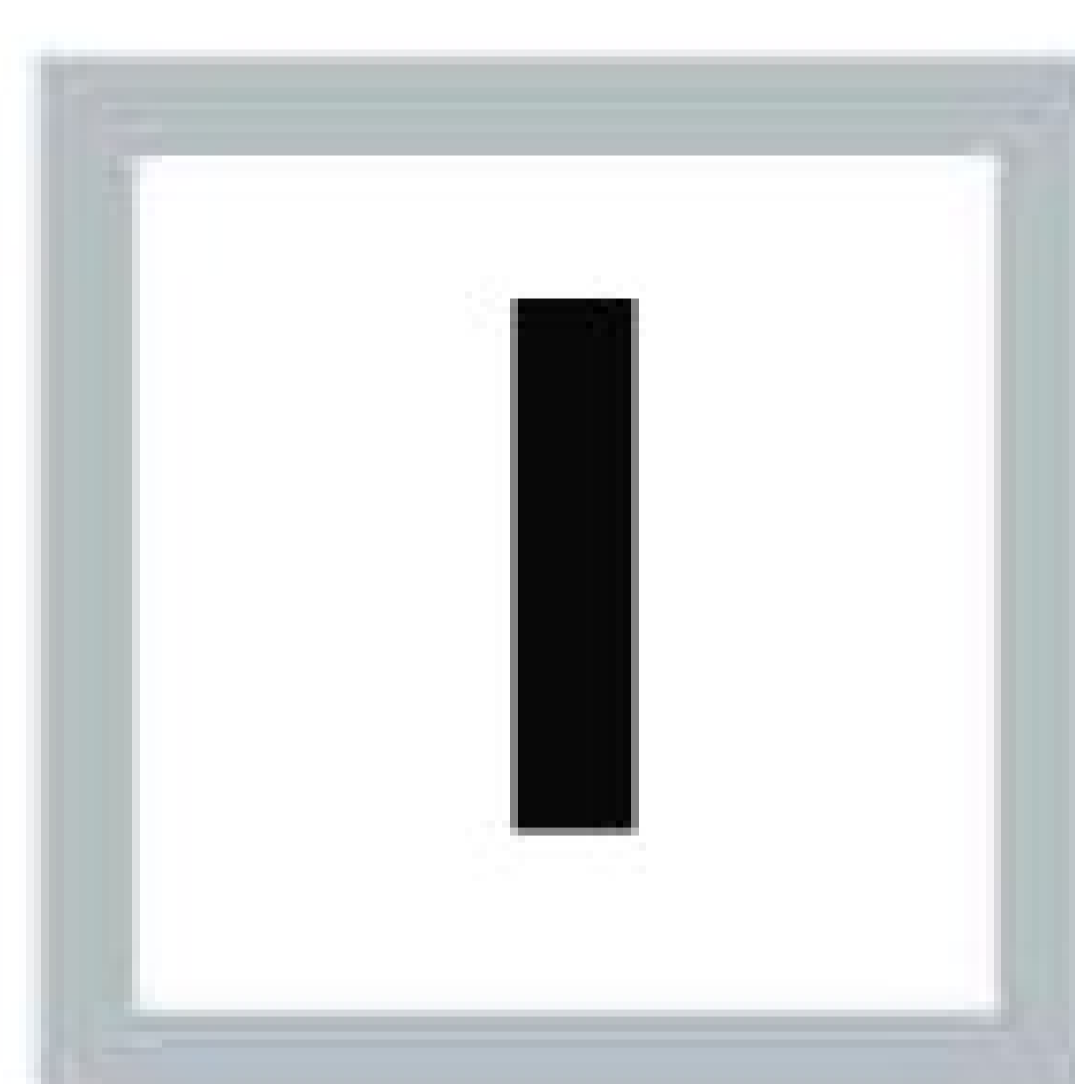


DRIVEN



FORD F-150 SVT RAPTOR 6.2

- 'SPECIAL VEHICLE TEAM' PICK-UP GETS UPDATED FOR 2011
- NEW 405BHP 6.2-LITRE V8 ■ DOUBLE-CAB VERSION JOINS LINE-UP



r's Tonka chunky, sky high, subtle as a Maori face tattoo and not officially available in Britain – but for pick-up truck folk this is the ultimate.

A biker has pulled up alongside me at the lights. On the other side a fellow Ford pick-up driver. First the biker checks out the BF Goodrich knobblies, then that brick wall of a front grille, resplendent with running lights. He looks at me and grins.

Seconds later the pick-up driver shouts over. 'Fox shocks, right?' He points at the big gap between tyre top and wheelarch. 'Them trucks don't git more badass than a Raptor. That there is one sweet truck, buddy.'

It certainly doesn't get more hardcore in truckdom. 'Born in Baja,' says Ford about its desert-focused repli-racer. But hang on, haven't we seen the SVT Raptor before? Yes, we have. This king-of-the-hill version of Ford's F-150 – still America's best-selling truck – has been on sale for over a year; we first drove one back in *evo* 142. But for 2011 it's also being offered as a double cab (with a 300mm longer wheelbase) and, crucially, comes with more horses beneath that gilled bonnet.

The original car was launched with 'just' a 5.4-litre V8. While it made the right noises, it felt a little flaccid for something designed to get seriously airborne without going lame on the landings. This 2011 version of the Detroit dinosaur still sports a cast-iron V8 block, but it now packs 6.2 litres of displacement in an all-

SPECIFICATION

Engine V8, 6210cc CO2 n/a
 Power 405bhp @ 5500rpm Torque 434lb ft @ 4500rpm
 0-60mph 7.5sec (est) Top speed 100mph (limited)
 Price c£26,600 (in the US) On sale Now, in the US

new design with 'aluminum' heads and pistons, and two valves and two spark plugs per cylinder. Still backed by a six-speed auto 'box, the Raptor now has 405bhp and 434lb ft of twist on tap – 85bhp and 40lb ft more than the 5.4.

Quick then? Hell yeah. Having climbed straight from a low-slung 426bhp new Camaro SS (also a 6.2) up into the Raptor's cab, it's the pick-up that not only feels faster but more exciting. It even sounds more raw.

Road holding is pretty good... for a truck. The special Fox Racing Shox – recalibrated for the heavier engine – offer a soft, compliant ride. The specially developed BF Goodrich 315/70 R17 tyres were born and bred for

all-terrain punishment, and on the road they feel, well, wooden. Judging by how little they wear during e-diff-assisted rolling burnouts, probably mahogany.

What about off-road? Hard as we try, there aren't many dunes, dirt tracks or gorse bushes to leap over in Detroit. All the Ford ads show the Raptor getting serious air – which is where the purpose-built, bright-blue Fox Shox come in. The internal-bypass front dampers provide 11.2 inches of suspension travel, while the rears each feature a piggyback reservoir (so they don't prolapse during *Dukes of Hazzard*-spec canyon leaps) to give 12.1 inches of movement.

Other Raptor-only tricks include cast aluminium front lower control arms, that front grille complete with its massive 'FORD' logo, closed-loop tow hooks, SVT 16in alloys and a sump scuff-plate. The Molten Orange colour scheme isn't compulsory – you can also choose between Ingot Silver, Tuxedo Black, Blue



Back doors are rear-hinged; 'SuperCrew' version gets four conventional doors and more room for rear passengers

**'EVERYWHERE
WE DRIVE THE
RAPTOR IT CAUSES
A STIR. BIG MEN
YEARN FOR IT'**



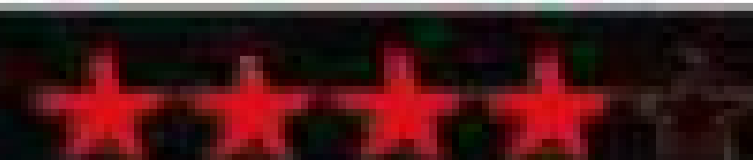
Dash design by Tetris; colour-coded inserts an option

Flame or Oxford White – and the '90s splatter graphics that detract from the Raptor's race-bred credentials are optional, thankfully. Oh, and speaking of options, go easy on the colour-coded leather interior accents. With toggle switches the size of fingers, the cabin looks Duplo enough without a primary colour explosion.

Everywhere we drove the Raptor in America it caused a stir. Big men yearned for it. Ford Europe won't be selling it, so would-be Raptor hunters this side of the Pond will have to source theirs through specialist importers. But while it may be niche, a bit pointless in the UK and bloody difficult to climb into and out of (even with 34in legs), it's brimming with no-holds-barred US-of-A charisma. This really is to truck folk what the GT3 is to the 911 world.

Jonny Smith

EVO RATING



- Born in the USA
- Which is where it works best



Suspension kit results in a firmer ride than Renaultsport's Cup set-up

K-TEC RACING MÉGANE RS250

■ 290BHP POWER UPGRADE ■ UPRATED SUSPENSION

SPECIFICATION

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc, turbo CO2 n/a
Power 290bhp @ 5790rpm Torque 305lb ft @ 3100rpm
0-60mph 5.7sec (claimed) Top speed 160mph+ (claimed)
Conversion price See text On sale Now (www.k-tecracing.com)

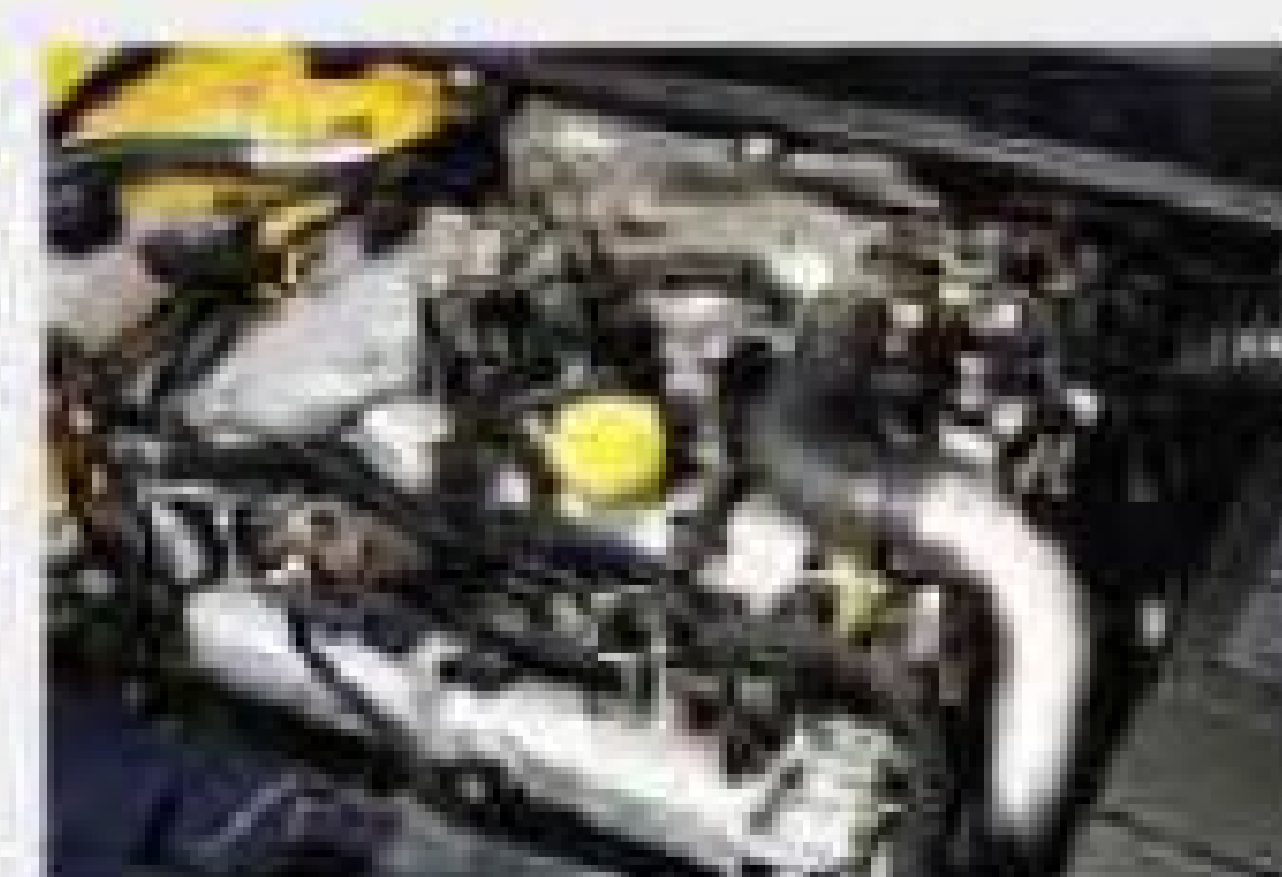
If you're an **evo** regular you'll know the RS250 is one of our favourite hot hatches, especially in Cup specification. If there's one thing it lacks, though, at least compared with the punchy Ford Focus RS, it's outright grunt.

This, then, could be a shrewd move from Dorset-based K-Tec Racing (KTR), for it gives the Mégane some serious slugging power thanks to an in-house-developed package comprising a three-inch cat-back exhaust system and Stage 1 remap.

Together these upgrades are good for a claimed 290bhp and 305lb ft of torque – increases of 43bhp and 54lb ft over the standard car. Compared with the understated delivery of the factory car, K-Tec's machine is louder and more aggressive. The exhaust is about as much as I'd want to put up with on a daily basis, but it does give the Mégane a more extrovert character.



Remap and new exhaust take the 2-litre turbo engine's power up to 290bhp, putting it just 10bhp shy of the 300bhp Focus RS



The way the KTR Mégane fires you down the road is mighty impressive, not only for the sheer accelerative drama, but also because the mapping is smooth, progressive and step-free. There's some additional torque-steer, but while this may spoil the experience for Renaultsport purists it's nothing a Focus RS driver would worry about. We didn't have a chance to figure the car ourselves, but K-Tec claims to have achieved 0-60mph in 5.7sec and 0-100 in 13.5 – improvements of 0.4 and 1.1sec respectively over our own times for the standard 250.

This demo car is also being used to develop a coilover suspension kit (with adjustable top-mounts) in collaboration with Nitron. Given the Cup chassis can easily cope with more power and torque, uprating the chassis is arguably fixing something that ain't broke, but there are some benefits. K-Tec's car runs on 18in rims, so the fact its ride feels uncompromising suggests there's no way you'd want to have this suspension with the optional 19s, but the chassis changes aren't too extreme for road use and they do help this more potent Mégane find impressive traction on sub-zero roads. And if you're a keen trackday goer, the KTR/Nitron set-up will undoubtedly give you an edge.

At £502 for the exhaust and £450 for the remap, KTR's power upgrade is excellent value. If you can live with the exhaust note it's a no-brainer and kicks the Focus RS where it hurts. The chassis mods are only for the truly committed, and at £1794 a significant investment, but if you have a non-Cup Mégane 250 it makes more sense.

Richard Meaden

EVO RATING



- Makes the Mégane a true RS kicker
- Exhaust may be too noisy for some

BMW X3 xDRIVE 20d SE

■ NEW VERSION OF BMW'S MID-SIZED SUV ■ IMPROVED QUALITY ■ 181 BHP DIESEL THE ONLY ENGINE AT LAUNCH

The outgoing BMW X3 was not without its critics. Awkward styling, poor quality interior fittings and a rough ride all attracted flak as BMW tried to repeat the X5's success in a scaled-down form, and failed.

So it's no real surprise that 'X3: The Second Coming' has addressed these issues head-on. The styling is much more conventional (and far better for it), the interior quality matches that of a 5-series (leather seats are standard, too) and, most importantly in our eyes, it now rides with real cohesion.

The old car seemed stiff and unforgiving for sportiness's sake, but its successor rides with aplomb. Our Variable Damper Control-equipped launch car offered a choice of three

SPECIFICATION

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1995cc, turbodiesel CO2 149g/km
 Power 181bhp @ 4000rpm Torque 280lb ft @ 1750rpm
 0-62mph 8.5sec (claimed) Top speed 130mph (limited)
 Price £30,490 On sale Now

different suspension settings (Normal, Sport and Sport+), though with all three providing a good balance between comfort and agility, things bode well for cars not equipped with the £910 variable system. That said, we'll reserve full judgement on the ride until we drive a car in the UK on non-winter tyres.

The driving experience as a whole is very positive: all the usual BMW strengths are present and correct, with impressively direct (if a touch heavy) steering and an overall feeling of tautness and lightness-on-its-feet that ensures the new X3 is undoubtedly the

'THE X3 IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE DRIVERS' CHOICE IN ITS SEGMENT'



Above and far left: new looks are softer than the first-generation X3's. Left: 2-litre turbodiesel engine could be smoother; more power wouldn't go amiss either. Below left: cabin materials have moved up a notch

drivers' choice in its market segment.

Which makes it all the more disappointing that – for now at least – in the UK you can only buy a new X3 in clumsily titled xDrive 20d form. In plain English, that means four-wheel drive and a 2-litre turbodiesel. And while this engine is far from gruff, it's just not all that pleasant sounding, having a faintly agricultural edge to it when it's working hard.

AUDI A1 1.6 TDI SPORT

■ DIESEL VERSION OF AUDI'S NEW MINI RIVAL ■ TOP-NOTCH FIT AND FINISH ■ UNDERWHELMING DRIVING EXPERIENCE

Idoubt you've been able to prevent your eyes flicking across to the verdict already. So why has this A1 earned so few of those bright red stars? The trouble is that once you've lapped up the quality (and that will take a little while because there's a lot to admire) there's really not much else to get the juices flowing. The A1 itself boasts no radical construction or other interesting technical features, and this 1.6-litre diesel... well, it's not our pick of the A1 line-up.

The manual gearbox has six gears but one of those is reverse and, once you've enjoyed

the moderately satisfying spurt of bottom-end grunt, the engine's torque flat-lines. Crucially, it's not as refined as you'd imagine Audi would want it to be.

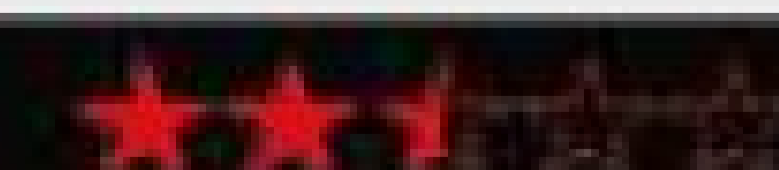
The A1 is a nice size – it's wieldy on the road and the weight is well balanced within the chassis – and provided you don't push too hard, neither over- nor understeer is prevalent. But that glimmer of hope aside, the TDI is a plodder. The suspension is so uncomfortably harsh (though our test car was on optional 17in alloys) that you find yourself bracing for manhole covers, while mid-corner steering

SPECIFICATION

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1598cc, turbodiesel CO2 105g/km
 Power 104bhp @ 4400rpm Torque 184lb ft @ 1500-2500rpm
 0-62mph 10.5sec (claimed) Top speed 118mph (claimed)
 Price £16,320 On sale Now



evo RATING



- It's a nice object
- Until you start moving



SUZUKI KIZASHI SPORT

- SUZUKI'S FIRST SALOON
- UK SALES A POSSIBILITY

SPECIFICATION

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 2393cc CO2 183g/km
 Power 176bhp @ 6500rpm Torque 170lb ft @ 4000rpm
 0-62mph 7.8sec (claimed) Top speed 134mph (claimed)
 Price c£22,000 On sale Watch this space

This chunky little mid-sized saloon is the Suzuki Kizashi, the Japanese firm's first foray into the Mondeo/3-series market. It's already on sale elsewhere in the world and this 2.4-litre 'Sport' model has been brought over to evaluate its prospects here in the UK.

Its cockpit is comfortable, neatly designed and pretty well equipped and right away the car exhibits a solid integrity. There's a hint of firmness to the ride but the payback is excellent wheel control, great poise over tricky surfaces, and good responses. There's a bit of roll but the Kizashi tacks into turns keenly and delivers good steering feel.



Kizashi looks smart (even more so in the metal) and its handling shows great promise, but it's let down by its underperforming 2.4-litre engine

The trouble is, it rather feels like a chassis in search of an engine. It's hard to believe its 2.4-litre four has 176bhp; it sounds and feels less than that. Even one-up and driven with verve, it never really gets going, hauling with little conviction from low revs. You keep expecting – and hoping – it will perk up at any moment, but it never does, its mildly hammery note remaining little changed right to the red line.

It's a shame, because fundamentally this is a well-sorted, well-built car. It would be no bargain, though. Suzuki GB reckons it would be priced at around £22K. That sounds a lot for a Suzuki that's a bit short of grunt.

John Barker

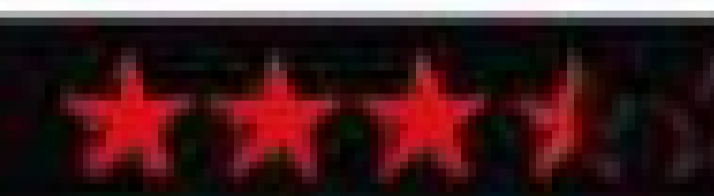
It's a good job it's brisk enough in the lower reaches of its rev-range (peak torque of 280lb ft is delivered at 1750rpm), as it runs out of puff pretty quickly, making constant stirring of the gearbox a necessity for fast progress. And this shows the six-speed manual up to be rather clunky. The eight-speed automatic (a £1495 option) is effortlessly smooth in comparison and super-snappy in its changes, especially if you take control yourself with the manual over-ride function.

High mpg and low CO2 are the targets, of course, and equipping the X3 with a clean

four-pot diesel results in class-leading figures of 50.4mpg and 149g/km, the latter low enough to qualify for annual road tax of £125. But without a turbocharged three-litre engine option – either petrol or diesel – the X3 can't yet claim to be a proper performance SUV, despite its admirable agility.

Stephen Dobie

EVO RATING



- + Rides and steers well
- Needs a more willing engine



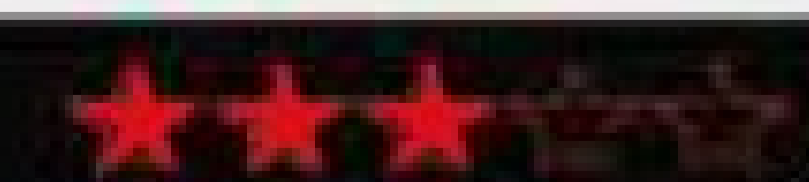
Left: A1 looks smart enough, but the driving experience leaves a lot to be desired, especially when rivals include the Mini. Turbodiesel engine (far left) is not as refined as you'd hope for in an Audi; it is the greenest A1 engine, though, with CO2 emissions of just 105g/km

kickback has to be experienced to be believed. I drove a Mini Cooper D recently. Zestier and more engaging, it was in a different class altogether. It's just a bit superficial, the A1 – if

you really must buy one go for the 1.4 TSI petrol DSG. It's much more polished and earns an extra half star.

Ollie Marriage

EVO RATING



- + Build quality, tidy handling
- Needs a better engine

DRIVEN: THE OUTSIDERS

FINDING THE THRILL OF DRIVING... IN UNLIKELY VEHICLES



FORD TRANSIT SPORTVAN

We make no bones about the fact this is the second Transit that's featured on this page in the space of a year. Back in issue 142, Dickie Meaden sung the praises of a high-roof, long-wheelbase version. I drove that one too and it was fun. This one's better.

All vans are fun, though. OK, so I'm sure the appeal wears off pretty quickly if you drive one every day, but for those of us used to interacting with a car, vans are something new and interesting. There are the physical differences, for a start. You climb up a long way and then find yourself sitting on a flat chair in front of a huge screen with a wheel on your lap. It's like eating your TV dinner on your knees.

I particularly like the newspaper holder built into the dashtop above the stereo – perfect size for a folded tabloid. Now that's called knowing your customers. There are also perfectly shaped holders for cans of Coke and Yorkie bars, and hard-wearing rubber mats for when they spill/melt.

Ford is only building 100 of these Transit Sportvans. They use the standard 2.2-litre 138bhp TDCi diesel engine, but the crucial figure is the 258lb ft of torque. Leave your payload at the depot and this front-drive



2.2-litre diesel is unchanged, but pumps out 258lb ft of torque



Cabin is fabulously functional, with a holder for everything

Transit doesn't muck about, at least between 1800 and 3000rpm – above that it quickly gets rather raucous and power tails off. But narrow though the powerband is, the six-speed gearshift is pretty quick through the gate and pleasingly precise.

However, without any cargo the Sportvan is a springy, bouncy thing that leaps off lumps as if the rear axle is devoid of any damping whatsoever. We didn't discover the perfect balance, but reckon 150kg over the back axle would tie things down much better and allow genuine enjoyment of the cornering grip available – which is quite considerable on the 235/45 R18 tyres. The steering is surprisingly detailed and the chassis more responsive than you'd ever imagine.

So now you know why Transits are always 'making progress'. Behind the wheel of each one there's a budding chassis engineer playing with weight distribution and analysing the finer points of ride and handling. That's what I like to think anyway.

Ollie Marriage

- + Fast when unladen
- But rather bouncy



AUDI A2 TDI

Now is surely the A2's time. Compact but spacious, with clever packaging, an aluminium body and spaceframe chassis, and a titchy but torquey three-cylinder diesel, it couldn't be more relevant. Yet production stopped five years ago...

Instead, Audi will now sell you an A1 – a shrunken-down A3 that's thoroughly competent but distinctly charisma-free. The A1 is great at being a small Audi, then, but the A2 is great at being a small car full stop. Its aluminium construction sees it weigh just 990kg, but feather-light doors aside, the whole thing feels so substantial.

That slender mass flatters the 1.4 TDI's 74bhp and 144lb ft; the gearchange is a little notchy but pleasingly short of throw, and while the steering is perhaps too light, the car handles with a deftness that comes naturally from a sub-tonne kerb weight and a taut, wheel-at-each-corner stance. Needless to say, there's fantastic fun to be had from keeping the three-pot engine warbling and momentum at a maximum.

Above all, though, the whole thing's dripping in character. The engine note may be unconventional and a tad intrusive at low speeds, but it's something that defines the experience rather than detracting from it. And despite being a decade-old design, everything looks and feels utterly modern – ahead of its time in fact.

Stephen Dobie



- + Cool, clever, characterful...
- ...and out of production



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Letter of the Month

Looking on the bright side

There's panic amongst the ranks. With 'green' vehicle concepts breaking cover almost weekly, I hear nothing but moans from fellow petrolheads convinced that this spells the end of driving thrills.

Over a hundred years of steady internal combustion engine development pass by, the anvil falls and everyone is suddenly looking elsewhere for propulsion. And – quite fabulously – no one, not even the manufacturers, have the foggiest idea which avenue will reach the promised land of clean motoring.

The marketing types have done reasonably well in pushing hybrids and electric vehicles as the ice-cap re-freezing answer, but I'm convinced it's a question that can only be answered by engineering breakthroughs still to come.

Personally, I've believed for years that solar power will save us. If the sun is responsible for creating and maintaining all life on earth and can burn my face from 93 million miles away, I'm certain it could power my Focus to the shops and back!

With R&D divisions working flat-out to steal a lead, the next couple of decades should see an historic leap in technological advancement that could benefit the world's industries as a whole, and I for one can't wait to watch it pan out.

One day, hopefully not too far distant, the social punch-bag that is today's motorist will be able to proclaim with pride to future generations the persecution we endured to get us there.

Dull? Exciting times indeed.
Paul Haynes

Could solar power be the answer to our green motoring future? Paul Haynes believes it might be



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In praise of cheaper thrills...

I always look forward to the eCoty edition, the ultimate road test of the year, and the challenge of guessing the finishing order from the opening group photo. To be honest, though, the 2010 test (issue 152) left me somewhat cold. Perhaps this was the greatest collection of cars in terms of performance and driving thrills, but I really missed the 'real world' section – the underdogs fighting it out first for the right to challenge the big boys.

I think the other problem is the 'mk2' editions. Other than a few tweaks, are the GT3 RS and Nissan GT-R really new cars? Porsche has obviously introduced some exciting

new stickers and left some scaffolding attached to the RS's rear end, but I wonder whether your closing comment on the Caterham in Track Car of the Year (same issue) shouldn't apply here: '...it doesn't offer anything new or significantly move the marque forward'?

The LFA and Merc SLS may not be quite so accomplished, but they at least bring something new to the party and made for a much more interesting read. Money-no-object, I'd rather put up with their quirks and own something distinctive.

Let's hope that next year brings a comeback from some more affordable contenders such as the new M-car, an Impreza saloon with a big wing,

perhaps a new hot Clio. I wouldn't say no to a new Stratos or Lambo Elemento, though...

Al Arthur, Bristol

The thrill of dreaming

I totally agree with your opinion about what a phenomenal year for performance cars 2010 was. I don't think we will see anything like it again. However, most of the cars have been financially far out of the reach of the average person – and this was reflected in the cars you chose to duke it out for the eCoty title.

The unfortunate thing is, unlike 2009, I and many others can only realistically aspire to own one of the cars featured, the RS500. This is doubly disappointing as most of us are having to tighten our belts. I still want to dream, but please retain the great balance you have had in the past between affordability and fantasy.

Iain Colwell

We were just as disappointed that there wasn't a stronger showing of 'affordable' contenders for this year's title, but it would have smacked of tokenism to include cheaper cars that weren't really up to Car of the Year standard. There's plenty about the engineering of the GT3 RS to qualify it as a new car, and the

same goes for the GT-R. We absolutely loved the 458 too, but in our collective opinion the RS was, by the tiniest margin, the more entertaining, challenging and satisfying car to drive – Ed

Porsche v Ferrari again

At eCoty 2007 you placed the 430 Scuderia behind the first-generation 997 GT3 RS. Henry Catchpole said of the Porsche: 'If this was the one car sitting outside my house – I wish – I would have absolutely no regrets about not having one of the others.' I was so surprised by that, I wrote to you asking if you were serious (you printed my letter in issue 113).

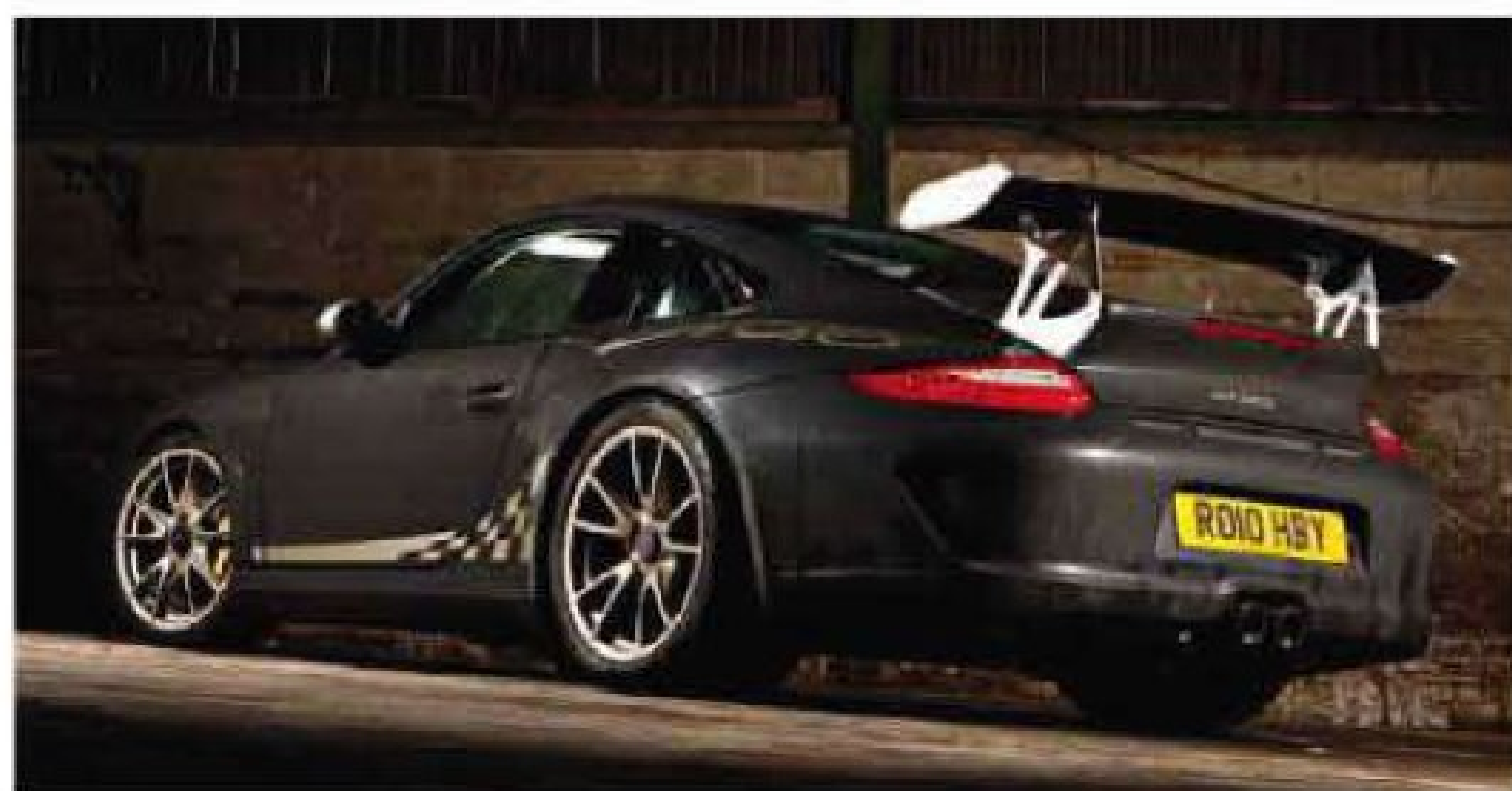
Three years on, do you still think you were right? I've been fortunate enough to drive both of them by now, and whereas the 997.1 GT3 RS is an excellent car, it isn't a whole lot better than the 997.1 GT3, whereas the 430 Scuderia is already one of the greatest ever Ferraris.

Anyway, I'm sure you won't be mad enough to put the latest version of the GT3 RS ahead of one of the greatest ever Ferraris again...

Douglas Campbell

Cover stars

Thought you might like to see the homage that has been done to evo by



Al Arthur isn't convinced the eCoty 2010-winning GT3 RS qualifies as a 'new' car



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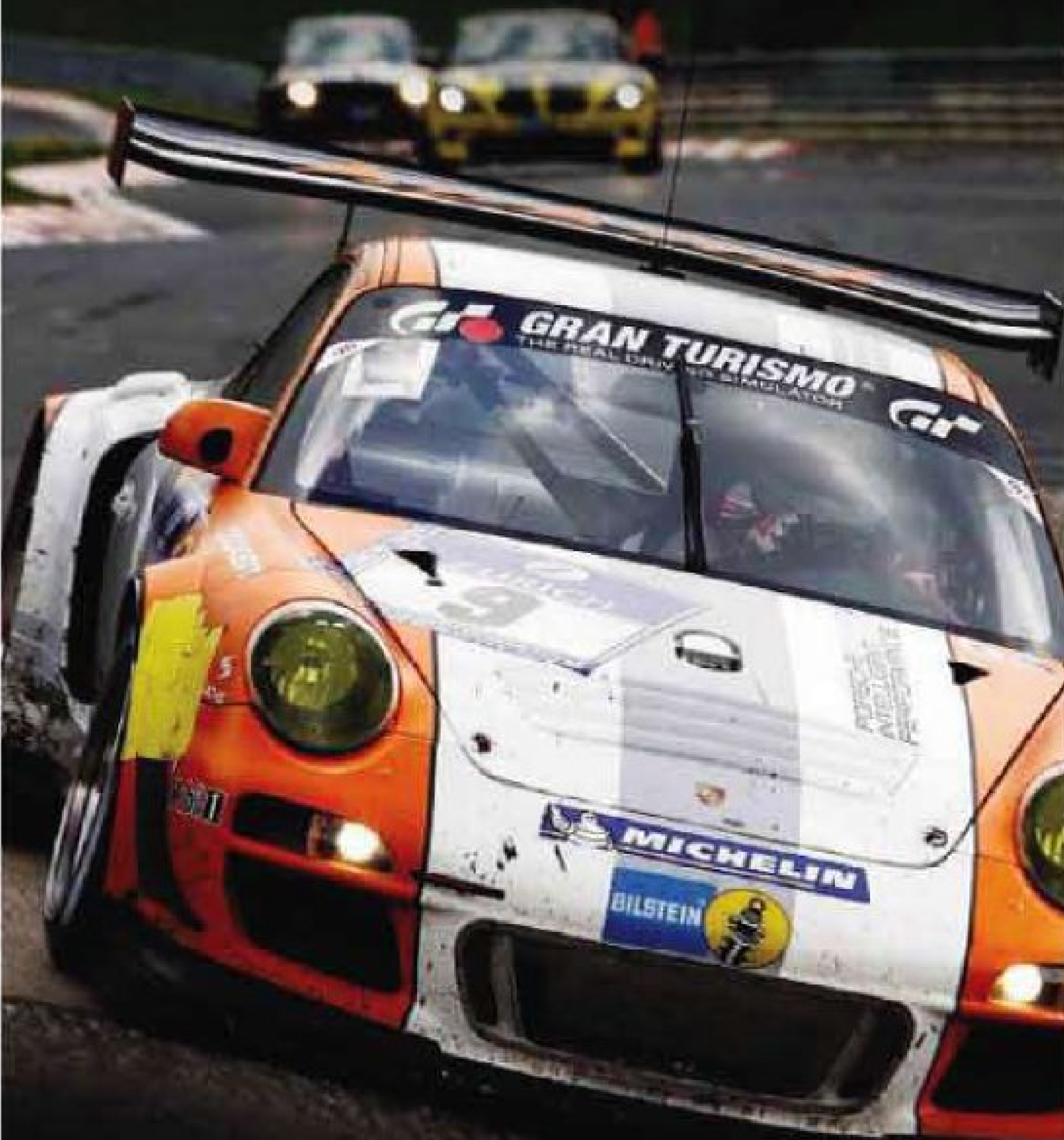
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Above: Scottish evo readers decided to recreate the cover from our July 2009 issue (left), but with an all-Lotus twist

some Lotus enthusiasts in Scotland.

Allan Matheson, owner of an Evora Launch Edition, had the idea on a drive out to the beauty spot known as 'Rest and Be Thankful' on the A83, the backdrop to some of the finest driving roads known to man. Rather than sully the scenery as evo did with a Porsche and a Nissan, our Scots did a sterling job and filled the foreground with some of the finest driving machines known to man – two Evoras and two Esprits!

Dave Ricketts

Admiring the view...

Congrats on another absorbing eCoty test. No other car mag seems to take you there quite like the collective musings and blinding photography of the evo clan. It always makes me chuckle how some get so huffy about the victor. My fave never wins, but then I don't want it to – I want the best car to win.

I'm happy to say I was in the Lion Inn the day you were testing. My wife came out to find me slobbering like one of Pavlov's dogs. Purely on visuals the Merc drew me straight over, while the Lambo's interior looked the best place to sit.

I saw my mother the next day: 'Ooh, you had a drive up to the North York Moors did you son? How was it?'

'Absolutely bloody spectacular mum!' And the countryside was OK, too.
Jim Parker, Driffield, East Yorks

All-weather BMWs

As a long-term reader (since issue 1 – still got the copy), I read with interest the letters from prospective RS5

owners desperately trying to put a positive spin on their purchase (evomail 152), probably due to a deep desire that the car would be a reincarnated V8 RS4.

To then go on to say that BMW M3 ownership (E90 DCT in my case) is not satisfying in the real world is just trying to further justify their delusion. Why is it that owners of mediocre Audis bang on about 'all-weather driving ability'? The recent inclement weather in the UK has proven to me that my winter-rubber-shod M3 goes places that summer-shod quattros fail to tread.

My wife's 1-series on Bridgestone Blizzaks in the snow was, frankly, astonishing. The local SUV brigade were stuck while we just charged by, as if on a gravel stage in the WRC. I can't recommend winter rubber enough.

Jonny Lutton

On the button

Just read the Lotus Evora Supercharged article (Driven, 151) and one thing really caught my eye: this 345bhp sports car has a 'sport' button!

Maybe I'm wrong, but I wouldn't want to buy a sports car where I have to opt in to it being sporty. I'd be happy with a 'dull' or 'city' button to soften it up a little, and it makes sense that my Astra SRi has a sport button as it is still a family car.

Maybe it's to satiate the green police, but if that's the case then the whole point of the car is at stake. Maybe it's to allow the driver to 'turn it up to 11'. Which is all well and good – until another manufacturer adds a 12 button, or a 15.

Chris Key, Nottingham

Griff comes to grief

A few months back, my heart soared when Harry Metcalfe added a Griffith 500 to his already impressive stable (Fast Fleet, 142). As a fellow Griff owner I thought 'yes!' at last the greater petrolheaded public will see a great car for what it truly is – a good,

old-fashioned, reliable, hairy-arsed, British sports car, with none of the modern driver aids to dilute the driving experience.

Imagine my despair when the engine blew! But now it's fixed, please keep it for a while and let all the doubters out there know that these are seriously great cars.

Peter Jaggs

More scary bikers

Similar to Tim Gates's recollection of a high-speed run through France (evomail, issue 152), my friends and I were on a deserted toll route one Saturday afternoon heading for Nice.

At 155mph or so the two other bikes were maxed, but my 'fettled' 'Busa had two gears left... Unlike Tim, I couldn't shape myself to improve the airflow as I had our lass on the back, so I stayed more upright to give her some protection.

Stuggling for breath, I glanced at the instruments to see a speedo-indicated 190mph. Then, to my horror, I saw that my hold on the bars was not a full grip but clinging by my finger-ends – and the 'Busa was still accelerating. I managed to lean forward and improve my grip then slow to around 100mph, which felt like 40mph after the last couple of minutes.

Didn't tell our lass for years. Great mag, by the way.

Paul Ruane, Leeds

Nothing to shout about

Reading your article about the Audi R8 GT (Driven, evo 151) I couldn't help but smile at the fact that Audi is 'keen to shout about' its weight savings of 100kg. It's still a 1525kg two-seater, though!

I just can't get my head around these numbers. Where does all this weight come from? The engine? The gearbox? The chassis? The wheels maybe?

Maybe it's all the sound-deadening. It occurs to me that many people spend proper fortunes on louder aftermarket



New addition to the Hardenberg family has a familiar name (see 'The name's Evo')

exhaust systems – maybe they should just remove all the sound deadening. The car will be louder inside, while not annoying the external world. Win-win!

I would so love to see a car like the R8 under 1000kg, and I'm sure it's feasible. Just imagine a 550bhp V10 engine like the Audi's in a car weighing under a ton... Major manufacturers need to try harder! Much harder...

Gergely Baksay, Budapest, Hungary

The name's Evo...

My wife and I have been fans of your magazine for several years now. We travel with our 500 Abarth through Europe to drive the same roads that are in your great mag, and boy do we love it!

In fact we're such big fans that we have named our new baby son Evo. In fact his full name is Evo Valentijn Onne Hardenberg (E.V.O. Hardenberg). It was my wife who came up with the name!

With your permission we will use the evo logo on our son's birthcard that we will send to our friends and family.

Emiel and Janske Hardenberg, The Netherlands



Gergely Baksay would like to see Audi make an R8 GT that's another 500kg or so lighter

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4/5 June	Oulton Park	Dunlop MSA British Touring Car Championship
25/26 June	Brands Hatch	'Modified Live' performance car show
1/2/3 July	Brands Hatch GP	FIA Historic Formula One Championship
1/2/3 July	Snetterton	MCE Insurance British Superbike Championship
15/16/17 July	Oulton Park	MCE Insurance British Superbike Championship
22/23/24 July	Brands Hatch GP	FIA Formula Two/International GT Open
5/6/7 August	Brands Hatch GP	MCE Insurance British Superbike Championship
6/7 August	Snetterton	Dunlop MSA British Touring Car Championship
27/28/29 August	Oulton Park	Oulton Park Gold Cup
27/28/29 August	Cadwell Park	MCE Insurance British Superbike Championship
2/3/4 September	Brands Hatch	DTM (German Touring Car Championship)
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From the forums: 'Formula 1 goes green'



Could the return of turbo engines to F1 bring back the excitement of the '80s turbo era?

Drophead: The new 'green' F1 engines for 2013 – what does everyone feel about them? I for one think its a load of left-wing b*****. These engines are still producing 750bhp so will still do 4mpg even if they are 1600cc turbo four-pots instead of the V8s. We will also lose that noise. I just can't get excited over the thought of a turbo four-pot droning round for two hours, and a 10,000rpm rev limit is a joke after hearing 17,000rpm+ screamers for the past two decades!

zedleg: People keep going on about how the turbo cars of the 80s were the most exciting to watch though, so it might be alright. There are other benefits to this approach as well. F1 may be able to convince other manufacturers into the sport as engine-builders if they are cheaper to develop. Also, in a few years you could buy a hot hatch with an F1-derived engine in it!

ExiledChris: The 80s turbos were more exciting due to ridiculous power delivery and 1500bhp in qualifying mode – for one lap. Less aero FTW.

Jack P: The decision is absolute rubbish tbh, but it was expected since they stepped down from V12s to V10s to V8s. By 2030 they will be electric.

DeskJockey: But imagine what excitement we can have then! 100% torque from 0 RPM, designers free of worrying about ride height as the car burns fuel. Surely they can make something exciting with those options.

Tim: It's all in the aero, always will be I'm afraid. Even the new Pirelli tyres are giving the teams aero problems through a fairly significant loss of downforce, and they are deliberately designed (by request of the FIA) to wear out quicker than the Bridgestones. Interesting times ahead in F1 I think.

Caneswell: The cars have no impact on the 'carbon footprint' of F1. Flying one team to a race probably produces more CO2 than the entire field racing all year! The proposed rule changes will be rubbish. Limit the fuel usage, don't limit the design freedom.

DeskJockey: What I find most interesting on the technology side is the creativity. By imposing limits and regulations you force enormous creativity to maximise the potential within the rules or in bending them, e.g. the fan car, double diffuser, F-duct and flexible front wings. IMO that makes it far more interesting. I don't really care what engines are in the cars – it's the race itself that I watch.

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In the passenger seat, Maximilian Stoschek seems quite anxious. Can't say I'm surprised. A bloke he met only moments ago is driving the car that he and his father Michael have painstakingly created, with the help of Pininfarina and an as-yet-undisclosed heap of cash. By sheer fluke, I am the first journalist in the world to drive the car they call...

Words **John Barker**



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...the New Stratos!

It really is purely by chance that I'm first into this quite exquisite recreation of the Lancia Stratos HF. Had there been a journalist here called Vince Aardvark, he would have claimed the honour because the schedule of drives has been determined alphabetically.

To the other members of the press who have come from as far as Japan this might look like a fix because the first three in the car – Barker, Barlow and Bremner – are all from the UK.

This is no big manufacturer launch, but you'd hardly know it. 'New Stratos' is described as a non-commercial project but it is being presented to selected press with panache and imagination. We landed at Le Castellet airport

alongside Circuit Paul Ricard in a small, chartered plane not 15 minutes ago and made our way to a semi-opaque rotunda erected on the infield at one end of the strung-out track. As we approached, there were tantalising glimpses of colours and shapes that would excite any Stratos fan, and then we'd ducked into its warmth, the air pulsing with chill-out tunes, to be greeted by a fabulous display of four significant Stratoses (Stratii?). Ranged from right to left were the fluorescent red Bertone road car prototype, an utterly original, lime green production car, an immaculate, Marlboro-liveried Group 4 rally car, and the Fenomenon concept car from the 2005 Geneva motor show.

The chunky Fenomenon 'on-road, off-road

supercar' is the key car here, the link between the old and the new. It was the brainchild of Chris Hrabalek, serial Stratos collector and RCA-trained car designer, and five years ago it woke the world up to the idea of a modern Stratos. Hrabalek sought investors to create the Fenomenon and among the ten who bought into the concept and the Stratos brand was Michael Stoschek, chairman of Brose, a giant German automotive parts company. Although the Fenomenon never progressed, when Stoschek retired from the day-to-day running of Brose in 2005 after 34 years, Hrabalek persuaded the businessman and race driver that creating a new Stratos was a brilliant idea!

They approached a number of small-volume car makers including Koenigsegg, Gumpert, Prodrive and Ruf to see if they would be interested in building it. Then the pair saw the Ferrari P4/5 created by Pininfarina on the Enzo platform for James Glickenhaus (see Planet Evo, this issue) and they knew they'd found their company. The one-of-a-kind homage to the classic Ferrari 330 P3/4 demonstrated all the skills that would be needed to create the new Stratos, which it had been decided should be based on the Ferrari 430 Scuderia. In September 2008, Pininfarina and Stoschek agreed terms. Just over two years later, it is ready.

After welcomes and introductions, a



Above: early stages of the project as Michael and Maximilian Stoschek ponder styling proposals at Pininfarina. Below: Michael (crouching) discusses packaging with project engineers. Below right: Barker is first journo in

'Wow! What a sculpture. The shape is bang-on but what



stirring compilation of the original Stratos's competition exploits is played on the big screens, the rock 'n' roll soundtrack enhanced by the raspy, buzz-saw growl of the Dino V6 swinging the rump of the tiny, mid-engined wedge as it powers along, here on fat asphalt tyres, there on spindly snow tyres, here with bull bars and Alitalia livery, there in Pirelli black and red with a Carello lightpod. Then, with the audience sufficiently roused by the footage, the sound is augmented by the more urgent cry of another Ferrari engine, this one real and fast approaching. In a flurry of downshifts the noise homes right in and then there it is, the new Stratos, driving into the rotunda right in front of us.

Wow! What a thing; what a sculpture. It's Stratos, pure and simple, but on a slightly larger scale, an idea we've got used to with remakes of the Mini, Beetle, Camaro and others. Initially I thought it was rather under-played in sober grey-black but closer inspection reveals that beneath the lacquer is a carbonfibre weave that looks very cool indeed.

The shape is bang-on but what marks this out as a top-drawer professional job is the detailing. I adore the way the roof spoiler, which sits up like a supermarket basket handle on the original, is blended into the rear clamshell at



marks this out as a top-drawer professional job is the detailing'



its base so that it's a spoiler on its top edge but forms engine air intakes down its sides. Then there are the rear lights: on the original they are mounted on moulded plastic cups but on the new one the lights (borrowed from the 599) are mounted on mesh grilles. The grilles work as vents too, extracting engine-bay heat, according to Luca Borgogna, Pininfarina's main designer on the project.

Anoraks like us would probably guess from the hollow howl and slightly plain idle that the heat to be extracted is generated by a flat-plane crank Ferrari V8, and a glance through the engine cover confirms this. In fact, a whole 430 Scuderia has been sacrificed to make the new

Stratos, and surprisingly little of it remains. The team at Pininfarina took measurements and tested the Ferrari's aerodynamics to see where they were starting from, and then peeled away the Scuderia's aluminium bodywork to reveal its extruded aluminium sub-structure.

To get the correct, much squarer wheelbase-to-width ratio of the original Stratos, they cut the Scuderia chassis in half just ahead of the rear bulkhead, lopped out a 200mm section, and welded it back together. From that base, they worked on getting the correct proportions for the compact cockpit with its distinctive, visor-like windscreen, and once that was set, everything else flowed from it. The screen pillars sit a full 250mm further inboard than those of the Ferrari and the cockpit frame is formed from FIA-spec, 40mm diameter steel tubing, which adds significant structural rigidity.

The design process was very much like that of a production car, with mock-ups of styling proposals and computer-aided design helping with the packaging, some of which was very tight. There was wind tunnel testing, too, to perfect the shape of the front splitter, side sills and roof spoiler. Borgogna was afraid that the ducktail would act like an air brake, but in fact the roof spoiler neutralises its effect and it was

quite easy to make the car aerodynamically balanced at speed.

If there's one controversial aspect it's the headlamps. Pop-ups are a no-no these days, so they had to be faired-in and it's the angle of their top edge that upsets most people. To some eyes, they make the Stratos look sad. But Stoschek was insistent that this was how they would be. And Mr Stoschek gets what he wants; at his insistence the shots of the car testing at Balocco, Fiat's proving ground, have not been re-touched; it is what it is. My suspicion is that that is partly why we, the selected world's motoring press, have been invited here to drive the finished item; he wants our opinion, straight and unfiltered. He's already had the opinion of Ferrari president Luca di Montezemolo who drove (and signed) the car at Fiorano.

The late arrival of our snow-delayed flight means that the schedule has been squeezed and just a few minutes after the car appears, my name is called and I'm ushered into the passenger seat alongside Maximilian Stoschek. Sit in an original Stratos and it's so narrow you can reach out and touch the base of the far screen pillar, while you rub shoulders with the driver and your feet are pushed slightly to the centre of the car by the intrusion of the front wheelarches. Not here. There's plenty of room



Left: interior is beautifully wrought in carbonfibre and suede. It includes the Scuderia's steering wheel and dials but skilfully adapted to recreate the Stratos look

and although there are some obvious Ferrari elements – steering wheel, centre console, heater switches – the car feels and looks quite different with its deep, wrap-around screen and sizeable, square instrument binnacle.

The instruments are wonderfully evocative, set into the brushed aluminium panel echoing the original Stratos layout and with period markings. They are the Ferrari dials, simply separated, re-faced and repositioned, with two extra dials, a clock and a G-meter, to make the numbers up to the required Stratos count. Neat.

I strap myself into the lightweight bucket with the multi-point race harness, the door slams shut, Max tugs the right-hand paddle and we're off. Now, this is a race track and therefore very smooth, yet the first thing that strikes me is how supple the ride is. I wasn't expecting that.

The only parts of the original suspension that remain are the wishbones. Even the bushes have been replaced with firmer mounts for greater precision and the electronic Sachs dampers have been recalibrated by the same



Above: door bins designed to accommodate helmets, just as with the original. Centre and main pic: designers had to include modern aero into the signature Stratos shape, so New Stratos has a front splitter, side skirts and a rear diffuser to manage the airflow (the ducktail actually has a neutral effect but had to be there for the classic look). Scuderia's exhaust replaced by a bespoke Capristo system. Liberates an extra 20bhp, bringing peak power to 523bhp. Luca di Montezemolo signed the car after he drove it



engineers who worked on the Scuderia set-up.

We tack into the first turn, a sharp-ish right-hander, and there's a real sense of the short wheelbase – the car feels so alert, so keen to change direction. Almost immediately we're into a longer, looping left. I get a strong sensation of mass muscling along just behind and I think 'Stratos'. Blimey, 30 years after the original, a new version comes along and it doesn't just look like the old one, it feels like it too!

What it doesn't feel is very fast. Maybe Max is soft-pedalling a little, fighting shy of using all the revs or being too aggressive with the throttle, this being the one and only and me being the first of many to want to experience it, but I was expecting a bit more of a kick. Especially as the V8 has been fitted with a Capristo high-performance exhaust system reckoned to help liberate an extra 20bhp for a healthy 523bhp, and because it has less mass to haul, too: new Stratos is 470mm longer than the original but 330mm shorter than the Scuderia and at 1270kg it weighs a significant 80kg less than the donor car too.

'You can sense the short wheelbase... the car alert, keen to change direction'

The weight of every component, down to the last nut, bolt and washer, has been reduced as far as possible, an approach that has challenged the engineers of Stoschek's own company. An unusual feature of the original Stratos that showed it was one of the first cars designed specifically for rallying was a door-bin on each side large enough to take a crash helmet. The new Stratos has them too, though rather than the simple, tilting side windows of the original, Brose engineered exceptionally lightweight electrically operated windows.

The lack of inertia in the car can certainly be felt in the way it changes tack but less so in

a straight-line. Or so it seems until Max pulls back in and we swap seats. A couple of laps in, I realise that the Stratos is going much faster than it appears when I notice that the 'pace car' that's leading me, a current 911 Carrera 2, is working its tyres really hard. It's like when you see the Merc SLS pace car being driven tidily to its limit by Bernd Maylander and then see the shocking contrast when the camera shot changes to the Formula 1 cars that are just loafing along behind.

Initial observations are that the steering wheel feels quite big (it's the Scuderia's but with a flat-bottom), that the long, carbonfibre gearshift paddles from the 430 racer feel flimsy and that the car feels solidly engineered. And the power is there all right, viciously, vocally, when you get the revs up and all the tell-tale lights embedded into the top of the steering wheel illuminate at 8500rpm. It's a very communicative car: through the electrically-assisted power steering you can feel the front coming under pressure as you peel into turns with enthusiasm, and when you get on the gas you can sense the mass behind becoming



Scenes from the development story. Above left: Michael Stoschek, seated in the car, checks out the packaging and ergonomics. Donor Scuderia bodywork has been peeled away to reveal the extruded aluminium platform, with the new tubular steel cockpit frame in place. Centre: just before work began, the donor car is introduced to an original Stratos here in Group 4 form and classic Marlboro livery, owned by Stoschek. Far right: dynamic benchmarking included the current 911 GT3 RS as well as the Scuderia itself

**BORN-AGAIN ICONS:
NEW STRATOS**

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‘Snap the throttle closed mid-bend and it might just pirouette. Very Stratos’



BORN-AGAIN ICONS: NEW STRATOS



Above, from left: Ferrari boss Luca di Montezemolo takes the wheel with Stoschek alongside; old and new Stratoses compare clamshells; the development team at Balocco

energized, becoming charged with potential. Snap the throttle closed mid-corner and it might just pirouette seems to be the message. Very Stratos.

However, as the Carrera 2 shows, on this flat, relatively featureless track, you're pushing harder than you might imagine. And besides, you're safe from a spin unless you've twisted the manettino all the way to the right. Yes, the Scuderia's adaptive systems are still in place, mostly. The significant element missing is the E-diff, replaced by a Drexler limited-slip diff that saves 20kg, but both the damper stiffness and gearshift speed are changed as the progressively racier settings are selected. There's anti-lock, too, for the Scuderia's ceramic brakes, which illustrates how thoroughly engineered the Stratos is.

To be honest, I hadn't even noticed that the manettino was there, and even if I had, I doubt that Max would have let me go near it. At the end of my all-too-brief five laps, I clamber out and ponder the experience. It's probably most like a 911, in that you have to manage the front end to be able to get the power on and use the mass over the rear.

Tiago Monteiro, ex-F1 and current WTCC driver, has helped with development, which included bench-marking against the Scuderia

and current 911 GT3 RS. 'Because of the short wheelbase you can change from understeer to oversteer in a snap second,' he says, but adds that the car is very adjustable, very open to suggestion: 'You can do ten laps and have ten different experiences at the same corner.' It all depends on your approach, he says, adding that it's very easy to control and that the different settings on the manettino offer distinct changes in feel. He also says it makes the Scuderia feel heavy and less responsive by comparison.

The rumour is that the car has cost around £3million to make, and before we leave, Michael Stoschek announces that there could be a limited run of 25 cars. Each might cost half a million pounds, including the donor car, but the price will depend on the exact number of the run, he says.

I don't think they will have much trouble finding that many enthusiasts. It is an astoundingly well made and beautifully engineered homage to the Stratos that brings the concept bang up to date. It would hardly matter if it wasn't a great drive but, fittingly, it feels challenging in exactly the same way that the original is, offering up all the agility you can handle but with modern safety systems if you're not up for it. It's a credit to all those involved. The Stratos lives, and how.

SPECIFICATIONS

NEW STRATOS

Structure Extruded aluminium chassis with steel roll-cage.

Body and interior panels in carbonfibre

Engine V8, 4308cc

Location Mid, longitudinal

Power 523bhp @ 8200rpm

Torque 369lb ft @ 3750rpm

Transmission Six-speed sequential manual gearbox, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip differential

Front suspension Double wishbones, coil springs, hydraulic twin-tube dampers with electronic control

Rear suspension Double wishbones, coil springs, hydraulic twin-tube dampers with electronic control

Brakes Ventilated and cross-drilled carbon-ceramic discs, 398mm front with six-piston calipers, 350mm rear with four-piston calipers, Brembo racing pads, ABS

Steering Electro-hydraulic power-assisted

Wheels 9 x 19in front, 11 x 19in rear, centre-lock alloys

Tyres 265/30 ZR19 front, 315/30 ZR19 rear;

Dunlop Sport Maxx

Length 4181mm

Weight (kerb) 1270kg

Power to weight 418bhp/ton

0-60mph 3.5sec (est)

0-125mph 9.7sec (claimed)

Top speed 200mph (est)

Basic price £500,000 provisionally (see text).

To register **interest** Email contact@new-stratos.com

EVO RATING ★★★★★





Left: the Stratos was a hugely successful rally car in the 1970s and early '80s. It won the world championship three years running in 1974, '75 and '76 in the hands of Sandro Munari and Björn Waldegård. This pic is from 1978, the only year it wore Pirelli colours and its last 'official' season, though it was still winning international events in privateer hands as late as 1981. Below left: the Stratos Zero concept car of 1970. Below: a very early road car (note the lack of spoilers on the roof and tail). Between 1972 and 1974 a total of just 492 were produced



The Stratos was the first purpose-built rally car, hence its short, wide stance and mid-engine layout for maximum agility and traction. It evolved from a 1970 Bertone concept, Stratos Zero (the work of Marcello Gandini), gaining Ferrari power in the shape of the V6 Dino engine. The road car had 190bhp but rally versions had up to 280bhp, or 500bhp-plus with a turbocharger.



It's silent as we stand, shielding our eyes from the sun reflecting off the Pacific. We're waiting, watching, listening; straining to catch the first indication of an approaching car, like spectators on the Monte or the Tour de Corse. Despite being only a rock's lob from Malibu, the road writhing around below us would sit just as easily in either of those Mediterranean locations. Then we hear it, that distinctive, mellow warble crescendoing with revs before bursting in a whistling rush of turbocharged air as each corner or new gear arrives. The gleaming white car appears around the rockface and a few seconds later arrives in front of us...

...the Quattro is back





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The Quattro's reincarnation isn't fully complete yet, of course. For that to happen it will have to become a proper production car rather than just the priceless one-off 30th birthday celebration you see here. The questions on everyone's lips, therefore, are 'when?', 'how much?' and 'how many?'. We'll return to those later. For now just feast your eyes on the car I'm about to drive. And I do mean drive properly – it's not just going to be a 10mph crawl round a car park, which is all you usually get with concept cars that claim to work. This one's a bit different.

Underneath the angular bodywork lies the shortened chassis of an RS5. The wheelbase has been chopped by 150mm and the roofline lowered by 40mm. Brit Steve Lewis, who designed the exterior (and reads *evo!*), walks me round the car. He's understandably excited because today is the first

time he's seen it moving and out on the road. 'I think the thing I'm most pleased about is that it's not retro,' he says. 'There are clear links with the Sport Quattro, most obviously the huge C-pillar, and details like the single bonnet vent on the right, but it's not retro.' I ask him what was the most difficult part of the design. 'I think it was trying to get the musculature in those arches right. I think we did.' And how much does he think it will change when... sorry, *if* it reaches production? 'Very little, hopefully. The bonnet might get a bigger bulge to satisfy pedestrian safety laws, but that's hardly a bad thing! We might have to raise the roofline a little; in fact the whole car might have to grow by five per cent just to help fit the fuel tank in, which is a bit of a squeeze at the moment, but you wouldn't notice.'

Under the current bonnet, the engine is the only one that it could be in a reborn Quattro – a turbocharged five-cylinder. In fact it's the one that usually resides in the TT RS and which won our Engine of the Year award in 2009. For the Quattro concept, however, it

has been boosted from 335bhp to 402bhp and the torque has swollen by 22lb ft to a peak of 354lb ft, which has been achieved by slotting in more aggressive cams and adding a larger turbo. The

other big difference between the TT RS and the Quattro concept is that the compact, 494mm-long engine is mounted longitudinally instead of transversely.

One of the biggest, and nicest, surprises when we first saw the concept at the Paris motor show was that it had a manual gearbox. Given that the S1 Quattro rally car had an early relative of Audi's now hugely successful DSG 'box, it would have seemed perfectly reasonable had they installed a twin-clutch system, but instead they lifted the six-speed 'box from the current S5. I spoke to several of the designers and engineers about this and there seemed to be a different answer every time. Some said that a DSG would have been used but they couldn't develop it in time, others that a manual 'box was always the intention as it fitted the ethos of the car. Certainly with the success of the open-gated lever in the R8 it would seem that customers are happy to self-shift in their Audis and I suspect that the manual will make it through to production (*if* the car as a whole makes it to production...).

Something that the engineers promise will improve if the car makes it any further is the weight. With the bonnet and rear hatch made of carbonfibre (again, like the original Sport Quattro) it's already impressively light at 1340kg, but apparently they will get the weight down still further to hit a target of 1300kg. That would make it some 150kg lighter than a TT RS and 70kg lighter even than a GT3 RS, so



'This will be a proper drive, not just a 10mph crawl round a car park'

Above: carbon-ceramic brake discs, gripped by six-piston calipers at the front. Above left: concept was signed by Quattro rally legend Walter Rörhl

**BORN-AGAIN ICONS:
QUATTRO**



the claimed 0-62mph time of 3.9 seconds seems entirely plausible.

Appetite thoroughly whetted, it's my turn behind the wheel. The door handles sit flush until you touch them. You don't even need to press or prod them; barely brush the metal and they emerge – I've no idea how they work but it seems like wizardry. Then, as you open the door, the sill catches your eye and you notice that someone has mistaken it for a whiteboard and scrawled their name on it with a fat black marker pen. The signature is that of one Walter Röhrl, who famously made the Monte Carlo Rally his own in a Quattro. On the passenger sill is the autograph of Christian Geistdörfer, his co-driver. You couldn't ask for two better people to effectively sign the project off.

Walter, I'm sure, approved of the interior, and in particular what lies behind the front seats, or rather what doesn't. He always thought the original Sport Quattro should have been a pure two-seater and the 2010 car is definitely that. There is nothing where the back seats would normally be, just a vast, carbonfibre-clad



quattro



Left: Quattro concept was inspired by the short-wheelbase Sport Quattro. Most obvious visual nod is the prominent C-pillar. Right: Catchpole and his beard enjoy a drive. Below: retractable spoiler adjusts to increase downforce





‘Walter, I’m sure, approved of the interior, and in particular what lies behind the front seats, or rather what doesn’t...’

emptiness with a strut-brace so large that it looks like a parcel shelf. The rest of the interior is purposefully Spartan too, with most of the MMI buttons moved from the transmission tunnel up to the sides of the instrument binnacle in another nod to the '80s car.

Just in front of the gear lever there's a red starter button. Push it once and the dash blinks into life. Press it again and the engine spins, catches and then settles to a low, rumbling gurgle that sounds like it's coming from the belly of something displacing much more than 2.5 litres. Adjust the carbonfibre rear-view mirror so you can see the cop behind and then we're off. We need the LAPD with us because the car isn't registered, so they'll form a blue-lights rolling roadblock while we travel along the Pacific Coast Highway to Route 23, the Decker Canyon Road, where we'll be able to drive the car in something other than a straight line.

The officers are an enthusiastic bunch. I'd travelled up with one of them earlier and at one point he'd left me alone in the front seat of his patrol car with a pump-action shotgun and an A-15 rifle (the civilian equivalent of the

famous M16), which clearly made me slightly more uncomfortable than him. He'd later been seen attempting to drift the enormously heavy, automatic Ford Crown Victoria round a hairpin, which went quite well until he got into the mother of all tank-slappers.

There's to be no slapping of tanks in the concept Quattro. Not because I naively think I'm going to have a good day and bring back every slide 'just so' but because it's a concept and, whilst not quite as ethereal as the name suggests, tyres will rub in arches if too much lock is applied and splitters will scrape on sudden inclines. That's not to say we can't drive it reasonably quickly, however. Although the engine is quite old-school laggy at low revs, which gives the initial impression that it's not running at a full 400bhp, push on above 2500rpm and when the turbo begins to blow it's plenty quick enough for the short blasts between corners.

We begin switchbacking up the start of Route 23. To our right is a crumbly looking, reddish rockface and in the middle of the road is a double yellow line snaking into the distance, giving the road a distinctly Stateside feel. It's



Single bonnet-vent is another nod to the Sport Quattro. Below: turbocharged 'five' from the RS TT sits longitudinally in the Quattro concept



BORN-AGAIN ICONS:
QUATTRO

'Push on above 2500rpm and when the turbo begins to blow



what's to the left that really grabs the attention though, because there are drops so steep that cars which plummet off the edge are just left to decay in the scrub below. Fortunately the Quattro's steering is pleasingly accurate, if very light. You sense that the rack is a little slower than it would be in a production car. No doubt it helps keep the car settled – you can really feel the shorter wheelbase when you turn into corners, the rear of the car reacting instantly to any direction change at the front instead of just following on behind.

The car doesn't yet have Audi's Sport Differential or torque vectoring, though a production version would get both. You can well imagine turning in hard to a medium right, then picking up the throttle aggressively while the car is unsettled in order to snap the stubby tail round, before riding out the slide as the four-wheel drive juggles the slightly oversteering drift. Or perhaps that's just me daydreaming. I'm sure Walter would do exactly that, given half a chance...

The gearshift is longer and lighter in its action than the one in the R8, but again I think that this could actually suit the more flighty feel of the Quattro. The actual stick itself is a thing of beauty, with two carbonfibre prongs holding the knurled aluminium cap. The brakes are carbon-ceramic, and although I'm leaving plenty of margin today, with just 1300kg to stop you can imagine them pressing the carbon splitter deep towards the tarmac impossibly late before corners.

Now, I realise there's a fair bit of conjecture and wistful imagining mixed into all of this, but that's the nature of a concept car and there's no point me lying to you and pretending that it's the real deal (as some might try to). One thing about it that I very much hope is the finished article, however, is the soundtrack. Back off the throttle above 3000rpm and you are treated to the most brilliantly characterful backchat from the turbo. Try to imagine a giant dove cooing aggressively, overlaid with wind-whistling-through-draffy-windowframe. All it needs is an



it's plenty quick enough for the short blasts between corners'

Far left: no rear seats, just a carbonfibre-clad cavern. Below: LED headlamp elements change their appearance depending on the lighting function activated. Right: trademark four rings are stamped into the aluminium skin on the C-pillars





The Quattro first appeared in 1980, designed to take advantage of new rally regs that allowed four-wheel drive, and it did this brilliantly, especially in short-wheelbase Sport form with carbon-Kevlar bodywork and in excess of 500bhp. The S1 version, with its striking use of wings and spoilers, also debuted the 'power-shift' gearbox, forerunner of today's DSG twin-clutch 'box. Road car production ran until 1991, by which time a total of over 11,000 Quattros had been built.



Above: Walter Röhrl, co-driver Christian Geistdörfer and the Sport Quattro (top) made a formidable combination in the mid-1980s. Below: road version of the Sport Quattro cost twice as much as the regular Quattro. Short wheelbase made it more agile; lightweight body panels and 300bhp-plus made it faster. Left: ultimate Sport Quattro was this Pikes Peak car, rumoured to produce 1000bhp



anti-lag *BANG!* as you change gear and you're there. I'm getting carried away again, I know, but it's that sort of car – it makes you dream of being Rörhl or (if you're a girl) Mouton. And if you don't believe me, just pop the satnav into Race mode, because it will begin reading you pace notes for the road ahead. That's right, you can have your very own electronic co-driver. Give it time and you'll probably even be able to download a voice file to make it sound like Phil Mills or Nicky Grist.

Things I would change before production? Well, the Sparco seats may look very nice and only weigh 18kg but they need a lot more bucketing and bolstering for the thighs and abdomen for when we eventually get to chuck it around properly – just look at the almost cartoonish Recaros in the original if you need inspiration! I'd also like a normal handbrake instead of an electric switch that activates whirring motors. But, apart from that, don't bother to wrap it, I'll take it just as it is. I think what I like most about it is that it has all the drama and presence of a supercar but a completely different feel.

The concept went from idea to completion in well under two years and if production

gets the nod it'll probably be a similar length of time until it's on the road without police escorts. The word is that fewer than 1000 will be produced, although one insider suggested a production run of 1300 in honour of the weight. I almost wish it weighed a bit more. Then there's the price, and although it's clearly a 911 rival in terms of power and size, the reborn Quattro would probably and unfortunately cost considerably more. Again, no-one is quite sure how much more, but I reckon it'll be close to R8 GT money.

A decision on whether to build it will be made fairly soon. Given the unbridled enthusiasm of the designers and engineers that I met, I think there will be strikes and rioting if the decision is no. I'll happily join them on a picket with a Molotov cocktail too, because the Quattro concept has planted short-wheelbase dreams in my head that need to become reality.

SPECIFICATION

AUDI QUATTRO CONCEPT

Engine In-line 5-cylinder, 2480cc, turbocharged
Location Front, longitudinal
Power 402bhp @ 5400-6500rpm
Torque 354lb ft @ 1600-5300rpm
Transmission Six-speed manual gearbox, four-wheel drive, crown-gear centre differential, 'sport' rear differential
Front suspension Five-link, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar
Rear suspension Trapezoidal link, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar
Brakes Ventilated and cross-drilled fibre-ceramic discs, six-piston callipers, ABS, EBD
Wheels 9 x 20in front and rear, aluminium alloy
Tyres 275/30 ZR20 front and rear
Weight (kerb) 1300kg
Power-to-weight 314bhp/ton
0-62mph 3.9sec (claimed)
Top speed 186mph (claimed)
Basic price c£100-130K (est)

EVO RATING ★★★★★

'It has all the drama and presence of a supercar but a completely different feel'



QUATTRO & STRATOS:
DRIVING THE LEGENDS



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QUATTRO & STRATOS: DRIVING THE LEGENDS

It could have come from another planet. The Lancia Stratos is so completely alien to the rest of the automotive world that you have to wonder how Bertone ever dreamt the thing up in the first place. From its wheeled-cheese-wedge profile and helmet-visor windscreen to the detailing and proportions, we'd not seen its anarchic nonconformity before or – until this month – since.

The Audi Quattro is the styling antithesis of the Lancia. At our Hethel-based face-off it stands next to the orangey-red homage to Pythagoras like a giant, muscled breeze-block. Square, bluff, blunt, hard and strong, it looks ready to head-butt a path through the laws of aerodynamics rather than neatly cleaving the air apart with an axe-like wedge. It would be nigh on impossible to find an iconic pairing more different on the eye, and yet not only have both of these machines been reinvented for the second decade of the 21st century, each in their day brought revolution to world rallying and became the dominant force of their time.

The Stratos looks and feels like it was designed for one man – Lancia's favoured son, Sandro Munari. It was a bespoke rally machine built from the ground up for the Italian to dominate the world scene. Road cars only emerged for homologation purposes, 500 being required for Group 4 eligibility (in fact 492 are thought to have been produced), with the chassis and bodies built by Bertone in Turin



‘There was nothing quite like the sight of a Stratos darting





Left: big, bluff Quattro towers over the diminutive, chisel-shaped Stratos. These are the road versions of the cars that transformed the world of rallying

between 1973 and 1975. Only final assembly was carried out at Lancia's Chivasso plant and it was there that they were fitted with the same Ferrari 2.4-litre V6 Dino engine with twin-choke Weber carburettors as the rally machines, only slightly less highly tuned, developing 190bhp at 7000rpm.

In Munari's hands, the Stratos won the Monte Carlo Rally in 1975, 1976 and 1977 amongst other notable victories, and Munari himself became FIA Cup Champion in 1977 (there was no drivers' world championship at that time). His overall strike rate of 14 wins from 40 World and European events was mighty, but the car required such a skill level that few others were able to master it. Björn Waldegård was one and he had the temerity to ignore team orders and beat Munari in the 1976 San Remo Rally. He was promptly sacked from the factory team.

There was nothing quite like the sight of a Stratos darting through stages on maximum attack, snapping through the turns with almost no inertia and with unwavering commitment from those drivers who had the skill and reflexes to stay on top of it. If you've never seen one in full flight you really ought to take a look on YouTube – though perhaps not just before you're about to drive one. Poring over the period films certainly heightened my anxiety about driving one of the very few road-going examples left in the UK. Value? Over £200,000.

through stages on maximum attack, snapping through turns'

The sheer functionality of both the Stratos and the Quattro, here in late 20V form, are a big part of their appeal. Wheel sizes of both cars seem very modest by modern standards at a mere 15in diameter. Both cars ride very well, as rally cars should, soaking up bumps



Swing open the door and you immediately sense the lack of mass – the glassfibre panel almost floats on its hinges revealing the largest door bins I've ever seen. They were there to store helmets and navigational notebooks, but the bizarrely curved pockets look perfect for transporting violins. The sill is quite wide, making folding yourself up and dropping into the deep, fawn-coloured bucket seat a little awkward, though, once in, the chair is both comfortable and supportive. The view through the wrap-around windscreen is panoramically brilliant and you are so far towards the middle of the car the driving position is almost as central as a McLaren F1's. It means you're very close to the passenger, almost rubbing shoulders – perfect for a navigator to bark instructions, less so for photographer David Shepherd to capture a driving shot. The headroom is fine for my 5ft 10in frame, but the rear view mirror is so close to my right temple in this LHD car the view through the slatted rear screen is permanently in my peripheral vision. It'd be very snug with a helmet on.

The pedals are shuffled to the right because





the cabin is pushed so far forward the wheel arch intrudes deep into the cabin. The steering wheel sits on your knees and partially obscures the rev-counter and speedo, which are positioned to the right of the wheel rather than behind it. The flip side of all this ergonomic haphazardness is that you are literally sitting right at the pointy-end of the action, but boy is it intimidating. The flat spats above the front wheels are visible just outside the 'visor' screen, allowing you to position the car to the millimetre. Accuracy through the precipitous stages of the Monte Carlo Rally would not have been a problem; finding the confidence and bravado to exploit this thing would have been another matter entirely.

Twist the key and the V6 wakes with a metallic rasp, the revs flying with every throttle blip, the engine reverberating just behind your shoulder blades. It's not overly loud, nor particularly exotic – in fact it's a sound-stage that will be familiar to anyone who has driven a Clio V6, and, as we'll discover shortly, this is entirely appropriate because the dynamics are also broadly similar to those of the chunky mid-engined Renault.

The wood-topped gear lever is a full arm-stretch away, with first gear on a dogleg. It's not a gearbox to be rushed and it has a long throw too, but there's plenty of torque so you don't need to constantly swap cogs



Above: ergonomically the Stratos is something of a disaster, but it focuses the mind a treat. Between the seats are small levers for the choke and a hand throttle for setting a fast idle speed when cold. Huge door bins (far left) are for crash helmets

“The Lotus test track in mid-December isn't exactly conducive



to make progress. The Lotus test track in mid-December isn't exactly conducive to fast laps in a car with a reputation for difficult handling – it's zero degrees and the tarmac is partly damp, partly coated with ice. The good news is the directness of the steering and a decent amount of feel. Turn the wheel and the car reacts instantly – the direction changes are ridiculously sharp, like a fighter jet that's deliberately designed to be unstable to allow harder and faster manoeuvring. Not only are the track and wheelbase almost square, the Stratos is the only rear-wheel-drive car where the driven wheels toe out (i.e. point away from the centre of the vehicle), so it's ready to turn in way before you get to a corner. When you do there's no slack, no delay, and no progression either, just an instantly altered course.

On-the-limit cornering is not something to be toyed with, but if you can summon the courage to push you'll discover that the front tyres relinquish grip first. Back off and it'll come back abruptly into line, but keep the throttle on and the rear will cut loose. Balance the throttle and it'll hang there for a moment while you get busy with the wheel – there are three and a quarter turns lock-to-lock so there's plenty of twirling to be done. Get it right and it'll all come back into line. Lose your bottle and back off sharply, or pick up the throttle a fraction too much and it'll pirouette within its length.



Above: Quattro interior is far more conventional, though it has a very '80s twist in the form of a digital dash, which works surprisingly well. Right: switchgear for lockable front and rear diffs. Now-iconic 'quattro' branding is everywhere



to fast laps in a car with a reputation for difficult handling'







'Driven to its strengths, the Quattro was devastating across country'

You can feel the mass pitching as the throttle attitude alters. There's a little roll, but then the Stratos soaks up the deliberately rough sections of the Hethel test track, just as you'd expect from a rally car. With 190bhp it's not ultra-fast in a modern sense, but there are few cars that can match the Stratos for intensity.

The Quattro doesn't live on its nerves like that. It gives an impression of invincibility, and that's exactly what it achieved when it hit the stages in 1981, just as the Stratos was reaching the end of its career. The Quattro wasn't a bespoke rally machine, though its potential was obvious to the development team and motorsport quickly became the key marketing strategy. Hannu Mikkola was in the middle of a lucrative Ford contract in 1979, but after a short test in one of the prototypes he immediately recognized the advantages the 4x4 system would bring and signed up for 1981 on the spot. Mikkola gave the car its first public outing on the Algarve rally in 1980, when it acted as the course car. Had it been running in the event proper he would have won by 26 minutes!

The Quattro revolutionised rallying. As well as the all-wheel-drive system, the use of a turbocharged in-line five-cylinder engine – with the longitudinal block positioned ahead

of the front axle – was equally novel. Forced induction road cars were still very much in their infancy and it was the addition of an intercooler that allowed Audi to productionise a 2.1-litre unit that could develop 200bhp.

It wasn't perfect – those early road cars suffered from turbo-lag below 3500rpm and the gearbox was a little baulky – but driven to its strengths the Quattro was devastating across country. Meanwhile the rally world had begun its dramatic and dangerous Group B adventure in 1983, but the results kept coming for the Ur-Quattro, with Mikkola winning the drivers' crown. Following the introduction of the short-wheelbase Sport version in '84, Audi retained its winning edge, though this time it was another factory driver, Stig Blomqvist, who claimed the title ahead of Mikkola. Most spectacular of all the Sports was the Pikes Peak car with its massive downforce-generating wings (see page 74). In 1987 it was driven up the iconic course with awe-inspiring commitment by Walter Röhrl, who won the event with a new course record.

A Sport homologation special was available for the road, but only 200 were made and they cost twice the price of the standard version. Improved performance for the masses arrived

in 1989 with the introduction of the 20V version, now with 220bhp, a wider torque spread and a Torsen diff. Around 1000 were sold, and we've got one of them at Hethel.

Sitting inside, it feels far more conventional than the Stratos, although the steering wheel is still offset slightly. The interior is completely unrecognisable from Audis of today: the plastics used for the dash look incredibly cheap and scratchy, while the switchgear feels so delicate you worry about it snapping off in your hands.

Opposite: Stratos's 2.4-litre V6 slotted in transversely just ahead of the rear axle. Below: Quattro's 2.1-litre turbocharged in-line five was forward of the front axle





It all works, though, and while the bright orange digital display is very much of its time, it is also clear and easy to read.

You don't get the same instant, intense hit as you do in the Lancia. Everything feels conventional, almost dull, after the slightly dangerous edginess and unpredictability of the first run in a Stratos. It's a slow burner, the Quattro, but after a few laps it starts to release the magic. That resonant five-cylinder warble and turbo hiss accompanies a decent punch from 2500rpm all the way up to the 7000rpm limit, and the mid-range torque makes it possible to amass pace with ease.

Turn the wheel and the reactions are lethargic. Of course, anything would feel like this after the electrifying Stratos, but even after a dozen corners it remains the same. So you have to readjust your driving style. Throw it at a turn and all that weight slung out front overburdens the tiny 15in wheels. It needs a touch



Left: Green gets to grips with the Lancia. It's a tight squeeze in there, with little shoulder-room and feet offset to the right because of the intruding wheelarches. View out is incredible though. Best of all, you can experience it, too, because this very car was computer-modelled for *Gran Turismo 5*

more slowing before you ask it to alter course. The Audi's priorities are the polar opposite of the Lancia's: it's all about the corner exit rather than the entry and once the initial turn has been made it's possible to nail the throttle. Hard. Full power can be exploited way before the apex – even in these conditions – and all that gutsy grunt is transferred to the tarmac. Nothing is wasted; the rear squats, the nose assumes a take-off attitude and the Quattro catapults itself out of the turn. It still feels impressive even by today's standards.

These, then, are two cars that deserve to be re-invented. Neither of the reinterpretations can possibly change our world the way these originals did, but if they can recapture just a smidgeon of their magic in a modern form they should be fêted. After driving this pair I can't understand why neither has been brought back before. I guess it's the burden of living up to the extraordinary legacies they left behind.

SPECIFICATIONS

AUDI QUATTRO 20V	LANCIA STRATOS HF
Engine In-line 5-cyl, 2226cc, turbocharged	Engine V6, 2418cc
Location Front, longitudinal	Location Mid, transverse
Power 220bhp @ 5900rpm	Power 190bhp @ 7000rpm
Torque 228lb ft @ 1950rpm	Torque 166lb ft @ 4000rpm
Transmission Five-speed manual gearbox, four-wheel drive, Torsen centre diff, electrically operated front and rear diff locks	Transmission Five-speed manual gearbox, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip differential
Suspension MacPherson struts, coil springs, dampers and anti-roll bar front and rear	Suspension MacPherson struts, coil springs, dampers and anti-roll bar front and rear
Brakes Ventilated 276mm front discs, solid 269mm rear	Brakes Ventilated 250mm discs front and rear
Wheels 8 x 15in front and rear	Wheels 6.5 x 15in front, 8.5 x 15in rear
Tyres 215/50 VR15 front and rear	Tyres 205/55 R15 front, 255/45 R15 rear
Weight (kerb) 1395kg	Weight (kerb) 980kg
Power-to-weight 146bhp/ton	Power-to-weight 197bhp/ton
0-60mph 6.2sec (claimed)	0-60mph 6.0sec (claimed)
Top speed 143mph (claimed)	Top speed 143mph (claimed)
Price new £32,995 (1989)	Price new £5500 (1973)
Value now £10-15,000	Value now £200,000+

★★★★★ **EVO** RATING ★★★★★

Thanks to all at Omicron Engineering

“The Quattro doesn't give you the same instant, intense hit as the Stratos. It's a slow burner”



Get in, sit down, shut

What's it like inside the rallying Quattro and Stratos when the men who drove them to victory

It's only when Walter and the Quattro are fully-lit, him applying corrective lock at 90mph on a narrow, vertiginous road somewhere in the French Alps, that you remember how old he is. This bloke is now 63. His reactions and the speed and accuracy of all his inputs make that seem quite improbable, but Walter Röhrl is clearly one of those freaks who remain immune to the ravages of time. He still keeps very fit, spending hours on his beloved mountain bikes every week.

We're halfway up the Col de Turini and Walter, wearing his Audi PR hat along with his Porsche racing overalls, has been giving these rides for three whole days. The car is an A2 from 1983. Quattros from '81 and '82 were fairly standard machines, but the A2 marked the beginning of the crazy development period that continued till 1986. Its in-line five used a cast-aluminium block that saved 23kg, and as many of the body parts as possible were made from Kevlar. The result was a kerb weight not far north of 1000kg and Walter smirks at Audi's claims of 265bhp and 332lb ft: 'Somewhere between 300 and 350bhp I would say.'

He twists a key and fires the motor, which settles to a pretty lumpy idle. The sound is still the same: unmistakably Quattro. Wisps of burnt oil filter into the cabin. He flicks a few dash toggles, glances over the super-clear VDO analogue instruments, grips what must be the most beautiful steering wheel ever made and then, curiously, fiddles with his left cuff.

Above a crawl, from inside, the five-cylinder signature sound is lost – you can barely



Chris Harris sits alongside rallying legend Walter Röhrl. The A2 Quattro won eight world rallies in 1983/'84

decipher that familiar thrum through the clatter of gearbox and gravel pinging into the wheelarches, but the *whoosh-chirp* of the KKK turbo is unmissable. But it's hard to assess noise as you peer into the footwell of a car – I am mesmerised by the man's dancing feet. Boost comes strong from around 4000rpm, but the power-band is quite narrow. You forget how much busier drivers were with three pedals, a gearstick and unhelpful power delivery. All the time the Quattro wants to understeer (was there ever a rally machine with its engine so far forward?) and Röhrl battles that front axle with a mixture of left-foot and gas.

Near the end of the stage he pushes hard, all the time balancing that need to work through the Quattro's inherent understeer with a deftness that avoids too much angle. It all feels so smooth, so effortless, so easy. We reach the end of the stage with a small sideways flourish. Again, he fiddles with his left cuff.

He's 63, with two world championships under his belt, several global awards for being the best rally driver that ever lived (those who really understand the sport are still in awe of his raw speed) and was once referred to by Niki Lauda as 'a genius'. Yet he still times himself. That's commitment to the cause. **Chris Harris**



up... and hold on!

attack a stage flat-out? **Chris Harris and Jeremy Walton** recall rides they'll never forget

Operatic wails punctuated by sharp gearshifts – an evocative sound for rally spectators of the '70s who trudged tarmac and forest trails. The difference was that I was harnessed in the front row of the action, the stubby bonnet invisible ahead, the shriek of that enraged ex-Ferrari Dino V6 at my back as I rode alongside triple Monte Carlo Rally winner Sandro Munari in the fabled Stratos.

Organised Fiat-Lancia chaos brought about this startling late-'70s encounter. A small press party had visited the Corso Marche suburban industrial estate premises of Abarth during the afternoon, Fiat bosses stressing the potential of their 131 saloon as a rally car (one that would

curtail the career of the charismatic Stratos). The chance of sitting alongside Munari was squeezed in before evening entertainment.

A few of us slumped down into that bare and dusty cockpit. It reeked of sweat – unsurprising since water and oil plumbing all but cooked toiling driver and apprehensive passenger in that claustrophobic cockpit.

This was not the pristine Alitalia-liveried weapon of a thousand images, stamping its exotic, mid-motor authority over conventional contemporary saloons on its way to triple WRC titles. This was an honest test hack with a good 220 of the front-line 280 horses ready for 7500rpm exercise, hauling less than 1000kg. Like most factory competition test vehicles,

it wore perfunctory supplier stickers, plus the scuffs and scars of constantly clattering over stony ground, but in less than an Armco-defined mile of gravel pit, Munari delivered a tantalising taste of The Real Thing.

Dialogue was short: 'Hi, I'm Sandro, 'ope you enjoy,' before first gear clunked home and the automotive answer to 'Shake Your Booty' began. The original Stratos had an 85-inch wheelbase, shorter than that of some superminis. Munari, supreme master of the Stratos order, turned the stubby Lancia around apparently in its own length at the hint of a hairpin. The height-adjustable ride was absorbent, but such reassurance was countered by constantly shifting scenery and high G-forces. Astonishing acceleration and retardation were evident on a distinctly loose surface.

Munari's stunning Stratos technique came from inside knowledge of car and track, plus international race and rally success. He demonstrated commitment, confidence and craftsmanship. There were no cumbersome left-foot braking tricks, no handbrake turns, just terminal velocity into each familiar test-track twist, coupled to total confidence that a stamp on the brakes and another twirl of the worn suedette steering wheel rim resolved anything. We exited each corner via a series of steering convulsions and that magnificent motor striving for red-line harmony.

I was lucky enough to drive road and rally Stratoses, but nothing matched that magic Munari memory. *Forza!*

Jeremy Walton



Sandro Munari, whose name will always be inextricably linked with the Stratos, feels the heat in the tight cockpit

Pictures Audi Tradition & McKlein Photography

Tinchy

SLIDER

Two decades ago, BBR created the turbocharged version of the MX-5 for Mazda UK. Today it's back, still based on the mk1 version of the little roadster, but now with a serious 220bhp. **John Simister** tries it

Good ideas are timeless. Mazda had two of them around 20 years ago. One was to launch the MX-5 sports car. The other, cooked up by the UK importer, was then to apply a turbocharger to this MX-5 and give it the power to go with the traditional front-engine, rear-drive handling that made it such a hoot.

Brodie Britain Racing of Brackley got the turbo development job, having proposed

an easy dealer-fit kit which, as company co-founder and successful racer Dave Brodie says, 'went together like Lego'. Suitably boosted, the MX-5 delivered not 115bhp but 150. And that was enough for a nervous new-car supplier, given that the warranty had to remain intact.

So it's quite amusing, as I sit in a 1990 MX-5 still with its original 82,000-mile-old, 1.6-litre engine, to be told that this particular car has just recorded 222bhp at 6900rpm. That's a near-doubling of urge.

This power is the result of BBR's 20-year-celebratory reincarnation of its turbo

conversion. It is not, however, just the old one dusted-off and repackaged. Nor is it even a development of the version that BBR marketed after the Mazda deal ended, good for 200bhp thanks mainly to a bigger intercooler now mounted ahead of the radiator – an operation which entailed removing the front bumper, adding a labour cost Mazda wanted to avoid. The new kit does use the front-mounted intercooler, but it also employs a modern Garrett GT25 ball-race turbo instead of the old T25 and mounts it on an all-new exhaust manifold and split downpipe to suit.



BORN-AGAIN ICONS: BBR MX-5 TURBO

Electronics have come on during the last two decades, too. BBR's Interceptor piggy-back ECU used simply to take over as soon as boost appeared, but the new one – digital instead of analogue and occupying a half-size box – works all the time to fool the original ECU into supplying the right fuelling for the uprated injectors the conversion now has. The boost pressure is much more closely controlled, too, not reaching its full 0.6bar until past 4000rpm in the interests of driveability. 'It feels more like a supercharged car than a turbocharged one,' says BBR's engineer, Neil McKay.

A treat is in store, I feel. BBR's pearlescent white demonstrator has been nicely refurbished where needed, involving new sills, new metal in the rear wheelarches, a repaint and a leather re-trim for the seats, and the company will sell you a similarly refreshed car with the turbo kit fitted for £7500 all in. The kit itself, fitted by BBR, is £4995, or you can buy it to fit yourself for £3995. It's an easy job if you're competent with a spanner, with the tapping of



Left: plaque on the dash lets passengers know what's providing the extra thrust. Below: buy a fully converted car and you'll get seats retrimmed in leather; Momo wheel is extra



the sump to take the turbo's oil drain the only worrisome part.

There's a bit more to G5 BBR, though. It also has a fabric hood (as opposed to the cheaper vinyl standard one), plus black spoilers and mirrors to go with the 16in black wheels shod with 205/50 tyres. Dampers are gas Spax items set at their softest, springs are about 10 per cent stiffer than standard with the front ones set for a slightly lower ride height. McKay doesn't like lowering the tail because it runs out of wheel travel. These springs are to BBR's own spec: 'I called our original supplier from 1990 and asked if he could reproduce them. He rummaged around a bit for the specs, and here they are.'

Another enhancement is the slightly longer-legged differential from a six-speed mk2 MX-5, complete with Torsen LSD. It's a £995 option, fitted, because it calls for new driveshafts and a new propshaft, and it lets you have the relaxed cruising that the new-found torque makes possible. Spent gases emerge from a new stainless-steel exhaust, and finally there's

'Top down, heater blasting, catching each torque-induced tail flick, I'm having one of the best drives I've had all year'



a central locking system, including a remote boot release.

I'm off to the Bedford Autodrome, via **evo's** office. I remember the original 150bhp car well. It was good fun but wayward in the wet, with the pause-then-whoosh torque delivery then typical of a turbo car. The usual delicacy of MX-5 control was washed away in the flood, and you had to keep your wits about you. The mechanical linearity of the man-machine interface, the *jinba ittai* (literally 'person and horse as one') that Mazda held so dear, was slightly scuppered.

So, A45 dual-carriageway, damp and slightly slippery given the freezing weather. Third gear, foot hard down at 70mph. What had been a fairly normal-feeling MX-5, with just a deeper exhaust note and stronger but entirely fitting low-end pull, now spins its rear wheels and we tail-wriggle past about five cars, Torsen diff doing its stuff rather usefully. Wow. Perhaps it really does have 222bhp; I wasn't quite convinced at first. And the claimed 175lb ft of torque at 5100rpm. McKay reckons 0-60mph in the mid-fives. It's entirely possible.

Into fourth, try it again. No wheelspin this time, just a solid shove to a speed to which I had better not admit, accompanied all the while by the swoosh and flutter of turbo boost and



Above: turbo upgrade raises the outputs of the 1.6-litre motor by 105bhp and 75lb ft. Left: 16in alloy wheels, up from the standard 14s, are available from BBR as an option



wastegate boost-dump. You are always right in the power picture in this car.

It's wonderfully well-mannered, though. At lower revs and boost pressure, the throttle response is as *jinba ittai* as an MX-5's should be, and at peak revs the engine – 82,000 miles old, remember, and otherwise untouched – is completely, uncannily, miraculously smooth. Turbo lag just isn't a factor, helped by the retention of the standard high-compression ratio as modern electronics let you do.

This MX-5 is just the right size to be the perfectly chuckable sports car. It rides very well for what it is, and rather better than I thought it would. The structure shudders a bit over bad bumps but not so much as to annoy. The snick-snick gearchange is as wrist-flickable as ever. And the steering, light but quick, feelsome and micro-accurate, is the best MX-5 guidance system I've ever tried. The wheels, tyres, springs and dampers are why, giving the Mazda

SPECIFICATION

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1598cc, turbocharged
Location Front, longitudinal
CO2 n/a
Power 220bhp @ 6900rpm
Torque 175lb ft @ 5100rpm
Transmission Five-speed manual gearbox, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip differential (optional extra)
Front suspension Double wishbones, BBR coil springs, adjustable Spax dampers, anti-roll bar
Rear suspension Double wishbones, BBR coil springs, adjustable Spax dampers, anti-roll bar
Brakes 235mm ventilated discs front, 231mm solid discs rear
Wheels 16in front and rear
Tyres 205/50 R16 front and rear
Weight (kerb) 971kg
Power-to-weight 230bhp/ton
0-60mph 5.5sec (est)
Top speed 140mph (est)
Price £3995 (kit), £4995 (fitted), £7500 (converted car)
Contact www.bbrgti.com, 01280 700700

evo RATING ★★★★★

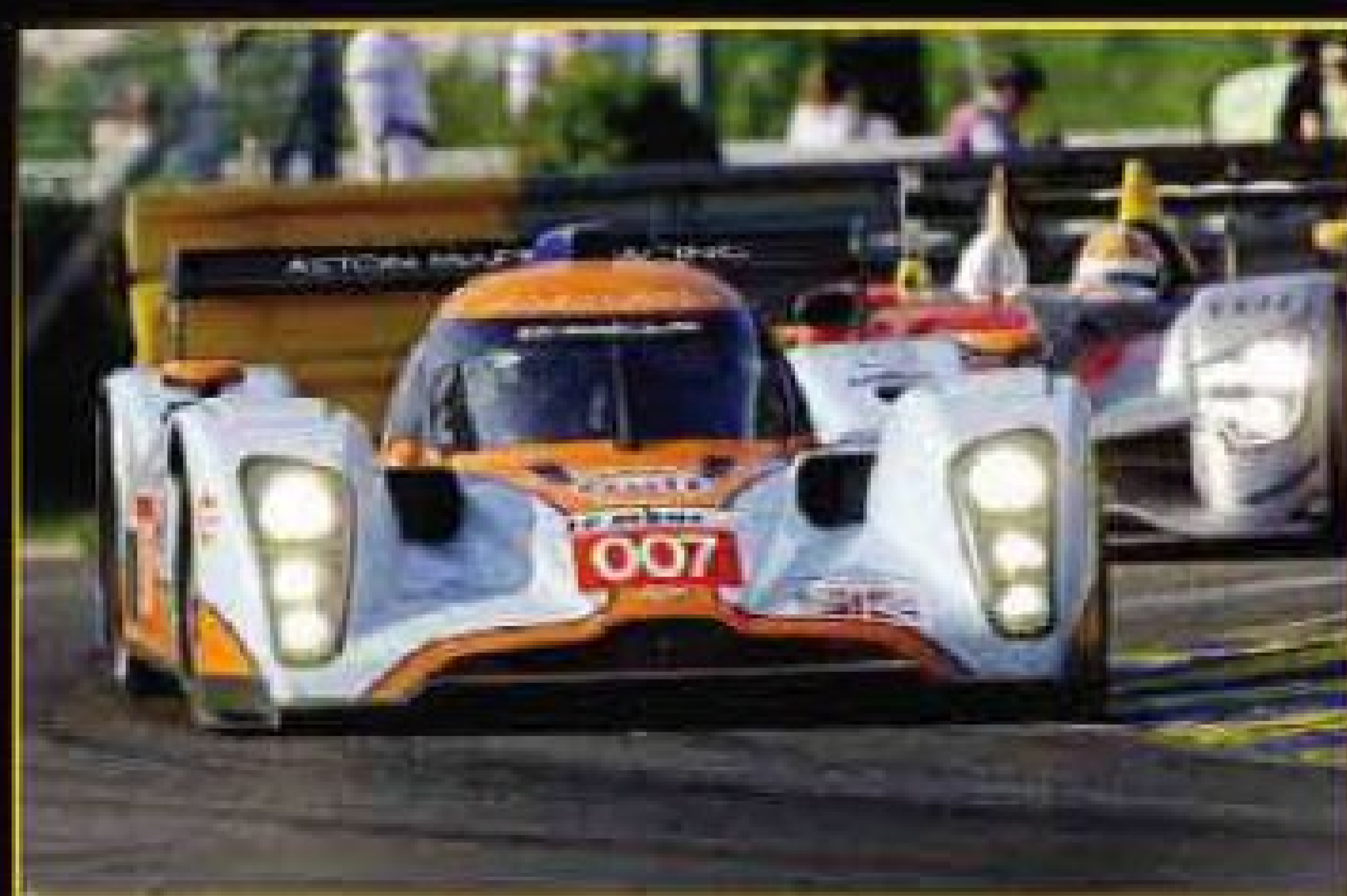
the meatiness it lacks as standard.

Blazing through Northamptonshire lanes, top down, heater blasting, catching each torque-induced tail-flick with a quick counter-steer, is riotous entertainment. I'm having one of the best drives I've had all year. The Autodrome is snow-covered but I have some glorious tail-out fun there, too. All this thrust in a small, light car is automotive addiction of the best sort, and I might just have to buy my old MX-5 back. As a 1.8 it would have even more torque once converted. God, I'm tempted.

The mk1 MX-5 is at an interesting point in its history right now. Values of good ones are about to rise and people will feel justified in spending money on them. A refreshed, BBR-converted MX-5 for £7500, far from being way too expensive for a 20-year-old sports car, strikes me as an outrageous bargain as well as the best possible way to celebrate 20 years of the MX-5. Still want that new Elise?

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REBORN *Legends*

Some work, others fail horribly. **Stephen Dobie** looks at a few more notable born-again icons

**BORN-AGAIN ICONS:
BEST AND WORST**

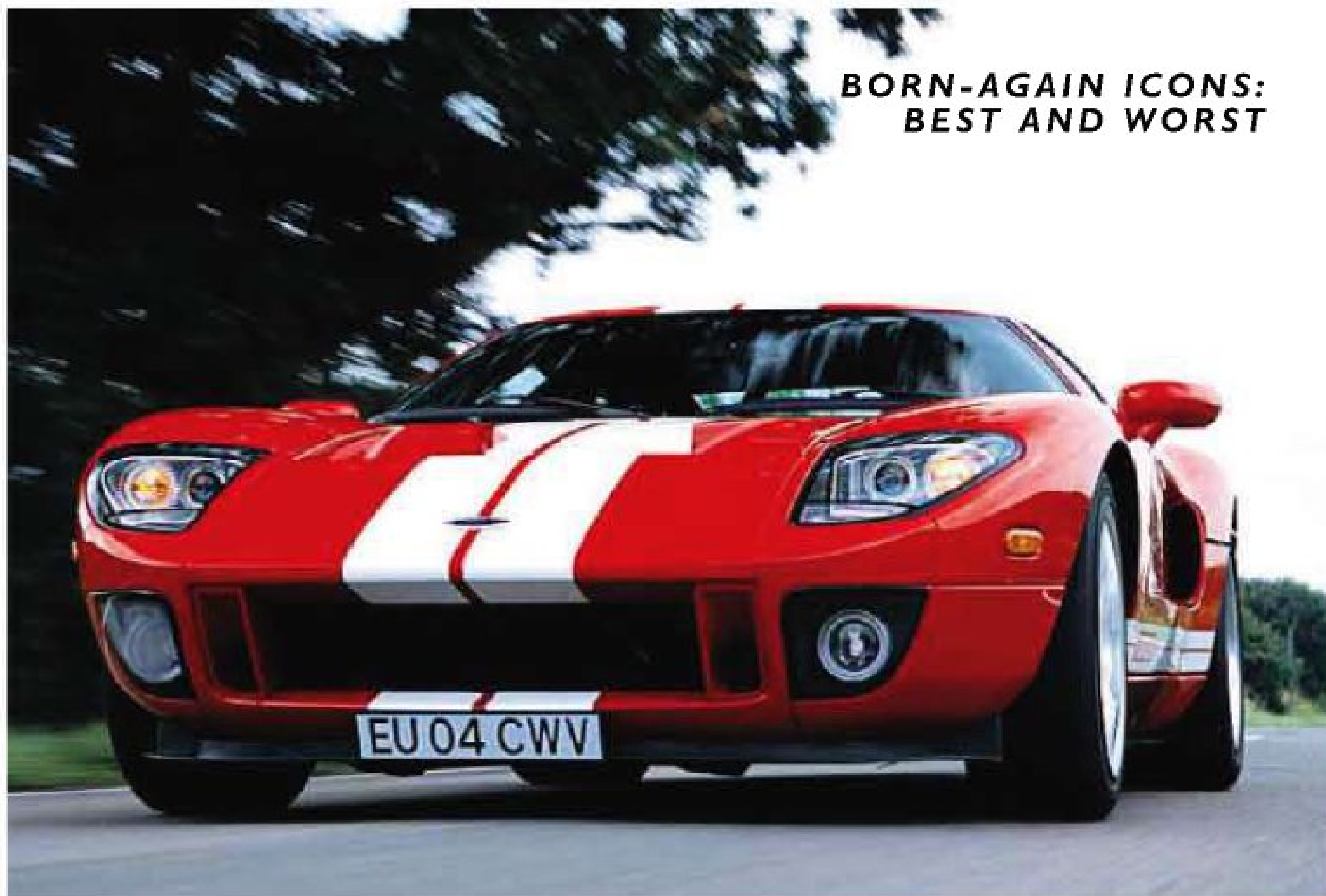
THE BEST

FORD GT

Still the most beguiling remake. The styling and proportions are perfect, the look of the mid-'60s GT40 eloquently recreated but with some handy upscaling to accommodate all sizes. And it has even echoed its ancestor's Ferrari-beating antics, though not via four consecutive Le Mans victories – instead it snatched the *evo* Car of the Year 2005 trophy from the superb Ferrari F430. There was high praise for the Ford's benign chassis and the accessibility of its monstrous supercharged V8 power. Over 4000 were sold, yet it still feels exclusive and oozes desirability. As memorable as the original.

MINI

Millions have found loving homes and there are soon to be six different body styles. Petrol, diesel and electric powerplants are available, with power ranging from 74 to 208bhp, and thanks to parent company BMW's Efficient Dynamics technology, they're all among the greenest cars in their classes. Of course, many bemoan the modern Mini's lack of innovation



Ford GT (above) wasn't just a looker, it was a great drive too. Neither could be said of the Beetle RSI (bottom left)

compared with its ancestor, as well as its distinctly un-miniature size, but with timeless looks and a great driving experience, the Mini has to be the biggest remake success story.

SHELBY DAYTONA COBRA COUPE

Like the Ford GT, a brutish racing car from the '60s becomes a 21st century supercar. Unlike the Blue Ovalled car, though, there are no airbags and there's no major-manufacturer polish. Instead Superformance's authentic, rough 'n' ready reincarnation has a spartan interior, frisky dynamics and challenging amounts of power – its LS3 and LS9 GM V8s can be supercharged beyond 650bhp!



Incidentally, just six original Daytonas were produced, campaigned by Shelby-American at the same time it raced GT40s for Ford.

ABARTH 500

Okay, so the present-day Abarth 500 is far from the perfect hot hatchback. Its ride quality is questionable and proper steering feel is conspicuous by its absence. Yet it injects a whole lot of fun into a sector that's become all too polished in recent years. The return of Abarth has brought back the rough-around-the-edges, bundle-of-energy hot hatch at an affordable price and with cute, customisable looks. Just like the old Abarth 595, then.



THE WORST

VOLKSWAGEN BEETLE

The original Beetle is an automotive legend. A cleverly designed economy car, its production life stretched across eight decades and 21 million sales. It's no surprise that Volkswagen wanted to bring its success to a modern audience, then, though it has done so with a vastly different car. The engine and driven wheels are now at the front rather than the rear (it's based on the mk4 Golf platform) while the focus has shifted from simple practicality to shamelessly retro styling. In *evo* 100 the 'sporty' Beetle RSI was ranked as one of the worst cars we'd yet driven, with

its looks described by Harry Metcalfe as being 'like one of those pill-popping female shot putters from Bulgaria'.

FORD THUNDERBIRD

The first Ford Thunderbird was a 1950s rival to the early Chevrolet Corvette. It even outsold the Vette by a staggering 23:1 ratio in



1955. It continued through ten generations before being retired in 1997. Then, in 2002, it made a comeback – an overly retro-styled one. It shared a platform with the very average Lincoln LS and Jaguar S-type (another disappointing remake), while its 3.9-litre V8 made just 252bhp. Sales were similarly uninspiring, and it was dropped in '05.





Ken Block's 650bhp Fiesta, star of the latest *Gymkhana* video, is an absolute monster. In an *evo* exclusive, **Chris Harris** jumps at the chance to drive it

BLOCK party

Competition cars are made for a specific reason. Yes, they're built within guidelines and conform to rules, but underneath all that lies the purpose for their existence.

A rally car must cover a variety of terrains as quickly as possible. A NASCAR must circulate an oval in the shortest possible time – you get the gist. Viewed in these terms, Ken Block's *Gymkhana* Fiesta is one of the most pointless engineering exercises ever undertaken, because, having driven it, I think I can now define its role in the autoverse.

It was built to be able to go backwards at 50mph, under full power in second gear. That is its sole reason for being. For the record, I must state that I thoroughly approve of pointless car-making adventures.

The need to travel backwards with all four wheels spinning forwards comes from the *Gymkhana* trilogy, a YouTube franchise so successful it trounces all other car-based material. As I write this, *Gymkhana 3* alone has logged over 19 million views, and it was only posted three months ago.

Ken Block began his 'Infomercial' journey back in 2008 in a Subaru, but then, in a move that still sends Scooby chat-rooms into a frothy rage, he switched to Ford last year. That meant a Focus WRC for his entry to World Rallying, but it also necessitated the creation of a new *Gymkhana* tool. Boy did they go to town.

The *Gymkhana* Fiesta is actually a Swedish Rallycross Fiesta, made by Olsbergs under the watchful eye of multiple Swedish rally champ Andreas Eriksson. Apart from being

Pictures Barry Hathaway



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'Rolling in first, there's only one thing to do – find out exactly what 650bhp feels like in a 1100kg Fiesta'

fantastically over-wrought and capable of breaking traction in any one of its six forward gears, the Fiesta gives us a tantalising glimpse of what might have happened if Group B hadn't died back in 1986. Last year, Eriksson took one of these cars to Pikes Peak and removed the 45mm plate that restricts power to 'only' 650bhp. From a 2-litre Duratec-based motor, they saw 875bhp on race day.

The stars had aligned themselves in hoonland. First, it looked like a Fiesta, a car that Ford was trying to push in the US. And second, well, it would go backwards at a-lot-of-mpg with all four wheels spinning in a forwards direction. Power wasn't going to be a problem; a new *Gymkhana* car was born.

I've wanted to drive this car since I first saw it in France on the set of *Gymkhana 3* (evo 149), but

the point at which curiosity became need was when I saw Block literally flinging it the wrong way into a right-hander and dragging himself through with power and tyre annihilation. Team Block said there would be a chance to drive it in LA in early December. I hate flying enough to have never visited the west coast before, but the horror of row 62 on a 747 is worth it when I hit the starter button.

Only you don't just hit the starter button in this Fiesta. First, you de-clunk the plastic door and turn right, as if you're High Tower from *Police Academy* heading for the rear seats. This is the full DTM-style driving position and since Mr Block never intended for anyone else to drive it, the Recaro is fixed. Since I am somewhat shorter than Ken, this constitutes something of a problem. Five minutes later,





with the padding from the passenger seat behind my back, I can at least reach the steering wheel.

Image is everything in *Gymkhana*-land, so this car feels like the strange love-child of Swedish Rallycross and MTV's *Pimp My Ride*. Honest motorsport paraphernalia – toggles, buttons – mingle with deliberate jewellery, the most obvious of which is the enormous, monogrammed and slightly scary looking handbrake lever, which is quite unlike anything I think I've ever seen in a car interior.

The controls are simple. Toggle-on, press the starter, pull the carbon gear-paddle back to go up the gearbox, push it away (WRC-style) to go back down. In the centre of the dash, where there should be a nice digital clock, there now sits a large gear indicator. This looks like a sop to cinematography, but 650bhp will soon change that opinion.

Last night at dinner Ken told me that he doesn't do shotgun rides 'because they're unpleasant'. I agreed emphatically, and I'm expecting Andreas Eriksson to jump in next to me, give me some pointers and ensure that I don't slap it into anything that looks like concrete. Instead, something my old PE teacher would have categorised as a 'fancy plimsoll' enters the passenger footwell, followed by some snot-green overalls. Ken wriggles down into the now cushion-less seat and looks about as happy as I would if I was about to be hurled around by some bloke I hardly know. Belted down, he musters a grin and nods: 'You're gonna love it, just don't crash it, I need to use it this weekend.'

But what to do with a 650bhp Fiesta on the infield of Irwindale Speedway? I don't have much time in the car because it costs a fair whack to run, and we're eating into the test schedule for Block's inaugural Grid competition – a chance for drifters, rally drivers and other loons to destroy tyres against the clock. The course is laid out, but there's no way I'm going to be able to navigate it with enough accuracy to avoid damaging the car or, more importantly, looking a complete idiot in front of the smattering of spectators.

The clutch is a bastard – avoiding a stall requires the delicacy of an organ player with your right foot and Scott Gibbs thigh-strength on the left side. I avoid the stall, but only just. Rolling in first, there's only one thing to do – find out exactly what 650bhp feels like in an 1100kg Fiesta.

Despite the enormous single turbocharger, boost initially builds according to your throttle input, then the whole car seems to make a great shrieking noise, a light flashes and you pull the paddle, as much out of relief as any desire to see what happens in second, and your brain registers a dose of back pain. For the record, the same thing happens in second, so you pull again. Your brain is so frazzled by the intensity of the experience that the gear-indicator acts as an LED comfort-blanket.

From a standing start, this is the fastest car I have driven. On slicks it has run 1.9 seconds to 60mph and even on these stock Pirellis it runs 2.4sec. This is mostly irrelevant though, because the *Gymkhana* Fiesta rarely spends

Gymkhana car is based on a Swedish Rallycross Fiesta, further tweaked by Olsbergs MSE, and painted in the same livery as Block's WRC Focus. Bespoke touches include Block-monogrammed handbrake (top left). Opposite page: Harris gets comfortable in the Fiesta (eventually) watched by an amused Ken Block

KEN BLOCK'S
650BHP FIESTA

much time using this titanic power to move forwards... as I am not about to demonstrate.

Second gear feels good for a skid, so I select an innocent-looking cone, approach it and pin the gas. Understeer. A second attempt: more understeer followed by a floppy tail-squiggle that peters out as the boost recedes, leaving me looking an arse. Thank God I can't see Ken's face. I stop and seek advice. 'Carry more speed,' he says. 'You have to use the handbrake, and once the car is sliding don't steer into it too much. The wheels kind of want to be straight ahead most of the time.'

Advice noted, I try again. Second gear, a reasonable tug on that slightly scary-looking handbrake and the car is immediately perpendicular. Instinctively you throw some corrective lock at the slide, then just pin the gas and feel the steering want to straighten itself. And there, as the car arcs around the cone and the motor screams, you happen across one of

motoring's better feelings. Drift equilibrium in the *Gymbhana* Fiesta.

I try again, only faster and with a bigger tug on the handbrake, hoping to reach the point of backwards-slide-nirvana, and it only goes and bloody works! Still in second gear, with the motor bouncing merrily off its electronic limiter, the car slews in completely the opposite direction, then begins another of its trademark, arcing slides. This is truly addictive, and for the next ten minutes I can't help but yank the brake and ride ever smokier slides. No left-foot braking, in fact very little braking, just a tug on the lever and power. You know you're beginning to get somewhere when the cabin fills with smoke.

So how does it make me feel about the video? Even more impressed. This car is an animal, and to drive it with the accuracy Block does requires ample helpings of skill and testicle. The real trick is in *placement* because the car

accelerates so fast you have to anticipate where it will begin to slide – and in this respect I'm hopeless because I have to gradually slow the car to gauge this distance. I grab a passenger ride with Ken and he confirms as much, flinging the car into crazy shapes 50 yards before he actually wants to go around an obstacle.

So, will there be another *Gymbhana* car next year? 'I don't think so,' says Ken. 'This car does everything we need right now. It's awesome!' A car that was built to go backwards in a forwards gear: the very definition of awesome.

Above: Harris has LA's Irwindale Speedway all to himself for a few blissful minutes. Right: 2-litre Duratec-R engine from the Focus gets the full tuning works from Swedish rallycross specialists Olsbergs. It's installed longitudinally in the Fiesta with a single turbo. In Pikes Peak spec, this engine produces 875bhp, but 650bhp is plenty to be getting on with...



‘As the car arcs round the cone, it’s one of motoring’s better feelings. Drift equilibrium in the *Gymkhana Fiesta*’



SPECIFICATIONS

GYMKHANA FIESTA

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1999cc, single turbocharger
Location Front, longitudinal
Power 650bhp @ 6500rpm
Torque 660lb ft @ 4000rpm
Transmission Maktrak MSE sequential six-speed manual gearbox, four-wheel drive
Front suspension MacPherson struts with lower wishbones, coil springs and gas dampers
Rear suspension Wishbones with coil springs and gas dampers
Brakes Ventilated and grooved steel discs
Wheels Aluminium alloy
Tyres Pirelli P Zero Nero
Weight (kerb) 1100kg
Power-to-weight 600bhp/ton
0-60mph 1.9sec (on slicks)
 2.4sec on grooved Pirellis
Top speed n/a
Basic price n/a

EVO RATING ★★★★★

END OF THE ROAD...

*The wide-bodied, 402bhp Carrera GTS is the final version of the 997-generation Porsche 911. **Richard Meaden** goes for a top speed run in the Mojave Desert. Or at least that's the plan...*



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PORSCHE 911 GTS AT EL MIRAGE

There's a ritual to car launches that's as old as the car launch itself. Basically it involves trying to get the car you want, in the colour and specification you want, to drive where you want for as long as you want. As you can imagine, that generally involves ignoring the manufacturer's carefully recce'd launch route and, if at all possible, stitching up your 'colleagues' from rival magazines and websites. And people say journalists are selfish so-and-so's...

Years ago, as a fresh young road tester, I used to wing it, relying on charm and innocence to beguile the PR representative. It rarely worked. Older and wiser, I now play the long game, putting a call in a few weeks before the launch, explaining that we'd really like the such-and-such in a bright, Nikon-friendly colour, and that we might go off-piste, but that it'll yield far more coverage than the guys doing straightforward first drives.

Such was my strategy for this, the Carrera GTS launch event held in Palm Springs, California. The early call went well, as did the friendly follow-up chat on the flight to the States. Then, over drinks, the German PR team brought round iPads with little test-car

avatars on their screens. It soon became clear that my plan was crumbling, not just because the iPad system was infuriatingly even-handed, but worse because there seemed to be far more PDK-equipped cars than manual. And I really didn't want a PDK.

Next morning photographer Andy 'Fly' Tipping and I wander out to our allotted car. It looks fabulous in the rich, bright Californian sunshine, the GTS's wide body sitting fat and happy on stunning black 19in Spyder alloys. A quick glance through the spokes reveals our car has the PCCB ceramic brake option, and we'd noticed from some distance away that it also sports a less expected optional GT3-esque bi-plane rear wing. Okay, so it also has the dreaded PDK transmission – drat and double drat – but we both conclude that the 997 911 has rarely looked better than this. It's also finished in bright yellow. It takes a while for the penny to drop that it's Speed Yellow, at which point a smile spreads across my face as I realise just how appropriate that name is for the story we've got planned. It's the kind of smile that makes other people think, 'What's he grinning at?' If only I could share the joke...

We might not have quite the perfect-spec GTS, but that's not going to deflect us from our



'Progressive, controllable and highly entertaining, it'll slide





Left: GTS interior gets acres of Alcantara and sports seats as standard. Right: Meaden buys his pass to gain access to the El Mirage lakebed. Above: display in the visitor centre shows what happens when high-speed runs on the lake go bad...



smoothly or grip for Deutschland depending on your style'

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mission. Predictably, it involves going in the opposite direction to everyone else, heading north-west in the direction of Los Angeles, then skirting Riverside – once an epic race circuit, now a faceless housing development – before heading into the Mojave Desert. Our destination is the El Mirage Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area: home of the South California Timing Association and birthplace of dry lake speed trials.

After the rash of extreme and extremely expensive 911s introduced over the last 12 months or so, the GTS is a breath of fresh air, primarily because it's one of those rare Porsches that's worth more than the sum of its options. Bodily and mechanically, the GTS is the most extreme non-Motorsport department 911 in the range, coming as standard with the wide body, uprated 402bhp engine and sports exhaust. Add PCCB and the sports suspension (which comes with a mechanical limited-slip differential) and you've got a Sport Classic driving experience in all but Fuchs, ducktail and double-bubble roof.

True, you don't get the Sport Classic's leather-fetish interior either, but you do get swathes of Alcantara on the door panels, dashboard and steering wheel, along with sports seats and delete-option rear seats, for that softcore GT3 ambience. Even by 911 standards it's an inspiring place to sit.

With a two-hour journey ahead of us, we

don't waste time. Climbing out of Palm Springs through a vast wind farm with its forest of turbines we're soon into thick cloud, which is somewhat alarming given we're supposed to be enjoying the region's famed desert climate. Ten minutes later we've got headlights and wipers on. This was not in the plan.

At least the GTS is great at eating the miles. Quieter, more refined and less physically demanding than a GT3 or even a Turbo, it settles at 90mph and rides the harsh surface sweetly. It's a reminder that while the more hardcore 911 models are far more habitable than they've any right to be, there's still a lot to be said for the pliancy and more laid-back demeanour of a 911 like the GTS.

That's not to say the GTS lacks teeth. Its hotted-up engine has 22bhp more than the regular Carrera S, and although peak torque remains the same at 310lb ft, the curve is fatter.

It closes the gap to the GT3's 429bhp engine, though without the Motorsport car's trick lightweight internals the GTS can't match its urgency or aggression. Nevertheless, the gains make the GTS a tangibly more muscular 911 thanks to the double bonus of more mid-range shove and top-end zing. It has a real bark too, thanks to the freer-breathing and more vocal (switchable) sports exhaust.

I'd wondered whether the wide-body, rear-drive combination would actually feel that different without the stiff suspension and Pilot Cups of a GT3 or RS. It takes a few miles to appreciate it, but the GTS definitely feels grippier, more assured and satisfyingly broad-shouldered compared with a regular Carrera S, whether you're cruising the Interstate or slicing through a series of corners.

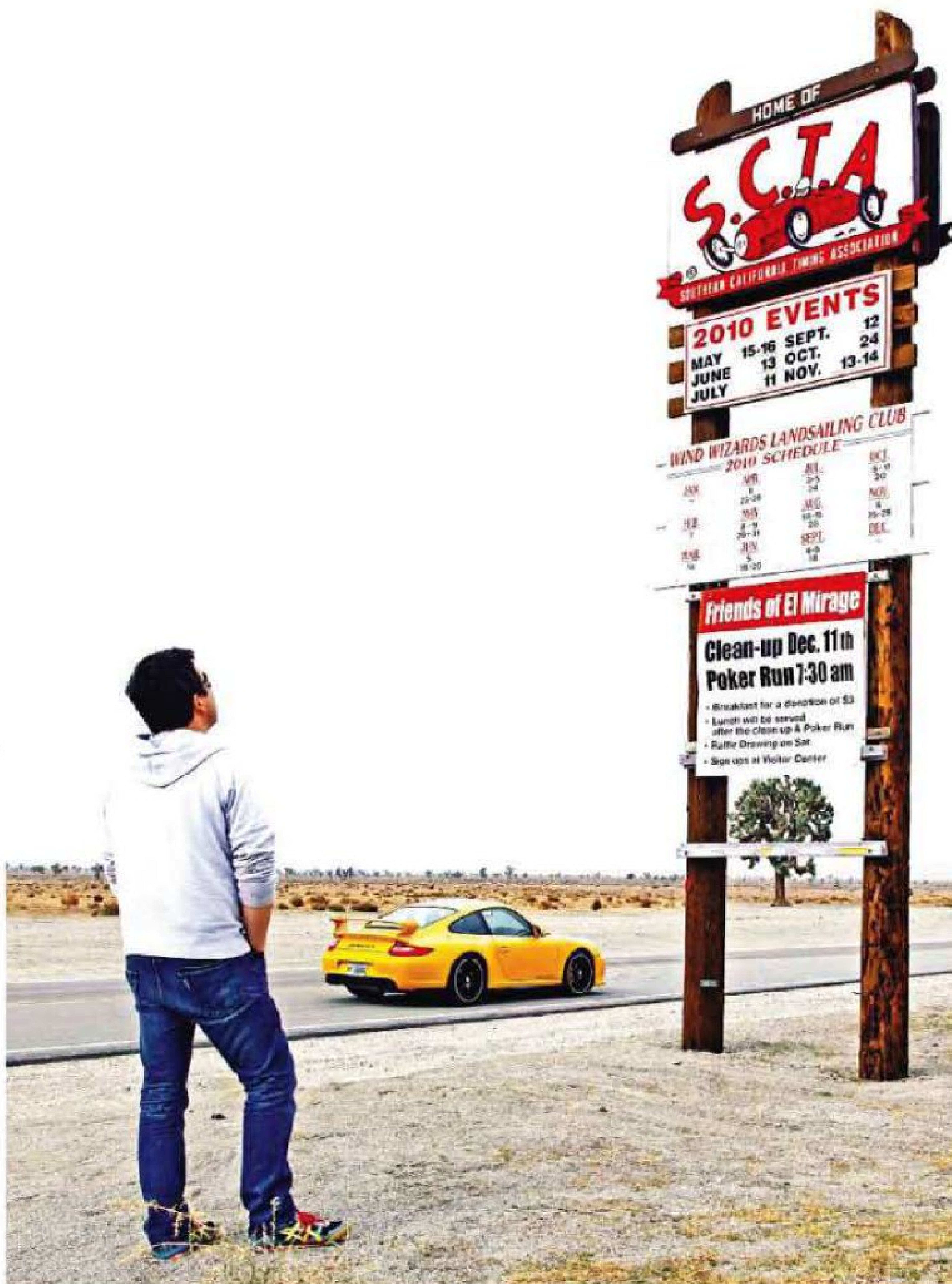
As we've come to expect from PASM, the damping is immaculate, isolating you from

Right: desert roads don't major on corners, but the GTS is happy to cruise. Left: it's also happy to bring its tail into play when a bend does present itself, although its wider rear tyres mean there's more grip to be overpowered





Above: Aerokit (a £2025 option) adds a more prominent front spoiler and a huge rear wing. Below: Meaden checks the upcoming events on the El Mirage lakebed; he should have the place to himself today. Below right: if he can get in...



the thwack of 305-section rear tyres across expansion joints, but keying you in to the action once you firm things up in Sport mode. And although there's more rear grip to overcome, the 911's unique weight distribution means it'll still respond well to a bit of hoonage. Progressive, controllable and highly entertaining, it'll slide smoothly or simply grip for Deutschland depending on your chosen cornering style.

Midway through our journey the sun makes a welcome appearance as we drive through the dusty wasteland of the Mojave. It's all looking promising for our pilgrimage to SoCal's speed capital, but as we hang a right off El Mirage Road onto Mountain View Road our hearts sink. Across the road is a barrier and a sign, which basically says that due to rain the lakebed is closed until further notice. Honestly, only a pair of Englishmen would have the bad luck to drive into the middle of the Mojave Desert and find rain has stopped play. It's so unfunny all we can do is laugh. Truth is, though, staring at a vast expanse of dry lakebed stretching out into the shimmering distance and knowing we can't drive onto it is about as frustrating a sight as you can possibly imagine.

The agony is piled on when a Park Ranger pulls alongside us. He's returned from a recce to check the lake conditions and says if the sun continues to shine the lake will be open tomorrow morning. Arrgh! Fly and I consider applying the 'possession is nine-tenths of the law' rule and going AWOL in the GTS until tomorrow afternoon, but the launch schedule simply doesn't allow it.

There is some good news, though. Clearly sensing our disappointment, the guys at the visitor centre have a word with the Park Ranger and they decide to allow us to venture onto the fringe of the lakebed to get a feel for the place and take some photos. It's not quite what we'd hoped for when leaving Palm Springs a few hours earlier, but the opportunity to dip the Carrera's treadblocks into El Mirage's hallowed dirt is something not to be missed.

With the feeling of binocular lenses burning holes in the back of our heads, we make our way from the visitor centre to the dirt track that leads onto the lake. We hadn't appreciated it before, but now we're down here it's clear there's no-one else around for miles. We entertain the thought of simply nailing it towards the horizon, then quickly dismiss it on the grounds that there'd be an armed and rightly angry welcoming committee on our dusty return. Sensibly we elect to park up and Fly goes to work.

The sense of scale and isolation is remarkable, even this close to the edge of the lakebed. The dun-coloured surface is cracked and parched like elephant's hide, and stretches to the Shadow Mountains some miles distant. The contorted silhouettes of Joshua trees (Bono & co mercifully not present) stand proud of the flat dirt-pan while above us a bird of prey



wheels and soars on mid-morning thermals. The silence is deafening, my ears filled with a mixture of tinnitus acquired four years ago from stupidly driving Ford's Supervan III without earplugs and the squishing sound of blood pumping round my head.

Stare at the horizon for long enough and I swear the eerie silence, space and heat shimmer begin to play tricks with your senses. It's a scene that could only be improved by a distant plume of dust and the hard-worked drone of a blown V8 hauling a high gear. Wishful thinking of course, but few locations come more evocative than this.

The top layer of the lakebed is flaky. Pick

some up and it crumbles to dust not much coarser than talcum powder. Once you get below the loose crust, though, the bed is rock hard: a perfect, non-corrosive surface on which to drive as fast as your car will carry you.

When the SCTA holds speed trials here, the runs are conducted on a 1.3-mile course marked by cones across the lakebed. This makes it much shorter than the more famous Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah, but it doesn't stop racers hitting big speeds. The outright record for El Mirage is 305.809mph. I can't really get my head around that, but then land-speed cars and drivers have always been a breed apart.

So, it must be said, is El Mirage itself. To

'Only a pair of Englishmen would have the bad luck to drive to the Mojave Desert and find rain has stopped play'



**Lake Bed
Closed
Due To Recent Rain
Please Enjoy The Rest
Of The Non Lake Bed Area**

**El lago esta cerrado
devido a recientes
lluvias, por favor
disfrute el resto
del area que
no es lago**



someone used to the petty rules, regulations, anti-noise lobbyists and general health and safety cobblers that pervades anything petrol-powered and remotely enjoyable back in the UK, El Mirage seems too good to be true. Then again, with Edwards Air Force Base – home of *The Right Stuff* and the first place on earth to be rocked by a sonic boom – less than an hour's drive away, this part of the world is steeped in speed.

To be brutally honest, there's not much else to commend it. The nearby city of Adelanto is pretty grim, and beyond that there's a whole lot of nothingness. If the best thing about this place

is El Mirage, the second best is the Interstate 395 that takes you back towards Los Angeles...

Not being able to drive on the lake has been excruciating, but still I wouldn't have missed coming here for anything. There's something incredibly special about the place and it's impossible not to let your imagination run away with you. In an unexpected way it's a bit like standing on the derelict banking at Monza or driving through the old Masta Kink at Spa. It's a privilege just to be here and breathe-in the atmosphere. The fact we've not done more than 10mph on the dirt is almost academic.

Had things been different there's no doubt the

Above: GTS has no rear seats as standard but they can be added at no extra cost. Below: 'Powerkit' version of 3.8-litre flat-six has 402bhp. Bottom: on the lakebed



'For someone used to the UK's petty rules, El Mirage seems too



GTS would have been a fine car to fire at the horizon. It's a great 911 and a fitting swansong for the 997 generation. Whether I'd have summoned the requisite cojones to have a crack at its claimed 188mph top speed on a less than smooth and, to all intents and purposes, lawless lakebed is a question that'll have to remain unanswered, for now at least. Something tells me I haven't seen the last of El Mirage.

SPECIFICATION

Engine Flat-six, 3800cc
 Location Rear, longitudinal
 Power 402bhp @ 7300rpm
 Torque 310lb ft @ 4200-5600rpm
 CO2 250g/km
 Transmission Six-speed manual gearbox (seven-speed PDK optional), rear-wheel drive, PSM (LSD optional)
 Front suspension MacPherson struts, coil springs, PASM dampers, anti-roll bar
 Rear suspension Multi-link, coil springs, PASM dampers, anti-roll bar
 Brakes Ventilated and cross-drilled, 330mm front and rear (optional PCCB 350mm front and rear), ABS, ABD
 Wheels 8.5 x 19in front, 11 x 19in rear
 Tyres 235/35 ZR19 front, 305/30 ZR19 rear
 Weight (kerb) 1420kg
 Power-to-weight 288bhp/ton
 0-62mph 4.6sec (claimed, 4.4sec with PDK)
 Top speed 190mph (claimed, 188mph with PDK)
 Basic price £76,758

EVO RATING ★★★★★

good to be true'

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If you're planning a trip to the States and fancy attending an SCTA meeting at El Mirage, you'd do well to check their website, www.scta-bni.org, for information. There are six events planned for 2011, the first being held on May 14-15, the last November 12-13.

If you'd rather go to El Mirage and drive the lake yourself then you've pretty much got the whole year to choose from. Apart from rain, only events such as the SCTA's meetings will prevent you from getting access to the lakebed itself, although bear in mind that it's a popular location for movie, television and commercial film shoots,

so this may mean certain restrictions are in force. Generally speaking, though, you simply arrive and drive, just like the Nürburgring Nordschleife.

To avoid disappointment be sure to check for the latest

El Mirage information by visiting www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/barstow/mirage.html. This site carries all the information you need, including directions and a weather hotline to call for the latest conditions.

Have fun and go fast!



SCTA meetings see all kinds of vehicles run flat-out at El Mirage, from vintage roadsters through diesel trucks to specially constructed streamliners



Pictures: Matt Howell

COLD. PLAY.

Volkswagen's Race Touareg has been designed to endure the heat and dust of the Dakar rally, but that doesn't stop it being fun in the snow too, as **Henry Catchpole** discovers



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Above: Catchpole (seated) is talked through the controls by Dakar competitor Mark Miller. Below: this particular Touareg's crew for the 2011 Dakar, which runs January 1-16



The Atacama desert is the most arid region on earth. It is also the focus for the 2011 Dakar rally. For that reason the main improvements Volkswagen has made to its new Race Touareg 3 are focused on cooling, with new aerodynamic carbonfibre bodywork to ensure the huge fans in the back keep the engine temperature down and the power up as the cars battle through the sand.

Whatever the conditions, these rally raid vehicles will take everything that's thrown at them, and I love them for it. Regular readers will know that I'm a mild obsessive about all things rallying, so today I'm just a bit excited, because I am about to join an extremely select group of people – those who have driven a Race Touareg in the snow.

To me the Dakar is perhaps the most romantic and awe-inspiring motorsport event on the planet – a proper adventure with two weeks' worth of racing that currently takes place in South America and goes from the Atlantic to the Pacific and back again, reaching altitudes of over 4700m along the way as the competitors cross the Andes twice (go to www.dakar.com to follow all the action). It's a hugely varied race, with soft, speed-sapping dunes one day and sections where drivers will travel for more than 30km flat-out in top gear without lifting the next. The vehicles taking part vary from motorbikes to

the giant and fabulous-looking racing trucks. But the overall victory is usually contested by the Class T1 prototypes like the Touareg.

Before I drive this one, I have a chat with Gérard Zyzik, who used to design WRC cars for Toyota (including Juha Kankkunen's Celica, which is a car I idolised on the television). There are very few stipulations about the prototypes – the badges are about the only thing in common with a production Touareg – but there are rules about the tyre diameter, the overall weight in relation to the engine size and, most intriguingly, the wheel travel. I was amazed to learn that the maximum permissible travel for the Touareg's class is just 250mm. To put this in perspective, Zyzik reckons that Citroën's C4 WRC car had between 300 and 320mm of travel in gravel spec.

I'm intrigued to know how expensive it is to compete in the Dakar. 'Well, please don't break it!' laughs Zyzik. He won't give any figures, but apparently it starts out expensive because you are developing a car from a blank sheet of paper, but once you have a core car that works, you change it as little as possible because the most important thing in Dakar is reliability, so development slows down and the costs decrease significantly. Any new part that is designed, however, has to cover at least one and a half times the Dakar race distance without any problems before it is put into competition.

My instructor and guide for the day is Mark Miller, serial Baja and Dakar competitor who

'Whatever the conditions, these rally raid vehicles will





take everything that's thrown at them. I love them for it'

started out on bikes back in 1981 and has raced with VW since 2005, finishing second on the Dakar in 2009 and third in 2010. We've actually already spent quite a lot of time talking cars and mountain bikes by the time I'm in the Touareg because by complete coincidence we were sitting next to each other on the (eventually cancelled) flight to Hanover the previous evening, and then when we did get to Germany this morning he drove us through the snowy chaos of Hanover (reassuringly just as bad as the UK) to Oschersleben.

Miller says the car is fairly straightforward – five-speed sequential, use the clutch to pull away and from first to second, then left-foot brake. He scrolls through the electronic dash, which is essentially just a long series of temperature and pressure readings from the 132 sensors dotted all over the car. It would take me an entire week to learn all the toggle switches and buttons on the centre console but I won't need them today. There is one big red button, which primeval curiosity means I have to ask about. 'That's the data marker. I'll hit that during a rally if we have a particularly nasty moment or if I miss a gear or something. It just makes it easier to find it in the data later so we can see what happened to the cogs or diffs or whatever at that point.'



Above: 2.5-litre turbodiesel engine sits in the nose of the car beneath the high-strength steel spaceframe chassis. Below: exhausts exit from the Touareg's sills. Left: tyres have been specially developed by BF Goodrich



VOLKSWAGEN RACE TOUAREG

Given that 250MB of sensor data, equivalent to roughly 16,500 A4 pages, is analysed by the engineers every day of the rally, it's easy to see why the markers are invaluable.

The Race Touareg might look imposing from the outside but, once you've swung yourself up and through the roll cage, the low roof and huge carbonfibre transmission tunnel make it feel surprisingly snug. The shallow windscreen, the unremitting blackness and the lack of a big, open, roll-caged boot behind you (as you have in a stage rally car) lend it a slightly tank-like feeling.

Start the five-cylinder, twin-turbo, 306bhp,

442lb ft diesel and the noise from the side-exit exhaust is angry. The barely silenced sound is meaty and guttural (think of a construction-site vehicle). Being a diesel it obviously doesn't rev as quickly as a petrol, but it shows Audi and Peugeot that a diesel can sound good.

Yank the T-bar gearlever back, ease up the amazingly friendly ceramic clutch and revel in the complete lack of grip as all four wheels spin through the powder. Ice is easy to cope with because studded tyres have something to dig into, but snow offers practically zero grip even with studs. The steering is very direct and amazingly light (lighter still because of

the snow, obviously) because the last thing you need if you're in a car for the hours and hours of a Dakar stage is pumped forearms from heavy steering. It inevitably takes a lap or two of the circuit to dial the brain into how the Touareg is going to react, how the torque's delivered, how the weight distribution affects the way it's moving and sliding. And, rather importantly, I also have to work out where the circuit goes as it wanders in a clockwise loop around what looks like an old quarry or possibly a Bond villain's hideout.

During these early laps there is a lot of arm-flailing and steering-wheel rotation going on as

'You get thrown around more than you might expect, but you



Above left: twin springs and dampers just visible. Above right: huge fans in the rear help cool the radiator, dampers and fuel. Below: cockpit, like the rest of the car, bears little resemblance to the production Touareg. Bottom right: engine air intake positioned high and facing rearwards to pick up the cleanest air possible



the Touareg slides and I gather, then another slide, gather, gear, *shiiiiide*... brake, down a gear, gather, corner, slide, gear... Gradually, however, and almost without realising it, I find that my inputs become neater and the slides longer and more precise as I balance the car more easily. I've thankfully got better at left-foot braking in the past few years so that at least it doesn't feel alien, but even with big stabs of the brakes to try to get the nose turned in, the Touareg isn't an instantly reactive rally car like an S2000 vehicle. That's perhaps not surprising given that it weighs a regulation-conforming 1787.5kg, but it means that I've got to give it bigger and more insistent inputs to get it to go where I want through the winter wonderland.





SPECIFICATION

Engine In-line 5-cyl, 2500cc, twin-turbo, diesel
Location Front, longitudinal
Power 306bhp @ n/a rpm
Torque 442lb ft @ n/a rpm
Transmission Five-speed sequential manual gearbox, four-wheel drive, limited-slip differentials front, centre and rear
Front suspension Double wishbones, twin springs and dampers per wheel
Rear suspension Double wishbones, twin springs and dampers per wheel
Brakes Ventilated and grooved discs front and rear
Wheels 16in front and rear
Tyres 235/85 R16 front and rear, BF Goodrich
Weight (kerb) 1787.5kg
Power-to-weight 174bhp/ton
0-62mph 6.1sec (claimed)
Top speed 117mph (claimed)

know that your neck will give out before the Touareg does'

The first part of the white track goes over a small hump and then through what has become a slushy, muddy, rutted section. The tail slews sideways on the exit as you accelerate round a long right-hander and head over another hump before snatching fourth along a short straight into a viciously bumpy braking zone where you need to get down to first gear for a hairpin right. Then it's a left-hander that opens on the exit followed by a huge right-hander with bumps all the way through and, finally, a small drop onto the start/finish straight.

Due to the aforementioned suspension travel you get thrown around by the bumps more than you might expect for a Dakar vehicle, but you know that your neck will give out before

the Touareg does. There are two ZF Sachs springs and dampers per wheel – during the rally the damper pistons can travel a total of 150m during every kilometre.

The hairpin is the trickiest corner because, bizarrely, the Touareg doesn't have a handbrake (there is a stubby lever that looks like one but it actually controls the diff locks). In order to tackle a tight turn without a handbrake you would normally try to set up a Scandinavian flick, but that's tricky because of the narrow, bumpy entry. So it's slow in, turn and then give it a bootful of throttle, which sounds easy but takes faith because the first thing the car does is understeer for a couple of yards in the wrong direction, making you want to lift off. But keep

your foot in and the four-wheel drive thumps everything to the rear and you swing round. Then all you need to do is hold the oversteer for a few metres, dab the brakes and swing it back for the next left. Easy. Sort of.

Ten laps in and the wipers are struggling to cope as it's -13 outside. The water and snow are freezing to the windscreen and the square I can see out of is getting laughably small. But I just don't want to stop – it is *so* much fun. I know the snow is not necessarily showing the Race Touareg off to its best ability, but then I suspect that nothing short of a multi-day rally raid would do that...

Now, VW let John Barker drive a Scirocco in the Nürburgring 24hrs. I wonder if...



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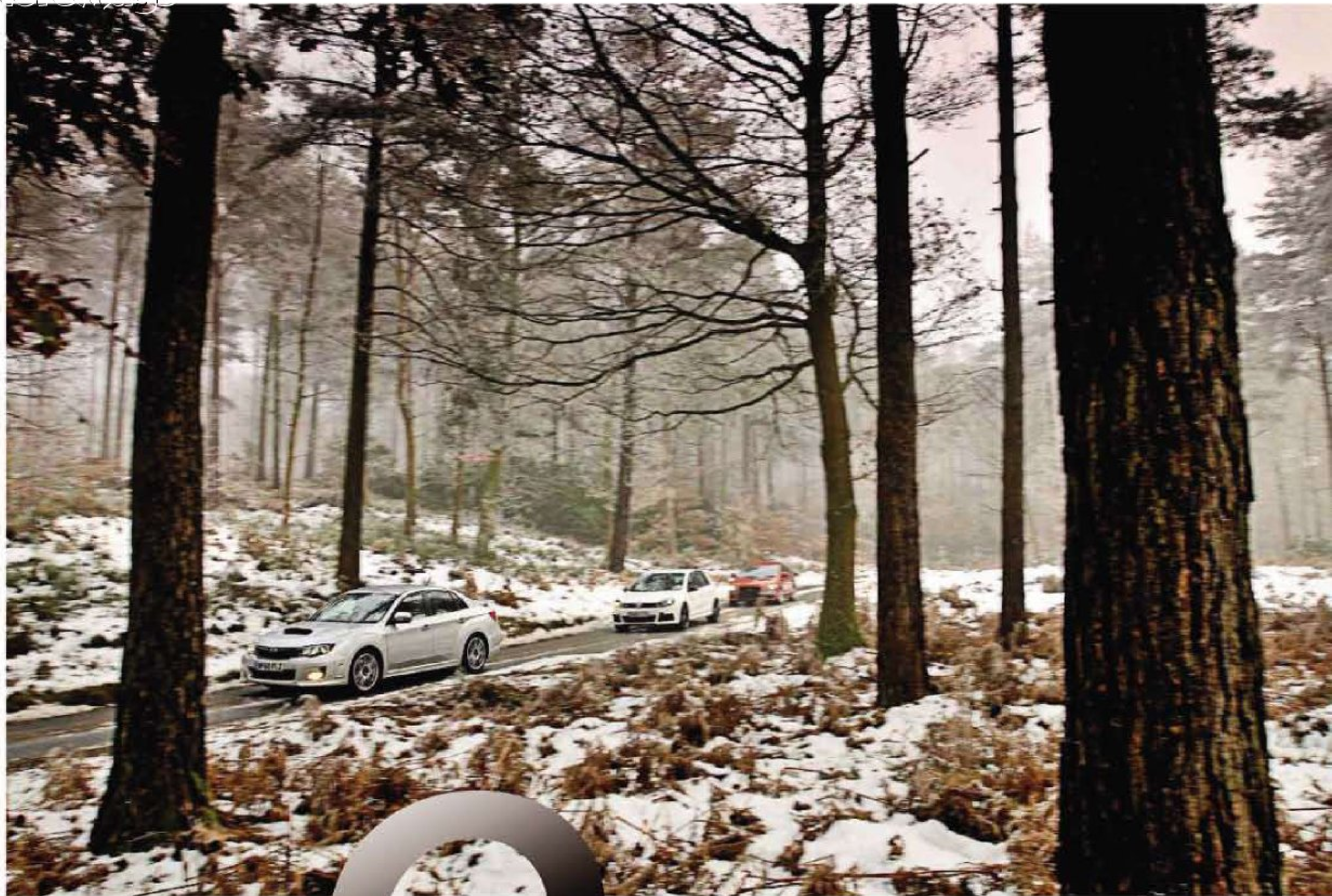
Snow patrol

With winter in full swing, what better time to put a trio of four-wheel-drive rivals to the test? **John Barker** compares Subaru's new four-door WRX STI with VW's Golf R and Mitsubishi's Evo X FQ-300



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f all the shifts at the affordable end of the performance car market, the most obvious over the last few years has been the wane in popularity of the turbocharged four-wheel-drive Japanese saloon. For over a decade the Impreza and Evo battle raged in the UK market, occasionally in yearly instalments such as the pace of development, with entrenched brand loyalists on both sides alternately celebrating and decrying the latest outcome.

Then Subaru and Mitsubishi scaled back their efforts in rallying, the key development driver, and simultaneously took a notion that what the market really needed was an Impreza/Evo offering greater comfort and refinement. And that's when the sales dive really gathered speed. Enthusiasts felt the cars had gone a bit soft, while everyone else still felt they were a step behind the quality brands they were chasing and still a bit manic, a bit cultish, a bit high-maintenance.

Mind, a good dump of snow serves as a timely reminder that these near-300bhp four-wheel-drive cars still have a lot to offer. There's also a clear suggestion from Subaru that the enthusiast is back in the frame: originally offered only in five-door, hatchback form in the UK, the current-generation Impreza is now available again in classic four-door trim and with sportier

'Spec C' suspension. The idea hasn't been fully embraced, as evidenced by the lack of Mica Blue paint and gold alloys on the options list and the odd decision to drop the Impreza name, but the Subaru WRX STI, as it's known, is a step in the right direction.

Unfortunately, its arrival coincides with a sizeable upward adjustment of UK Subaru prices that sees the new car hit the market at £32,995, which puts it dangerously close to the cars it aspires to steal sales from – a BMW 335i M Sport saloon costs just £3K more. Meanwhile its arch rival, the Mitsubishi Evo X, costs £30,759 in FQ-300 form, though since November it has been offered at £27,999, or £28,999 with the SST twin-clutch gearbox. Mitsubishi UK cannot say how long these prices will be held (we do hear that it has rather a lot of SSTs in stock, though).

It has been a while since I've spent time behind the wheel of an Evo or an Impre... WRX STI, and it's a welcome refresher, an almost nostalgic reminder of the inherent character of the flat-four-engined Subaru and of the directness of the Mitsubishi (and what a very hardcore proposition it was before it was softened up).

Astoundingly competent front-drive hatches like the Ford Focus RS and Renaultsport Mégane 250 have taken up a lot of slack in the market, but there's a four-wheel-drive hatch that we felt deserved inclusion here. It's the

SUBARU WRX STI v VW GOLF R v
MITSUBISHI EVO X FQ-300



‘What you feel in the WRX STI, what you’d perceive even if you were blindfold, is unmistakably Impreza’



Finish of the Golf's cabin (right) is in a different league to that of the STI (above) and Evo (below). Subaru's Recaros (left) are fab, but all the cars have good seats



SUBARU WRX STI v VW GOLF R v
MITSUBISHI EVO X FQ-300

Above: STI's 296bhp turbo 2.5-litre flat-four. Evo (right) and Golf (below) have turbo 2-litre in-line fours with 290 and 266bhp respectively



Volkswagen Golf R, successor to the V6-engined R32. Like the Japanese pair, the top-spec Golf now has a turbo four-cylinder engine that drives all its wheels, and it has a list price just north of £30K. It's the Manx cat of the test, a chopped-off five-door to the others' booted saloon shapes, but it offers just as much room and the quality of trim is right where they want to be.

However, while its rivals weigh in with close to 300bhp, the Golf R offers just 266bhp, and while they have permanent four-wheel drive, the Volkswagen has the Haldex system, which is rather more 'on demand'; a mere 10 per cent of drive is fed to the rear wheels until the fronts are in trouble. Is that really an issue given the level of competence that front-drive hatches have achieved? We'll soon find out.

I start the day in the Subaru. Firing up from cold – and it's properly cold for the UK at -8 degrees C – the 2.5-litre flat-four throbs heartily, the sound iconic, and no fewer than four tailpipes chug out vapour as I scrape the windows clear. There were no issues getting the door open – conventional framed doors replaced the traditional frameless door glass with this generation Impreza – and the interior is a notch above the last one in style and quality. However, what you feel, what you'd perceive even if you



‘Work the Evo’s front end hard and the back will get mobile on a greasy, cold surface’

were blindfold, is unmistakably Impreza.

It goes beyond the timbre of the engine, itself toned down but still distinct. Take the gearshift: the lever is long but has a short-throw notchiness. Then there’s the steering, which has a light, slightly disconnected feel that is rather disappointing at first. The essential character of the car is intact, and this extends to its dynamics. Although there’s now that Spec C suspension, there must be quite a lot of weight acting upon it because the ride is more than acceptably supple and free of harshness.

Even with a very low-grip start to the day, the inherent traction of permanent four-wheel drive is impressive. Treading tentatively around shiny-slick roundabouts, the car poised on the edge of grip, the STT’s exit pace is sensational – provided the engine hits boost when you’re in a straight line. If it does, the car squats slightly and fires off up the road, perhaps with a slight tug at the steering wheel as the front wheels shimmy. Gas it before things are straight and you’ll be treated to a nudge of understeer and, if you stick with it, a transition to a smidge of oversteer, a scenario you can influence with the ‘C.Diff’ (centre differential) button. Press ‘+’ and the nose of the Scooby will push on a little more, press ‘-’ and the rear will slip a bit sooner and more.



**SUBARU WRX STI v VW GOLF R v
MITSUBISHI EVO X FQ-300**



When all three cars are gathered and posed in a snowy car park in the Surrey Hills, we agree that, in terms of visual impact, there's definitely something going for the new four-door Impreza that the five-door lacks. It's probably the bulging wheelarch extensions front and rear, which seem more prominent. The Evo X looks like a sharp-edged Evo IX that's been polished smooth and it wears its high-rise spoiler with pride, but the most modern-looking of the three is the Golf. Mostly this is because of its gloss black 19in alloys (silver 18s are standard), which sit large and fulsome in the arches. The other 'R' markers are quite limited, being a deeper nose section with a trio of gaping air intakes, and twin tailpipes centred in the rear valance.

Settling into the Mitsubishi, I'm struck by how similar in tone and content its cockpit is to the Subaru's. It's as if the interior has been designed by the same team in a parallel universe; same shiny sweep of dark trim blends with rather

ordinary plastics, same layout of controls on the steering wheel, same positioning of various all-wheel-drive switches, and similar high-back, deep-sided Recaros. The Volkswagen cabin shows where both Japanese cars really need to be if they're to compete with premium European brands. It's a cut above, a bit cooler and classier thanks to soft-touch plastics, fine slivers of brightwork around the dials and air vents, and a micro machine-turned look to the metal fillets on the fascia and door casings. The seats are 'R' branded and offer Recaro-like support and comfort, and I have to confess I'm a sucker for blue instrument needles.

First, though, it's time to reacquaint myself with the Evo. As ever, a couple of things strike you almost immediately after a stint in the Subaru. The first is that the Evo's in-line four is among the plainest-sounding of engines available anywhere, its note a light, bland thrum. The second that the small-diameter steering



Above, from left: STI's looks are improved in saloon form, although the hatchback version is still offered; Golf is only available as a hatch, but can be specced with three or five doors; Evo comes only as a four-door saloon

“The Golf R’s throaty in-line four delivers consistent, strong urge right across the rev-range”

SUBARU WRX STI v VW GOLF R v MITSUBISHI EVO X FQ-300

wheel is alive and intimately connected via a fast rack to a chassis that is alert and direct.

This car belongs to reader Simon Edgley and has covered 40,000 miles, but it feels impressively tight and fresh, only the polished leather of the steering wheel rim betraying the mileage. It's an SST model and the dual-clutch 'box works really well, being smooth and direct at low speeds and shifting seamlessly once you've upped the pace. It's the character of the chassis and the approach to making four-wheel drive work for you that strikes the strongest contrast with the Subaru, though. The Evo chassis is a bit firmer, more reactive to surfaces, and much more pointy – where the front end goes, the tail follows.

Like the WRX STI, the Evo has a slightly old-school power delivery, boost building with a bit of a rush from around 2500rpm for a proper kick in the pants. Being four-wheel-drive it can cope with the engine's *fizz-bang!* style, staying fully hooked up in a straight line, but it's in the corners that it gets interesting. Work the front end hard and the back will get mobile on a greasy, cold surface, which is initially worrying, but you soon realise it's the way the car is set up; it stays calm and poised and sorts itself out.

Then you notice that after the car has scythed into the corner there's dead time if you wait until the apex to pick up the throttle while boost builds. So, when the appropriate, well-sighted, second-gear corner appears, you get on the gas as you turn in and in one fluid motion the car enters with attitude and holds it to the exit, the torque picking up where momentum runs out. Oh yes. It's one of motoring's rites of passage, like power oversteer. It makes sense of hauling all those extra driveshafts and diffs around, and you can tap into this ability all year round; like the Subaru, there's a button that adjusts its



All three cars wear 18in alloys as standard, although our Golf test car sports optional black, 19in versions of the R's 'Talladega' rims (above). There are no other wheel options for the STI (below left) and Evo (below right)



Left: Subaru's SI-Drive dial allows the driver to fine-tune the throttle response; C.Diff control alters the front:rear bias of the centre limited-slip differential. Below: toggle by the Mitsubishi's gearlever adjusts the shift speed of its dual-clutch gearbox



dynamics to the conditions, offering Tarmac, Gravel or Snow settings.

Although it's as roomy as the two Japanese saloons, the Volkswagen feels like a smaller car as soon as you get rolling. The weight feels usefully low slung, too, and initially the ride feels Subaru smooth. Like the Evo, this Golf has a twin-clutch gearbox; if you simply drop the lever into Drive it's so keen to work its way into the highest gear possible that it gives the car an oddly leaden, lazy feel. The Sport setting makes it slightly over-enthusiastic, so for best control on a decent road you end up using the stumpy plastic paddles on the back of the wheel.

It's a bit down on power on paper, but the Golf feels close on performance, its throaty in-line four delivering consistent, strong urge right across the rev-range. This impression of solid urge is enhanced by each seamless upshift (punctuated by a soft tailpipe pop), which appears only to change the note of the engine. It's interesting that you can change the shift speed in the Mitsubishi but a more aggressive mode is denied you with DSG, and it can feel rather tardy at times.

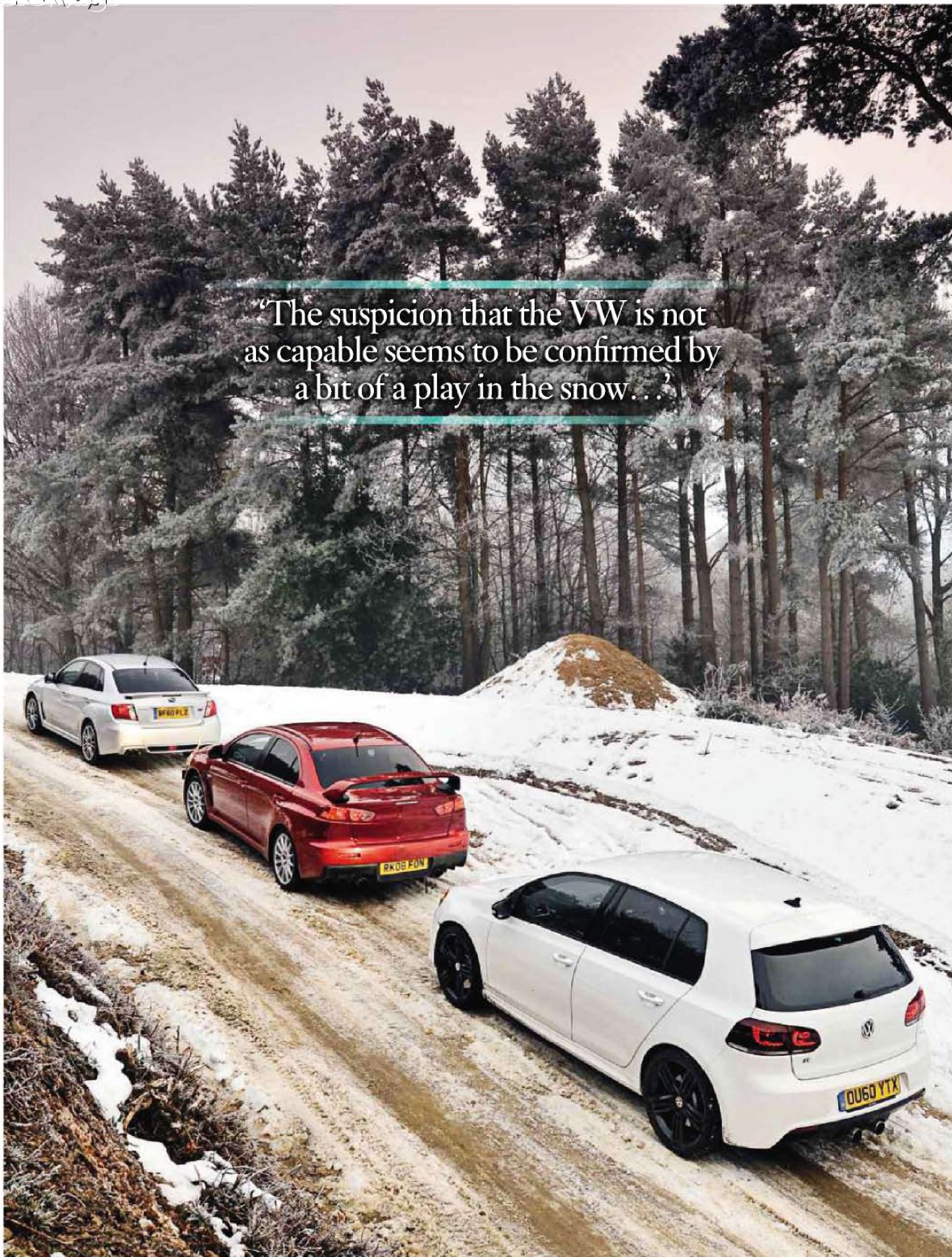
This 19in-wheeled car doesn't feel as supple as it did on 18s, and while the Japanese cars get better when you pick up the pace on a lumpy

road, the Golf starts to feel like it looks – a bit short-legged. There's no doubt it has impressive traction, more than the front-drive GTI would find, but in lots of respects it has the same dynamics; it's all about getting the weighty nose turned in and hooked up before getting on the power. You can trail-brake into turns to get the back involved but that's about as far as it goes.

You have to work at getting the Subaru onto its toes in the same way, but once you've got it into the corner with all four tyres working equally hard, its drivetrain will absorb the turbocharged torque hit and the car will exit the turn with the feeling that all the tyres are hauling equally hard. It's a less clean approach than the Evo, but feels effective, feels four-wheel-drive.

The suspicion that the VW's largely part-time 4wd is not ultimately as capable seems to be confirmed by a bit of a play, cornering in the snow. The STI drives in and drags itself through and out; the Evo seems to go more sideways but gets out in the end, while the Golf gets stuck. It gets itself out after some coaxing, but the ESP can't be totally switched off, basically because its sensors need to talk to the electronic diff, so it's busy braking wheels to restore grip where there isn't any and where a simple churning of all four wheels would get it through eventually.

“The suspicion that the VW is not as capable seems to be confirmed by a bit of a play in the snow...”



SUBARU WRX STI v VW GOLF R v MITSUBISHI EVO X FQ-300

SPECIFICATIONS

	MITSUBISHI EVO X FQ-300	SUBARU WRX STI	VOLKSWAGEN GOLF R
Engine	In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc, turbocharged	Flat-four, 2457cc, turbocharged	In-line 4-cyl, 1984cc, turbocharged
Location	Front, transverse	Front, longitudinal	Front, transverse
CO2	246g/km	243g/km	199g/km
Power	290bhp @ 6500rpm	296bhp @ 6000rpm	266bhp @ 6000rpm
Torque	300lb ft @ 3500rpm	300lb ft @ 4000rpm	258lb ft @ 2500rpm
Transmission	Five-speed manual (six-speed DCT optional), 4WD, front LSD, S-AWC, ASC	Six-speed manual gearbox, 4WD, front, centre and rear LSDs, SVDC	Six-speed manual gearbox (six-speed DCT optional), Haldex 4WD, ESP
Front suspension	MacPherson struts, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar	MacPherson struts, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar	MacPherson struts, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar
Rear suspension	Multi-link, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar	Multi-link, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar	Independent four-link, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar
Brakes	Ventilated discs, 350mm front, 330mm rear, ABS, EBD	Ventilated discs, 330mm front, 305mm rear, ABS, EBD, EBA	Ventilated discs, 345mm front, 310mm rear, ABS, EBD
Wheels	8.5 x 18in front and rear	8.5 x 18in front and rear	7.5 x 18in front and rear
Tyres	245/40 R18 front and rear	245/40 R18 front and rear	235/40 R18 front and rear
Weight (kerb)	1560kg	1505kg	1521kg
Power-to-weight	189bhp/ton	200bhp/ton	178bhp/ton
0-62mph	4.7sec (claimed)	5.2sec (claimed)	5.7sec (claimed, 5.5sec with DSG)
Top speed	155mph (limited)	158mph (limited)	155mph (limited)
Basic price	£27,999 (but see text)	£32,995	£30,345

EVO RATING



There's no question that the Golf R is a good car. It feels solid and refined, especially over long distances, and it's pretty quick. However, there's a moment when you're driving it and you think: 'Hang on... this costs over £30K. What does it do that the GTI doesn't?' And the answer is, unfortunately, very little. It certainly doesn't feel four-wheel-drive or exploit the fact that it is, like the Mitsubishi and Subaru.

The Evo X may be a toned down, more refined Evo, but compared with rivals, including the WRX STI, it stands out as being wonderfully

focused. It's supple enough to be used every day but its directness and willingness to get stuck in mark it out as a true drivers' car and make it easier to forgive its thirst and limited range. As ever, though, the Subaru has more character and a slightly more easy-going nature. You have to work a bit harder to get results, especially with its less connected, less feelsome steering, but this WRX STI is the best current-generation Impreza we've driven. It would be easy to see why you'd choose it over the Evo, but we'd plump for the sharper Mitsubishi.





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|| LONG-TERM TESTS

Henry's got a new Subaru saloon and Richard Porter has bought a lovely old Jag. Meanwhile, the Fiesta has been Mountuned, the Mégane's got a new exhaust and the Mazda 3 MPS has had some turbo trouble

't's very understeery,' said Peter Tomalin when he handed the keys back to me. As he used to run a hatchback STI as a long-termer, I'd thought it would be good to get his sage opinion on the new saloon and so suggested that he take BF60 FLZ home on the first night it was with us. His pronouncement the following morning was a bit of a stunner, because when I'd driven the four-door STI on its launch just a month earlier (evo 151), I hadn't been plagued by the dreaded nose shuffling. Then I remembered Tomalin's nickname of 'The Crab' (because he's known for driving everywhere more sideways than a crustacean on a surfboard) and relaxed a little. Peter's idea of understeer was probably just a bit different to mine.

Through the village, over the roundabout heading home, tip it into the first decent left-hander... and the air scoop wasn't in the least bit interested in my nominal drain-cover apex. There was no steering feel either, just a disconcerting lightness, as in the old car. This was not good.

It has happened occasionally before; you go on a launch, have a good drive in a new car, give it a glowing evo rating, and then when you drive it in the UK a few months later it feels completely different, leaving you confused and disappointed. Sometimes this can be put down to launch-spec pre-production cars, but this couldn't be the case with our Impre... sorry, WRX STI, as it was one of the very cars that was on the launch (hence the starting mileage of 3662).

As Holmes would have taken to the violin, so I sought out the solace of the skinny saddle and spent my evening cycle-pondering the problem. By the end of it I'd formed a plan, and early the next morning I went in search of roundabouts to do laps of and scrub the front tyres in. Sure enough, once

SUBARU WRX STI

Date acquired	November 2010
Total mileage	4974
Mileage this month	1312
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	24.7

the sheen of new rubber on the fresh Dunlop SP Sport 600s had been worn away, the front end shored up and the steering regained some of its meatiness. Elementary really.

The OTR price of the new WRX STI is £33,405, which puts it dangerously close to BMW 335i and Audi S4 territory. However, neither BMW or Audi could compete with the fantastic new Recaros in the STI, which are some of the most instantly comfortable and secure seats that I've had the pleasure of sitting in. The Germans would definitely have the upper hand when it comes to the rest of the interior, mind, although redeeming features do include a radio with longwave (so that I can listen to the brilliant *Test Match Special* coverage of the Ashes if I happen to be driving around in the middle of the night), good keyless entry and a decent amount of storage space. Oh, and glowing red dials. I like red.

With the rubber sorted, I've really warmed to the STI. I've said it before, but I love the honesty of Subaru – the weighty pedal actions and the hearty 296bhp from the STI's boxer feel like a log fire compared to a radiator. I've been enjoying fiddling with the settings of the centre diff on the way in to work in the mornings, too (I'll report back when I've come to a definite conclusion as to which is the best). In fact the only thing I'm less than happy with is that low-profile rear wing. I can do without a blue-and-gold colour scheme, but I'm firmly in the big pushbar camp, so I plan to see if there is anything that can be done about it...

Henry Catchpole



This month: Subaru WRX STI Jaguar XJR Renault Clio Williams Renault Mégane 250 Cup Mazda 3 MPS Nissan GT-R BMW M3 Skoda Yeti Infiniti G37S Coupe Vauxhall Insignia VXR Citroën DS3 Peugeot 306 Rallye Maserati GranTurismo Jaguar XKR Speed Pack Ford Fiesta Zetec S Radical Clubsport 1100 SEAT Leon Cupra R Audi TT RS Ford Capri V8

NEW ARRIVAL



Left: Recaro seats are superb, but the rest of the interior (far left) feels dated. Below: Catchpole's not a fan of the low-rise boot spoiler

'I'VE BEEN ENJOYING FIDDLING WITH THE SETTINGS ON THE CENTRE DIFF ON THE WAY IN TO WORK'

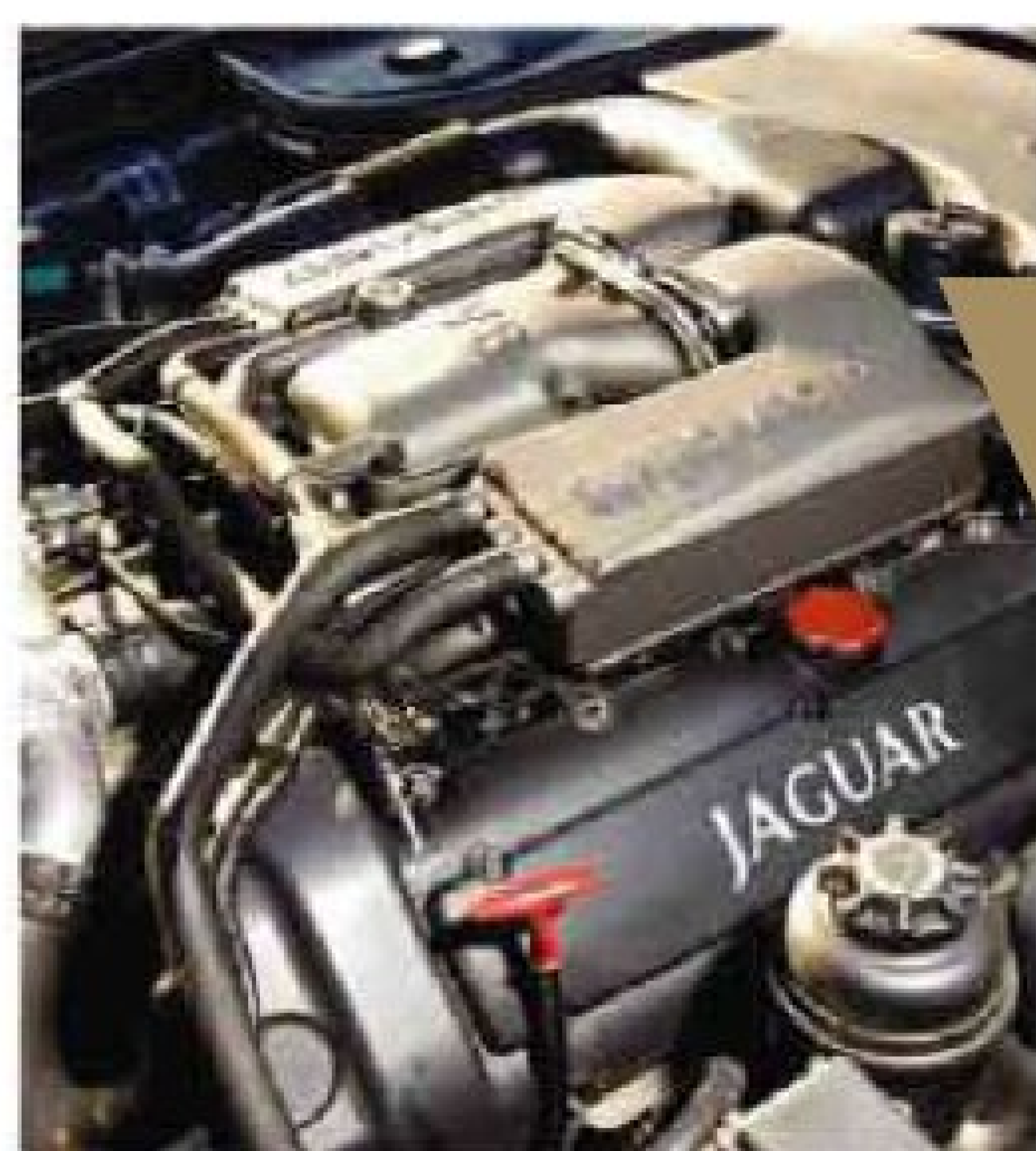
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||| LONG-TERM TESTS



Above: remember the days when you could actually see an engine, not just a plastic shroud? Here's Porter's Jag's 4-litre V8 complete with supercharger and associated plumbing. Below: putting its 370bhp to good use

NEW ARRIVAL

When I was a kid I briefly harboured thoughts of becoming a lawyer, not because of any deep-seated belief in justice or a fascination with the tort and penal law of this country but because my parents' solicitor had a Jaguar XJ and I decided that it was the kind of car I wanted when I was older. Fortunately I turned out to be too thick and lazy to get into law school, but the love of big Jags never went away.

In fact it got stronger, especially after the first time I tried an XJ with a V8 and a supercharger. Now it became an obsession that really wouldn't fade, to the extent that when the alloy-bodied XJ came in, I badgered Jag into lending me one of the old steel-bodied 4-litre XJRs just so I could have a final

drive in it. Yes, the new model was technically superior but there was something about the hefty, wafty, geezerish old car that somehow appealed to me more. One day I'd have to own one.

Earlier this year, whilst suffering a particularly acute pang of lust for one of these old warhorses, I put a half-serious message on my Sniff Petrol Twitter feed asking if anyone had an XJR they wanted to sell to me. Straight away a chap called Stephen Hallahan replied to say that yes, actually he did. And, as it turned out, what he was offering came close to XJR perfection. A 1999 car in black with cream leather and, incredibly, fewer than 32,000 miles on the clock. Hallahan was just

JAGUAR XJR

Date acquired	July 2010
Total mileage	33,244
Mileage this month	743
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	18.8

the second owner. Four years ago he went out to buy a fitted kitchen but the showroom was next to a Jaguar garage and he came home with the XJR instead. Now, with his wife expecting their first baby, the kitchen still not replaced, and the Jag reduced to the role of occasional plaything, he was prepared to let it go for a very reasonable price. I was powerless to resist. Which means, at last, I've realised a childhood ambition.

Now, I drove these cars when they were new and in my mind the dynamics were always a bit on the soft side, but my XJR is actually better than I remember. The brakes aren't the sharpest things in the world but they stop the car just fine; the steering wouldn't be on Porsche's list of things to benchmark but it's more direct than I recall, and whilst it thumps and tramlines in a way that belies the basic age of the design, the chassis is capable of taking an increase in tempo without rolling or heaving or making

'THE XJR ISN'T AS FAST AS MODERN SUPER-SALOONS, BUT IT'S BRISK ENOUGH TO



you do some sick onto the hand-stitched leather.

Best of all, there's that 370bhp engine surging you forward with a discreet supercharger whirr. The XJR might not be as fast as modern super-saloons but it's brisk enough to give

upstart hot hatches and badly driven Boxsters a ruddy good drubbing. And that's the XJR for you – a bit old-fashioned, but not so dated that you can't live with it everyday. Which is what I do. And, so far, I bloody love it.

Richard Porter



RENAULT CLIO WILLIAMS

Date acquired	September 2010
Total mileage	83,502
Mileage this month	629
Costs this month	£30
mpg this month	29.0

As I drooled over some of the magnificent motors at the recent Classic Car Show at the NEC, I felt a twinge of embarrassment. The owners of these cars clearly knew what they were doing and put so much time and effort into their pride and joys. Feeling rather guilty, the very next day I decided to get active and sort something Stephen Dobie and I had been meaning to do ever since we purchased the Willy.

I went to Halfords with V5 in hand and got some new registration plates. I then removed the rusty old screws holding the original faded plates,

wiped the uncovered bodywork clean and fitted the new plates using heavy-duty self-adhesive pads.

Small things make such a difference. It cost £30 for the plates, plus a couple of quid for the sticky pads, and the whole thing probably took 15 minutes. But the Willy looks smarter for it, shaving a few years off its appearance in the process and leaving me feeling weirdly chuffed.

Adam Shorrock



GIVE HOT HATCHES A GOOD DRUBBING'

RS MÉGANE 250 CUP

Date acquired	May 2010
Total mileage	10,589
Mileage this month	1668
Costs this month	£566
mpg this month	28.0

If there's one upgrade many of us consider for our cars it's an exhaust and filter swap. So when the UK importer for Remus exhausts (www.remusuk.com) offered a cat-back fully stainless system and a Pipercross replacement filter, along with a before-and-after rolling road run to chart any gains in power and torque, I jumped at the chance.

I've heard good things about Remus from a few mates who have systems fitted to their cars, and since they have to pass stringent TÜV tests, you know they're built to a very high standard. I was also encouraged by the fact that the Remus system (£506 plus an hour's fitting) not only retains the Mégane's standard catalytic converter and doesn't mess with the tailpipe finisher, but it also has a pair of silencers, so it wouldn't be stupidly noisy. The standard system is a one-piece item so you need to cut it aft of the catalyst downpipe. The two-piece Remus system then attaches with a snug, sleeved joint and clamp. It uses all the standard mounts and fits like a glove.

Running on regular 95 octane fuel, the standard Mégane achieved 244.1bhp, just a few horsepower down on Renault's factory claim of 246.7bhp (250PS). With the Remus system fitted, it develops a peak of 253.8bhp, with useful gains from 4000rpm upwards. Likewise, torque output increases by anywhere between 4 and 8lb ft from 4000rpm through to the 7400rpm limiter.

On the road those gains are tangible, with a little added in-gear urgency and a sweeter, freer-breathing top-end. Aurally there's little difference, save a very subtle deepening of the exhaust note. That it could pass as an OE system, but with greater performance, is perhaps the best compliment we can pay.

Richard Meaden



The two-piece stainless Remus exhaust, about to be bolted to Meaden's Mégane

Fast Fleet

||| LONG-TERM TESTS



Finding winter tyres for the M3's 19in alloys is tricky, but help is at hand...

BMW M3 COMPETITION

Date acquired	May 2010
Total mileage	15,025
Mileage this month	886
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	23.1

I'm not sure if the stop/start function on the M3 makes an appreciable difference to its economy, but then I don't drive it in heavy traffic that often. What I do know is that after you've spent some time driving a car that cuts out every time you stop with your foot on the brake, it feels most odd to be in one that carries on idling. So when the M3 didn't cut out at any of my stops on the way to work the other morning, I wondered why. My colleague Stephen Dobie said it was because it was close to freezing outside, and he's right; one of the conditions that deactivates stop/start is a temperature of 3deg C or below. Looks like it won't be active for a little while, then...

In last winter's snow I spent three hours slithering 20 miles in an M5, so I'd promised myself I'd look into winter tyre options for the M3. Searching the web, I discovered that BMW and its UK dealers have embraced the idea of the seasonal tyre change with its new 'Winter Tyre Program'. On the M3, this gets you a set of 18in alloys shod with Michelin WR Pilot Alpin PA3s and the storage of your summer tyres on their rims until the spring. For this they charge £1955 (prices for other models start at £600). Pretty good value, especially if you intend keeping the car for a few years, as apart from the cost of a half hour's labour to change them over, there's nothing more to pay until the tyres wear out. Tempting...

John Barker

Chasing this year's eCoty candidates across Yorkshire for last month's cover story put plenty of stress on both me and the Mazda, but which broke first? Well it was a close-run thing, but I managed to survive the encounter slightly better than our long-termer...

The MPS had done an excellent job for most of the week, even if it struggled to put down all of its power on the rain-soaked roads we encountered, but by the Thursday there was smoke coming from the exhaust and a slight smell of oil. Then the engine warning light came on, and a quick check on the oil level revealed that it had used more than two litres in only 40 miles. I decided to leave it in the hotel car park and hitch a lift with fellow photographer Matt Howell to get the final shots of the test.

At the end of the shoot a call to Mazda summoned assistance, but due to the remote location the RAC truck wouldn't be able to get to the car for over an hour and a half. At least I could spend the time in the warmth of the hotel rather than in the cold at the side of the road. When the

MAZDA 3 MPS

Date acquired	May 2010
Total mileage	10,601
Mileage this month	1570
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	29.1

engineer finally arrived the diagnosis was bleak. It was agreed that the car would be transported back to my local Mazda dealer in Cambridge, while I made my way back with Matt, who had generously offered to stay behind.

After a couple of days I heard back from the dealer, and it wasn't good news. It needed a new turbo. Worse, the dealer said that since the first service was overdue by about 1500 miles, it wouldn't be covered under the normal warranty. Now I'm pretty particular when it comes to servicing, and as well as checking the oil before we'd set out I'd checked the onboard computer, which said a service wasn't due for 1500 miles. Unfortunately it was telling porkies. Fortunately, when I explained the situation the dealer was sympathetic and hopefully all will now be resolved pretty quickly, but the moral of the story is: Know the service schedule.

Chris Rutter



Staff photographer Rutter was using the Mazda as a camera-car on last month's Car of the Year feature (right) when it started smoking and using oil. Both Rutter and the RAC man suspected a knackered turbo, and so it proved



Yu's GT-R lines up with a 911 Turbo S at the final VMax day of 2010 at Brunters

'CHASING THE ECOTY CARS ACROSS YORKSHIRE PUT STRESS ON BOTH ME AND THE MAZDA'



NISSAN GT-R

Date acquired	April 2009
Total mileage	15,798
Mileage this month	300
Costs this month	£699 (service)
mpg this month	15.4

How time flies. The GT-R was due its 18-month service recently, and once again a quick email to Middlehurst Motorsport summoned the free Nissan Concierge collection and delivery service and it was whisked off the 200-odd miles to St Helens.

Why use such a distant dealer when there are now plenty of Nissan High

Performance Centres (HPCs) closer by? Well, they were the supplying dealer and our relationship goes back 15 years to my first Skyline R32 GT-R. Being by far the most experienced GT-R specialists in Europe, I never considered going anywhere else.

Fully refreshed and fighting fit, it was time to take 'Purple Zilla' back to Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground for the final VMax day of the year (vmax200.com). You may remember back in issue 147 that we managed a best speed of 192mph on the 1.6-mile runway, but there were some fuelling issues as the standard injectors were maxing out. Now with the much

bigger Injector Dynamics 1000cc/min jobbies and a Cobb air intake with appropriate GTC custom tune, it was going to be interesting to see how the extra 21bhp thus liberated would translate into extra mph.

easy 196mph on the very first run. Frustratingly it proved impossible to beat that speed, but we matched it several times and with no sign of the previous fuelling problems.

Purple Zilla proved more than a

'PURPLE ZILLA HIT AN EASY 196MPH ON THE VERY FIRST RUN'

The damp, cold conditions were good for power but not so good for traction, with even the GT-R struggling for grip around the bottom corner that feeds onto the main straight. But I was delighted to hit an

match for a both a 997 GT2 RS and a 997.2 Turbo S (which admittedly did go on to match the 196mph, but took more time to get there). Not bad for a sub-£60K Datsun...

David Yu

Fast Fleet

|| LONG-TERM TESTS

There's a button on the centre console of the Yeti marked 'Off Road' and to be honest I'd thought that it was about as serious as a 'Sport' button in a SsangYong. I was quite prepared to believe that the Yeti could make its way across a muddy field, but only with as much enthusiasm as a Rodius would muster around a lap of Castle Combe.

How wrong can you be? The Rodius is brilliant through Quarry! Only joking... I've no idea if the Rodius has a Sport button or if one has ever been to Wiltshire. The Yeti, however, is extremely impressive at tramping across boggy Scottish wilderness and I know this because I've experienced it.

I'd borrowed our Yeti from regular keeper Ollie Marriage and driven up to Loch Kennard, just south of Aberfeldy, where Miko Hanninen (newly crowned 2010 IRC champion) and Guy Wilks (who has subsequently taken over the seat vacated by Kris Meeke at Peugeot) were giving passenger rides in their Super 2000 Fabia rally cars (you can see the video on www.evo.co.uk). Almost as a sideshow, people were being allowed to do a spot of off-roading in some Yetis, so I hopped into one with an instructor alongside.

The first question I asked was what tyres this Yeti was on and what the pressures were. 'Winter road tyres and the pressures are normal,' came the response. Fair enough. We set off along a normal forest fireroad, which I attempted to drive fairly swiftly, using cambers and suchlike to help progress. To my surprise, the Yeti lapped it up. It sailed over the rocky, potholed ground with amazing suppleness but without



SKODA YETI 1.8 TSI

Date acquired	July 2010
Total mileage	14,421
Mileage this month	3897
Costs this month	£50 (windscreen excess)
mpg this month	22.5

rolling horribly in the corners, thus encouraging you to drive ever faster.

Then we stopped, pressed The Button (which seamlessly activates the electronic differential lock and adjusts the ABS and traction control) and headed out into the heather and some extremely black mud. I'm not about to say that the Yeti will challenge a Land Rover Defender – it's only got 180mm of ground clearance for a start – but it got us up slopes (with a few revs), through water and then down slopes (into neutral and touch the brakes to help the hill descent system) that I guarantee you wouldn't believe possible. It would be fun to turn up at your local green lane event in a Yeti.



Driving back down the A74 in ours, listening to the slightly crackly radio (we still haven't replaced the aerial), I looked at the little glowing-green Off Road button with respect. I'm not sure Ollie, or most other 4x4 Yeti owners, will ever have much cause to press it and put it to the test, but it's nice to know it's not just for show. The Yeti must surely be the most versatile long-term we've ever run.

Henry Catchpole



Top left: our Yeti meets a Super 2000 Fabia, which Henry got to ride in (left). Biggest eye-opener, though, was off-roading in a Yeti (above). He came away well impressed by its abilities

Our Infiniti has no issues with wintry conditions now it's on suitable rubber



Perfect timing. There was less than a week between our G37S being fitted with winter tyres and the snow arriving. Probably for the best, too. Much as it was amusing the way the Infiniti's rear Bridgestones would spin up on wet roads as if they were attached to some 500-odd-bhp AMG Mercedes, I didn't fancy their chances at all on the white stuff.

Fortunately, Infiniti communications director Wayne Bruce had clearly been thinking along similar lines and had suggested we might like to try a set of Dunlop SP Winter Sport 3D

INFINITI G37S COUPE

Date acquired	July 2010
Total mileage	8892
Mileage this month	917
Costs this month	£700.40 (winter tyres)
mpg this month	25.2

tyres on GGI0 EVO. It sounded like a good plan to me.

While our G37S Coupe was away having its new rubber fitted, I got to try a G37 Convertible for a couple of days. As a big fan of drop-tops – and, it must be said, of our Coupe – I was quite excited about getting to try this version of the G37, even though the

**'THE YETI GOT US UP
SLOPES, THROUGH
WATER AND DOWN
HILLS YOU WOULDN'T
BELIEVE POSSIBLE'**



VAUXHALL INSIGNIA VXR

Date acquired	June 2010
Total mileage	13,698
Mileage this month	1810
Costs this month	£123.59 (service)
mpg this month	24.2



Car enthusiasts can be a snobbish lot. It's decades since Vauxhall built any seriously ropey cars, and it's almost as long since they were pilloried for building boring ones by one Jeremy Charles Robert Clarkson. And yet you still sense a residual sneeriness, particularly from drivers of the German 'big three'. There's really no need, not on the evidence of our Insignia VXR Sports Tourer, which is proving a very capable and likeable replacement for the BMW 335i Touring and Audi S4 Avant that we've previously run.

Unlike those cars, the Insignia has so far suffered neither mechanical failures nor electronic glitches. Okay, the interior materials aren't quite in the Audi league, but it has a real dash of style about it, inside and out. It's a lot of very good-looking motor car for the money (our heavily optioned car, at £37,860, certainly isn't cheap, but it's around £10K less than a similarly specced S4).

And the savings continue. Where the Beemer and Audi each stung us for around £200 for their first service, the Insignia has just had an oil-change service at the local Vauxhall dealer, and was returned washed and vacuumed for a very reasonable £123.59. Apart from petrol, consumed at an acceptable 24-25mpg (slightly better than the S4 but about 3mpg behind the 335i), that's the only expense so far.

I'm impressed. And if your inner car snob isn't convinced, just remember that the VXR was engineered, developed and built in Germany, just like the 335i and S4. Though personally I won't be holding that against it!

Peter Tomalin

weather wasn't exactly conducive to long stretches of roof-down motoring. This proved particularly unfortunate as it turned out, because while the Convertible looks smart with its folding metal roof up, the constant squeaks and creaks that it emits when in this position are rather off-putting. And the less said about the shuddering of the steering wheel and rear-view mirror, the better. A bit disappointing, then, but at least it confirmed that the fixed-roof car is the one to have.

Especially, I now know, on winter tyres. Thus equipped, our Infiniti not only shrugs off snow, but has

vastly improved traction on cold, wet tarmac. The rear end's twitchiness has been tamed to the point where it now only gets loose when you're deliberately seeing how far you can push it, and even then the breakaway is so gentle that the tyres usually find grip again before the ESP gets involved. It is, I reckon, spot on.

Ian Eveleigh



Winter tyres (above) are impressive, convertible-roofed G37 (left) less so

Fast Fleet

LONG-TERM TESTS

JAGUAR XKR SPEED PACK

Date acquired	September 2010
Total mileage	10,250
Mileage this month	1880
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	18.2

A precarious relationship saved by a heated steering wheel? Of course I'd never allow myself to be swayed by such trinkets... But, as I'm learning, Jaguar does understand the way we live with cars.

The heated steering wheel and seats are, as I've already mentioned, scorching – and gratefully used several times a day right now. The satnav's screen and controls may not be cutting edge, but it always



Below left: iPod connection works well. Above: heated seats and wheel welcome

gets me to my destination. The iPod interface works really well and charges my telephone – which Bluetooths seamlessly into the car.

In fact there's some lovely systems integration at work in the XKR. When the fuel warning chimes, the satnav automatically shows the nearest fuel stations. Set a destination you can't reach without refuelling and the nav warns you as much. I also love the way a plummy Brit accent welcomes you to new countries the moment you cross a border.

The 2+2 seating layout is proving invaluable too. Two under-sixes fit

into the rear chairs well enough, even if that then means grubby footmarks everywhere. One set of circumstances is to be avoided at all costs, though. The front seats have ventilation fans to cool one's back. They draw air through perforations on the seat faces and exit it through the seat backs. Do not, under any circumstances, allow adults to eat hot, spicy food and think the fans will avert embarrassment. Because the kiddies will get a face-full of guff. Naturally, this observation is purely theoretical.

Chris Harris

On the front, Pirelli P6000s, the Rallye's original tyre when it was new. On the back, Firestone Firehawk TZ200s, 'fresh' from a few summer trackdays. On the driver's seat, me, rapidly rediscovering why old Peugeots had the reputation they did.

The new eBay wheels and tyres have gone on the front and the difference is mesmerising – and not only because at long last I've got rid of the square wheel and associated juddering. I had been putting the Peugeot's lack of outright incisiveness down to the car's age, but now it's a complete dazzler. The front end is so much more responsive; even the ride seems to have improved because the damn thing just flows so well across country. And then, just to see what happens, you lift off mid-corner and...

...it's magical. Not a sudden spit sideways, but a calm, measured movement, catchable at any time by getting back on the oh-so-sharp

PEUGEOT 306 RALLYE

Date acquired	April 2010
Total mileage	87,821
Mileage this month	339
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	29.1

throttle and/or gently nudging the steering.

I'm so glad I didn't give the chassis too much grip by fitting modern tyres.



Now it has round wheels all round, the 306 Rallye's handling has been transformed

Does it matter that, even on its everyday Dunlops, our Skoda Yeti is far faster through any given corner? Not for a split second. In the Rallye things happen at more manageable, sociable speeds, and corners last longer, so you can do more on the way through them. And let's face it, corners are why I bought this car in the first place.

Ollie Marriage

DS3's looks are a hit with Adam, but he's disappointed with the uncomfortable seats and the creaking dash (bottom right)



Though it troubles me to say it, I can't help feeling slightly let down by the DS3.

Every time this car shows promise there turns out to be a hidden disappointment. For example, the smooth, punchy power delivery, excellent economy, stylish cabin and roomy boot suggest it could be a mini GT. But set out on a long journey and after barely an hour on the road the seats feel uncomfortable and unsupportive. Part of the trouble is that I feel I'm perched on the seat rather than actually in it.

Another example: the DS3 is very well priced; it could well be seen as a bit of a bargain compared with the equivalent Mini. But after just 8000 miles, poor French build quality has

CITROËN DS3 1.6 DSPORT

Date acquired	August 2010
Total mileage	8291
Mileage this month	1015
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	40.1



'AT THE CORE OF THE DS3'S APPEAL ARE ITS DESIGNER LOOKS AND THE EXCEPTIONAL 1.6 THP DSPORT ENGINE'

SECOND OPINION

Adam and I tend to see eye to eye on cars. That's why we share ownership of a Clio Williams. But not here. While it's not overly sporty, the DS3 really impresses me, chiefly by being a compelling all-rounder. If I were a full-strength road tester I'd call it dynamically homogeneous. Or something.

Its key controls – steering, gearbox and pedals – may lack feel compared with some of the more hardcore hatches, but they play off each other near perfectly, so end up feeling rather well judged. In combination with the keen, torque-rich engine, they allow you to string together corners in a calmer, more supple

manner than in many rivals – a Mini Cooper S on similarly large wheels in particular. And while I do normally look for a more involving, keyed-in driving experience, the DS3 should be commended for bringing something different to the party.

I agree about those seats, though...

Stephen Dobie



reared its ugly head in the shape of a creaking parcel shelf and dashboard, with the added bonus of ice on the *inside* of the windscreen on cold mornings. Being the co-owner of a Clio Williams, I'm well aware that this sort of thing can add to the charm of a car. But then the Willy is 17 years old; on a brand new car it's plain annoying.

Some of the toys have their irritations too, and the automatic wipers are top of the list. To switch them on you push the wiper stalk down from the 'off' position. It springs back up immediately, and the auto wipers are now on. But to cancel them

you don't tap the stalk down again, instead you have to click it upward to 'intermittent' then back down to 'off'. I've lost count of how many times I thought I'd turned the wipers off only to have the blades give me a wave to signal they're still on.

At the core of the DS3's appeal are its designer looks and the exceptional 1.6 THP DSport engine. But if you're looking for something extra, you might struggle to find it. Citroën needs to build on these strengths for the DS3 to be the complete package it needs to be to compete with the Mini.

Adam Shorrock

Fast Fleet

||| LONG-TERM TESTS

HARRY'S GARAGE ROUND-UP



Clockwise from above: Range Rover has now got its winter tyres on; Insight is surprisingly capable in the snow too; GranTurismo has been taken away for a service; Harry had to fit a new battery to the Zonda



'IF THE SNOW GETS REALLY BAD, I CAN DO A LOT WORSE THAN STICKING TO MY HONDA INSIGHT'

It was the GranTurismo's turn for attention this month as it's about to celebrate its third birthday and that means the comfort blanket of an all-encompassing manufacturer's warranty is about to come to an end.

To make sure the car is in rude health before it runs out, I phoned the local Maserati main dealer, Dick Lovett in Swindon, and asked for the car to be collected so that they could inspect it and carry out a service (quoted at £1250 all-in) and MOT at the same time. I also asked them to check out why the left-hand indicator refuses to cancel and see if they think the diff has a slight whine to it. Hardly an expansive list for 24,000 miles of motoring, but today's Maseratis are very different to what went before... I'll report back on how it went next time.

Next up for attention were the two 4x4s in the Metcalfe fleet, both due to have their winter tyres fitted. On the Range Rover TDV8 this is a

piece of cake (well, except for the ridiculous weight of each wheel) as I've got a set of second-hand rims with Pirelli winter rubber already fitted to them, so the changeover takes around 20 minutes. This will be the third season for this set of tyres and I have to say they're lasting well. They cover around 5000 miles each year and I can see them lasting another two winters at least. For the reassurance they give in wintry conditions, I think they're worth every penny.

I wish it was as easy with the Panda 4x4, but I still haven't found any spare rims for it, so it's a matter of changing the front tyres for a set of winters instead. I've ordered up some new Vredestein Snowtrac 3s this year as the old tyres were five years old and well past their best. Only trouble is, the Vredesteins have yet to arrive and the snow's started early this year. Fingers crossed they turn up soon...

If the snow gets really bad, I can

do a lot worse than sticking to my Honda Insight as, for some reason, it's incredibly good in the snow. I think it's the combination of ultra light weight and skinny tyres that make it next to unbeatable for a regular two-wheel-drive car. Weird, but then the Citroën 2CV was also highly rated in snow thanks to similar attributes, not that I'd recommend one for any other reason.

The Zonda may be tucked up for the winter but that hasn't stopped it from breaking down. evo's good friend Richard Tipper (he of Perfection Detailing fame) came to work his magic on it the other day but it refused to start. It turned out the battery was kaput after the trickle charger went on the blink and boiled it dry. Halfords probably don't know this, but they stock Pagani batteries on the shelf, as the Zonda uses the same one as the Ford Transit. And that means it costs just £113 to replace. Happy days.

Harry Metcalfe

FORD FIESTA ZETEC S

Date acquired	May 2010
Total mileage	8622
Mileage this month	1515
Costs this month	£2149 (Mountune power upgrade), £400 (four tyres)
mpg this month	37.4

I've never been one for tuning cars. The several I've owned have stayed completely standard, despite me growing up in an age of *Max Power* and *The Fast and the Furious*. Yet when the time came to 'Mountune' our Fiesta, I was pretty excited. As it spent the day at my local Ford dealer, Tim Norton of Oakham, having its ECU remapped and its new exhaust system and air filter fitted, I couldn't wait to find out how much faster it would be.

Disappointing, then, that it didn't feel all that different at first – below 4000rpm it was louder, though barely any brisker. But whereas the standard Zetec S does its best work between 3500 and 5500rpm, the Mountune's power really kicks in around 4250rpm, with urgency akin to a finessed VTEC engine, before building with linearity (and loudness) until the new 7000rpm limit (500rpm higher).

The new kick is at its best in gears two to four, with some newfound and welcome gusto exiting tight corners. A visit to a range of rolling roads saw highs of 141.8bhp at 6700rpm and 126.9lb ft at 4750rpm, delivered at the excellent (though well hidden) Track 'n' Road Powerperformance in Rainham. Standard, the Zetec S produces 118bhp at 6000rpm and 112lb ft at 4050rpm, and while the Mountune's ultimate

The Radical travelled 350 miles this month – all in the cosy surroundings of this Brian James RS2 fully enclosed trailer. Co-owner Roger Green and I were hoping to get some more track time with the Clubsport before winter, but motorsport team 360 Racing at Silverstone (who will be running the car for us next season) spotted some damage and the chaps at Radical in Peterborough offered to refresh the car (more next month).

So, while I can't tell you what the Radical has been like to drive these last four weeks, I can tell you what it's been like to tow it. And, simply put, it has been brilliant.

The RS2 can accommodate anything



'THE MOUNTUNE KIT'S POWER KICKS IN WITH URGENCY AKIN TO A FINESSED VTEC ENGINE'

PERFORMANCE

Zetec S Mountune		
0-60mph	9.7sec	8.9sec

2ND GEAR		
10-30	4.6	6.0
20-40	3.9	3.7
30-50	3.9	3.7
40-60	n/a	4.0

3RD GEAR		
20-40	5.9	5.8
30-50	5.8	5.6
40-60	5.9	5.5
50-70	6.2	5.7

4TH GEAR		
20-40	8.8	8.7
30-50	8.1	7.8
40-60	8.3	7.8
50-70	8.5	8.1
60-80	9.0	8.4

SEAT LEON CUPRA R



Protruding spokes are a worry for Leon driver Lang

live in fear! The Cupra R's standard wheels are called Potenzas and are 19 inches in diameter. They look awesome, with spokes similar to the claws of Wolverine from the X-Men movies. Trouble is, said spokes stick out a long way – well beyond the tyre wall when viewed in profile – so there's nothing to protect them from accidental kerb kissing. This worries me. I now constantly dread hearing the sound of concrete hitting alloy. In fact I'm so cautious when parking that I need a taxi just to get me to the kerb...

Paul Lang

performance feels broadly similar – our VBOX-recorded 0-60mph time is less than a second quicker – real world in-gear times are helpfully cut (see table).

Crucially, though, it all comes at a price. Not just the £2149 for the power kit, fully dealer fitted (which takes the total price of our Fiesta up to a scary £19,054), but the din that now accompanies progress. Short B-road bursts are jolly good fun if you're in the

mood, but the new exhaust makes so much hubbub north of 4000rpm that I've found myself short-shifting through the gearbox to keep things reasonably peaceful – and thus missing out on all the added performance...

What really grates, though, is that it's altered the Fiesta's character too much. Gone is the subtler, more considered rival to the Renaultsport Twingo and Suzuki Swift Sport; in its place is a car

with more power, but power that is far less pleasurable to utilise.

On the plus side, upgrading to Dunlop SP Sport Maxx tyres (an optional part of the Mountune process) has upped the Fiesta's chassis finesse – the ride is much improved and the steering response crisper. Hopefully the rest of the mods will win me over in the long run.

Stephen Dobie

AUDI TT RS

Nearly 15,000 miles on, and other than fuel not a penny has been spent on the TT RS, although this is likely to change soon as the tyres are closing in on their wear indicators. The engine seems to have got louder recently, which is weird but no hardship, as the five-cylinder turbo warble is one of the car's highlights.

Roger Green

FORD CAPRI V8

Last time round, I mentioned the unwelcome discovery of silicone sealant in the Capri's sump. Well, the V8 is now out of the car and further inspection has thrown up some more 'issues'. It's now looking horribly like a full strip and rebuild will be required. Bugger.

John Barker

RADICAL CLUBSPORT 1100

Date acquired	July 2010
Total mileage	n/a
Mileage this month	0
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	n/a

up to mk2 Escort size and 1800kg, which means the sub-450kg Radical is an easy fit. The hydraulic tilt bed and short ramps (for ultra-low loading) make driving, or pushing, the Radical on board 'easy as'.

I'm a novice at towing, but hitched up to our Skoda Yeti the RS2 has proved steady and stable even in crosswinds. The width of the enclosed trailer does obscure rear visibility, but a set of towing mirrors



from Halfords sorted that.

And you know what? I thought I'd hate towing – the counter-intuitive reversing, the general plodding. Yet, while not quite the 'thrill of driving',

the RS2 has made it as hassle-free and safe. Not cheap at £5299, but I wouldn't want to mummy our Radical around in anything else.

Nick Trott

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BUYING GUIDE

HONDA CIVIC TYPE-R Screaming VTEC fun from under £10K

Wacky styling, futuristic dash, high-revving naturally aspirated twin-cam and Honda engineering. What's not to like? We tell you

JUST LOOKING p147



CARS FOR SALE

We all love browsing the classifieds, but what are the cars like to drive? This month we try a supercharged Monaro and a BMW Z4 2.5i

TRACK BATTLE p150



WHICH IS FASTER?

BMW's sublime M3 CSL takes on a manic Mitsubishi Evo X RS around the Bedford Autodrome's West Circuit. Place your bets...

ASK THE EXPERTS p171



YOU ASK, WE ANSWER

On a long journey, could your car produce your own body weight in CO2, asks one reader. As always, our experts have all the answers

Honda Civic Type-R

Just out of production after four years, here's the low-down on the high-revving Honda

Even before *The Fast and the Furious* brought so-called 'rice rockets' to a wider audience, Japanese performance cars already enjoyed a fanatical following. Not only were they excellent packages straight from the factory, there was a wealth of tuning options available.

Honda has frequently been at the forefront, using its 'Type-R' badge to denote a lightweight, semi-homologation special. One of the

earliest cars to wear the badge was the brilliant NSX-R but perhaps the best-known is the Civic.

The previous incarnation of the Civic Type-R, built from 2001-2005, was a cracking hot hatch with a strong enthusiast following, so when its replacement, code-named FN2, was launched in the UK in early 2007, great things were expected.

The new car's shape polarised opinion, as did the space-shuttle dashboard. Honda was on safer

ground under the skin, because the new Type-R got the same naturally aspirated 2-litre, 16-valve variable valve-timing 'VTEC' engine from the previous model. Power was up only a fraction, from 197 to 198bhp, but Honda had smoothed the VTEC's marked step-up in power delivery by re-configuring the variable timing settings and introducing a different profile for the high-speed cam.

The new car used the same, brilliant six-speed manual gearbox and a slightly

shorter final drive, but the kerb weight had gone up by around 60kg, which slightly blunted any performance gains. We recorded 0-60mph in a respectable 6.8sec (identical to the previous version).

On the road, you still had to keep the revs up to make properly quick progress, but that's always been the Type-R way. What was slightly disappointing was the chassis, which lacked a little feedback and interaction. The electrically assisted steering was



‘The shape polarised opinion, as did the space-shuttle dashboard’

particularly lacking in feel. But the Civic had plenty of grip and a sporting ride, and when you were slotting the stubby gearlever around the gate and making that VTEC engine sing, it still had plenty going for it.

For the real hardcore driver, though, there are a number of variants worth considering. The Championship White was a special edition that arrived towards the end of 2008, boasting a mechanical limited-slip differential that really sharpened the handling and brought some genuine involvement. Equipment-wise, it was specced to the same lavish standards as the 'GT' version which accounted for 90 per cent of Type-R sales.

There are also two Mugen versions that you might come across. The rarest is a full-on road-racer of which just 20 examples were built by Mugen's UK operation and cost an eye-watering £38,599. With 237bhp, it was a proper little Touring car.

Then there was the Mugen 200, which came out in Spring 2010 and effectively replaced the Championship White, having the same limited-slip diff and similar cosmetic tweaks. As the name suggests, just 200 were produced. Best of all is the Japanese-market Civic Type-R, actually a four-door saloon, never officially imported to the UK but one of the true greats.

It was a sad day when Honda announced that it would cease production of the Civic Type-R. The engine doesn't meet the 2011 Euro5 emissions regulations and Honda didn't want to dilute the Type-R's essence to comply. You have to admire that sort of engineering purity. It also means that if you want a Civic Type-R, then pre-owned is now the only way to go.

Words Jim Blackstock

Pictures Chris Rutter

SPECIFICATION

(2007 Civic Type-R)

- Engine 4-cylinder, 1998cc, 16v VTEC
- Max power 198bhp @ 7800rpm
- Max torque 142lb ft @ 5600rpm
- Transmission Six-speed manual gearbox, front-wheel drive
- Tyres 225/40 x ZR18 front and rear
- Weight (kerb) 1267kg
- Power-to-weight 158bhp/ton
- 0-60mph 6.8sec
- Top speed 141mph (claimed)
- Basic price when new £17,600 (2007)

PARTS PRICES

Supplied by TGM Sport, Fleet, Hants. Prices include VAT at 20% but exclude fitting.

- Tyres (each) £126 (Bridgestones)
- Brake pads (front, set) £53.59
- Brake discs (front, each) £60.19
- Clutch, complete £219.91
- Flywheel £301.90
- Oil filter £10.80
- Air filter £27.68
- Spark plugs (set of four) £43.20
- Exhaust system £352.58

SERVICING

(Prices supplied by TGM Sport)

- Minor service £125
- Major service £270
- Cambelt change n/a (chain)

WHAT TO PAY

Prices start at well below £10,000 for an early (2007) example with reasonable mileage – around the 30,000-35,000 mark. 2008 examples fetch £12,000-13,000, though for this money you should be able to find a nice, low-mileage car. Later cars, including Championship Whites, cost from £15,000, while it's still possible to find a few available new. Indeed our new car finder service at evo.co.uk/new-car has a new Civic Type-R listed at just £18,849.95 OTR! And if you fancy a Japanese-market Civic, expect to pay around £16-£17K.

IN THE CLASSIFIEDS



2007
36,000 miles
Leather/Alcantara seats, GT pack (cruise, fogs, curtain airbags, etc)

£9995



2008
22,500 miles
19in alloys, sat-nav, auto lights and wipers, balance of warranty

£11,995



2009
11,000 miles
Sat-nav, Bluetooth connection, service history, full specification

£14,500



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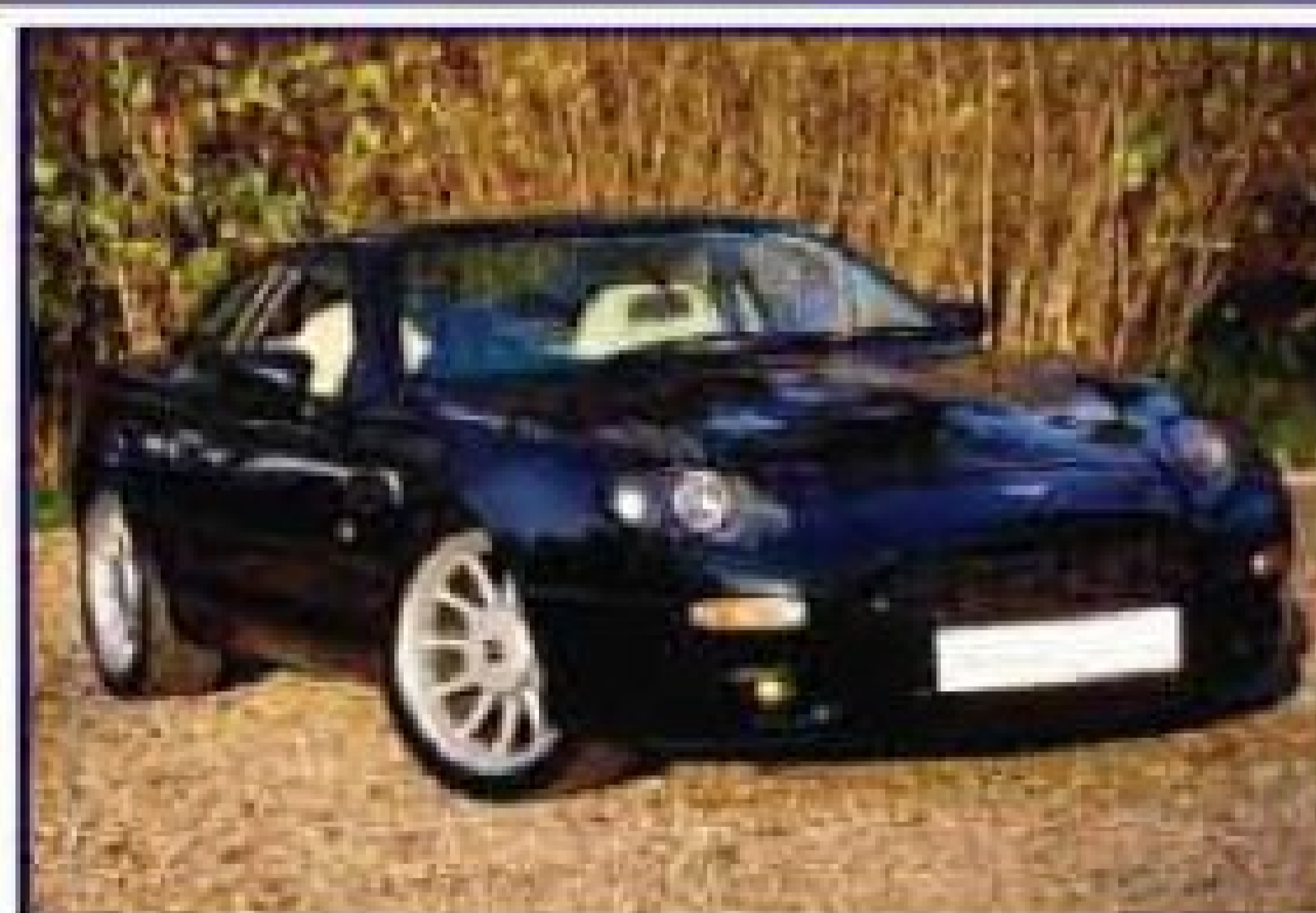
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JAGUAR XK 4.2 COUPE
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CHECKPOINTS

We spoke to Tom Gannon at TGM Sport, an independent Honda specialist and one of the UK dealers for Mugen products. TGM Sport sees more examples of the preceding 'breadvan-style' Civic Type-R, but since the two cars share many of their mechanical parts, their experience is worth listening to.

■ Engine

There have been no reports of major issues with the 2-litre twin-cam in the new-shape FN2 Type-R. However, in the previous version the engine did have a reputation for inconsistent oil consumption, as Gannon explains. 'There seemed to be no real rhyme or reason as to why some cars would use a lot of oil and others none at all. For example, we've seen cars with blown engines just 3000 or 4000 miles after they have been serviced. The owner assumed that the oil level would be OK and didn't bother checking until it was too late, if at all.' So check the dipstick – the oil should be just below the upper mark. If it isn't, the car probably hasn't been looked after.

Some cars have experienced a starting problem when the red button is pressed. It's caused by the starter

not engaging on the flywheel and requires the latter's replacement, so make sure it starts 'on the button'.

■ Transmission

Some owners of early (2007) cars have reported problems shifting into third gear, and even in some cases the 'box jumping out of third. Replacing the synchro appears to fix the problem, and many cars had this done under warranty. If you're looking at an early car, it's worth asking if this has been done, and paying special attention to the shift into third on the test drive. The clutch should work smoothly and without any creaking noises, which would indicate a worn clutch release bearing.

TMG have fitted a number of FN2 Civic Type-Rs with an aftermarket limited-slip differential. According to Gannon, 'it transforms the grip and they way they handle'.

■ Suspension, wheels & brakes

Honda's decision to replace the previous Civic's purebred rear double-wishbone set-up with a torsion beam means owners looking to upgrade their suspension face a more challenging task to adjust the

geometry: 'We always reset the geometry if we carry out any work on customer cars,' says Gannon. 'On the FN2 this involves shimming the rear hubs to achieve the correct settings.'

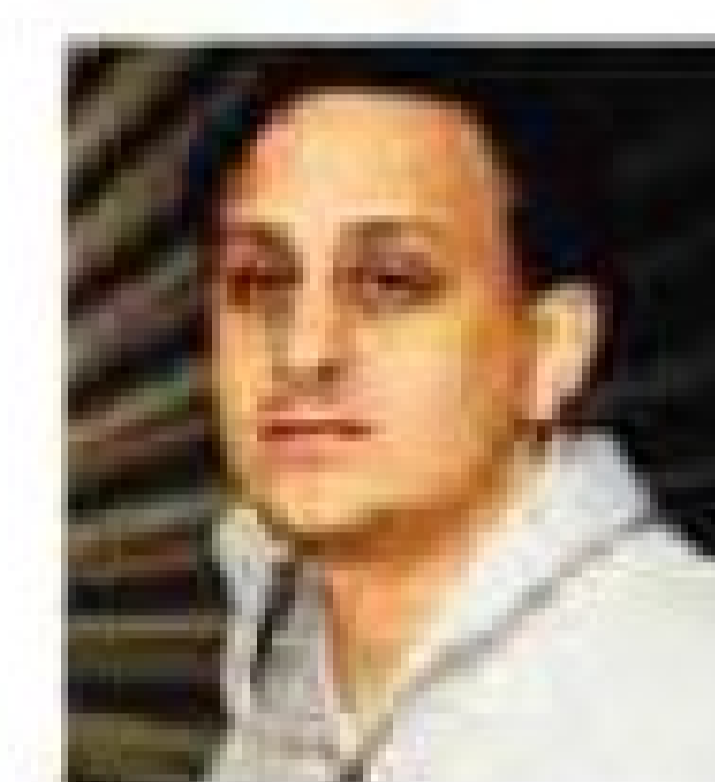
One complaint about the new car was that the brakes never felt as sharp as they should be. 'This is probably down to the specification of the pad material,' explains Gannon, 'as the actual hardware is the same as the predecessor. We fit a lot of cars with brake upgrades, particularly for the road, as the standard versions lack bite and stopping power. A set of uprated pads, braided hoses and high-performance fluid transforms it.'

■ Bodywork

Any FN2 Civic is still a pretty new car and shouldn't have any major rust issues, so if there is any evidence of repairs or respraying, view with real suspicion. That said, the top edges of the doors can start to rust from under the trim. If treated it's not a problem but, if not, it can develop quite quickly, so check carefully.

The paint is quite thin so you may well find stone-chips, particularly on the bonnet. So long as they're touched-in, it's not a problem.

I BOUGHT ONE



Mohammed Jounis

29-year-old student Mohammed has only owned his Type-R for five months but he's already smitten.

'I've had the car for five months and I really like it. It's a great everyday car and the space inside is really good, especially in the back – I can get three friends in no problem.'

'It's my first new-shape Civic, so the interior and in particular the dashboard took a little getting used to. But I like the fact that it's clearly all designed with the driver in mind – everything is angled towards you and is in just the right place.'

'You can really chuck it around'

'I love the way the car drives – it's real fun. The engine is very responsive, as is the chassis. It feels nimble yet sure-footed and very well balanced, even for such a small car. It feels very stable and the ride is pretty good, although it can feel a bit 'crashy' at times.'

'The grip is great though – I've never felt like it was on the verge of getting out of control. You can really chuck it around and it just sticks. It can be a bit noisy at times but the stereo's really good too, so I just turn that up...'

USEFUL CONTACTS

- www.tgmsport.co.uk (specialist)
- www.civictype-r.co.uk (owners' club/forum)
- www.civiclifeline.net (Honda forum)
- www.type-r-owner.co.uk (owners' club/forum)
- www.pistonheads.com (cars for sale)



Above: engines can use oil, so check the level. Otherwise they seem remarkably reliable. Cockpit isn't for everyone but feels robust. Spacious, too



www.joemacari.com

Joe Macari

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 <p>1990 Ferrari F40</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modified to Road Legal LM Specification <p>£295,000</p>	 <p>2009/09 Ferrari Scuderia Spider 16M</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi Grey with Dark Alcantara Interior • Very sought after • 350 miles from new <p>£187,500</p>	 <p>2005/08 599 GTB LHD with HGTE kit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stripo Alcantara • Tan Daytona seats with grey piping • Full HGTE kit <p>£150,000</p>	<p>1962 Ferrari 330 GTO Recreation Series 1 4.0-litre engine. Very competitive. Superb condition. Recently repainted..... £250,000</p> <p>2010 Maserati GranCabrio, Nero carbonio, Nero interior, Tappeto nero carpets, BOSE premium £89,950</p>
 <p>2007 Ford GT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grey • Black leather • White stripes • Brush wheels • Red calipers <p>£147,500</p>	 <p>2008 Ferrari F430 Scuderia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosso corsa • Full Option • Racing slicks • Race seats <p>£138,500</p>	 <p>2007/07 Bentley GT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diamond black metal • Bellagio main and secondary hide • Chrome fitting to windows and doors <p>£74,995</p>	<p>2009 Ducati 848, Red, Termignoni exhaust with carbon huggers and tinted screen 1500 miles £9,750</p> <p>2010 Ducati Hypermotard, Black with carbon trim, Termignoni exhaust £9,000</p> <p>For more fast cars at fantastic prices, please visit our website.</p>

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 ■ Vendor Dick Lovett Swindon (www.dicklovett.co.uk, 01793 615999)
 ■ Engine In-line 6-cyl, 2497cc ■ Max power 174bhp @ 5800rpm
 ■ Max torque 170lb ft @ 3500-5000rpm ■ 0-60mph 6.9sec ■ Top speed 142mph

I once ran a Z4 for a year, and when my 12 months with the car were up I was really sorry to see it go. I hadn't expected to fall for it, but then this version of BMW's popular roadster is such an easy car to live with day-to-day – as long as you are OK with the limitation of only having two seats, that is. Combine BMW's slick six-cylinder engine and six-speed manual drivetrain with a well laid-out interior and a fully electric roof and you end up with an extremely enjoyable car that you can use in all seasons.

This particular example has the revised 2.5-litre six-cylinder engine introduced in 2006. With a claimed 174bhp, it's an engine that loves to be revved, and it produces very decent performance once provoked, especially above 3000rpm.

This Z4 is in 'Sport' trim, so it comes equipped with M Sport suspension, 18in wheels, sports seats and a thick-rimmed M Sport steering wheel all as standard. The only options selected for this particular car were metallic paint and champagne nappa leather, bringing the OTR price when new back in July 2008 to a smidge under £30,000.

Two and a half years and 22,000 miles later, it's up for sale at £17,000, including a full 12-month BMW warranty, which seems remarkably good value to me.

This isn't the time of year you'd normally look to be buying a roadster like this Z4, but it's actually the best time to do so, as dealers know they might not be able to sell until spring arrives so are always keen to do a deal.

HM



SUMMARY

EXTERIOR

No flaws to be seen on paintwork or wheels. Good colour for resale

INTERIOR

Champagne leather jars a bit in the dark cabin but livens up the overall look. No satnav

MECHANICALS

Super-smooth six-cylinder feels as-new. Gearchange typically notchy but not a problem

SHOULD I BUY IT?

If you want an easy-going roadster with a great engine, look no further

- **FOR:** Very good value. Full mechanical cover from BMW-approved warranty
- **AGAINST:** You'll always be wondering if you should have bought the 3.0 version

Simon Furlonger

SPECIALIST CARS



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2004, 3,047 Miles, Rosso Corsa

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£54,990

1999, 10,197 Miles, Giallo Modena

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- Vendor Taylors of Newbury (www.taylorsofnewbury.co.uk, 01635 34155)
- Engine V8, 5667cc, supercharged ■ Max power 560bhp @ n/a rpm
- Max torque n/a ■ 0-60mph 3.9sec (claimed) ■ Top speed 190mph+ (claimed)

I turned up at Taylors of Newbury on a snowy day to have a look at a supercharged Vauxhall Monaro. Clearly I hadn't thought this through. And, to be frank, I'd forgotten just how much power the 5.7-litre GM LS2 engine can produce when you bolt a healthy 'charger to it.

In standard, naturally aspirated guise these cars had 329bhp. Even the later VXR-badged models with the 6-litre Corvette motor were 'only' 398bhp. I say 'only' in the context of the car you can see here, which has been dyno'd at 560bhp. Yep, 560bhp for under £13,000.

The modifications (which cost over £14,000) were carried out by Monkfish Performance and comprise a Vortech V2 supercharger, tuned ECU, a 3in bore exhaust, AP Racing brakes and a Road

Response kit to improve body control.

And you know what? As long as you don't prod it too sharply, it's a pussycat. The clutch is weighty but feels strong, and I barely need to go near the throttle until I exit the 30mph limit. Third gear ramps up strongly, but through the mid-range you certainly haven't got 560bhp – just a feeling that the supercharger hasn't yet shown its full hand. The cards go on the table at 4500rpm, as push becomes shove and on a cold, wet road, the narrow, 235-section rear tyres start to spin...

Monaros are honest-to-goodness entertainers that easily seat four adults, munch miles, sound awesome and, even with this much power (if you're sensible...), are perfectly docile and driveable. Even in the snow. **OM**



SUMMARY

- **EXTERIOR**
No signs of rust, but driver's door has dropped a millimetre or two on its hinges
- **INTERIOR**
Plush electric seats. Blaupunkt six-CD system. Steering wheel a bit shiny, but can't blame the previous owner for gripping it hard...
- **MECHANICALS**
No nasty noises or unusual exhaust vapours. Gearbox vague, but they were like that new
- **SHOULD I BUY IT?**
If you're feeling brave. Or wait until spring...
- **FOR: Ferrari 458 power for under £13,000? You betcha!**
- **AGAINST: The trip computer was reading 11.7mpg...**

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MITSUBISHI EVO X RS V

They're both hardcore road racers, but while they share similar power-to-weight ratios, their approaches are very different. **Roger Green** discovers which is faster round the West Circuit



There were only ever 422 right-hand-drive E46 M3 CSLs in the UK, which is a shame because on the road it is without doubt one of the very best of the breed, right up there with the various iterations of the original, iconic E30 M3. As a trackday machine, however, the CSL is arguably peerless, for despite the E30's exceptional fluidity and feel, its four-pot motor is, well, a bit sluggish on a circuit by today's standards. Yet while the 2003 CSL is hardly current either, it can keep a 2010 M3 GTS honest – the newer car is only two seconds quicker around the Nordschleife.

Don't expect to pick up a CSL at a bargain price, though. You'll need around £27,000 for a tidy one today, which is about what it costs to buy a brand new Mitsubishi Evo X RS. The RS is a true homologation special – the interior

trim is cheap, there's no air-con and the central diff is a straightforward mechanical unit – and on the road it changes direction with the kind of aggressive apex hunger that's been missing for a while now in the Evo range. Best of all, the official UK supplier of the RS, the JRM Group, now offers the car with 360bhp (up from 276), and that gives it a power-to-weight ratio that's almost identical to the CSL's (258bhp/ton versus 260). There's no doubt about it, this is a pair of road racers from the top drawer. Yet until now neither has been put through its paces at Bedford.

First up is the CSL, and it doesn't take long to understand the huge following this car has.

SPECIFICATIONS

MITSUBISHI EVO X RS 360

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc, turbo
 Power 360bhp @ 6800rpm
 Torque 362lb ft @ 4350rpm
 Weight 1420kg
 0-60mph 5.0sec (est)
 Top speed 155mph (claimed)
 Price £27,500

BMW M3 CSL

Engine In-line 6-cyl, 3246cc
 Power 355bhp @ 7900rpm
 Torque 273lb ft @ 4900rpm
 Weight 1385kg
 0-60mph 5.3sec
 Top speed 155mph (limited)
 Price £58,455 (2003)

The howl from its straight-six would have you believe you're in a junior supercar. It's a soundtrack that reaches a menacing, yowling crescendo in the upper reaches of the rev band, and you'll need to be wringing it there too, as it only truly gets going above 5000rpm. Low-down torque isn't the CSL's forte, though that wouldn't matter on track if the gear ratios were short enough to keep it right in the hot zone. Unfortunately it doesn't quite manage this and



BMW M3 CSL



you feel time seep away on each upshift.

Speaking of gearboxes, the SMG system fitted to the CSL was a breakthrough in its day, but things have moved on remarkably quickly in this department and now it feels overly harsh, thumping each new cog home. And, of course, it isn't as quick as a twin-clutch system either. The chassis is sensational, though. There's zero slack when it comes to cornering: turn the wheel and the CSL instantly alters course – no roll, no fuss. The front tyres just tack towards the apex, and the balance is simply gorgeous.

The Evo X has a lot to live up to and the first couple of corners come as quite a shock. In the CSL you're locked in the embrace of firm, Alcantara-covered seats, but in the Evo you're quite literally in the cheap seats, perched on soft, basic cushions that offer no support at all.



You're supposed to junk these and choose your own, of course, but today I've got to work with it – not easy given the lateral loadings the Evo can generate. It works its front tyres harder than the CSL through the slower stuff, where understeer has to be kept in check, but you can utilise the all-wheel drive and pick up full throttle even earlier than in the BMW.

In the final, fast corners the front is so assertive that the rear has a job keeping up. Turn in with a trailing throttle or lift mid-corner and you need to be ready to counter-steer. The Evo is softer than the CSL and so dives hard onto its nose in the braking zones and squats its rear under acceleration. You can use this to your advantage, though, and set up some monster four-wheel drifts. It assumes a different attitude and requires a different technique, but in terms of entertainment it rewards at the same high level as the BMW.



The Evo X out-brakes the CSL – its anchors are comprehensively better both in terms of performance and longevity, and the latter means you get more chances to nail a perfect lap. However, it should be noted that most CSL owners have upgraded their brakes, so this completely original example from the BMW heritage fleet is a rarity.

The Evo's traction and braking advantages ultimately make it the faster car by 1.7sec around our West Circuit lap, but as a trackday tool to enjoy when the clock isn't ticking, it's very difficult to choose a favourite. Both cars are dynamically dazzling. If you want an icon to cherish, take the German, but if you want something to rag mercilessly until the tyres wear out, then look no further than the Mitsubishi Evo X RS.

■ Evo X RS: 1.26.1. M3 CSL: 1.27.8

Above: trimming or exaggerating the CSL's angle of oversteer with the throttle is child's play. Bottom: four-wheel-drive Evo is grippier, but can be coaxed into some huge drifts. Interiors (left) couldn't be more different, the BMW's purposeful, with its Alcantara-clad wheel and bucket seat (bottom), the Mitsubishi's bargain-basement – but then you are supposed to rip most of it out...

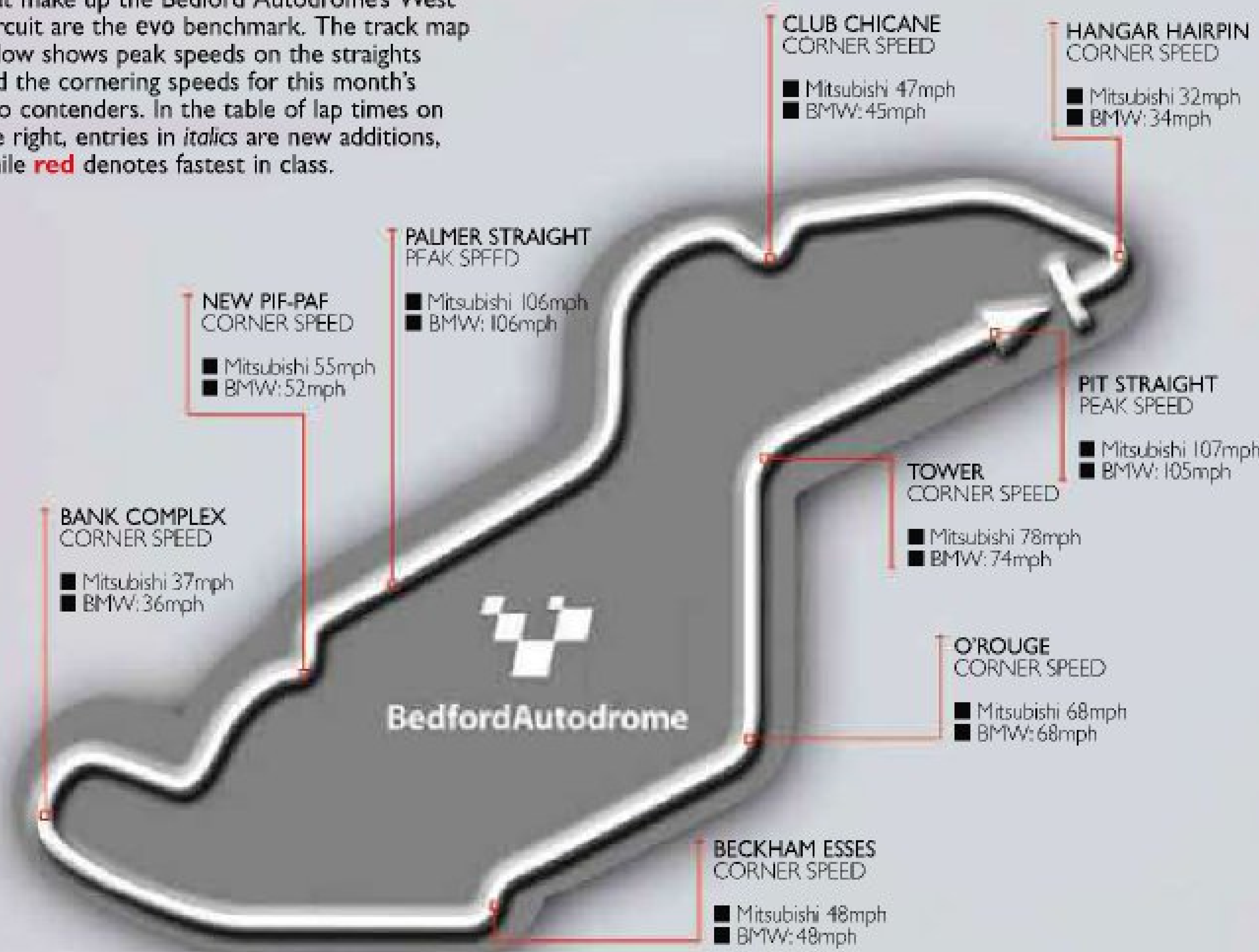
“The Mitsubishi requires a different technique, but it rewards at the same high level as the BMW”





HOW FAST?

■ The 1.8 miles of fast and technical tarmac that make up the Bedford Autodrome's West Circuit are the Evo benchmark. The track map below shows peak speeds on the straights and the cornering speeds for this month's two contenders. In the table of lap times on the right, entries in *italics* are new additions, while **red** denotes fastest in class.



WHICH WAS FASTER?

EVO X RS 360 1min 26.1sec (peak 106.6mph) M3 CSL 1min 27.8sec (peak 105.4mph)



▲ The curves between the Club Chicane and Palmer Straight highlight the advantage of four-wheel drive, as it's easy to be flat here in the Evo where the CSL requires some throttle modulation. The greater grip levels are also evident in the transition in Pif-Paf. The CSL's lack of torque can be seen on the upshifts

THE LEADERBOARD

Radical SR8LM (fastest car)	1.13.6	127.8
Caparo T1 (fastest supercar)	1.14.8	130.9
Gumpert Apollo S	1.19.4	120.4
Caterham Levante V8	1.19.6	118.6
Lotus 2-Eleven GT4	1.20.1	113.2
Caterham Superlight R500	1.20.2	115.7
Ferrari 458 Italia	1.20.3	117.0
Lamborghini Murciélago LP670-4 SV	1.21.3	121.1
Ariel Atom 3 Supercharged	1.21.5	113.6
KTM X-Bow (300bhp)	1.21.5	112.7
Ferrari 430 Scuderia	1.21.7	117.2
Porsche 997.2 GT3 RS (fastest coupe)	1.21.9	116.8
Lamborghini Gallardo LP560-4	1.22.5	119.1
Brooke Double R	1.22.5	113.2
Lamborghini Murciélago LP640	1.22.9	116.7
Porsche Carrera GT	1.23.3	115.2
Porsche 997.2 GT3	1.23.3	114.5
Lamborghini Gallardo LP550-2 Valentino Balboni	1.23.4	116.8
Porsche 997 GT2	1.23.5	115.1
Nissan GT-R	1.23.6	113.1
Porsche 997 Turbo	1.24.1	113.5
Lotus 340R (190bhp)	1.24.2	110.0
Caterham Superlight R300	1.24.3	101.5
Ferrari California	1.25.0	111.8
KTM X-Bow	1.25.0	105.0
Mercedes SL65 AMG Black	1.25.2	108.6
BMW E92 M3 Coupe	1.25.9	108.8
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-400 (fastest saloon)	1.25.9	107.5
<i>Mitsubishi Evo X RS 360</i>	<i>1.26.1</i>	<i>106.6</i>
BMW E90 M3 Saloon	1.26.2	108.2
Audi TT RS	1.26.3	107.2
Aston Martin DBS	1.26.4	109.5
Audi R8	1.26.5	112.0
Porsche Panamera Turbo	1.26.5	109.2
Jaguar XJ220	1.26.7	111.7
Audi RS5	1.26.9	106.8
Lotus Evora	1.27.1	104.2
Lotus Elise SC	1.27.7	104.6
Vauxhall VXR8 Bathurst S	1.27.8	106.1
BMW E46 M3 CSL	1.27.8	105.4
Renaultsport Mégane R26.R (fastest hot hatch)	1.27.8	103.3
Audi RS6 Avant (fastest estate)	1.27.9	111.0
Jaguar XFR	1.27.9	108.1
Honda Civic Type-R Mugen	1.28.0	104.4
Lexus IS-F	1.28.1	106.4
Porsche Boxster S	1.28.1	105.4
Jaguar XJ Supersport	1.28.4	106.6
TVR Griffith	1.28.5	101.4
Ford Shelby GT500	1.28.6	106.5
Nissan 370Z	1.28.7	103.7
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG	1.28.8	106.3
Bentley Continental Supersports	1.29.2	105.8
BMW 335i Coupe	1.29.9	104.9
Nissan 350Z	1.30.0	101.4
Honda NSX	1.30.1	101.3
Subaru Impreza WRX STI	1.30.2	103.4
Ford Focus RS (Mk2)	1.30.8	101.8
Lotus Carlton	1.31.2	102.7
Honda Civic Type-R Championship White	1.31.8	97.9
Renaultsport Clio 200 Cup	1.31.9	97.2
VW Golf GTI (Mk6)	1.32.4	99.3
VW Scirocco 2.0 TSI	1.32.4	98.6
BMW E30 M3	1.33.3	94.0
Renaultsport Clio 172 Cup	1.33.4	96.1
Renaultsport Clio Trophy	1.34.0	96.5

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* New entries this month. STAR RATINGS: ★ Thrill-free zone ★★ Tepid ★★★ Interesting ★★★★ Seriously good ★★★★★ A truly great car

Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	Bhp/rpm	Lb ft/rpm	Weight	Bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2 g/km	EC mpg	evo rating
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SUPERMINIS/HOT HATCHES



OUR CHOICE Renaultsport Clio 200 Cup. After the mild disappointment of the Clio 197, Renaultsport has got the Clio back to its very best, producing a cracking small hot hatch more than capable of chasing down supercars on eCoty 2009 for a top five finish.

Best of the Rest: The Ford Focus RS (right) is rabidly quick and totally involving, while VW's grown-up Golf GTI and Mini's mad JCW also appeal. Further down the ladder, the Fiat Panda 100HP, Renault Twingo 133 Cup and Suzuki Swift Sport are all *evo* favourites.



Abarth Punto Evo	149 F	£16,500	4/1368	161/5500	184/2250	1155kg	142	7.9	-	132	142	-	+ Attractive and fun - Needs the upcoming Esseesse power upgrade	★★★★
Abarth 500 Esseesse	129 R	£16,100	4/1368	158/5750	170/3000	1035kg	155	7.2	20.4	131	155	-	+ A properly fun, old-school hot hatch - Limited numbers being imported	★★★★
Alfa Romeo Mito 1.4 TB	132 D	£15,045	4/1368	153/5500	170/3000	1145kg	136	8.0	-	134	-	43.5	+ So close to being a modern-day Alfasud - But not close enough...	★★★★
Alfa Romeo Mito Cloverleaf	149 F	£17,875	4/1368	168/5500	184/2500	1145kg	149	7.5	-	136	139	47.1	+ Great MultiAir engine, impressive ride - Not as feisty as we hoped	★★★★
Alfa Romeo Giulietta 1.4 MultiAir	144 D	£19,475	4/1368	168/5500	184/2500	1290kg	134	7.8	-	135	134	48.7	+ Has the equivalent VW Golf covered - An Alfa for your head, not your heart	★★★★
Alfa Romeo Giulietta Cloverleaf	144 D	£24,495	4/1742	232/5500	251/1900	1320kg	179	6.8	-	150	177	37.2	+ Shows signs of deep talent... - ...but should be more exciting	★★★★
Alfa Romeo 147 2.0 Lusso	01-09	4/1970	150/6300	136/3800	1270kg	120	9.3	-	129	-	-	31.7	+ Fantastic looks, engine and handling - Build quality still lacking	★★★★
Alfa Romeo 147 GTA	053 F	'03-'06	6/3179	247/6200	221/4800	1360kg	185	6.0	15.5	153	-	23.3	+ Focus RS pace without the histrionics - Slightly nose-heavy	★★★★
Alfa Romeo 145 Cloverleaf	'95-'01	4/1970	150/6200	138/4000	1200kg	127	8.0	-	129	-	-	32.1	+ Fiery engine, individual appeal - Ape-like driving position	★★★★
Audi A1 1.4 TFSI Sport	147 D	£15,345	4/1390	120/5000	147/1500	1125kg	108	8.9	-	126	122	53.3	+ Audi's Mini rival is an accomplished thing - But not a particularly fun one	★★★
Audi A3 2.0 TFSI	£20,765	4/1984	197/5100	206/1700	1295kg	155	7.0	-	148	164	39.8	+ Usual Audi strengths - Usual Audi weaknesses	★★★	
Audi S3	106 R	£29,960	4/1984	261/6000	258/2500	1455kg	183	5.6	13.6	155	-	33.2	+ Very fast, very effective, very... err, quality - A little too clinical	★★★★
BMW 118i SE	£20,790	4/1995	141/6000	140/4250	1365kg	107	8.7	-	130	143	46.3	+ Quality feel and delightful handling - You'll long for a straight-six	★★★★	
BMW 120d SE	£22,670	4/1995	175/4000	258/1750	1440kg	124	7.5	-	142	125	58.9	+ Involving rear-drive chassis - Yet it's curiously difficult to oversteer	★★★★	
BMW 123d M Sport (5dr)	122 R	£26,535	4/1995	201/4400	295/2000	1495kg	137	6.5	17.4	148	135	54.3	+ Economical and no slouch - Doesn't feel special enough	★★★★
BMW 130i M Sport (3dr)	106 R	'05-'10	6/2996	261/6650	232/2750	1450kg	183	6.1	15.3	155	-	34.0	+ Fantastic engine - Suspension can still get a little boingy	★★★★
BMW 325ti Compact	031 D	'01-'05	6/2494	189/6000	181/3500	1480kg	130	7.1	-	147	-	31.7	+ Terrific engine, chassis, price - Looks a bit geeky	★★★★
Citroën C1/P'geot 107/Toy. Aygo	126 F	£8220+	3/998	68/6000	68/3600	790kg	87	14.2	-	98	103	61.4	+ Full of character and insurance-friendly - Insurance friendly power	★★★★
Citroën C2 VTS	072 R	'04-'09	4/1587	123/6500	105/3750	1084kg	116	8.3	-	126	-	40.9	+ Quick and accomplished - Perhaps a bit over-refined for its own good	★★★★
Citroën C2 GT	064 R	'04-'05	4/1587	108/5750	108/4000	1027kg	117	8.7	-	121	-	-	+ Appealing and affordable homologation special - Inert steering	★★★★
Citroën Saxo VTR	013 R	'97-'03	4/1587	100/5700	100/3500	920kg	99	9.3	-	116	-	36.7	+ VTS poise, half the insurance group - Cramped pedals	★★★★
Citroën Saxo VTS	020 R	'97-'03	4/1587	120/6600	107/5200	935kg	130	7.6	22.6	127	-	34.9	+ Chunky, chuckable charger - Can catch out the unwary	★★★★
Citroën DS3 1.6 THP	142 F	£15,900	4/1598	154/6000	177/1400	1240kg	126	7.2	-	133	155	-	+ A proper French hot hatch - Petrolheads might find it too 'designed'	★★★★
Citroën Xsara VTS	'98-'04	4/1997	167/7000	142/4750	1190kg	143	8.0	-	137	-	-	33.6	+ Citroën's GTI-6 - Missing one gear and a bit of handling polish	★★★★
Fiat Panda 100HP	132 F	£11,005	4/1368	99/6000	97/4250	975kg	103	9.5	-	115	154	43.5	+ Most fun per pound on the market - Optional ESP can't be turned off	★★★★
Fiat Punto Evo Sporting	141 D	£15,175	4/1368	133/5000	152/1750	1155kg	117	8.5	-	127	129	-	+ Great engine, smart styling - Dynamics don't live up to the Evo name	★★★★
Fiat Bravo 2.0 Sport Multijet	£18,950	4/1956	163/4000	265/1750	1360kg	122	8.2	-	134	139	53.3	+ Eager to please, and well made too - Petrol version should be even better	★★★★	
Ford Ka 1.2 (Mk2)	126 F	£7995	4/1242	68/5500	75/3000	940kg	73	13.1	-	99	119	55.4	+ Better than a Fiat 500 - Lacks the old Ka's ultimate chuckability	★★★★
Ford Sportka SE	084 R	'03-'08	4/1597	94/5500	100/4250	934kg	102	9.5	-	108	-	37.2	+ Big fun in a little package - Could handle even more power	★★★★
Ford Fiesta Zetec S	123 D	£13,995	4/1596	118/6000	112/4050	1045kg	115	9.9	-	120	134	47.9	+ Genuinely entertaining supermini - Grown up compared to Twingo/Swift	★★★★
Ford Fiesta Zetec S Mountune	132 F	£16,150	4/1596	138/6750	125/4250	1080kg	130	7.9	-	120	134	-	+ As above, with a fantastically loud exhaust... - ...if you're 12 years old	★★★★
Ford Fiesta Zetec S	020 R	'00-'02	4/1596	102/6000	107/4000	976kg	106	10.2	-	113	-	38.2	+ Better than you'd ever believe - No-one else will believe it	★★★★
Ford Fiesta ST	075 D	'05-'08	4/1999	148/6000	140/4500	1137kg	132	7.9	-	129	-	38.2	+ Great looks, decent brakes - Disappointing chassis, gutless engine	★★★
Ford Fiesta ST185 Mountune	115 R	'08	4/1999	185/6700	147/3500	1137kg	165	6.9	-	129	-	-	+ Fiesta ST gets the power it always needed - OTT exhaust note	★★★★
Ford Focus ST	119 R	£22,895	5/2522	222/6000	236/1600	1392kg	162	6.7	16.8	150	224	30.4	+ Value, performance, integrity - Big engine compromises handling	★★★★
Ford Focus ST Mountune	137 R	£23,595	5/2522	256/5500	295/2500	1392kg	187	5.8	14.3	155	224	-	+ ST takes extra power in its stride - You probably still want an RS	★★★★
Ford Focus RS (Mk2)	139 R	£27,895	5/2522	300/6500	324/2300	1467kg	208	5.9	14.2	163	225	30.5	+ Huge performance, highly capable fwd chassis - It could be the last RS...	★★★★
Ford Focus RS500	152 F	£35,750	5/2522	345/6000	339/2500	1467kg	239	5.6	12.7	165	225	-	+ More power and presence than above - Pricy (and all sold!)	★★★★
Ford Focus RS (Mk1)	053 R	'02-'03	4/1998	212/5500	229/3500	1278kg	169	5.9	14.9	144	-	-	+ Some are great - Some are awful (so make sure you drive plenty)	★★★
Ford Escort RS Cosworth	011 F	'92-'96	4/1993	227/6250	224/3500	1304kg	176	5.8	-	143	-	24.5	+ The ultimate Essex hot hatch - Ultimate trophy for tea leaves	★★★★
Ford Puma 1.7	095 F	'97-'02	4/1679	123/6300	116/4500	1041kg	120	8.6	27.6	122	-	38.2	+ Everything - Nothing. The 1.4 is worth a look too	★★★★
Ford Racing Puma	016 F	'00-'01	4/1679	153/7000	119/4500	1174kg	132	7.8	23.2	137	-	34.7	+ Exclusivity - Expense. Standard Puma does it so well	★★★★
Honda Civic Type-R	102 R	£20,620	4/1998	198/7800	142/5600	1267kg	158	6.8	17.5	146	215	31.0	+ Looks great, VTEC more accessible - Steering lacks feel, inert balance	★★★★
Honda Civic Type-R Mugen	144 F	£38,599	4/1998	237/8300	157/6250	1233kg	195	5.9	-	155	-	-	+ Fantastic on road and track - There'll only be 20, and it's a tad pricey...	★★★★
Honda Civic T-R C'ship White	126 D	'09-'10	4/1998	198/7800	142/5600	1267kg	158	6.6	-	146	-	31.0	+ Limited-slip diff a welcome addition - It's not available on standard car...	★★★★
Honda Civic Type-R	075 R	'01-'05	4/1998	197/7400	145/5900	1204kg	166	6.8	16.9	146	-	31.7	+ Potent and great value - Looks divide opinion, dull steering	★★★★
Lancia Delta Integrale	011 F	'88-'93	4/1995	210/5750	220/3500	1350kg	158	5.7	-	137	-	23.9	+ One of the finest cars ever built - Demands love, LHD only	★★★★
Mazda 2 1.5 Sport	132 F	£12,630	4/1498	102/6000	101/4000	1030kg	107	10.4	-	117	135	49.6	+ Fun and funky - Feels tinny after a Mini	★★★★
Mazda 3 MPS (Mk2)	137 R	£22,595	4/2261	256/5500	280/3000	1385kg	188	6.3	14.5	155	224	29.4	+ Quick, eager and very good value - The steering's still iffy	★★★★
Mazda 3 MPS Aero Kit (Mk1)	106 R	'07-'09	4/2261	256/5500	280/3000	1410kg	184	6.1	14.3	155	-	29.1	+ Speed, grip, stability - Slightly strange steering, dull styling	★★★★
MG ZS 180	035 D	'01-'05	6/2497	175/6500	177/4000	1235kg	144	7.3	-	139	-	29.7	+ Well-sorted chassis, characterful engine - Image: looks like a 45	★★★★
Mini One	£12,620	4/1598	97/6000	113/3000	1135kg	87	10.5	-	116	127	52.3	+ Perfect power-to-grip ratio - HUGE speed, slow car	★★★★	
Mini Cooper	099 D	£13,980	4/1598	120/6000	118/4250	1140kg	112	9.1	-	126	127	52.3	+ Still desirable - Steering has lost a little feel	★★★★
Mini Cooper S	149 F	£17,640	4/1598	181/5500	177/1600	1205kg	153	7.0	-	142	136	48.7	+ New engine, Mini quality - Lacks old car's direct front end	★★★★

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evo TRIED & TESTED

SUPERTOOTH BUDDY

Price: £49
From: www.supertooth.net/en

I've tried a fair few of these Bluetooth speaker kits. They undoubtedly make you appear far less foolish than clamping a cockroach to your ear, but I've only come across one so far, the Parrot Minikit Slim, that I actually thought worked well.

The main trouble with them is that the volume and sound quality just isn't up to scratch to be used in a car – and that's the main problem with the Supertooth Buddy, too. People at the other end of the line found my voice metallic but audible, but the only way I could hear

them adequately was to slow right down or remove the device from the visor and hold it nearer my ear, which defeats the whole object of having it.

But as I said, that's a fault that afflicts almost all of these kits, and for £49 this one isn't bad value. It supports voice dialling, the buttons are large and easy to press and in two months I've only had to recharge it once – it's apparently capable of 20 hours' talk time and 1000 hours on standby. It's also very small and flat and I particularly liked the fact that it magnetises to the visor clip, so you can leave that in the car and take the valuable bit with you.

Ollie Marriage



Decent value but sonically lacking

	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	Bhp/rpm	Lb ft/rpm	Weight	Bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2 g/km	EC mpg	EVO rating
Mini John Cooper Works	137 F	£21,670	4/1598	208/6000	206/1850	1205kg	175	6.5	-	148	165	40.9	+ Most exciting new Mini yet - Occasionally just a little too exciting ★★★★
Mini Cooper S Clubman	110 D	£18,075	4/1598	172/5500	192/1700	1280kg	137	7.6	-	139	137	44.8	+ More rear space, load flexibility - Torque steer, looks are a matter of taste ★★★★
Mini JCW Clubman	137 D	£22,770	4/1598	208/6000	207/2000	1280kg	165	6.8	-	148	167	40.4	+ Ride and handling more composed than the JCW hatch - It's no looker ★★★★
Mini Cooper S Works (Mk2)	111 F	'07-'08	4/1598	189/6000	199/1750	1130kg	170	7.6	18.0	145	-	-	+ Cracking hot Mini, until the JCW - Expensive with option packs included ★★★★★
Mini Cooper S Works GP	144 F	'06	4/1598	218/7100	184/4600	1090kg	203	6.5	-	149	-	32.8	+ Storming engine, agility - Tacky styling 'enhancements' ★★★★★
Mini Cooper S (Mk1)	077 R	'02-'06	4/1598	168/6000	155/4000	1140kg	143	7.8	19.9	135	-	33.6	+ Strong performance, quality feel - Over-long gearing ★★★★★
Mini Cooper S Works (Mk1)	074 D	'03-'06	4/1598	210/6950	181/4500	1140kg	187	6.6	-	143	-	-	+ Even more power and pace than the 197bhp version - Even pricier, too ★★★★★
Mitsubishi Colt Ralliart	132 F	£12,849	4/1468	147/6000	155/3500	1060kg	141	7.4	-	131	161	40.9	+ Price, handling, performance - Its looks are a little odd ★★★★
Mitsubishi Ralliart Sportback	121 D	£21,649	4/1998	237/6000	253/2550	1540kg	156	7.0	-	143	243	-	+ A taste of Evo at a keener price - Doesn't do what it says on the tin ★★★★
Nissan Micra 160SR	084 R	'05-'08	4/1598	108/6000	112/4400	1024kg	107	9.8	-	114	-	42.8	+ Engaging chassis, spirited engine - Doesn't have 160bhp its name suggests ★★★★
Nissan Sunny GTi-R		'92-'93	4/1998	220/6400	197/4800	1269kg	176	6.1	-	134	-	25.1	+ Nissan's Escort Cossie - Make sure it's a good one ★★★★
Peugeot 106 Rallye (Series 2)		'97-'98	4/1587	103/6200	97/3500	865kg	121	8.8	-	121	-	34.0	+ Bargain no-frills thrills - Not as much fizz as original 1.3 ★★★★
Peugeot 106 Rallye (Series 1)	095 F	'94-'96	4/1294	100/7200	80/5400	826kg	123	9.3	-	118	-	35.6	+ Frantic, thrashy fun - Needs caning to extract full potential ★★★★★
Peugeot 106 GTi 16v	034 R	'97-'04	4/1587	120/6600	107/5200	950kg	128	7.4	22.2	127	-	34.9	+ Fine handling supermini - Looks its age ★★★★★
Peugeot 207 GTi THP 175	095 F	'06-'09	4/1598	170/6000	195/1600	1325kg	132	7.1	-	137	-	39.2	+ Great engine - Sloppy controls and huge body smother the chassis ★★★★
Peugeot 205 GTi 1.9	105 F	'88-'91	4/1905	132/6000	119/4750	910kg	145	7.9	-	124	-	36.7	+ Still scintillating after all these years - Brittle build quality ★★★★★
Peugeot 306 GTi-6	020 R	'93-'01	4/1998	167/6500	142/5500	1215kg	139	7.2	20.1	140	-	30.1	+ One of the great GTis - They don't make them like this any more ★★★★★
Peugeot 306 Rallye	095 F	'98-'99	4/1998	167/6500	142/5500	1199kg	141	6.9	19.2	137	-	30.1	+ Essentially a GTi-6 for less dash - Limited choice of colours ★★★★★
Peugeot 309 GTi		'89-'92	4/1905	130/6000	119/4750	985kg	134	8.3	-	124	-	28.2	+ 205 GTi in drag, cheap - Who wants a cheap drag queen? ★★★★
Renault Twingo GT	108 F	£10,695	4/1149	99/5500	107/3000	980kg	102	9.8	-	117	132	47.9	+ French alternative to Panda 100HP - Panda's more fun ★★★★
Renaultsport Twingo 133 Cup	132 F	£12,100	4/1598	131/6750	118/4400	1049kg	127	8.7	-	125	159	40.4	+ Renaultsport experience for pocket money - Could handle extra 30bhp ★★★★★
Renault 5GT Turbo	123 F	'87-'91	4/1397	120/5750	122/3750	831kg	146	7.8	-	120	-	28.4	+ Clio Williams' grand-daddy - Most have been thrashed ★★★★★
Renaultsport Clio 200 Cup	139 R	£16,710	4/1998	197/7100	159/5400	1204kg	166	6.6	16.7	141	190	34.4	+ The hot Clio is back to its best - Why the long face? ★★★★★
Renaultsport Clio 197 Cup	115 R	'07-'09	4/1998	194/7250	158/5550	1240kg	161	6.9	-	134	-	33.6	+ Quick, polished and capable - Not as much sheer fun as 182 Cup ★★★★
Renaultsport Clio 182	066 R	'04-'06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1110kg	165	6.6	17.5	139	-	34.9	+ Took hot hatches to a new level - Flawed driving position ★★★★★
Renaultsport Clio 182 Cup	074 D	'04-'06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1090kg	168	6.5	-	139	-	34.9	+ Full of beans, fantastic value - Sunday market upholstery ★★★★★
Renaultsport Clio Trophy	095 F	'05-'06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1090kg	168	6.6	17.3	140	-	34.9	+ Most fun you can have on three wheels - Just 500 were built ★★★★★
Renaultsport Clio 172 Cup	048 R	'02-'04	4/1998	170/6250	147/5400	1011kg	171	6.5	17.7	138	-	-	+ Bargain old-school hot hatch - Nervous in the wet, no ABS ★★★★
Renaultsport Clio V6 255	057 R	'03-'05	6/2946	255/7150	221/4650	1400kg	182	5.8	-	153	-	23.0	+ Revised Clio V6 is a winner - Uninspired interior ★★★★★
Renaultsport Clio V6	029 F	'99-'02	6/2946	230/6000	221/3750	1335kg	175	5.8	17.0	145	-	23.0	+ Pocket supercar - Mid-engined handling can be tricky ★★★★
Renault Clio Williams	095 F	'93-'96	4/1988	150/6100	126/4500	981kg	155	7.6	20.8	121	-	26.0	+ One of the best hot hatches ever - Can be fragile like an Integrale ★★★★★
Renaultsport Mégane 250 Cup	139 R	£23,160	4/1998	247/5500	251/3000	1387kg	181	6.1	14.6	156	195	33.6	+ Fantastic chassis... - partially obscured by new-found maturity ★★★★★
Renaultsport Mégane R26.R	125 F	'08-'10	4/1998	227/5500	229/3000	1220kg	189	5.8	15.1	147	-	-	+ One of the true hot hatch heroes - Two seats, plastic rear windows ★★★★★
Renaultsport Mégane 230 R26	102 R	'07-'09	4/1998	227/5500	229/3000	1345kg	171	6.2	16.0	147	-	-	+ Best hot Mégane... until the R26.R - F1 Team stickers in dubious taste ★★★★★
R'sport Mégane dCi 175 Cup	119 R	'07-'09	4/1995	173/3750	265/2000	1470kg	119	8.3	23.5	137	-	43.5	+ A diesel with a genuinely sporty chassis - Could take more power ★★★★
Renaultsport Mégane 225 Cup	087 F	'05-'09	4/1998	222/5500	221/3000	1345kg	167	6.5	-	147	-	32.1	+ Good value and plentiful - You gotta like big backsides ★★★★★
Renaultsport Mégane Trophy	087 F	'05	4/1998	222/5500	221/3000	1355kg	166	6.7	17.3	147	-	32.1	+ Mega grip and traction - Steering needs a touch more feel ★★★★
SEAT Ibiza FR	134 D	£15,670	4/1390	148/5800	162/1250	1167kg	129	7.7	-	130	146	44.8	+ Fun and frugal - You're forced to have the DSG automatic 'box ★★★★★
SEAT Ibiza FR TDI	144 F	£16,610	4/1968	141/4200	236/1750	1245kg	115	8.2	-	131	123	61.4	+ Even more fun and frugality - Almost as pricey as the Cupra ★★★★
SEAT Ibiza Cupra	139 R	£17,020	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1172kg	154	6.9	-	140	148	44.1	+ Funky (especially in Bocanegra trim), economical - The FR's a better drive ★★★★
SEAT Ibiza FR	066 D	'04-'08	4/1781	150/5500	162/2000	1154kg	132	8.4	-	134	-	38.8	+ Torquey and brisk - Devoid of soul ★★★★
SEAT Ibiza Cupra	104 F	'04-'08	4/1781	178/5500	181/2000	1248kg	145	7.1	-	143	-	35.3	+ Well built, punchy engine - The 'warm' FR is a better bet ★★★★
SEAT Leon FR	131 D	£19,900	4/1984	208/5300	206/1700	1334kg	158	7.2	-	145	170	35.8	+ As quick as a Golf GTi but £4K cheaper - Misses the VW's completeness ★★★★
SEAT Leon Cupra	105 F	£21,500	4/1984	237/5700	221/2200	1375kg	175	6.3	-	153	190	34.0	+ Great engine, composure - Doesn't have adjustability of old Cupra R ★★★★
SEAT Leon Cupra R	139 R	£25,205	4/1984	261/6000	258/2500	1375kg	193	6.1	14.0	155	190	-	+ Bold car, blinding engine - Lacks the character of its rival mega-hatches ★★★★
SEAT Leon Cupra 20v T	020 R	'00-'06	4/1781	178/5500	173/5000	1322kg	137	7.7	-	142	-	33.2	+ Terrific value - Lacks sparkle of very best hatches ★★★★
SEAT Leon Cupra R 225	067 R	'03-'06	4/1781	222/5900	206/2200	1376kg	164	6.9	-	150	-	32.1	+ Cross-country pace, practicality, value - Not as thrilling as some ★★★★★
Skoda Fabia vRS (Mk2)	146 D	£15,700	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1218kg	148	7.3	-	139	148	45.6	+ Well priced, well made, with great engine and DSG 'box - Dull steering ★★★★
Skoda Fabia vRS (Mk1)	077 F	'04-'07	4/1896	130/4000	229/1900	1315kg	100	9.6	-	127	-	55.4	+ Fascinatingly fun and frugal hot hatch - A little short on steering feel ★★★★
Skoda Octavia vRS (Mk2)	085 D	£19,380	4/1998	197/5100	206/1700	1395kg	143	7.3	-	149	175	37.7	+ Drives like a GTi but costs much less - Green brake callipers? ★★★★
Skoda Octavia vRS (Mk1)	032 D	'01-'05	4/1781	180/5500	173/1950	1354kg	135	7.9	-	146	-	35.3	+ Remarkably fun and capable - Cabin quality ★★★★★
Smart Fortwo Brabus	110 D	£14,400	3/999	97/5500	104/3500	780kg	126	9.9	-	95	119	52.3	+ Telling people you drive a Brabus - Them realising it's not a 720bhp S-class ★★★★
Subaru WRX STi	151 D	£32,995	4/2457	296/6000	300/4000	1505kg	200	5.1	-	155	243	26.9	+ Spec C suspension makes a better drive - No blue paint or gold wheels ★★★★★
Subaru Impreza STi CS400	146 R	£49,995	4/2457	395/5750	400/3950	1505kg	267	4.6	10.7	155	-	-	+ Cosworth kudos, Fastest hatch we've tested - Pricey, lifeless steering ★★★★
Subaru Impreza WRXS	125 D	'08-'10	4/2457	251/5400	288/3000	1395kg	180	5.5	-	130	270	-	+ An improvement over the basic WRX - Still not the WRX we're longing for ★★★★
Subaru Impreza STi 330S	124 F	'08-'10	4/2457	325/5400	347/3400	1505kg	219	4.4	-	155	-	-	+ A bit quicker than the STi... - but not better ★★★★
Suzuki Swift Sport	132 F	£12,740	4/1586	123/6800	109/4800	1105kg	113	8.9	-	124	165	39.8	+ Entertaining handling, well built - Lacking in steering feedback ★★★★★
Toyota iQ 1.33	129 D	£11,995	4/1329	97/6000	92/4000	930kg	106	11.8	-	106	113	58.9	+ Individual take on the city car - Toyota's Aygo more fun and much cheaper ★★★★
Vauxhall Corsa VXR	104 F	£18,145	4/1598	189/5850	192/1980	1166kg	165	6.8	-	140	-	35.8	+ Looks snazzy, surprisingly refined - Odd clutch, lacks a little grit ★★★★
Vauxhall Astra 1.6T SRi	138 D	£21,005	4/1598	178/5500	169/2200	1305kg	139	7.8	-	137	159	36.7	+ Cracking chassis - Looks dull, optional FlexRide suspension disappointing ★★★★★
Vauxhall Astra VXR	102 R	£22,875	4/1998	237/5600	236/2400	1393kg	173	6.7	16.7	152	221	30.7	+ Fast and furious - Lacks a little composure and precision ★★★★
Vauxhall Astra VXR 888	127 D	£26,573	4/1998	295/4650	317/4250	1393kg	215	5.1	-	160	221	-	+ Crazy power, chassis copes admirably - Lacks exploitability of Mégane R26 ★★★★
VW Lupo GTi 6-spd	036 D	'00-'05	4/1598	125/6500	112/3000	978kg	128	8.3	-	127	-	38.2	+ Looks, performance, snappy gearshift - Lacks fizz of 106 GTi ★★★★
VW Golf GTD (Mk6)	133 D	£23,645	4/1968	168/4200	258/1750	1329kg	128	8.1	-	138	134	50.4	+ Punchy performance and good economy - Not as much fun as the GTi ★★★★
VW Golf GTi (Mk6)	139 R	£24,295	4/1984	207/5300	207/1700	1318kg	160	6.4	16.5	149	170	38.7	+ Still a very accomplished hot hatch - 207bhp isn't a lot any more ★★★★
VW Golf R (Mk6)	140 D	£30,345	4/1984	266/6000	258/2500	1521kg	178	5.5	-	155	199	33.6	+ Great engine, tremendous pace and poise - High price, ACC only optional ★★★★★
VW Golf GTi (Mk5)	102 R	'05-'09	4/1984	197/5100	207/1800	1336kg	150	6.7	17.9	145	-	-	+ Character and ability: the original GTi is back - Lacking firepower? ★★★★★
VW Golf R32 (Mk5)	087 F	'06-'09	6/3189	246/6300	236/2500	1510kg	165	5.8	15.2	155	-	26.4	+ Traction's great and you'll love the soundtrack - We'd still have a GTi ★★★★
VW Golf R32 (Mk4)	053 F	'02-'04	6/3189	237/6250	236/2800	1477kg	163	6.4	16.3	154	-	24.6	+ Charismatic - Boomy engine can be firesome ★★★★
VW Golf GTi 16v (Mk2)		'88-'92	4/1781	139/6100	1								

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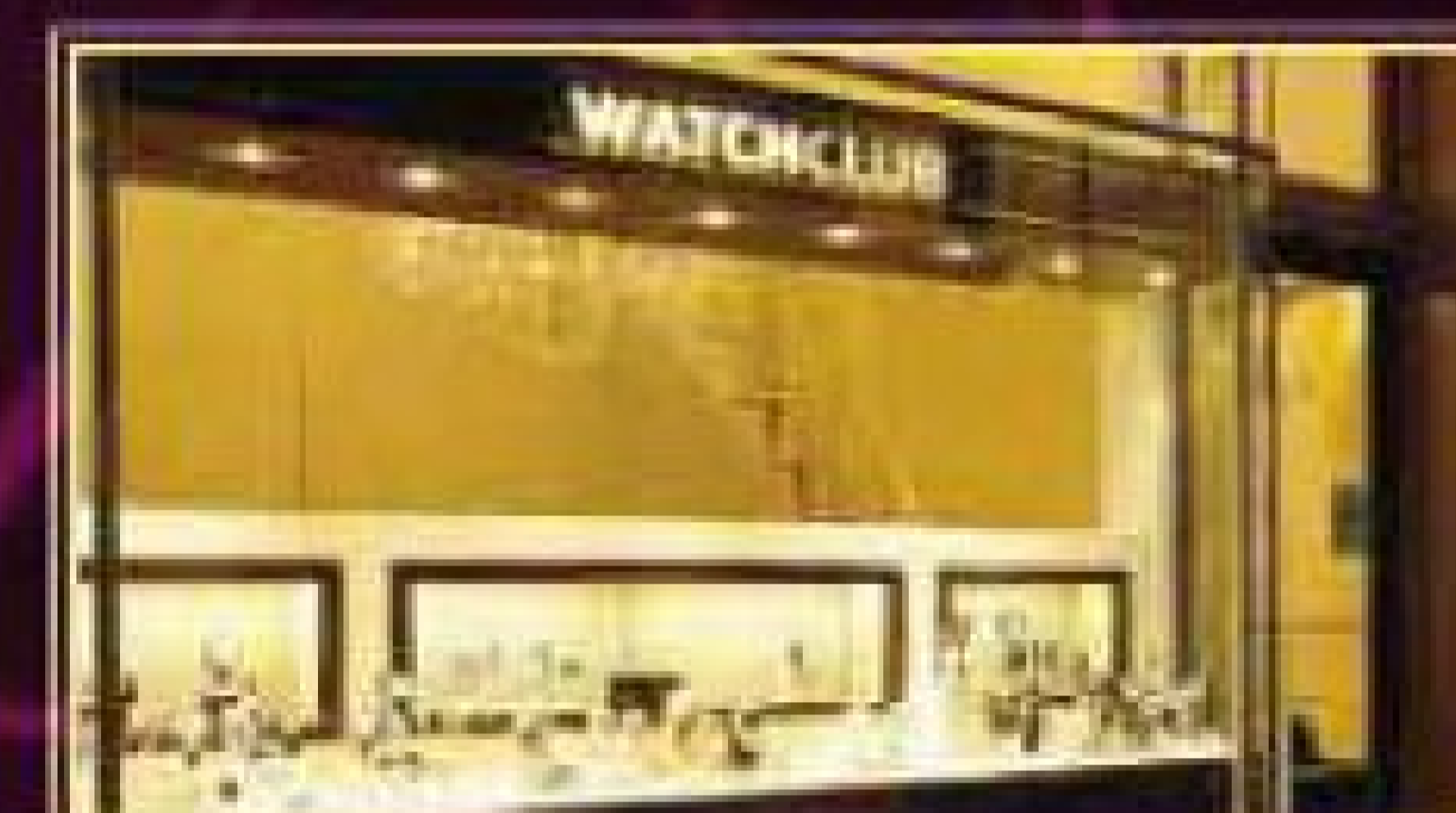
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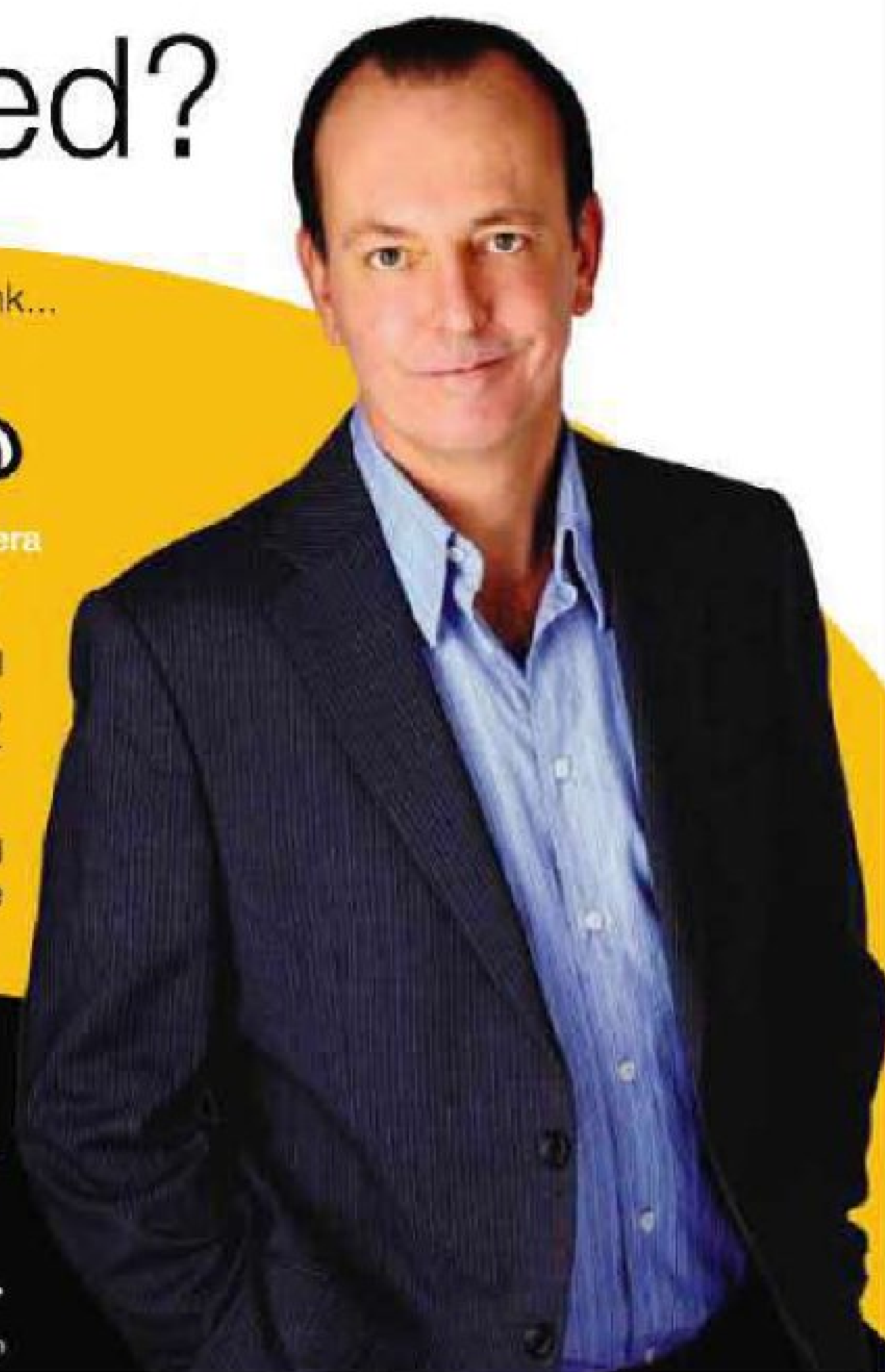
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SALOONS/ESTATES/4X4s



OUR CHOICE BMW M3. It's got two more doors than the coupe version but the M3 saloon costs nearly £1500 less. OK, it does without the carbon roof, but everything else that makes the two-door great is present and correct. What's not to like?

Best of the Rest: The Lexus IS-F is the M3's unnatural riva with a glorious high-revving V8 and playful rear-drive. Moving up a size, we heartily recommend the Jaguar XFR (right) with its supercharged V8, while the Mercedes C63 AMG is our fast estate choice.



Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	Bhp/rpm	Lb ft/rpm	Weight	Bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2 g/km	EC mpg	EVO rating	
Alfa Romeo 156 GTA	045 F	'02-'06 6/3179	247/6200	221/4800	1410kg	180	6.3	-	155	-	23.3	+ Noise, pace and individuality - Front-drive chassis can't keep up	★★★
Alpina D3		€30,950 4/1995	211/4000	332/2000	1495kg	143	6.9	-	152	-	52.3	+ Excellent chassis, turbodiesel oomph - Rather narrow powerband	★★★★
Alpina B5 Biturbo	149 D	€69,995 8/4395	500/5500	516/3000	2040kg	265	4.7	-	191	-	-	+ Big performance and top-line luxury - Driver not really involved	★★★★
Alpina B5 S	118 D	'07-'10 8/4398	523/5500	535/4750	1720kg	309	4.5	-	197	-	23.0	+ Quicker and more exclusive than the E60 M5 - Suspension has its limits	★★★★
Alpina B7	134 D	€97,950 8/4395	507/5500	516/3000	2040kg	252	4.5	-	174	-	-	+ Massive performance and top-line luxury - Feels its weight when hustled	★★★★
Alpina B7	085 R	'05-'08 8/4398	500/5500	516/4250	1950kg	261	4.8	-	186	-	-	+ Alpina makes a mad, bad 7-series - Over-cautious traction control	★★★★
Aston Martin Rapide	141 F	£144,950 12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1990kg	240	5.2	-	188	355	-	+ Better than its DB9 sibling - More a 2+2 than a proper four-seater	★★★★
Audi A4 3.2 FSI quattro S-line	111 D	€34,510 6/3197	261/6000	243/3000	1610kg	165	6.1	-	155	214	31.7	+ A good match for its German foes - An extra £3K buys an S4...	★★★★
Audi A4 3.0 quattro	032 R	'01-'04 6/2976	220/6300	221/3200	1505kg	146	6.7	-	151	-	26.9	+ V6 adds class - Jag X-type shows how good 4wd can be	★★★
Audi S4 (Mk3)	134 F	€36,530 6/2995	328/5500	325/2900	1650kg	202	5.1	-	155	234	29.1	+ More fun than you'd believe possible - When's the new RS4 coming?	★★★★
Audi S4 (Mk2)	073 D	'05-'08 8/4163	339/7000	302/3500	1700kg	206	5.4	-	155	-	-	+ Effortless V8, agile handling - Lacks ultimate finesse of class leaders	★★★★
Audi RS4	088 F	'06-'08 8/4163	414/7800	317/5500	1650kg	255	4.5	10.9	155	-	-	+ A leap on for fast Audis, superb engine - Busy under braking	★★★★
Audi RS4 Avant	105 F	'07-'08 8/4163	414/7800	317/5500	1710kg	246	4.6	-	155	-	20.6	+ More desirable than ever - Everyone thinking you're married with kids	★★★★
Audi RS4	024 R	'00-'02 6/2671	375/6100	325/2500	1620kg	236	4.8	12.1	170	-	17.0	+ Effortless pace - Lacks finesse. Bends wheel rims	★★★★
Audi RS2		'94-'95 5/2226	315/6500	302/3000	1595kg	201	4.8	13.1	162	-	18.0	+ Storming performance (thanks to Porsche) - Try finding one	★★★★
Audi S6	091 D	€59,055 10/5204	429/6800	398/3000	1910kg	228	5.2	-	155	299	22.4	+ Even faster, and discreet with it - Very muted V10	★★★★
Audi RS6	124 D	€76,715 10/4991	572/6250	479/1500	1985kg	293	4.5	-	155	331	20.3	+ Looks and drives better than estate version - M5 is ten grand cheaper...	★★★★
Audi RS6 Avant	116 F	€78,285 10/4991	572/6250	479/1500	2025kg	287	4.3	9.7	155	333	20.2	+ The world's most powerful estate - Power isn't everything	★★★★
Audi RS6	052 R	'02-'04 8/4172	444/5700	413/1950	1840kg	245	4.8	11.6	155	-	19.3	+ Huge real-world performance - Inert steering	★★★★
Audi RS6 Avant	052 R	'02-'04 8/4172	444/5700	413/1950	1865kg	242	4.8	11.6	155	-	19.3	+ The ultimate estate car? - Numb steering	★★★★
Audi S8	088 D	'06-'10 10/5204	444/7000	398/3500	1940kg	232	5.7	-	155	-	21.4	+ V10 engine, ceramic brakes, fantastic gearbox - Light steering	★★★★
Audi Q7 V12 TDI	124 D	€98,255 12/5934	493/3750	737/1750	2635kg	190	5.1	12.2	155	298	25.0	+ Undeniably quick, relatively economical - Will anybody want one?	★★★★
Bentley Flying Spur	080 D	£123,400 12/5998	552/6100	479/1600	2475kg	226	4.9	-	195	396	17.0	+ Performance, wonderful interior - Have you seen petrol prices?	★★★★
Bentley Flying Spur Speed	141 F	£140,000 12/5998	600/6000	553/1750	2440kg	250	4.6	-	200	396	17.0	+ 600bhp, surprisingly fun handling - Could look a bit more like it goes	★★★★
Bentley Mulsanne	145 D	£220,000 8/6752	505/4200	752/1750	2585kg	198	5.1	-	184	393	-	+ Drives like a modern Bentley should - Shame it doesn't look like one too	★★★★
Bentley Arnage R	048 F	'02-'08 8/6750	400/4000	616/3250	2585kg	157	6.9	17.1	155	-	13.7	+ Twin turbo thrust, limo-like ride - It's a bit heavy	★★★★
Bentley Arnage T	096 D	'06-'08 8/6751	500/4200	737/3200	2585kg	196	5.2	-	179	-	14.5	+ Still able to impress - Something of an anachronism	★★★★
BMW 320d EfficientDynamics	143 D	€27,245 4/1995	161/3250	280/1900	1420kg	115	8.0	-	142	109	68.9	+ A diesel close to its best - The Alpina D3 costs little extra	★★★★
BMW 330d SE	123 D	€31,775 6/2993	241/4000	384/1750	1610kg	150	6.1	-	155	152	49.6	+ More power, refinement and mpg - Electric power steering lets side down	★★★★
BMW 325i M Sport		€30,540 6/2996	215/6700	199/2400	1505kg	145	6.6	-	155	168	39.2	+ Stunning drivetrain, controlled chassis - Looks a bit steady	★★★★
BMW 335i M Sport	134 F	€36,045 6/2979	302/5800	295/1300	1610kg	190	5.6	-	155	196	31.0	+ As above, with added wallop - Still looks a bit steady	★★★★
BMW M3 (E90)	123 R	€51,805 8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1680kg	250	4.9	10.7	165	290	22.8	+ Every bit as good as the M3 coupe - No carbon roof	★★★★
BMW 325i SE		'99-'05 6/2494	192/6000	181/3500	1485kg	131	7.1	-	149	-	31.4	+ Loses little to 330i - Steering not the best	★★★★
BMW 330i Sport	028 R	'99-'05 6/2979	231/5900	221/3500	1510kg	153	5.9	17.0	155	-	30.0	+ Clean, classy and confident - Too smooth for its own good?	★★★★
BMW 535i SE	141 D	€37,300 6/2979	302/5800	295/1200	1760kg	174	6.1	-	155	199	33.2	+ New 5-series impresses... - But only with all the chassis options ticked	★★★
BMW M5 Touring (E60)	105 F	'07-'10 10/4999	500/7750	383/6100	1880kg	270	4.8	-	155	-	19.3	+ Brilliant at ten tenths - Feels slightly clumsy when pottering	★★★★
BMW M5 (E60)	129 F	'04-'10 10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1855kg	276	4.7	10.4	155	-	19.6	+ Close to being the ultimate supersaloon - 5MG gearbox feels old-tech	★★★★
BMW M5 (E39)	110 F	'99-'03 8/4941	400/6600	369/3800	1720kg	236	4.9	11.5	155	-	-	+ Magnificent V8-engined supersaloon - We'd be nit-picking	★★★★
BMW M5 (E34)	110 F	'92-'96 6/3795	340/6900	295/4750	1653kg	209	5.9	13.6	155	-	-	+ The Godfather of supersaloons - The family can come too	★★★★
BMW M5 (E28)	110 F	'86-'88 6/3453	286/6500	250/4500	1431kg	203	6.2	-	151	-	-	+ The original storming saloon - Two handfuls in the wet	★★★★
BMW X5 xDrive 40d SE		€46,310 6/2993	302/4400	442/1500	2185kg	140	6.6	-	147	198	37.7	+ Handling, comfort, refinement - Looks like a big X3	★★★★
BMW X6 xDrive 50i	118 D	€56,045 8/4395	408/5500	442/1750	2190kg	186	5.4	-	155	292	22.6	+ Stunningly good to drive - Will you want to be seen arriving?	★★★★
BMW X6M	134 D	€80,220 8/4395	547/6000	502/1500	2380kg	234	4.7	-	171	325	-	+ Fast, refined and comfortable - But it definitely lacks the M factor	★★★
BMW 750i		€68,495 8/4395	401/5500	442/1750	2020kg	202	5.2	-	155	266	24.8	+ The ultimate drivers' limo - The back's a nicer place to be than the front	★★★★
Brabus Bullit	119 F	€300,000 12/6233	720/5100	811/2100	1850kg	395	3.8	-	217	-	-	+ Seven hundred and twenty bhp - Three hundred thousand pounds	★★★★
Cadillac CTS-V	148 F	€57,718 8/6162	556/6100	551/3800	1928kg	293	3.9	-	191	365	18.5	+ It'll stand out among M-cars and AMGs - But the novelty might wear off	★★★★
Chrysler 300C SRT8	096 D	€43,995 8/6059	425/6000	420/4800	1965kg	220	4.9	-	168	337	20.2	+ Looks, supple ride, composed chassis - Too much understeer, slow 'box	★★★★
Chrysler 300C 5.7 Hemi	088 D	'05-'08 8/5654	340/5000	387/4000	1910kg	180	6.2	15.1	155	-	23.3	+ Gangster chic - Ginsters suspension	★★★★
Ford Mondeo 2.0T Titanium X		€24,295 4/1999	200/6000	221/1750	1581kg	128	7.9	-	144	179	36.6	+ Terrific chassis, sweet engine - People will still want an Audi	★★★★
Ford Mondeo ST220	043 D	'02-'07 6/2967	223/6150	204/4900	1550kg	146	6.8	-	151	-	27.7	+ Muscular engine, fine chassis - Hotted-up reprobable image	★★★★
Ford Sierra RS Cosworth 4x4		'90-'93 4/1993	220/6250	214/3500	1305kg	159	6.6	-	144	-	24.4	+ Fast and furious - Try finding a straight one	★★★★
Ford Sierra RS Cosworth		'86-'90 4/1993	204/6000	204/4500	1220kg	169	6.2	-	143	-	-	+ Roadgoing Group A racecar - Don't shout about the power output!	★★★★
Holden HSV GTS S'charger	041 D	'02 8/5665	502/6050	457/5100	1799kg	283	4.5	-	180	-	-	+ Massive linear power, great chassis - Slow 'shift, cheap interior	★★★★
Honda Civic Type-R *	108 D	'07-'10 4/1998	222/8000	158/6100	1252kg	180	5.9	-	150	-	-	+ Screaming engine, razor-sharp chassis - Specialist import only	★★★★
Honda Accord Type-R	012 R	'99-'03 4/2157	209/7200	158/6700	1306kg	163	6.1	17.4	142	-	29.4	+ One of the finest front-drivers of all time - Lack of image	★★★★
Infiniti G37S		€34,470 6/3696	316/7000	265/5200	1709kg	188	5.8	-	155	248	26.7	+ Credible alternative to its German rivals - Lacks their looks and kudos	★★★★
Infiniti M37S	150 D	€39,650 6/3696	316/7000	265/5200	1765kg	182	6.2	-	155	235	27.7	+ Stands out from the crowd - Not as involving as some rivals	★★★★
Jaguar XF 3.0D S	145 D	€38,600 6/2993	271/6000	443/2000	1820kg	161	5.9	-	155	179	42.0	+ Best XF after the R - But we'd still have the R...	★★★★
Jaguar XF 5.0		€51,600 8/5000	380/6500	380/3500	1780kg	231	5.5	-	155	264	25.4	+ Ten grand cheaper than the XFR... - ...which is still the one we'd have	★★★★
Jaguar XFR	138 F	€62,600 8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1891kg	270	4.8	10.2	155	292	22.5	+ Brilliant blend of pace and refinement - Looks too discreet?	★★★★
Jaguar XF SV8	116 F	'08-'09 8/4196	410/6250	413/3500	1842kg	226	5.7	-	155	-	22.4	+ Convincing driving experience - Overshadowed by XFR	★★★★
Jaguar S-type R	048 R	'02-'07 8/4196	400/6100	408/3500	1800kg	226	5.3	-	155	-	22.5	+ Fine dynamics belie olde worlde looks - Auto-only, and no lsd	★★★★

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	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	Bhp/rpm	Lb ft/rpm	Weight	Bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO ₂ g/km	EC mpg	EVO rating	
Jaguar XJ 3.0 V6 diesel	148 D	£53,900	6/2993	271/4000	442/2000	1796kg	153	6.0	-	155	184	40.1	+ A great Jaguar - But not as great as the Supersport...	★★★★
Jaguar XJ Supersport	144 D	£88,000	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1892kg	270	4.7	-	155	289	23.4	+ Superb ride and handling, monster performance - Opinion-dividing looks	★★★★★
Jaguar XJR	054 R	'03-'09	8/4196	400/6100	408/3500	1665kg	244	5.0	-	155	-	23.0	+ Genuine 7-series rival - 2007 facelift didn't help middle-aged image	★★★★★
Jaguar XJR 4.0	018 R	'00-'03	8/3996	370/6150	387/3000	1775kg	211	5.6	13.5	155	-	21.9	+ Matchless grace, extraordinary pace - Not much space	★★★★★
Lamborghini LM002	016 F	'86-'89	12/5167	450/6800	369/5200	2700kg	169	-	-	130	-	-	+ Craziest 4x4 ever, Countach V12 - Craziest 4x4 ever...	★★★★★
Lexus IS-F	151 R	£56,540	8/4969	417/6600	372/5200	1714kg	247	4.7	10.9	173	270	24.8	+ Shockingly good Lexus - The M3's available as a four-door too	★★★★★
Lotus Carlton	035 F	'91-'93	6/3615	377/5200	419/4200	1658kg	231	4.8	10.6	176	-	17.0	+ The Millennium Falcon of saloon cars - Every drive a work-out	★★★★★
Maserati Quattroporte S	137 R	£85,550	8/4691	425/7000	361/4750	1990kg	216	5.1	12.1	174	365	18.0	+ Finally, a QP with more bhp - New grille a bit Hannibal Lecter	★★★★★
Maserati Q'porte Sport GTS	141 F	£92,355	8/4691	433/7000	361/4750	1990kg	221	5.1	-	177	365	17.9	+ The most stylish supersaloon - Slightly wooden brakes, unforgiving ride	★★★★★
Maserati Quattroporte	085 F	'04-'08	8/4244	394/7000	333/4500	1930kg	207	5.1	-	171	-	17.9	+ Redefines big-car dynamics - Don't use auto mode	★★★★★
Maserati Q'porte Sport GTS	113 D	'07-'08	8/4244	396/7000	339/4250	1930kg	208	5.5	-	167	-	-	+ Best Quattroporte chassis so far - More power wouldn't go amiss	★★★★★
Mazda 6 MPS	093 F	'06-'07	4/2261	256/5500	280/3000	1665kg	156	6.5	-	149	-	27.7	+ Agility, effective 4wd system, price - Inconsistent steering	★★★★
Mercedes-Benz 190E 2.5 16		'89-'92	4/2498	197/6750	177/5500	1360kg	147	7.2	-	142	-	24.4	+ M-B's M3 alternative - Not as nimble as the Beemer	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG	151 R	£52,435	8/6208	451/6800	442/5000	1730kg	264	4.4	9.7	160	312	21.1	+ Monstrous pace and extremely engaging - M3's just a little better...	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz DR520	148 D	£62,430	8/6208	513/6800	479/5000	1730kg	301	4.1	-	187	-	-	+ C63 AMG goes feral - For an extra ten grand, though	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz C55 AMG	088 R	'04-'08	8/5439	367/5250	376/4000	1635kg	228	5.2	-	155	-	23.7	+ Furiously fast, commendably discreet - Overshadowed by M3 and RS4	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG	134 D	£71,900	8/6208	518/6800	464/5200	1840kg	286	4.5	-	155	295	-	+ Sounds good, drives very well - Not as lazily grunty as its rivals	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG	096 D	'06-'09	8/6208	507/6800	464/5200	1840kg	280	4.5	-	155	-	19.8	+ Brilliant engine, indulgent chassis - Vague steering, speed limits	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz E55 AMG	052 R	'03-'06	8/5439	476/6100	516/2650	1760kg	271	4.8	10.2	155	-	21.9	+ M5-humbling grunt, cossetting ride - Speed limits	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz E55 AMG		'98-'02	8/5439	354/5500	390/3000	1642kg	219	5.5	-	155	-	23.0	+ Dragster disguised as a limo - Tyre bills	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz S63 AMG	148 D	£109,125	8/5461	536/5500	590/2000	2115kg	257	4.5	-	155	244	-	+ Massive torque, massively reduced emissions - Massive car	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz S65 AMG	098 F	£153,342	12/5980	604/4750	737/2000	2260kg	272	4.4	-	155	334	19.5	+ God's own supersaloon - Unholy price and thirst	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz S65 AMG	073 F	'04-'05	12/5980	603/6500	738/5950	2220kg	275	4.3	-	155	-	16.1	+ Eye-widening wallop - Wallet-shrivelling thirst	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG	099 F	£77,960	8/6208	507/6100	464/2650	1905kg	270	4.5	-	155	345	19.5	+ Beauty, comfort, awesome performance - M5 has the edge on B-roads	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz CLS55 AMG	092 F	'06	8/5439	476/6100	516/2650	1920kg	252	4.7	-	155	-	20.8	+ As above - You bang your head getting in	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz ML63 AMG	104 F	£78,430	8/6208	503/6800	464/5200	2310kg	221	4.6	11.0	155	-	17.1	+ Goes like an SUV has no right to - Gordon Murray will hate you	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz G55 AMG	092 F	£114,975	8/5439	476/6100	516/2650	2550kg	190	5.2	-	130	-	-	+ Thuggishness, anti-style statement - It's a bit silly	★★★★★
MG ZS 180	071 D	'01-'05	6/2497	175/6500	177/4000	1235kg	144	7.3	-	139	-	29.7	+ Sweet V6 engine, pace, tidy handling - Image	★★★★
MG ZT 260 V8	068 F	'03-'05	8/4601	256/5000	302/4000	1680kg	155	6.5	16.3	155	-	21.5	+ Lovely woolly V8, well-sorted rear-drive chassis - Thirst	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-300		£30,299	4/1998	290/6500	300/3500	1560kg	189	4.7	-	155	246	27.4	+ The Evo grows up - Perhaps just a little too sensible?	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-300 SST	118 F	£33,799	4/1998	290/6500	300/3500	1590kg	185	5.2	13.9	155	256	26.2	+ As above with twin-clutch transmission - As above, with paddles on	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-330 SST	134 F	£36,799	4/1998	324/6500	322/3500	1590kg	207	4.4	-	155	256	-	+ Great engine and gearbox combo - It still lives in the shadow of the Evo IX	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-360	122 D	£38,229	4/1998	354/6500	363/3500	1560kg	230	4.1	-	155	328	19.9	+ Ridiculously rapid new Evo - A five speed gearbox?!	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-400	138 F	£50,799	4/1998	403/6500	387/3500	1560kg	262	3.8	-	155	328	-	+ The best Evo X so far... - ...is about X grand too much	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo IX FQ-340	088 F	'05-'07	4/1997	345/6800	321/4600	1400kg	250	4.3	10.9	157	-	-	+ Gives Porsche drivers nightmares - Points, Lots of	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo IX MR FQ-360	103 F	'05-'07	4/1997	366/6887	363/3200	1400kg	266	3.9	-	157	-	-	+ Well-executed engine upgrades - Prison food	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo VIII	055 F	'03-'04	4/1997	276/6500	289/3500	1410kg	199	5.1	-	157	-	-	+ The Evo grows up - Brakes need beefing up	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo VIII MR FQ-300	057 R	'03-'05	4/1997	305/6800	289/3500	1400kg	221	4.8	-	157	-	20.5	+ Extra pace, extra attitude - Price premium	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo VII	031 F	'02-'03	4/1997	276/6500	282/3500	1360kg	206	5.0	13.0	140	-	20.4	+ Terrific all-rounder - You tell us	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo VII RS Sprint	041 D	'02-'03	4/1997	320/6500	327/6200	1260kg	258	4.4	-	150	-	-	+ Ruthlessly focused road weapon - For the truly committed	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo VI RS Sprint	011 F	'99	4/1997	330/6500	323/3000	1255kg	267	4.5	11.8	145	-	-	+ Lighter, keener, quicker than regular Evo - A little uncompromising	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo VI Makinen Ed.	128 F	'00-'01	4/1997	276/6500	275/2750	1365kg	205	4.6	-	150	-	-	+ Still one of our favourite Evos. Exclusive, too - Import only	★★★★★
Porsche Panamera S	133 D	£73,827	8/4806	394/6500	369/3500	1770kg	226	5.6	-	177	293	26.2	+ Great cabin and typically fine Porsche chassis - Only a mother could love it	★★★★★
Porsche Panamera Turbo	137 R	£97,358	8/4806	493/6000	516/2250	1970kg	254	3.6	8.9	188	286	23.2	+ Fast, refined and dynamically sound - It still leaves us cold	★★★★★
Porsche Cayenne Turbo	144 D	£81,589	8/4806	493/6000	516/2250	2170kg	231	4.7	-	173	270	24.6	+ Greener, faster, better - Odd rear styling, numb steering	★★★★★
Porsche Cayenne Turbo	104 F	'06-'10	8/4806	494/6000	516/2250	2355kg	213	4.7	11.4	171	-	19.0	+ Appears to defy physics - Still cracks mirrors at 50 paces	★★★★★
Range Rover Sport V8 S'chgd	135 D	£63,840	8/5000	503/6000	461/2000	2590kg	200	5.9	-	140	348	18.9	+ Thumpingly fast and hugely comfortable - It's no Cayenne in the corners	★★★★
Range Rover V8 Supercharged	134 D	£82,270	8/5000	503/6000	461/2000	2710kg	189	5.9	-	140	348	19.0	+ Fast, comfortable, luxurious - Big, heavy, thirsty	★★★★
Rolls-Royce Ghost	140 D	£195,840	12/6592	563/5250	575/1500	2435kg	235	4.7	-	155	317	20.8	+ More sporting, more affordable Rolls-Royce - But it still costs £192,500	★★★★★
Rolls-Royce Phantom	054 F	£275,990	12/6749	453/5350	531/3500	2550kg	181	5.7	-	149	377	18.0	+ Rolls reinvented for the 21st Century - The roads are barely big enough	★★★★★
Saab 9-5 2.8T XWD Aero	146 D	£37,795	6/2792	296/5500	295/2000	2065kg	146	6.9	-	155	244	26.6	+ Brilliant start to new Saab era - Steering and transmission could be better	★★★★★
Subaru WRX STI	151 D	£32,995	4/2457	296/6000	300/4000	1505kg	200	5.1	-	158	243	26.9	+ The fast Subaru saloon is back - Blue paint and gold wheels aren't	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza WRX GB270	109 D	'07	4/2457	266/5700	310/3000	1410kg	192	5.2	-	143	-	-	+ Fitting final fling for 'classic' Impreza - End of an era	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza WRX	087 F	'05-'07	4/2457	227/5600	236/3600	1410kg	163	5.4	-	143	-	27.4	+ 2.5 litres gives even greater thump - Slightly light steering	★★★★
Subaru Impreza STI	090 R	'05-'07	4/2457	276/6000	289/4000	1495kg	188	5.3	-	158	-	25.9	+ Stunning to drive - Not so stunning to look at	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza STI Spec C *	084 D	'05-'07	4/1994	320/6730	311/3500	1350kg	240	4.3	-	157	-	-	+ Lighter, faster, fiercer - The need for self-restraint	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza RB320	105 F	'07	4/2457	316/6000	332/3750	1495kg	215	4.8	-	155	-	-	+ Fitting tribute to a rallying legend - Too hardcore for some?	★★★★★
Subaru Imp'ra WRX STI PPP	073 F	'03-'05	4/1994	300/6000	299/4000	1470kg	207	5.2	12.9	148	-	-	+ A Subaru with real edge - Bit too edgy in the wet	★★★★★
Subaru STI Type RA Spec C *	067 F	'03-'05	4/1994	335/7000	280/3750	1380kg	247	4.3	11.1	160	-	-	+ Best Impreza since the P1 - Has lost its throbby flat-four voice	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza WR1	067 R	'04-'05	4/1994	316/5800	310/4000	1470kg	218	5.3	13.1	155	-	-	+ Most powerful official UK Impreza until RB320 - Spec C is better	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza Turbo	011 F	'98-'00	4/1994	215/5600	214/4000	1235kg	177	5.4	14.6	144	-	27.2	+ Destined for classic status - Thirsty	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza P1	067 F	'00-'01	4/1994	276/6500	260/4000	1283kg	219	4.9	13.3	150	-	25.0	+ Ultimate old-shape Impreza - Prices reflect this	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza RB5 (PPP)	011 F	'99	4/1994	237/6000	258/3500	1235kg	195	5.0	14.1	143	-	-	+ Perfect blend of poise and power - Limited numbers	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza 22B	011 F	'98-'99	4/2212	276/6000	265/3200	1270kg	220	5.0	13.1	150	-	-	+ On paper, the ultimate - On the road, too uncompromising	★★★★★
Subaru Forester STi *	087 F	'05-'08	4/2457	320/5800	330/3500	-	-	4.8	-	150+	-	-	+ Undercover fun, gutsy engine - Lacks ultimate edge of an Impreza	★★★★★
Vauxhall Insignia VXR	134 D	£32,290	6/2792	321/5250	321/5250	1810kg	180	5.6	-	155	249	24.7	+ Highly able and very likeable - It's a E31K Vauxhall...	★★★★★
Vauxhall Vectra VXR	102 D	'06-'09	6/2792	276/5500	262/1800	1580kg	177	6.1	-	161	-	27.4	+ Great engine, effortless pace, good value - Numb steering, lumpy ride	★★★★★
Vauxhall VXR8	122 D	£35,275	8/6162	425/6000	405/4400	1831kg	236	4.9	-	155	-	18.6	+ Oversteer, price, oversteer, practicality - Suspension can get befuddled	★★★★★
Vauxhall VXR8 Supercharged	113 R	£42,095	8/5967	533/6000	568/4400	1831kg	296	4.5	-	180	-	-	+ The Lotus Carlton reinvented - Doesn't have polish of best Europeans	★★★★★
Vauxhall VXR8 Bathurst S	148 F	£44,995	8/6162	564/6000	527/4000	1866kg	307	4.6	10.7	155	-	-	+ A tauter VXR8. Bonkers pace, brilliant noise - Gearchange still rubbish	★★★★★
VW Phaeton W12	046 D	£78,685	12/5998	444/6050	413/2750	2240kg	201	6.1	-	155	348	1		

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SPORTS CARS/CONVERTIBLES



OUR CHOICE Porsche Boxster. OK, it's become a bit of a cliché and it's got all the visual tension of a bar of soap, but the Boxster's still a great drive and the latest version boasts fresher, more powerful engines. New Spyder iteration (left) is even more driver-focused.

Best of the Rest: The back-to-basics Lotus Elise is a joy, with sublime handling and just enough power, while the revamped Mazda MX-5 handles like it should again. For the ultimate road and track thrills, though, buy a Caterham R300 (right) or an Ariel Atom.



	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	Bhp/rpm	Lb ft/rpm	Weight	Bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO ₂ g/km	EC mpg	EVO rating	
AC MKVI GT	135 D	£93,500	8/6162	437/4800	431/4800	1000kg	4.4	3.9	-	162	-	-	4.5	+ Cobra charm with a modern twist - It's priced against some strong rivals
Alfa Romeo 8C Spider	139 F	£174,000	8/4691	450/7000	354/4750	1675kg	2.7	4.5	-	181	-	-	4.5	+ Beauty meets beast. They hit it off - Good luck trying to buy one
Ariel Atom 3 245	113 D	£29,954	4/1998	245/8200	155/5200	500kg	4.9	3.2	-	150	-	33.0	4.5	+ The Atom just got a little bit better - Can still be a bit draughty...
Ariel Atom 3 Supercharged	138 F	£42,000	4/1998	300/8200	162/7200	550kg	5.5	3.3	-	155	-	-	4.5	+ It's brilliant - It's mental
Ariel Atom V8 500	150 R	£146,699	8/3000	475/10,500	284/7750	550kg	8.7	3.0	5.8	170	-	-	4.5	+ An experience unlike anything else on Planet Car - £150K for an Atom
Ariel Atom 2 300 Supercharged	123 R	'03-'09	4/1998	300/8200	162/7200	550kg	5.5	3.3	-	155	-	28.0	4.5	+ Makes your face ripple - ...like Clarkson's
Ariel Atom 2 275	068 D	'03-'08	4/1998	275/8400	192/7650	500kg	5.5	3.4	-	150	-	-	4.5	+ Supercharged engine is a scream - One for the brave
Ariel Atom 1	015 F	'99-'03	4/1796	125/5500	122/3000	496kg	2.5	5.6	18.0	115	-	-	4.5	+ Amazing styling, huge fun - As practical as a chocolate teapot
Aston V8 Vantage Roadster	130 F	£96,995	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1710kg	2.5	4.7	-	180	328	20.4	4.5	+ Sportiest, coolest drop-top Aston in years - Lacks real teeth
* Aston Vantage Roadster N420	152 D	£104,995	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1710kg	2.5	4.7	-	180	328	20.4	4.5	+ Drives and sounds as good as it looks - Not as quick as its price suggests
Aston Martin DB9 Volante	150 D	£131,445	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1815kg	2.6	4.6	-	190	389	17.2	4.5	+ Consummate cruiser and capable when pushed - Roof-up wind noise
Aston Martin DBS Volante	133 D	£179,500	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1810kg	2.8	4.3	-	191	388	17.3	4.5	+ A feelgood car par excellence - It's a bit of a heavyweight
Audi TT Roadster 1.8 TFSI		£24,690	4/1798	158/4500	184/1500	1285kg	1.2	7.4	-	139	152	43.5	4.5	+ Cheap entry into TT Roadster ownership - Lacks some of the coupe's rigidity
Audi TTS Roadster	122 D	£36,825	4/1984	268/6000	258/2500	1455kg	1.8	5.6	-	155	189	34.4	4.5	+ Effortlessly quick - Long-term appeal open to question; not cheap either
Audi TT RS Roadster	133 D	£46,715	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1510kg	2.2	4.7	-	155	221	29.7	4.5	+ Terrific engine... - ...is the best thing about it
Audi TT Roadster (Mk1 225bhp)	016 R	'00-'06	4/1781	225/5900	206/2200	1395kg	1.6	6.9	20.0	150	-	30.4	4.5	+ Winner on the King's Road - Trails Boxster on the open road
Audi S5 Cabriolet	130 D	£44,195	6/2995	328/5500	325/2900	1875kg	1.7	5.6	-	155	224	29.1	4.5	+ Gets the S4's trick new supercharged engine - Just a little bit dull
Audi RS4 Cabriolet	094 D	'06-'08	8/4163	414/7800	317/5500	1845kg	2.2	4.9	-	155	-	-	4.5	+ That engine - Wibble wobble, wibble wobble, jelly on a plate
Audi R8 5.2 V10 quattro Spyder	152 F	£112,500	10/5204	518/8000	391/6500	1720kg	3.0	4.1	-	194	356	19.0	4.5	+ Looks and sounds sensational - It's the most expensive Audi ever
Bentley Conti GTC Speed	131 D	£156,800	12/5998	600/6000	590/1750	2485kg	2.4	4.5	-	200	396	17.0	4.5	+ A great convertible just got better - Optional carbon brakes a necessity
Bentley Conti Supersports	147 D	£178,000	12/5998	621/6000	590/2000	2395kg	2.6	3.9	-	202	388	-	4.5	+ Fast, capable and refined - Coupe does the Supersports thing better
Bentley Azure T	140 D	£250,400	8/6761	500/4200	738/1800	2695kg	1.8	5.2	-	179	465	14.5	4.5	+ Two-and-a-half-ton sunbed - Cheaper Conti GTC a much better drive
BMW Z4 sDrive 23i (Mk2)	139 D	£29,695	6/2497	201/6400	184/2750	1480kg	1.3	6.6	-	151	199	33.2	4.5	+ The Z4 has grown up... - ...and got fat
BMW Z4 sDrive 35i (Mk2)	130 D	£38,480	6/2979	302/5800	295/1300	1600kg	2.1	5.2	-	155	219	30.1	4.5	+ As above, with more power - Not as much fun as it used to be
BMW Z4 3.0si (Mk1)	094 D	'06-'09	6/2996	265/6600	232/2750	1385kg	1.9	5.7	-	155	-	32.9	4.5	+ Terrific straight-six - Handling not as playful as we'd like
BMW Z4 M Roadster	091 R	'06-'09	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1485kg	2.3	4.8	-	155	-	23.3	4.5	+ Exhilarating and characterful, that engine - Stiff suspension
BMW M Roadster	002 F	'98-'02	6/3246	325/7400	258/4900	1450kg	2.2	5.3	-	155	-	25.4	4.5	+ Fresh-air M3, that motor, hunky looks - M Coupe drives better
BMW 335i SE Convertible	102 D	£40,720	6/2979	302/5800	295/1300	1810kg	1.6	5.8	-	155	205	29.7	4.5	+ Looks good, great to drive, fantastic engine - A bit shaky
BMW M3 Convertible (E93)	119 D	£57,285	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1885kg	2.2	5.3	-	155	269	21.9	4.5	+ M DCT transmission, pace, slick roof - Extra weight blunts the edge
BMW M3 Convertible	035 D	'01-'06	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1655kg	2.0	5.3	-	155	-	23.3	4.5	+ That engine - Gets the wobbles on British B-roads
BMW M6 Convertible	098 D	£92,175	10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1930kg	2.6	4.8	-	155	352	19.2	4.5	+ Composure, grip, power, comfort - Steering lacks feel at low speed
BMW Z8	026 R	'00-'03	8/4941	400/6600	369/3800	1585kg	2.5	4.8	11.1	155	-	14.4	4.5	+ M5-powered super-sportster - M5's more fun to drive
Brooke 260 Double R	094 F	£32,995	4/2261	260/7500	200/6100	550kg	4.8	3.9	-	155+	-	-	4.5	+ Fast, dynamic, well built - No roof, looks not for everyone
Caterham 7 Classic	068 F	£16,300	4/1397	105/6000	95/5000	540kg	1.9	6.5	-	110	-	-	4.5	+ The Caterham experience starts here - It's pretty raw
Caterham 7 Roadsport 125	105 F	£21,200	4/1595	125/6100	120/5350	539kg	2.3	5.9	-	112	-	-	4.5	+ New Ford-engined model is just great - Bigger drivers need SV model
Caterham 7 Roadsport SV 175	140 D	£28,300	4/1999	175/7000	139/6000	555kg	3.2	4.8	-	138	-	-	4.5	+ The Caterham for everyday use, R300 engine - Loses intensity of R300
Caterham 7 Superlight R300	150 F	£29,500	4/1999	175/7000	139/6000	515kg	3.4	4.5	-	140	-	-	4.5	+ Possibly all the Caterham you need - Factory-built cars can top £30K
Caterham 7 Superlight R400	105 F	£33,600	4/1999	210/7800	152/5750	525kg	4.0	3.8	-	140	-	-	4.5	+ R400 reborn with (lots of) Ford power - Slightly hesitant low-rev pick-up
Caterham 7 Superlight R500	123 R	£40,200	4/1999	263/8500	171/7200	506kg	5.2	2.9	-	150	-	-	4.5	+ Better power-to-weight ratio than a Veyron - Until you add the driver
Caterham CSR 260 Superlight	094 F	£42,900	4/2261	265/7500	200/6200	565kg	4.6	3.8	-	155	-	-	4.5	+ Brilliant for high days, holidays and trackdays - Wet Wednesdays
Caterham Levante	131 F	£115,000	8/2398	550/10000	300/8500	520kg	10.7	4.8	8.2	150	-	-	4.5	+ Twice the power-to-weight ratio of a Veyron! - Not easy to drive slowly
Caterham 7 R300	068 F	'02-'06	4/1796	160/7000	130/5000	500kg	3.2	4.7	-	130	-	-	4.5	+ Our 2002 Trackday Car of the Year - Not for wimps
Caterham 7 R400	068 F	'03-'06	4/1796	200/7500	150/5750	490kg	4.1	3.9	-	140	-	-	4.5	+ Race-car with a number plate - Your missus will leave you
Caterham 7 R500	068 F	'99-'06	4/1796	230/8600	155/7200	460kg	5.0	3.6	8.8	146	-	-	4.5	+ Fine for the Nürburgring - Hard work around the Bullring
Caterham 7 R500 Evolution	069 F	'04	4/1998	250/8000	190/4000	460kg	5.2	3.9	8.1	150	-	-	4.5	+ Madder than Mad Jack McMad - Er, it's a bit mad
Chevrolet Corvette C6	083 D	£56,186	8/6162	430/5900	424/4600	1460kg	3.0	4.3	-	186	-	21.2	4.5	+ Corvette performance - Convertible dynamics, electronics
Elfin Clubman	108 F	£42,000	8/5665	329/5200	343/4400	900kg	3.7	4.1	-	160	-	-	4.5	+ Aussie V8-engined bathtub - Needs refining to release potential
Fiat Barchetta	061 D	'95-'05	4/1747	130/6300	117/4300	1060kg	1.2	8.7	-	124	-	33.2	4.5	+ Out-chics the MX-5, great fun and terrific value, too - LHD only
Ginetta G20		£15,995	4/1796	140/5800	101/3500	660kg	3.4	6.3	-	126	-	-	4.5	+ Classic looks, old-fashioned value - Vintage driving experience
Grinnall IV	081 F	£26,995	4/1781	350/6800	310/6100	680kg	5.2	2.9	-	150	-	-	4.5	+ Monster power-to-weight ratio - Monsters aren't friendly
Honda S2000	118 D	'99-'09	4/1997	237/8300	153/7500	1260kg	1.9	6.2	-	150	-	28.2	4.5	+ An alternative and rev-happy roadster - The Boxster's better
IFR Aspid	126 D	£90,000	4/1997	398/8600	240/7800	740kg	4.5	2.8	-	155	-	-	4.5	+ Imagine a Caterham crossed with a Zonda - It's a bit pricey
Jaguar XK 5.0		£68,500	8/5000	380/6500	380/3500	1696kg	2.2	5.3	-	155	264	25.2	4.5	+ Basic XK gets extra power... - ...but loses some of its GT refinement
Jaguar XKR	130 F	£81,500	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1800kg	2.8	4.8	-	155	292	23.0	4.5	+ Gains Jag's fantastic new V8 - Loses sporting ground to its main foes
Jaguar XK	089 F	'06-'09	8/4196	294/6000	303/4100	1635kg	1.8	6.6	-	155	-	25.0	4.5	+ Every bit as good as the XK coupe - 294bhp still only just enough
Jaguar XKR		'06-'09	8/4196	414/6250	413/4000	1705kg	2.4	5.0	-	155	-	-	4.5	+ First Jag sports car for years - Overwrought detailing
Jaguar XKR	004 F	'97-'06	8/3996	370/6150	387/3600	1750kg	2.1	5.4	12.8	155	-	15.6	4.5	+ Hurricane-in-the-hair motoring - A danger to toupees everywhere
Jetstream SC250	125 D	£29,450	4/1998	247/5600	236/2400	700kg	3.5	4.0	-	160	-	38.0	4.5	+ The way it drives - The way it looks
KTM X-Bow	138 F	£49,482	4/1984	237/5500	229/2000	790kg	3.0	3.8	-	137	-	-	4.5	+ Mad looks, real quality feel - Heavier and pricier than we'd hoped
Light Car Company Rocket	104 F	£46,000	4/1002	143/10500	77/8500	406kg	3.5	4.4	-	145	-	35.0	4.5	+ Single-seater style, speed - Old Formula Fords cost £5K
Lotus Elise S 1.6	144 D	£27,450	4/1598	134/6800	118/4400	876kg	1.5	6.0	-	127	149	45.0	4.5	+ New 1.6-litre Elise is light and fantastic - Very slightly slower than 1.8

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	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	Bhp/rpm	Lb ft/rpm	Weight	Bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO ₂ g/km	EC mpg	EVO rating
Lotus Elise R	068 F	£31,450	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	860kg	223	5.6	13.9	150	196	34.4	+ Most thrilling Elise yet - Blaring engine note
Lotus Elise SC	131 F	£34,450	4/1794	218/8000	156/5000	870kg	254	4.5	11.4	148	199	33.2	+ All the usual Elise magic - Supercharged engine lacks sparkle
Lotus 2-Eleven	126 F	£32,440	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	720kg	267	4.3	-	140	-	-	+ Not far off supercharged car's pace - Pricy once it's made road-legal
Lotus 2-Eleven Supercharged	123 R	£40,945	4/1796	252/8000	179/7000	670kg	382	3.8	-	150	-	-	+ Impressive on road and track - Not hardcore enough for some
Lotus 2-Eleven GT4	138 F	£76,590	4/1796	266/8200	179/7200	670kg	403	3.7	-	155	-	-	+ evo Track Car of the Year 2009 - It's a 76-grand Lotus with no roof
Lotus Elise S 1.8	104 F	'06-'10	4/1794	134/6200	127/4200	860kg	158	6.3	18.7	127	-	37.2	+ Brilliant entry-level Elise - Precious little
Lotus Elise S2 111S	049 F	'02-'04	4/1796	156/7000	129/4650	860kg	197	5.1	-	131	-	40.9	+ A genuinely useable Elise - Air-con? In an Elise?
Lotus Elise S2 Sport 135	040 D	'03	4/1796	135/6200	129/4850	726kg	189	5.4	-	129	-	-	+ One of our fave S2 Elises - Brakes need more bite and pedal feel
Lotus Elise S2 Sport 190	044 F	'03	4/1796	190/7800	128/5000	710kg	272	4.7	12.1	135	-	-	+ Fabulous trackday tool - Pricy
Lotus Elise S1	126 F	'96-'00	4/1796	118/5500	122/3000	731kg	164	6.1	18.5	126	-	39.4	+ A modern classic - A tad impractical?
Lotus 340R	126 F	'00	4/1796	190/7800	146/5000	658kg	293	4.5	12.5	126	-	-	+ Hardcore road-racer... - ...that looks like a dune buggy from Mars
Lotus Elan SE	095 F	'89-'95	4/1588	165/6600	148/4200	1022kg	164	6.7	-	137	-	21.0	+ Awesome front-drive chassis - Rather uninvolved
Lotus Elan Sprint	126 F	'71-'73	4/1558	126/6500	113/5500	720kg	178	6.6	-	122	-	-	+ Sensational chassis, properly quick - Affording a mint one
Maserati GranCabrio	142 D	£95,630	8/4691	434/7000	332/4750	1980kg	223	5.3	-	176	354	18.5	+ As good to drive as it is to look at - Lacks the grunt of some rivals
Maserati 4200 Spyder	055 F	'03-'07	8/4244	390/7000	333/4500	1720kg	229	4.9	-	177	-	15.2	+ Magnificent engine, decent chassis - Brutal turn-in
Mazda MX-5 1.8i SE	123 R	£17,245	4/1798	124/6500	123/4500	1155kg	109	9.9	-	121	167	40.4	+ Basic MX-5 offers ESP-less fun - But you'll probably want the 2.0's power
Mazda MX-5 2.0i Sport Tech	138 F	£20,645	4/1999	158/7000	139/5000	1173kg	144	7.6	-	132	181	37.2	+ Handles brilliantly again - Less than macho image
Mazda MX-5 1.8i (Mk3 v1)	091 F	'05-'09	4/1798	124/6500	123/4500	1155kg	108	9.3	-	122	-	-	+ Gearchange, interior - Lost a lot of the charm of old MX-5s
Mazda MX-5 1.8i (Mk2)	017 R	'98-'05	4/1839	146/7000	124/5000	1065kg	140	8.6	-	123	-	32.5	+ Affordable ragtops don't get much better - Cheap cabin
Mazda MX-5 1.6 (Mk1)	131 F	'89-'97	4/1597	115/6500	100/5500	971kg	120	9.0	-	114	-	-	+ The original and still (pretty much) the best - Less than rigid
Mercedes-Benz SLK350	120 R	£38,260	6/3498	301/6500	266/4900	1485kg	206	5.5	13.5	155	227	29.1	+ Best non-AMG SLK yet - Still no Boxster-beater
Mercedes-Benz SLK55 AMG	087 F	£53,790	8/5439	355/5750	376/4000	1575kg	229	4.9	-	155	-	23.5	+ Superb engine, responsive chassis - No manual option, ESP spoils fun
Mercedes-Benz SLK55 AMG Black	110 F	'07-'08	8/5439	394/5750	383/3750	1495kg	268	4.9	11.2	174	-	-	+ AMG gets serious - Dull-witted 7G-Tronic auto box, uneven dynamics
Mercedes-Benz SL500		£79,420	8/5461	383/6000	391/2800	1910kg	204	5.4	-	155	272	24.4	+ Unflappable, gorgeous, beautifully engineered - Just a bit dull
Mercedes-Benz SL63 AMG	117 D	£104,560	8/6208	518/6800	464/5200	1895kg	278	4.6	-	155	328	20.3	+ More focused than old SL55 AMG - Lost some of its all-round appeal
Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG		£157,510	12/5980	604/4800	737/2000	2045kg	300	4.2	-	155	-	18.7	+ Humongous torque - Humongously expensive
Mercedes-Benz SL55 AMG	070 F	'02-'07	8/5439	493/6100	516/2650	1955kg	256	4.6	10.2	155	-	-	+ As fast as a Murciélago - Not as much fun
Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG	071 D	'04-'07	12/5980	604/4800	737/2000	2035kg	302	4.1	-	155	-	-	+ Gob-smacking performance - Gob-smacking price
Mini Cooper S Convertible		£19,460	4/1598	181/5500	177/1600	1305kg	141	7.2	-	140	139	47.1	+ It's still a great driver's car - The image is far from masculine
Mini John Cooper Works Conv.	130 F	£24,040	4/1598	208/6000	206/1850	1305kg	162	6.9	-	146	169	39.8	+ A manlier Mini cabrio. As hardcore as the hatch... - ...which is still better
MG TF LE500		£16,399	4/1796	133/6750	122/5000	1185kg	114	8.4	-	127	185	35.8	+ It's not bad to drive - But it can't be recommended at this price
Morgan Roadster V6	073 D	£39,038	6/2967	202/6000	206/4900	950kg	216	4.9	-	134	225	28.8	+ Lusty V6, romantic atmosphere - Bygone dynamics
Morgan Aero SuperSports	145 F	£126,900	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1180kg	312	4.2	-	170	-	-	+ As above, with a targa top - It's proper supercar money
Morgan Aero 8	105 F	'02-'08	8/4799	362/6300	361/3400	1100kg	334	4.5	-	170	-	25.2	+ Glorious sound, view over bonnet, dynamics - Awkward-looking rear
Nissan 370Z Roadster	143 F	£30,445	6/3696	326/7000	269/5200	1554kg	213	5.5	-	155	262	25.2	+ The Zed's old-school character remains intact - Its purposeful looks don't
Nissan 350Z Roadster		'04-'09	6/3498	309/6600	264/4800	1600kg	196	5.8	-	155	-	24.8	+ Drives just like the coupe - But doesn't look as good
Porsche Boxster		£34,726	6/2893	252/6400	214/4400	1335kg	192	5.9	-	163	221	30.1	+ Still as impressive as ever - It's a typically Porsche facelift
Porsche Boxster S	128 F	£41,724	6/3436	306/6400	265/5500	1355kg	229	5.3	-	170	223	29.7	+ As above, but with more power - Lighter steering than before
Porsche Boxster Spyder	140 F	£45,603	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1275kg	252	5.0	-	166	221	-	+ Lighter, more driver-centric Boxster - Collapsed-brolly roof not practical
Porsche Boxster (Mk2)		'05-'09	6/2687	241/6500	201/4400	1305kg	188	6.0	-	160	-	29.4	+ Mk2 Boxster is even better than the Mk1 - Ubiquity?
Porsche Boxster S (Mk2)	101 D	'07-'09	6/3387	291/6250	251/4400	1385kg	218	5.3	-	169	-	27.2	+ Real drop-top alternative to a 911 - It ain't cheap
Porsche Boxster (Mk1)	049 F	'99-'04	6/2687	228/6300	192/4700	1275kg	182	6.3	-	155	-	29.1	+ Still an impeccable sports car - Very little
Porsche Boxster S (Mk1)	070 F	'99-'04	6/3179	260/6200	228/4700	1320kg	200	5.5	-	164	-	26.9	+ Added power is seductive - As above
Porsche 911 Carrera S Cabrio	130 F	£80,343	6/3800	380/6500	310/4400	1510kg	256	4.9	-	188	242	27.4	+ Minimal compromise, max performance - Questionable image
Porsche 911 C4 Cabrio	122 D	£76,143	6/3614	341/6500	288/4400	1555kg	223	5.2	-	176	242	27.4	+ The usual - The usual image problems
Porsche 911 Turbo Cabrio	139 D	£105,927	6/3800	493/6000	479/1950	1645kg	305	3.7	-	194	275	24.1	+ Absurdly quick and capable drop-top - We'd still take the coupe
* Porsche 911 Speedster	152 D	£144,100	6/3800	402/7300	310/4200	1540kg	265	4.4	-	189	242	27.0	+ Rarity, quality, head-turning styling - More collectors' than drivers' car
Porsche 911 C2 Cabrio (996)		'05	6/3387	316/6800	273/4250	1386kg	232	5.0	-	174	-	25.4	+ Feels solid like the hard-top - What more do you want?
Porsche 911 Turbo Cabrio (996)	060 F	'03-'05	6/3596	414/6000	413/4600	1700kg	250	4.7	-	185	-	-	+ Faster than you'll ever need it to be - Just the image thing again
Radical SR4 Tracksport	070 F	£28,995	4/1500	250/9000	130/8000	462kg	550	3.5	-	160	-	-	+ 2004 Trackday Car of the Year - You may want a trailer
Radical SR8LM	138 F	£88,000	8/2800	460/10,500	260/8000	680kg	687	3.2	-	168	-	-	+ Fastest car around the Nordschleife - Convincing people it's road legal
Rolls-Royce Phantom DHC	106 D	£321,740	12/6749	453/5350	531/3500	2620kg	176	5.6	-	149	377	18.0	+ Opulent throwback - Short of pace and perfection
Smart Roadster Brabus	067 D	'04-'07	3/698	101/5600	96/2500	895kg	115	9.8	-	121	-	54.3	+ Feisty engine, growly soundtrack - Slow paddleshift gearbox
Tesla Roadster	131 F	£92,000	AC motor	248/4500	273/0-4500	1283kg	196	5.0	14.3	120	-	-	+ If this is the future, it's going to be fun - Limited range, high price
Toniq-R Duratec	102 D	£23,500	4/1999	193/6500	174/4500	550kg	357	4.5	-	140	-	-	+ Very good value, well built, and lots of fun too - No roof, no windscreen
Toyota MR2	078 F	'00-'06	4/1794	138/6400	125/4400	975kg	141	7.2	21.2	130	-	38.2	+ Tight lines, taut dynamics - Minimal luggage space
TVR T350T	067 D	'04-'07	6/3605	350/7200	290/5500	1100kg	318	4.4	-	175+	-	-	+ Targa top roof, grunty engine - Lacks polish
TVR Tamara	070 F	'01-'07	6/3605	350/7200	290/5500	1050kg	338	4.5	-	160	-	-	+ Well-sorted soft-top TVR - Awkward styling
TVR Tuscan Convertible	091 R	'05-'07	6/3996	365/6800	315/6000	1100kg	337	3.8	8.1	195+	-	-	+ Spirit of the Griff reborn - Over 195mph? Really?
TVR Tuscanra 5.0	007 R	'93-'03	8/4988	320/5500	320/3750	1060kg	307	4.6	-	167	-	26.4	+ Gorgeous noise, tarmac-rippling grunt - Details
TVR Griffith 4.3	068 F	'92-'93	8/4280	280/5500	305/4000	1060kg	268	4.8	11.2	148	-	-	+ The car that made TVR. Cult status - Mere details
TVR Griffith 500	009 R	'93-'01	8/4988	320/5500	320/3750	1060kg	307	4.8	11.2	167	-	22.1	+ Gruff diamond - A few rough edges
Ultima GTR	017 R	£45,500	8/6300	534/5800	528/4800	990kg	548	3.9	8.2	204	-	-	+ Turns the M1 into the Mulsanne - You'll have to build it yourself
Vauxhall VX220	023 R	'00-'04	4/2198	145/5800	150/4000	875kg	168	5.6	-	136	-	34.4	+ Absurdly good Vauxhall - The badge?
Vauxhall VX220 Turbo	066 R	'03-'05	4/1998	197/5500	184/1950	930kg	215	4.7	-	151	-	-	+ Nothing comes close for the money - Marginal everyday usability
Westfield Megabus	036 F	£24,450	4/1298	175/9800	102/9000	430kg	413	3.7	-	140	-	-	+ Bike-engined road-rocket - Not big on practicality...
Westfield 1600 Sport Turbo	140 D	£27,499	4/1598	195/5850	170/2000	650kg	305	4.7	-	142	-	-	+ Very quick and composed - Expensive, and a little on the heavy side
Westfield XI	078 D	£16,950	4/1275	65/6000	72/3000	498kg	132	8.5	-	120	-	-	+ Old-school charm - Old-school power
Westfield XTR4	068 D	£33,995	4/1781	220/5500	184/5000	542kg	413	3.6	-	160	-	-	+ Mini-Le Mans racer - You wouldn't want to drive it there
Westfield SEIGHT	068 F	'92-'94	8/3900	270/6000	-	622kg	441	4.4	9.4	144	-	-	+ Snarling, fire-breathing V8, ferocious pace - Spits fuel at you
Wiesmann Roadster MF3	077 D	£65,000	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1180kg	291	4.9	-	158	-	-	+ Engine, ride, build quality, exclusivity - Umm... '50s styling?

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COUPES/GTs



OUR CHOICE Porsche 997.2 GT3 RS. From its gloriously vocal flat-six to its race-car aero addenda, the latest RS is a machine optimised for the circuit, yet it also works extraordinarily well on the road. Simply intoxicating, and our 2010 Car of the Year.

Best of the Rest: Lotus's Evora (right) was our 2009 eCoty, offering Elise fun and tactility in a baby-supercar package. Nissan's GT-R (our 2008 eCoty) is supercar-quick, while Audi's R8s are sublime and BMW's M3 is mega, especially with the Competition Pack.



	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	Bhp/rpm	Lb ft/rpm	Weight	Bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2 g/km	EC mpg	eVO rating	
Alfa Romeo Brera 'S' 3.2 V6	120 F	£30,065	6/3195	256/6300	237/4500	1532kg	170	6.9	-	155	260	-	+ Brera optimised for UK roads - Steering still lacking some feel	★★★★
Alfa Romeo GT 3.2 V6 Lusso	071 R	'04-'08	6/3179	240/6200	221/4800	1410kg	173	6.3	15.5	149	-	22.8	+ Gorgeous looks, strong performance - Unsettled ride	★★★★
Alfa Romeo GTV 3.0 V6	010 F	'96-'06	6/2959	220/6300	199/5000	1406kg	159	6.5	-	150	-	24.1	+ Glorious V6 makes it a mini-Ferrari - So-so chassis	★★★★
Alfa Romeo 8C Competizione	120 F	c£111,000	8/4691	450/7000	354/4750	1585kg	288	4.1	-	181	-	-	+ Looks, exclusivity, noise, balance - They're all sold	★★★★★
Alpina B3 Biturbo	108 F	£50,250	6/2979	355/5500	369/3800	1570kg	230	4.8	-	177	-	29.1	+ Alpina's M3 alternative - Too refined for some	★★★★★
Artega GT	122 F	£64,860	6/3597	296/6600	258/2400	1100kg	273	4.9	-	170	-	-	+ Stunning looks, chassis up with the best - Interior design, price	★★★★★
Aston Martin V8 Vantage 4.7	120 F	£88,995	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1630kg	262	4.7	-	180	328	20.4	+ More power lifts Vantage to a new level - Ride is unremittingly firm	★★★★
Aston Martin V8 Vantage N420	147 F	£96,995	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1603kg	266	4.7	-	180	-	20.4	+ Aston's best V8 Vantage yet... - ...is by far the most expensive	★★★★★
Aston Martin V8 Vantage 4.3	109 F	'05-'08	8/4281	380/7300	302/5000	1630kg	237	5.2	12.0	175	-	-	+ Gorgeous, awesome soundtrack - Can't quite match 911 dynamically	★★★★
Aston Martin V8 Vantage N400	114 F	'07-'08	8/4281	400/7300	309/5000	1630kg	249	4.9	-	177	-	-	+ Brilliant limited edition Vantage - They should have built more like this	★★★★★
Aston Martin DB9	146 D	£122,445	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1760kg	271	4.6	-	190	389	17.2	+ Ride & handling transformed for 2010 - Rapide doesn't cost much more	★★★★★
Aston Martin DB7 Vantage	081 R	'00-'05	12/5935	420/6000	400/5000	1770kg	241	4.9	11.2	185	-	18.6	+ DB7 with near-supercar pace - Handling lacks edge	★★★★
Aston Martin DBS	142 F	£170,500	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1695kg	306	4.2	-	191	388	17.3	+ Stupendous engine, gearbox, brakes - Pricey. Can bite the unwary	★★★★★
Audi TT 2.0 TFSI	150 D	£27,925	4/1984	208/4300	258/1600	1260kg	168	6.1	-	152	154	42.8	+ Front-driver loses nothing to quattro TTs - Steers like a computer game	★★★★
Audi TTS	119 D	£34,760	4/1984	268/6000	258/2500	1395kg	195	5.4	-	155	184	35.3	+ Usefully quicker TT; great drivetrain - Still steers like a computer game	★★★★
Audi TT RS	135 R	£44,775	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1450kg	235	4.4	11.1	155	214	31.0	+ Sublime 5-cylinder turbo engine - Rest of package can't quite match it	★★★★
Audi TT Sport (Mk1)	081 D	'05-'06	4/1781	237/5700	236/2300	1390kg	173	5.7	-	155	-	30.3	+ Deliciously purposeful interior, crisp chassis - Numb steering	★★★★
Audi S5 quattro	105 D	£42,045	8/4163	349/7000	324/3500	1630kg	221	5.1	-	155	288	23.3	+ Fast, comfortable, beautifully built - Soft and a bit uninteresting	★★★★
Audi RS5	151 R	£57,480	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1725kg	261	4.3	10.6	155	-	-	+ Brilliant engine and accomplished chassis... - ...don't get together	★★★★
Audi R8 4.2 V8 quattro	106 R	£85,100	8/4163	414/7800	317/4500	1560kg	270	4.1	9.9	187	332	20.3	+ Finally, a true 911 alternative - Exclusivity comes at a price	★★★★★
Audi R8 5.2 V10 quattro	146 R	£105,810	10/5204	518/8000	391/6500	1620kg	325	3.9	8.4	196	351	19.2	+ The fabulous R8 gets a supercar engine - Looks a lot like the V8	★★★★★
Audi R8 GT	151 D	£142,585	10/5204	552/8000	398/6500	1520kg	369	3.6	-	199	-	-	+ Everything we love about the R8 - Not as hardcore as we wanted	★★★★★
Audi Quattro 20V	019 F	'90-'91	5/2226	220/5900	228/1950	1329kg	146	6.2	18.2	143	-	19.1	+ Modern classic - Buy wisely to avoid big bills	★★★★★
* Bentley Continental GT	152 D	£135,760	12/5998	567/6000	516/1700	2320kg	248	4.6	-	198	384	-	+ 200mph in utter comfort - Weight, thirst	★★★★
Bentley Continental GT Speed	115 F	£144,440	12/5998	600/6000	553/1750	2350kg	259	4.3	-	202	396	17.0	+ Stupendous performance, fine dynamics - Weight, thirst...	★★★★★
Bentley Conti Supersports	137 F	£166,600	12/5998	621/6000	590/2000	2245kg	282	3.7	-	204	388	17.3	+ A thoroughly impressive car... - ...rather than a fun and involving one	★★★★
Bentley Brooklands	116 D	£241,600	8/6761	530/4000	774/3250	2655kg	203	5.0	-	184	465	14.5	+ More fun than it has any right to be - It's a bit thirsty	★★★★★
BMW 135i M Sport	113 F	£30,675	6/2979	302/5800	295/1300	1560kg	197	5.3	-	155	198	30.7	+ Fast, fun, £20K cheaper than an M3 - Not as wild as we'd hoped	★★★★
BMW 330Ci	071 R	'00-'06	6/2979	231/5900	221/3500	1522kg	154	6.4	16.6	155	-	31.0	+ Not much slower than a contemporary M3 - Coupés should be bolder	★★★★
BMW 335i M Sport	095 D	£38,215	6/2979	302/5800	295/1300	1600kg	192	5.2	12.2	155	196	31.0	+ Eager engine, exploitable chassis - Slightly unadventurous styling	★★★★★
BMW M3 [E92]	151 R	£53,275	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1655kg	254	4.3	10.3	155	290	22.8	+ Fends off all of its talented new rivals - Priced very close to 911 territory	★★★★★
BMW M3 GTS [E92]	150 F	£115,215	8/4361	444/8300	324/3750	1530kg	295	4.3	-	155	-	-	+ Highly exclusive, feels special - Highly priced, too. And it's no GT3 RS	★★★★★
BMW M3 [E46]	066 F	'00-'07	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1570kg	219	5.1	12.3	155	-	23.7	+ One of the best BMWs ever - Slightly artificial steering feel	★★★★★
BMW M3 CS [E46]	088 F	'05-'07	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1570kg	219	5.1	-	155	-	23.7	+ CSL dynamics without CSL price - Looks like the standard car	★★★★★
BMW M3 CSL [E46]	060 R	'03-'04	6/3246	355/7900	273/4900	1385kg	255	5.3	12.0	155	-	-	+ Stripped-down road-race M3 - Standard brakes barely adequate	★★★★★
BMW M3 [E36]	'93-'98	6/3201	321/7400	258/3250	1515kg	215	5.4	12.8	157	-	25.7	-	+ Performance, image - Never quite as good as the original	★★★★
BMW M3 [E30]	019 F	'86-'90	4/2302	220/6750	180/4750	1257kg	178	6.7	17.8	144	-	20.3	+ Best M-car ever! Race-car dynamics for the road - LHD only	★★★★★
BMW Z4 3.0si Coupe	107 R	'06-'09	6/2996	261/6600	232/2750	1395kg	190	5.6	-	155	-	31.7	+ The looks, the sounds, the way it goes - Fidgety chassis	★★★★
BMW Z4 M Coupe	097 F	'06-'09	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1424kg	241	5.0	-	155	-	23.3	+ A real drivers' car - You've got to be prepared to get stuck in	★★★★★
BMW M Coupe	005 R	'98-'03	6/3246	325/7400	258/3250	1450kg	228	5.1	-	155	-	25.0	+ Quick and characterful - Lacks finesse	★★★★
BMW M6	106 R	£87,335	10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1785kg	285	4.8	10.0	155	342	19.8	+ Awesome GT, awesome sports car - SMG gearbox now off the pace	★★★★★
Bristol Blenheim 3 'S'	038 D	£158,331	8/5900	n/a	410/3500	1787kg	-	5.4	-	155	-	21.7	+ Individualism - Anachronism	★★★
Chevrolet Camaro SS	148 F	c£30,000	8/6162	420/5900	420/4600	1751kg	247	4.7	-	155	-	-	+ Looks like a Transformer made real - We'd prefer it in robot mode	★★★
Chevrolet Corvette C6	116 D	£49,033	8/6162	430/5900	424/4600	1461kg	300	4.3	-	186	-	21.2	+ A Corvette with no apologies needed - Still left-hand drive only	★★★★★
Chevrolet Corvette Z06	099 F	£66,403	8/7011	505/6300	469/4800	1418kg	363	3.9	8.5	198	-	19.2	+ 8.5 to 100, brakes, price - Not quite the road-racer we expected	★★★★★
Dodge Challenger *	122 D	c£40,000	8/6059	425/6200	420/4800	1877kg	230	5.2	-	160+	-	-	+ Effortlessly cool... - ...if you live in Hazzard County	★★★★
Dodge SRT-10 Coupe	087 D	'06-'08	10/8277	500/5600	525/4200	1565kg	324	3.9	-	190	-	-	+ Awesome power, muscle-car looks - Cheap cabin, vague gearchange	★★★
Farbio GT5350	132 F	£76,375	6/2967	350/6500	308/5400	1066kg	337	4.0	-	170+	-	-	+ Genuine Porsche 911 rival - Needs final fettling	★★★★
Ford Mustang GT *	148 F	c£35,000	8/4951	412/6500	390/4250	1635kg	256	4.5	-	155	-	-	+ Compelling alternative to a Nissan 370Z - LHD and imports only	★★★★
Ford Shelby GT500 *	140 R	c£47,000	8/5411	540/6000	510/4500	1780kg	308	4.6	-	155	-	-	+ Massive power never fails to entertain - Heavy, unsophisticated chassis	★★★★
Honda CR-Z GT	144 F	£19,999	4/1497	122/6100	128/1500	1198kg	103	9.9	-	124	117	56.5	+ The first hybrid with sporting intent - No match for a good diesel hot hatch	★★★★
Honda Integra Type-R [DC2]	095 F	'96-'00	4/1797	187/8000	131/7300	1101kg	173	6.2	17.9	145	-	28.9	+ Arguably the greatest front-drive car ever - Too raw for some	★★★★★
Honda Integra Type-R [DC5] *	037 F	'01-'06	4/1998	217/8000	152/7000	1250kg	176	7.1	16.7	140	-	-	+ Sharp looks, massive grip - Lost a little of the DC2's magic	★★★★
Honda NSX	043 F	'90-'05	6/3179	270/7300	220/5300	1410kg	196	5.5	-	168	-	22.8	+ 'The useable supercar' - 270bhp sounds a bit weedy today	★★★★★
Honda NSX-R *	051 F	'02-'03	6/3179	276/7100	224/5300	1270kg	221	4.4	-	168	-	-	+ evo Car of the Year 2002 - Honda never brought it to the UK	★★★★★
Infiniti G37S Coupé	127 R	£35,890	6/3696	316/7000	265/5200	1706kg	188	5.8	13.8	155	248	26.7	+ Softer 370Z delivers sharp-driving swing at the Germans - Bland looks	★★★★
Jaguar XK 5.0	130 D	£62,500	8/5000	380/6500	380/3500	1660kg	232	5.2	-	155	264	25.2	+ Fine car for the likes of us - Jag buyers may not like the harder edge	★★★★
Jaguar XKR	129 D	£75,500	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1753kg	292	4.6	-	155	292	23.0	+ Fast and incredibly rewarding Jag - The kids will have to stay at home	★★★★★
Jaguar XKR 75	150 F	£85,500	8/5000	523/6000	488/2500	1762kg	302	4.4	-	174	-	-	+ Fastest and most involving Jag - They're only making 75 of them	★★★★★
Jaguar XKR	'98-'06	8/4196	400/6100	408/3500	1735kg	234	5.2	-	155	-	22.9	+ Extra grunt of 4.2-litre motor - Lacks feedback	★★★★★	
Lotus Exige S	105 F	£35,550	4/1796	218/7800	158/5500	930kg	238	4.5	-	148	199	33.2	+ Non-limited edition of the Exige 240R - Uninspiring soundtrack	★★★★★

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	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	Bhp/rpm	Lb ft/rpm	Weight	Bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2 g/km	EC mpg	EVO rating
Lotus Exige Cup 260	139 D	£45,950	4/1796	256/8000	174/6000	890kg	293	4.0	-	152	199	31.1	+ Feels like a race car, yet works on the road - Costs the best part of £50K ★★★★★
Lotus Exige (series 2)	068 R	'04-'08	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	875kg	219	4.9	-	147	-	32.1	+ Highly focused road and track tool - Lacks visual impact of S1 ★★★★★
Lotus Exige 240R	087 F	'05	4/1796	243/8000	174/7000	930kg	264	3.9	9.9	155	-	-	+ Lightweight with a hefty punch - Instantly sold out ★★★★★
Lotus Exige (series 1)	067 D	'00-'01	4/1796	192/7800	146/5000	780kg	247	4.6	-	136	-	-	+ Looks and goes like Elise racer - A tad lacking in refinement ★★★★★
Lotus Evora	138 F	£48,550	6/3456	276/6400	258/4700	1382kg	203	5.6	13.6	162	205	32.5	+ Sublime ride and handling. Our 2009 car of the year - Pricy options ★★★★★
Lotus Evora S	152 F	£57,550	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1430kg	245	4.6	-	172	239	-	+ A faster and better Evora - But one which spars with the Porsche 911... ★★★★★
Lotus Europa SE	127 F	'08-'10	4/1998	222/5600	221/4000	995kg	227	4.9	-	146	-	28.8	+ More of a Lotus than before - Still overshadowed by the Exige and Evora ★★★★★
Lotus Esprit Sport 350	005 R	'99-'00	8/3506	350/6500	295/4250	1299kg	274	4.3	9.9	175	-	22.0	+ Designed for track work but brilliant on the road - Limited edition ★★★★★
Maserati GranTurismo	114 R	£80,450	8/4244	399/7100	339/4750	1880kg	216	5.5	12.7	177	330	19.7	+ Striking, accomplished GT - Doesn't spike the pulse like an Aston or 911 ★★★★★
Maserati GranTurismo S	120 F	£86,765	8/4691	433/7000	361/4750	1880kg	234	4.9	-	183	354	17.0	+ A genuinely sporty Maser - A bit heavier and pricier than we'd like ★★★★★
Maserati Coupe	064 F	'03-'07	8/4244	390/7000	333/4500	1680kg	237	4.8	-	177	-	17.6	+ Glorious engine, improved chassis - Overly sharp steering ★★★★★
Maserati GranSport	073 F	'04-'07	8/4244	400/7000	333/4500	1680kg	239	4.8	-	180	-	-	+ Maser Coupe realises its full potential - Very little ★★★★★
Mazda RX-8 R3	122 R	£25,540	2R/1308	228/8200	156/5500	1429kg	162	6.5	16.4	146	299	24.6	+ Even sharper chassis than basic RX-8 - Same wafer-thin torque output ★★★★★
Mazda RX-8	071 R	'03-'08	2R/1308	228/8500	156/5500	1394kg	166	7.0	19.0	146	-	25.2	+ Never mind the quirkiness, it's a great drive - Dull-sounding engine ★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz E500 Coupe	132 D	£50,935	8/5461	382/6000	391/2800	1715kg	226	5.4	-	155	254	25.9	+ The usual V8 Merc strengths - Not overly exciting, no AMG version coming ★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz CLK63 AMG	092 D	'06-'09	8/6208	481/6800	464/5000	1755kg	278	4.6	-	155	-	19.9	+ Power, control, build quality - Lacks ultimate involvement ★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz CLK63 AMG Black	106 F	'07-'09	8/6208	500/6800	464/5250	1760kg	289	4.2	-	186	-	-	+ AMG goes Porsche-hunting - Dull-witted gearshift spoils the party ★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz CL63 AMG	150 D	£111,985	8/5461	536/5500	590/2000	2060kg	264	4.5	-	155	244	-	+ Presence, pace, monster engine - Stiff ride, stiff competition ★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz CL65 AMG	115 F	£154,930	12/5980	603/4800	737/2000	2240kg	273	4.4	-	155	334	19.1	+ Unsurprisingly rapid on non-wiggly bits - Lacks charm, involvement ★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz CL65 AMG	069 F	'03-'06	12/5980	612/6500	738/5950	2155kg	289	4.4	-	186	-	-	+ If depreciation's done its work... - Steering slightly disappointing ★★★★★
Morgan AeroMax	097 D	£110,000	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1180kg	312	4.1	-	170	-	-	+ Weird and utterly wonderful - They're all sold ★★★★★
Nissan 370Z	131 F	£28,345	6/3696	326/7000	269/5200	1520kg	218	5.4	-	155	248	-	+ Quicker, leaner, keener than 350Z - Not quite a Cayman-killer ★★★★★
Nissan 350Z (309bhp)	107 R	'07-'09	6/3498	309/6800	264/4800	1532kg	205	5.5	13.0	155	-	24.1	+ Huge fun, and great value too - Honestly, we're struggling ★★★★★
Nissan 350Z (296bhp)	094 F	'06-'07	6/3498	296/6400	260/4800	1525kg	197	5.8	-	155	-	24.8	+ Small power boost adds to Z's appeal - As below ★★★★★
Nissan 350Z (276bhp)	059 D	'03-'06	6/3498	276/6200	268/4800	1525kg	184	6.1	14.8	155	-	24.8	+ Original 350Z makes a great used buy - Slightly low-rent interior ★★★★★
Nissan 200SX	'94-'02	4/1998	197/6400	195/4800	1267kg	158	6.5	-	142	-	29.1	-	+ Fast, cheap and rwd - Looks, image ★★★★★
Nissan GT-R	152 F	£69,950	6/3799	520/6400	475/3200	1740kg	304	3.5	-	194	295	-	+ Our 2008 Car of the Year. Now even better - Pricier than before ★★★★★
Nissan GT-R Spec V	150 F	£124,950	6/3799	478/6400	447/3500	1680kg	289	3.4	-	193	295	-	+ Phenomenal brakes and handling - Not really worth the extra £55K ★★★★★
Nissan Skyline GT-R (R34)	009 R	'99-'02	6/2568	276/7000	289/4400	1560kg	180	4.7	12.5	165	-	20.1	+ Big, brutal, and great fun - Very firm ride ★★★★★
Nissan Skyline GT-R (R33)	019 F	'97-'99	6/2568	276/6800	271/4400	1540kg	182	5.4	14.3	155	-	22.0	+ Proof that Jap hi-tech can work (superbly) - Limited supply ★★★★★
Noble M400	089 F	'04-'06	6/2968	425/6500	390/5000	1040kg	407	3.5	-	185	-	-	+ Devilishly fast - Demon Tweaks interior ★★★★★
Noble M12 GT0-3R	070 F	'03-'06	6/2968	352/6200	350/3500	1080kg	332	3.8	-	170	-	-	+ The ability to humble exotica - Flawed driving position ★★★★★
Noble M12 GT0	023 R	'00-'03	6/2544	310/6000	320/3500	980kg	321	4.1	10.2	165	-	-	+ Gives GT3 drivers a fright - Styling could be more cohesive ★★★★★
Peugeot RCZ 1.6 THP 200	143 D	£22,750	4/1598	197/5500	202/1700	1297kg	154	7.5	-	147	159	40.9	+ Distinctive looks, highly capable handling - Could be a bit more exciting ★★★★★
Porsche Cayman	131 F	£37,261	6/2893	261/7200	221/4400	1330kg	199	5.8	-	165	221	30.1	+ Extra power, just as involving - Still lacks desirability of other Porsches ★★★★★
Porsche Cayman S	132 F	£45,449	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1350kg	237	5.2	-	172	223	29.7	+ Still want that 911? - Yeah, us too [even though it's the best Cayman yet] ★★★★★
Porsche Cayman S	097 F	'06-'09	6/3387	291/6250	251/4400	1350kg	219	5.3	12.2	171	-	26.6	+ Pure and rewarding - If they'd just move the engine back a bit... ★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera [997.2]	'94-'97	6/3614	341/6500	288/4400	1415kg	245	4.8	-	180	225	29.4	-	+ Faster and greener than the mk1 997 - Lost a little of the 911 magic ★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera S [997.2]	121 F	£72,894	6/3800	380/6500	310/4400	1425kg	271	4.6	-	188	242	27.4	+ Poise, precision, blinding pace - Feels a bit clinical ★★★★★
* Porsche 911 Carrera GTS [997.2]	152 D	£76,758	6/3800	402/7300	310/4200	1420kg	288	4.6	-	190	240	26.6	+ Fitting finale for the 997 generation - Absolutely nothing ★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera 4S [997.2]	'97-'09	6/3800	380/6500	310/4400	1480kg	261	4.8	-	179	247	26.9	-	+ Huge grip, power and composure - The Carrera S is £4K cheaper ★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 [997.2]	138 F	£85,564	6/3797	429/7600	317/6250	1395kg	312	4.2	9.2	194	303	22.1	+ Even better than the car it replaces - Give us a minute... ★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS [997.2]	152 F	£106,870	6/3797	444/7600	317/6750	1370kg	329	4.0	-	193	314	-	+ Our 2010 car of the year - Looks and noise are slightly OTT ★★★★★
Porsche 911 Sport Classic	140 F	£137,529	6/3800	402/7300	310/4200	1425kg	287	4.6	-	188	-	-	+ Curious concept that works well - GT2 price with Carrera S performance ★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 [997.1]	103 R	'07-'09	6/3600	409/7600	298/5500	1395kg	298	4.3	9.4	192	-	-	+ Runner-up evo Car of the Year 2006 - Ferrari 599 GTBs ★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS [997.1]	105 F	'07-'09	6/3600	409/7600	298/5500	1375kg	302	4.2	-	193	-	-	+ evo Car of the Year 2007 - £15K more than the brilliant GT3 ★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 [996.2]	066 F	'03-'05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1380kg	272	4.3	9.2	190	-	-	+ evo Car of the Year 2003 - Looks softer than previous GT3 ★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS [996.2]	068 R	'03-'05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1330kg	286	4.2	9.2	190	-	-	+ Track-biased version of above - Limited supply ★★★★★
Porsche 911 RS [993]	036 R	'95	6/3746	300/6500	262/5600	1270kg	240	4.7	11.2	172	-	-	+ Barking engine note, gearchange - Not quite hardcore enough ★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 [996.1]	066 F	'99	6/3600	360/7200	273/5000	1350kg	271	4.5	10.3	187	-	21.9	+ Our Car of the Year 1999 - Porsche didn't build enough ★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera S [997.1]	070 F	'04-'08	6/3824	350/6600	295/4600	1420kg	246	4.6	10.9	182	-	24.5	+ 'S' is like a junior GT3 - Tech overload? ★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera 4S [996]	051 F	'02-'05	6/3596	316/6800	273/4250	1470kg	218	5.1	-	174	-	-	+ Second best 996 only to the GT3 - Very little ★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera [996 3.4]	008 R	'98-'01	6/3387	300/6800	258/4600	1320kg	230	4.6	-	173	-	28.0	+ Beautifully polished 911 - Some like a bit of rough ★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera [993]	'94-'97	6/3600	285/6100	251/5250	1372kg	211	5.2	-	168	-	25.0	-	+ More character than 996 - Harder work at speed ★★★★★
Porsche 968 Club Sport	019 F	'93-'95	4/2990	240/6200	225/4100	1335kg	183	6.1	15.7	149	-	-	+ One of the all-time greats - Lots have been driven very hard ★★★★★
Porsche 928 GTS	'92-'95	8/5396	350/5700	317/4250	1790kg	199	5.2	-	171	-	17.0	-	+ Big-hearted and beautiful - Be sure to buy a good one ★★★★★
Renault Alpine A410	'92-'96	6/2975	250/5750	258/2900	1420kg	179	5.4	13.8	160	-	21.0	-	+ Overlooked, bargain-price French 911. Try one - RS interior ★★★★★
Superformance Daytona Coupe	149 D	£102,225	8/6162	437/5900	424/4600	1300kg	342	3.9	-	200+	-	-	+ Awesome engine, awesome looks - Damp roads equal moist palms ★★★★★
TVR T350C	057 R	'03-'07	6/3605	350/7200	290/5500	1100kg	318	4.7	10.0	175	-	-	+ Looks, engine - Unsupportive seats; chassis lacks ultimate polish ★★★★★
TVR Sagaris	099 D	'05-'07	6/3996	406/7500	349/5000	1078kg	383	3.7	-	185	-	-	+ Looks outrageous - 406bhp feels a touch optimistic ★★★★★
TVR Tuscan S (Mk2)	076 R	'05-'07	6/3996	400/7000	315/5250	1100kg	369	4.0	-	185	-	-	+ Possibly TVR's best ever car - Aerodynamic 'enhancements' ★★★★★
TVR Typhon	102 F	'04	6/3996	400/7000	330/5250	1040kg	383	3.9	-	180+	-	-	+ Carbon body, exclusivity - Interesting damping, no supercharger ★★★★★
TVR Cerbera Speed Six	004 R	'98-'06	6/3966	350/6800	330/5000	1130kg	315	5.0	11.4	160+	-	-	+ Accomplished and desirable - Check chassis for corrosion ★★★★★
TVR Cerbera 4.5	014 F	'97-'04	8/4578	420/6750	380/5500	1100kg	388	3.9	-	180+	-	-	+ Genuine supercar pace - Integrity? ★★★★★
Vauxhall Monaro VXR 6.0	079 D	'05-'07	8/5967	398/6000	391/4400	1677kg	241	5.1	-	180+	-	-	+ Improved chassis and steering, 180mph - Looks a bit snouty ★★★★★
VW Scirocco 2.0 TSI	122 R	£23,615	4/1984	207/5300	207/1700	1298kg	162	6.9	-	149	172	38.2	+ Golf GTI price and performance - Interior lacks flair ★★★★★
VW Scirocco R	138 F	£28,505	4/1984	261/6000	258/2500	1352kg	196	5.8	-	155	189	35.3	+ Great engine, grown-up dynamics - Looks very grown-up, too ★★★★★
VW Corrado VR6	095 F	'92-'96	6/2861	190/5800	180/4200	1237kg	156	6.2	-	143	-	29.5	+ One of the great all-rounders - A little nose-heavy ★★★★★
Wiesmann GT MF4	117 D	£108,000	8/4799	362/6300	361/3400	1250kg	294	4.5	-	174	-	-	+ Old-school looks with new-school go - Big-school price ★★★★★
Wiesmann GT MF5	127 D	£150,000	10/4999	500/7750	383/6100	1380kg	368	3.9	-	193	-	-	+ Striking coupe mated to BMW M5's V10 - Steering a little light ★★★★★

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SUPERCARS



OUR CHOICE Ferrari 599 GTO. You can argue about the use of the Gran Turismo Omologato tag (one thing it isn't is an homologation car), but everything else about the GTO just feels so right, from its 661bhp V12 to its racecar-sharp chassis. A legend in the making.


Best of the Rest: The Veyron Super Sport is just awe-inspiring, though you'd have as much sheer fun in a Ferrari 458. We also love the soon-to-be-replaced Murciélago LP670-4 SV (right), Porsche's ballistic GT2 RS and the screaming Lexus LFA.



	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	Bhp/rpm	Lb ft/rpm	Weight	Bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO ₂ g/km	EC mpg	EVO rating
9ff GT9R	127 D	€450,000	6/4000	1120/7850	774/5970	1346kg	845	2.9	-	260	-	-	+ Above 100mph eats Veyrons for breakfast - Eats M3 dust at traffic lights ★★★★★
Aston Martin V12 Vantage	146 R	€135,000	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1680kg	308	4.4	9.7	190	388	17.3	+ The best car that Aston Martin makes - Erm, a tad thirsty? ★★★★★
Aston Martin Vanquish S	110 F	'05-'07	12/5935	520/7000	425/5800	1875kg	282	4.9	10.1	200	-	-	+ Vanquish joins supercar greats - A tad intimidating at the limit ★★★★★
Aston Martin Vanquish SDC	035 F	'01-'05	12/5935	460/6500	400/5000	1835kg	255	4.9	10.2	190	-	-	+ Aston's genuine Ferrari rival - Needs Sports Dynamic Pack to shine ★★★★★
Aston Martin Vantage s/c	001 R	'93-'00	8/5340	550/6500	550/4000	1988kg	281	4.6	-	186	-	13.1	+ Two tons of well-hung British beef - Leaden gearbox ★★★★★
Aston Martin Vantage 600	131 F	'98	8/5340	600/6200	600/4400	2020kg	302	4.6	11.0	190	-	-	+ A proper, full-fat Aston Martin - Running costs will be equally 'proper' ★★★★★
BMW M1		'78-'81	6/3500	277/6500	239/5000	1303kg	216	5.8	-	161	-	-	+ Early supercar icon - A bit under-endowed these days ★★★★★
Bristol Fighter	146 R	€234,982	10/7990	525/5500	525/4200	1600kg	333	4.0	-	210	-	-	+ Unique, intriguing, goes like stink - Looks perhaps not for everyone ★★★★★
Bugatti Veyron 16.4	134 F	€925,000	16/7993	1000/6000	922/2200	1950kg	521	2.8	5.8	253	-	-	+ Superbly engineered 4wd quad-turbo rocket - Er, lacks luggage space? ★★★★★
Bugatti Veyron Grand Sport	133 F	€1.4m	16/7993	1000/6000	922/2200	1990kg	510	2.6	-	253	-	-	+ Warp speed and ferocious noise sans-roof - Ridiculous broly/roof thing ★★★★★
Bugatti Veyron Super Sport	151 F	€2.0m	16/7993	1183/6400	1106/3000	1838kg	654	2.5	-	268	539	-	+ The world's fastest supercar - Limited to 258mph for us mere mortals ★★★★★
Bugatti EB110	078 F	'91-'95	12/3500	552/8000	451/3750	1566kg	358	3.4	-	212	-	-	+ Superbly engineered 4wd quad-turbo rocket - It just fizzled out ★★★★★
Caparo T1	138 F	€301,975	8/3499	575/10,500	310/9000	689kg	848	3.8	6.2	205	-	-	+ Absolutely staggering performance - Absolutely staggering price tag ★★★★★
Chevrolet Corvette ZR1	133 R	€106,605	8/6162	638/6500	603/3800	1528kg	424	3.8	7.6	205	-	18.8	+ Huge pace and character - Take plenty of brave pills if there's rain ★★★★★
Ferrari California	143 F	€143,870	8/4287	453/7750	358/5000	1735kg	265	3.8	9.0	193	299	21.5	+ Despite the CC roof, it's a real Ferrari - We'd still take an F430 Spider ★★★★★
Ferrari 458 Italia	152 F	€169,545	8/4499	562/9000	398/6000	1485kg	384	3.4	-	202	307	21.2	+ An astounding achievement, looks fantastic - There'll never be a manual ★★★★★
Ferrari 599 GTB Fiorano	101 R	€207,620	12/5999	611/7600	448/5600	1688kg	368	3.5	7.4	205	415	15.8	+ evo Car of the Year 2006 - Banks are getting harder to rob ★★★★★
Ferrari 599 GTB Fiorano HGTE	146 R	€221,884	12/5999	611/7600	448/5600	1688kg	368	3.5	7.4	205	415	-	+ As above, with a bit more edge - Can be a little too edgy in the wet ★★★★★
Ferrari 599 GTO	149 F	€299,300	12/5999	661/8250	457/6500	1605kg	418	3.4	-	208	-	-	+ One of the truly great Ferraris - Erm, the air con isn't very good ★★★★★
Ferrari 612 Scaglietti F1	090 R	€217,775	12/5748	533/7250	434/5250	1840kg	294	4.3	9.8	199	470	13.8	+ Awesomely capable grand tourer - Looks divide opinion ★★★★★
Ferrari F430	087 F	'04-'10	8/4308	483/8500	343/5250	1450kg	342	4.0	-	196	-	18.6	+ Just brilliant - Didn't you read the plus point? ★★★★★
Ferrari F430 Spider	095 F	'04-'10	8/4308	483/8500	343/5250	1520kg	326	4.1	-	193	-	18.6	+ Bertinetta dynamics, 8000rpm with the roof down - Looks? ★★★★★
Ferrari 430 Scuderia	121 R	'07-'10	8/4308	503/8500	347/5250	1350kg	378	3.5	7.7	198	-	15.7	+ Successful F1 technology transplant - Likes to shout about it ★★★★★
Ferrari 360 Modena	008 R	'99-'04	8/3586	400/8500	275/4750	1390kg	292	4.5	9.0	180+	-	17.0	+ Worthy successor to 355 - Not quite as involving as it should be ★★★★★
Ferrari 360 Challenge Stradale	068 R	'03-'04	8/3586	420/8500	275/4750	1280kg	333	4.1	-	186	-	-	+ Totally exhilarating road-racer. It's loud - It's very, very loud ★★★★★
Ferrari F355 F1 Berlinetta	003 F	'97-'99	8/3496	375/8250	268/6000	1332kg	286	4.7	-	183	-	16.7	+ Looks terrific, sounds even better - Are you kidding? ★★★★★
Ferrari 575M 'Fiorano'	050 D	'02-'06	12/5748	508/7250	434/5250	1730kg	298	4.2	9.6	202	-	12.3	+ 'Fiorano pack' makes 575 truly great - It should have been standard ★★★★★
Ferrari 550 Maranello	066 F	'97-'02	12/5474	485/7000	415/5000	1716kg	287	4.3	10.0	199	-	12.3	+ Everything - Nothing ★★★★★
Ferrari Enzo	149 F	'02-'04	12/5998	650/7800	485/5500	1365kg	484	3.5	6.7	217+	-	-	+ Intoxicating, exploitable - Cabin detailing falls short of Zonda or F1 ★★★★★
Ferrari F50	064 F	'96-'97	12/4968	513/8000	347/6500	1229kg	424	3.7	-	202	-	-	+ The best drivers' Ferrari - Lines lack tension ★★★★★
Ferrari F40	064 F	'87-'92	8/2936	478/7000	425/4000	1100kg	441	3.7	-	201	-	-	+ The shape that launched a thousand posters - Er... ★★★★★
Ferrari 288GTO	064 F	'84-'85	8/2855	400/7000	366/3800	1160kg	350	4.9	-	189	-	-	+ Painfully beautiful, rarer than the F40 - You are joking? ★★★★★
Ferrari 512TR		'92-'94	12/4943	422/6750	362/5500	1517kg	291	4.8	-	195	-	16.0	+ Pick of the flat-12 Ferraris, incredible sound - It's a bit wide ★★★★★
Ford GT	087 F	'04-'06	8/5409	550/6500	500/3750	1583kg	353	3.7	-	205	-	-	+ Our 2005 Car of the Year - JC had one. Reckoned it didn't handle... ★★★★★
Gumpert Apollo	110 F	€275,000	8/4163	690/6300	675/4000	1200kg	584	3.0	-	220+	-	-	+ Stupendous performance, 'Apollo' - High price, 'Gumpert' ★★★★★
Jaguar XJ220	131 F	'92-'94	6/3498	542/7200	475/4500	1470kg	375	3.7	-	213	-	-	+ Britain's greatest supercar... - ...until McLaren built the F1 ★★★★★
Koenigsegg CCX	094 F	€500,000	8/4700	806/6900	678/5700	1180kg	694	3.9	7.7	241	-	-	+ Sweden's greatest supercar - Sweden's only supercar ★★★★★
Koenigsegg CCXR Edition	118 F	€1.5m	8/4800	1004/7000	796/5600	1280kg	797	2.8	-	254+	-	-	+ The world's fastest car. Probably - Spike power delivery ★★★★★
Koenigsegg CC8S	061 F	'03-'06	8/4700	655/6800	553/5000	1175kg	566	3.3	-	242	-	-	+ Pretty darned quick - A tad intimidating ★★★★★
Lamborghini Gallardo LP550-2	138 F	€166,784	10/5204	542/8000	398/6500	1380kg	399	3.9	-	199	-	-	+ The mad rear-driven Lambo is back! - For a limited period only... ★★★★★
Lamborghini Gallardo LP560-4	122 R	€149,107	10/5204	552/8000	398/6500	1410kg	398	3.7	7.8	202	327	20.0	+ Great car gets quicker and cleaner - Rocky ride; grabby carbon brakes ★★★★★
Lamborghini LP560-4 Spyder	130 F	€155,860	10/5204	552/8000	398/6500	1550kg	362	4.0	-	201	330	20.0	+ The sound of a V10 with no roof - A smidge less hardcore than the coupe ★★★★★
Lamborghini LP570-4 S'leggera	152 F	€174,840	10/5204	562/8000	398/6500	1340kg	426	3.5	-	202	325	-	+ A reminder of how great the Gallardo is - LP560-4 does as good a job ★★★★★
Lamborghini Gallardo	094 F	'06-'08	10/4961	513/8000	376/4250	1520kg	343	4.3	9.4	196	-	-	+ On a full-bore start it spins all four wheels, cool - Slightly clunky e-gear ★★★★★
Lamborghini G'ardo S'leggera	104 F	'07-'08	10/4961	522/8000	376/4250	1420kg	373	3.8	-	196	-	-	+ Lighter, more agile - Grabby carbon brakes, clunky e-gear ★★★★★
Lamborghini Murciélago LP640	093 F	€212,750	12/6496	631/8000	487/6000	1665kg	385	3.3	-	211	-	21.3	+ Compelling old-school supercar - You'd better be on your toes ★★★★★
Lambo M'lago LP640 Roadster	101 D	€232,990	12/6496	631/8000	487/6000	1690kg	379	3.4	8.0	205	-	21.3	+ Open-top thrills come no bigger - The hood's a bad joke ★★★★★
Lambo M'lago LP670-4 SV	138 F	€270,038	12/6946	661/8000	487/6500	1565kg	429	3.2	7.3	212	-	-	+ A supercar in its truest, wildest sense - Be prepared for stares ★★★★★
Lamborghini Murciélago	089 D	'01-'06	12/6192	570/7500	479/5400	1650kg	351	4.0	-	205	-	-	+ Gorgeous, capable and incredibly friendly - V12 feels stressed ★★★★★
Lamborghini Diablo 6.0	019 F	'00-'02	12/5992	550/7100	457/5500	1625kg	343	3.8	-	200+	-	-	+ Best-built, best-looking Diablo of all - People's perceptions ★★★★★
Lamborghini Diablo GT	016 F	'99-'00	12/5992	575/7300	465/5500	1490kg	392	4.1	8.3	211	-	12.5	+ Briefly the world's fastest production car - They made only 80 ★★★★★
Lamborghini Countach QV		'88-'91	12/5167	455/7000	369/5200	1447kg	320	4.9	-	180	-	13.7	+ Still the definitive supercar - Visibility, pract- oh hell, who cares? ★★★★★
Lexus LFA	152 F	€336,000	10/4805	552/8700	354/6800	1480kg	379	3.7	-	202	-	-	+ Absurd and compelling supercar - Badge and price don't quite match ★★★★★
Maserati MC12	079 R	'04-'05	12/5998	621/7500	481/5500	1445kg	437	3.8	-	205	-	-	+ Rarer than an Enzo - The Ferrari's better ★★★★★
McLaren F1	145 F	'94-'98	12/6064	627/7500	479/4000	1137kg	560	3.2	6.3	240+	-	19.0	+ Still the most single-minded supercar ever - There'll never be another ★★★★★
Mercedes SL65 AMG Black	131 F	€250,000	12/5980	661/5400	737/2200	1876kg	358	4.0	8.1	199	-	-	+ Bonkers looks, bonkers speed - Bonkers price ★★★★★
Mercedes SLS AMG	152 F	€157,500	8/6208	563/6800	479/4750	1620kg	335	4.1	8.4	197	308	-	+ Great engine and chassis (gullwing doors too!) - Slightly tardy gearbox ★★★★★
Mercedes SLR McLaren	073 F	'04-'07	8/5439	617/6500	575/3250	1618kg	387	3.7	-	208	-	-	+ Zonda-pace, 575-style drivability - Dreadful brake feel ★★★★★
Mercedes SLR 722 McLaren	103 D	'07	8/5439	641/6500	605/4000	1574kg	414	3.5	-	209	-	-	+ Monster presence, monster pace - Highly strung ★★★★★
Noble M600	138 F	€200,000	8/4439	650/6800	604/3800	1250kg	528	3.0	-	225	-	-	+ Noble's unbelievably good attack on the supercar class - It's a bit pricey ★★★★★
Pagani Zonda Cinque Roadster	147 D	€1.5m	12/7291	669/6200	575/4000	1400kg	485	3.4	-	217+	-	-	+ The best Zonda ever - The last Zonda ever [probably] ★★★★★
Pagani Zonda F Roadster CS	127 F	'06-'08	12/7291	641/6200	575/4000	1400kg	465	3.5	-	214	-	-	+ As light and stiff as the coupe - You'd better like carbonfibre ★★★★★
Pagani Zonda F	082 F	'05-'06	12/7291	602/6150	575/4000	1230kg	497	3.6	-	214	-	-	+ Everything an Italian supercar ought to be - Choose interior carefully ★★★★★
Pagani Zonda C12S	096 F	'01-'05	12/7291	555/5900	553/4050	1250kg	451	3.6	-	197	-	-	+ Set a new supercar benchmark - Harry won't let us use his long-termer ★★★★★
Porsche 911 Turbo [997.2]	140 R	€105,927	6/3800	493/6000	479/1950	1570kg	319	3.2	7.3	193	272	24.8	+ The Turbo at the very top of its game - The GT3's cheaper... ★★★★★
Porsche 911 Turbo S [997.2]	146 R	€123,263	6/3800	523/6250	516/2100	1570kg	339	2.9	6.8	196	268	-	+ As above, with more power - The GT3's even cheaper... ★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT2 RS [997.2]	152 F	€164,107	6/3600	611/6500	516/2250	1370kg	453	3.5	-	205	284	-	+ More powerful than a Carrera GT. Handles, too - Erm... ★★★★★
Porsche 911 Turbo [997.1]	094 F	'06-'09	6/3600	472/6000	457/1950	1585kg	303	4.0	8.7	193	-	22.1	+ Monster cornering ability - A bit woolly on its standard settings ★★★★★
Porsche 911 Turbo [996]	017 F	'00-'06	6/3600	420/6000	413/4600	1540kg	272	4.1	10.0	189	-	21.0	+ The 911 for all seasons - We can't find any reasons ★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT2 [996]	072 F	'04-'06	6/3600	475/5700	457/3500	1420kg	339	4.0	-	198	-	-	+ Later revisions made it even more of a star - Care still required ★★★★★
Porsche 911 Turbo [993]	066 F	'95-'98	6/3600	408/5750	398/4500	1502kg	276	4.3	9.2	180	-	19.4	+ Stupendous all-weather supercar - It doesn't rain

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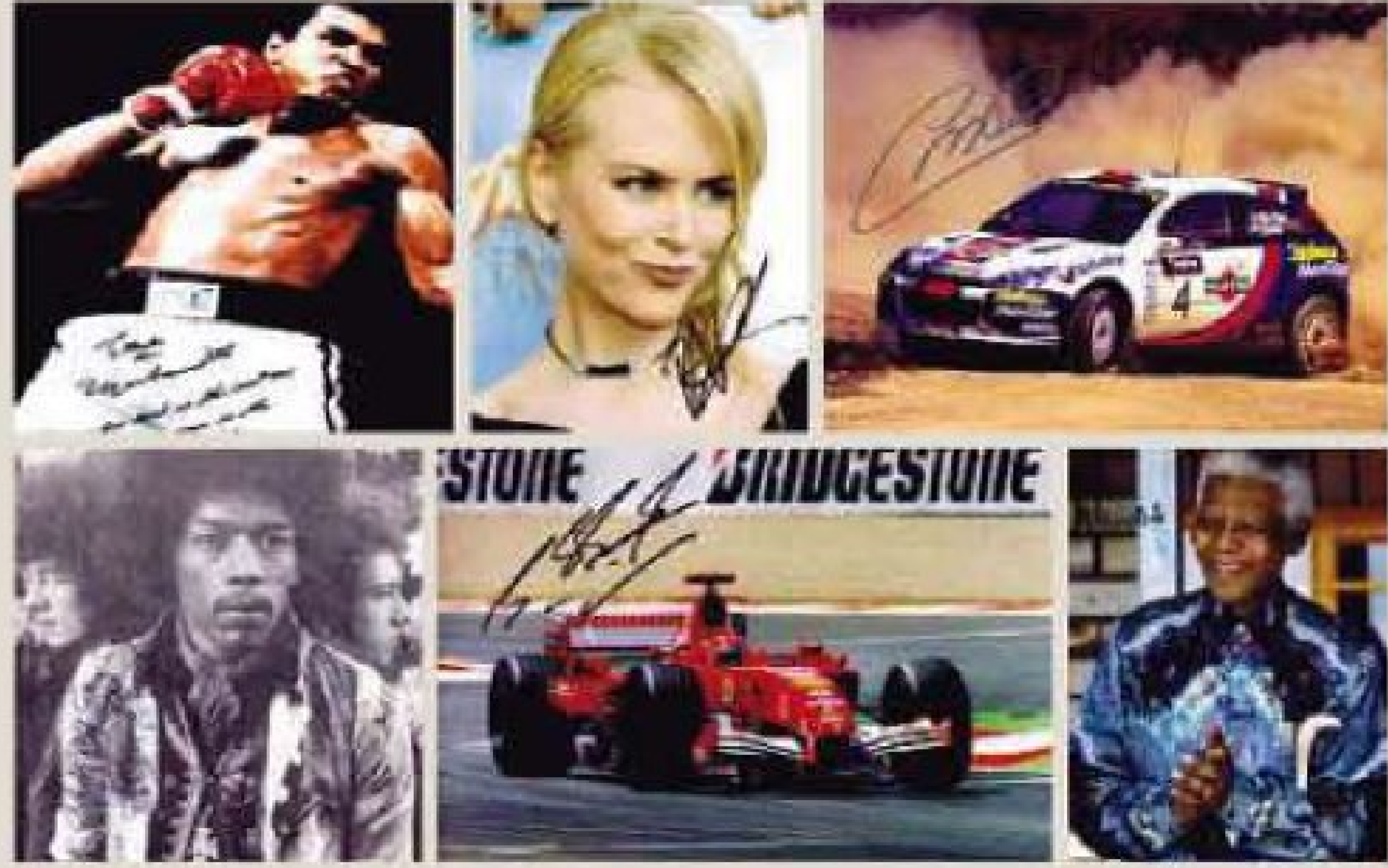
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BUYING CARS

Q I currently own a mk1 Mazda MX-5 and a Honda Integra Type-R (DC2), both amazing cars in their own right. I'm struggling to justify having both cars at the moment and was trying to think of a suitable replacement for both of them. I love the engine/gearbox and overall package of the Honda but the RWD convertible bug has bitten, so surely a Honda S2000 would be a perfect joint replacement? I have read a lot to the contrary, however, so will the

S2000 be a disappointment after these two great drivers' cars? – Adrian Mertens

A Let's get the S2000's negative points out of the way first. The cockpit was too small and the seating position too high, which gave it a toy-car sensation – you felt as if you were sitting on top of it rather than immersed in the heart of the action. Adding to the sense of remoteness was the numb steering, with dull turn-in and a rear end that was too soft under acceleration. All of which made

the S2000 tricky to drive hard, with a wooliness that was at odds with the engine and gearbox – at launch, the banshee engine was the highest-revving 2-litre unit on sale and the gearbox was as sweet and snickety as they come. More good news is that over ten years Honda chipped away at the S2000's weak points, and while they never completely nailed it, the car became more and more exploitable.

So if you plump for an S2000, go for the latest model your budget will allow and revel in the buzz of the ballistic VTEC cams, especially now that they

have been legislated out of existence.

As for alternatives, skip the Z3, TT convertible and SLK, for none of them is dynamically much of an improvement over the S2000. Instead take a look at the Porsche Boxster 2.7. It's a different experience to the Honda but it's tight and controlled and can be driven with far greater accuracy. Although you don't get the top-end engine frenetics, you do get low-down torque and a very linear power delivery. Sorry to be banging on about a Porsche again, but it is the best all-round package and it's where we'd spend our cash – RG

S2000 isn't a dynamic paragon, but it got better as time went on. Alternatively...



THE EXPERTS



JOHN BARKER

– our road test editor has been road-testing and racing since the late '80s and has driven every significant supercar and performance car since. Want to know which car to buy next? Barker's your man



RALPH HOSIER

– an engineer by profession, with stints at Ford, Bentley and Jaguar among others, Hosier is passionate about all things automotive. He also campaigns a Triumph GT6 racer – with a V12 engine, naturally



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TUNING & ENGINEERING

Q While writing a ludicrously large cheque for the road tax on my BMW M3, I got thinking about CO2 emissions. At 290g/km, could a single long journey really produce my own body weight in CO2?

The official combined-cycle fuel consumption figure for my car is around 23mpg, so by my calculations 23mpg = 37km/gallon = 8.1km/litre. Since petrol weighs around 750g per litre, the weight of the petrol that my car burns in one (combined-cycle) kilometre is only 92g. Where does the other 198g come from? Surely the weight of the CO2 in my petrol cannot exceed the weight of the petrol? – James Rush

A Your car really does chuck out a higher mass of CO2 than it consumes as fuel, and of course you can force even more out of the tailpipe with a little 'spirited' driving.

But it's not magic. Petrol and diesel are known as hydrocarbons because they are made principally of hydrogen and carbon, but a molecule of CO2 is

mostly made of two oxygen atoms, and these come from the vast amount of air an engine munches through. In fact, a petrol engine uses over 14 grams of air for each gram of fuel it consumes. In your case that works out as something in the region of 1.4kg of air per km, which is about 1100 litres.

Oxygen is surprisingly heavy stuff. The two atoms in a molecule of CO2 weigh over five times more than the carbon atom they are attached to. However, in your calculation you have used the entire weight of fuel to get 92g/km, but only about 50g of that fuel is carbon, the rest is hydrogen, which is mostly exhausted as water (H2O).

Also, not all the carbon is turned to CO2. Some fails to burn and exits as hydrocarbon – this is the HC bit on your MOT emissions test – although catalytic converters turn HC into more CO2 and a little bit of water.

It is quite astounding just how much CO2 a car throws out. A 90-litre tankful of petrol turns into 200kg of greenhouse gas, so every five fill-ups results in a tonne of the stuff being blasted into our atmosphere. So make sure it was worthwhile – RH



The mass of CO2 emitted by a car is many times the mass of the fuel you put in – you can thank air for that

THE EXPERT



RALPH HOSIER

– engineer and racer Hosier answers your questions about how cars work and how best to tune them

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BUYING CARS

Q After 12 years on an Italian-only diet of Ferrari (355 and 456), Lamborghini (Diablo VT and 6.0 VT) and Maserati (Ghibli Cup, 3200, 4200, QP), I now feel just that tad too old, fat and bald to get away with this sort of car. So three months ago I succumbed and bought a 911.

Not wanting to get in too deep too early, I plumped for a facelifted 3.6-litre 996 Carrera 4 at £20K. And blow me down, I love it. Fast, easy to drive, easy to clean, cheap to insure/service/run, etc, I use it as my everyday car.

So, with the Porsche being such a success, I can justify throwing another £10K into the pot. My question is, should I buy a 996 Turbo or an early 997 Carrera?

By the way, it has to be the Tiptronic version as my wife uses it occasionally and only has an auto licence – Ewan Clark

A An early 997 Carrera is a great car, but it isn't a patch on the previous-generation Turbo, which remains one of the best road cars

the company has built. The key to this is the Turbo's engine – this is the original Metzger-designed motor and it makes the 'ordinary' flat-six used in the Carreras seem a little flat and unexciting. Okay, the 996 interior now looks pretty dated, but it's tough enough and, as you've discovered, surprisingly practical.

How does the 996 Turbo beat the later 997 Carrera as a driving tool? Torque is the key. The Turbo's blown six is pretty much lag-free. Thank relatively low boost pressures and quite high compression (9.4:1) for that. A 996 Turbo has a 100lb ft advantage over a naturally aspirated 3.8-litre 997, and you feel that advantage the whole time.

For you there is just one uncomfortable aspect: transmission choice. I ran a 996 Turbo in 2006 for 5000 miles and loved every second of it, but mine was a six-speed manual. I never enjoyed the Tiptronic version because it robbed the car of precision, performance and overall enjoyment.

So the course of action is simple. Select a nice, clean 996 Turbo, and give your wife some driving lessons in a manual! – Chris Harris

We'd take a 996 Turbo over a 997 Carrera, chiefly for its quite brilliant engine



THE EXPERT



CHRIS HARRIS

– our expert on all things Porsche, Harris has driven, owned and raced more 911s than he's had hot dinners

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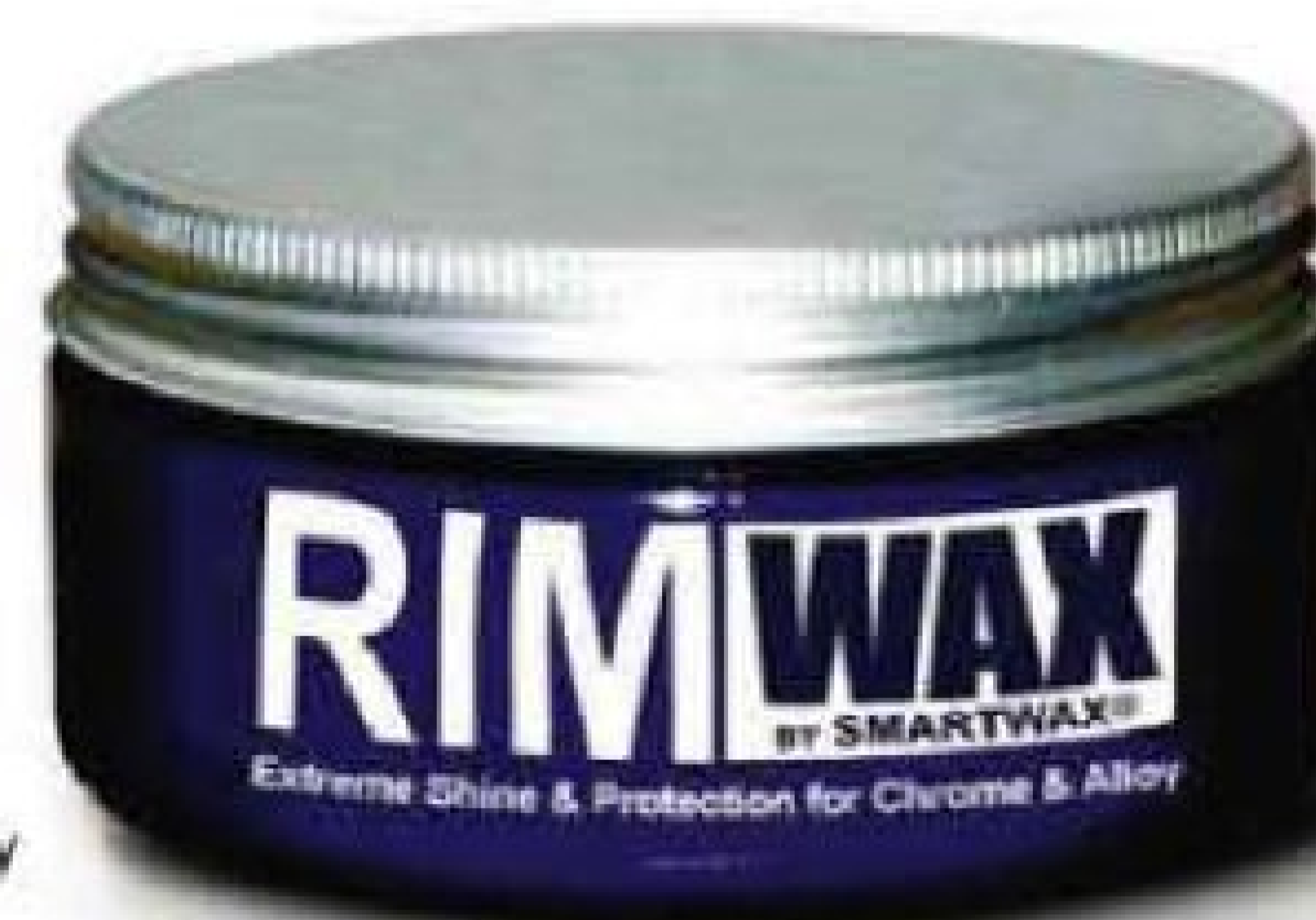
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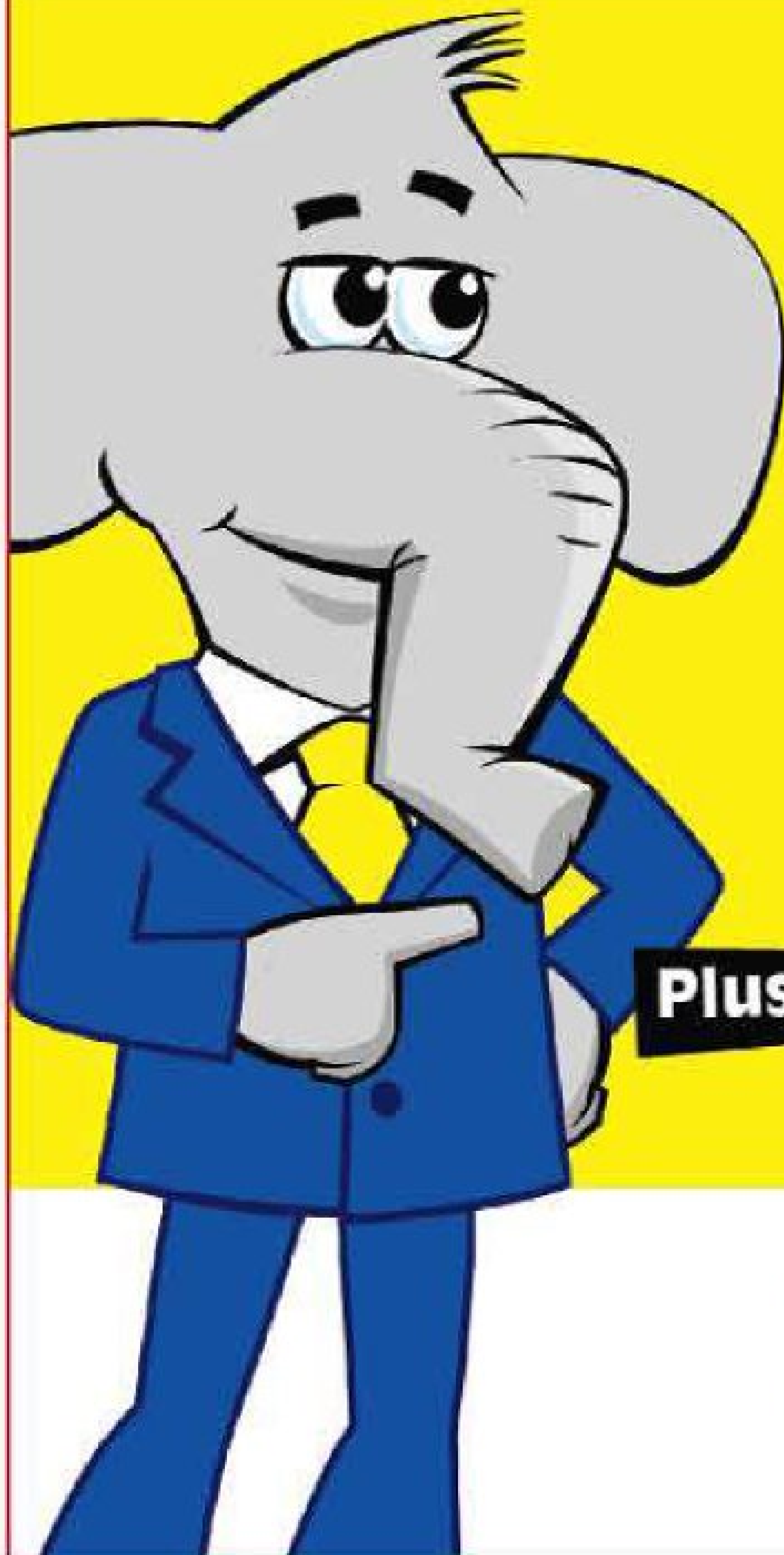
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David Smith & his MITSUBISHI EVO VII

YORKSHIREMAN SMITH FINDS HIS PERFECT EVERYDAY CAR – IF HE CAN FORGET THE BILLS

This is my Evo VII RS Sprint. It has been my everyday car for the past eight years, during which time it has clocked up some 130,000 miles. It has also cost me a small fortune in running costs. And it's all the fault of this wonderful magazine!

Back in 2001, I had a problem. My six-month-old Evo VI Mäkinen had been taken from me by two masked thugs with baseball bats, never to be seen again. I loved that car and I wanted another; but by that time the Evo VI had now been replaced by the VII, which, according to the reports, had been 'softened' and had lost a bit of its edge. I felt I would be disappointed if I bought one.

So what could I buy to replace the Mäkinen? The answer came with the March 2002 edition of *evo* (issue 041). I read the Driven report on the RS Sprint by Richard Meaden and immediately knew this was the car I was looking for. No ABS, no electric windows, no air-con, but more grunt, less weight, closer ratio gearing, quicker

steering, a mechanical rear diff, four doors and a boot... surely the perfect everyday car!

I placed an order with Ralliart the next day. Six months later the car arrived – and so began a steady drain on my bank account. Servicing and tyres every 4500 miles, numerous sets of pads and discs, clutches... Fuel alone must have cost me over £40,000. And obviously you can never have too much power. The engine was rebuilt

and upgraded with a new turbo at 80,000 miles before a rod gave up at 110,000 miles. The car now has an Evo IX engine with Motec management complete with anti-lag.

So why have I spent so much money running this car for the past eight years? Put simply, it's an addiction. Every journey is an event, be it the commute to work or a late-night moorland run

just for the fun of it.

The Evo is genuinely practical too. A few months ago I was competing in a round of the British Historic Karting Championship in the Lake District – I race a 1982 Class 1 kart, 100cc two-stroke, revs to 20,000rpm, terrific fun. Anyway, my van was out of action and my wife wanted to come along with our new five-month-old daughter and make a long weekend of it. So the kart went on the roof, my wife in the front,

baby and suitcases in the back seats. And four engines, two sets of slicks, one set of wets, tools, spares and fuel went in the boot. You can't do that in the back of a 911!

And the best bit of the whole weekend? Not the racing, not the fantastic Lakeland scenery. No, it was the early Sunday-morning drive from the hotel to the circuit. With my wife

and baby still asleep in the hotel and all the karting gear having been dropped off at the circuit the day before, I was free to enjoy the Lakeland roads...

The car was simply in its element, catapulting from corner to corner, breaking and turning in with real feel and conviction, moving around on the damp road with grunt overwhelming grip until the diffs hooked up, allowing the car to find incredible traction and fire down the next straight. The experience was amazing and worth every single penny the car has cost me.

I plan to keep it. Selling it would be like losing a limb, and I've no idea what I'd replace it with. Anything else would be a bit of a let-down. I do sometimes worry about the expense and I've thought about getting a little runabout for the everyday stuff, but I have a feeling the runabout would be left at home and I'd be off in the Evo...

■ If you'd like to be featured here with your car, email rogerg@evo.co.uk. To see galleries of pictures of previous cars with their owners, visit www.evo.co.uk

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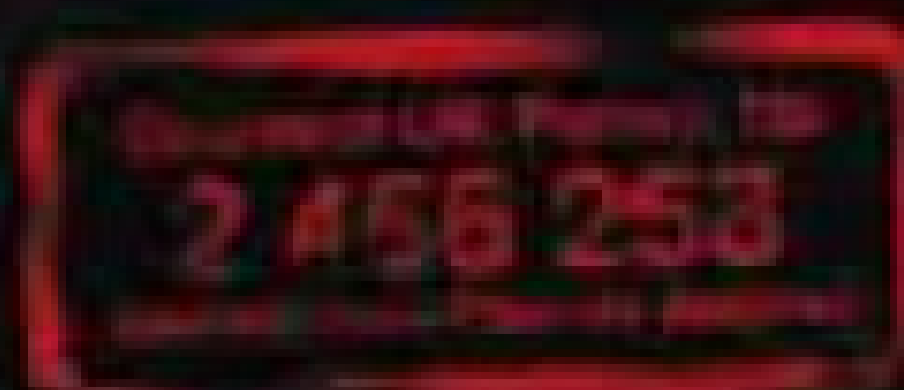
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