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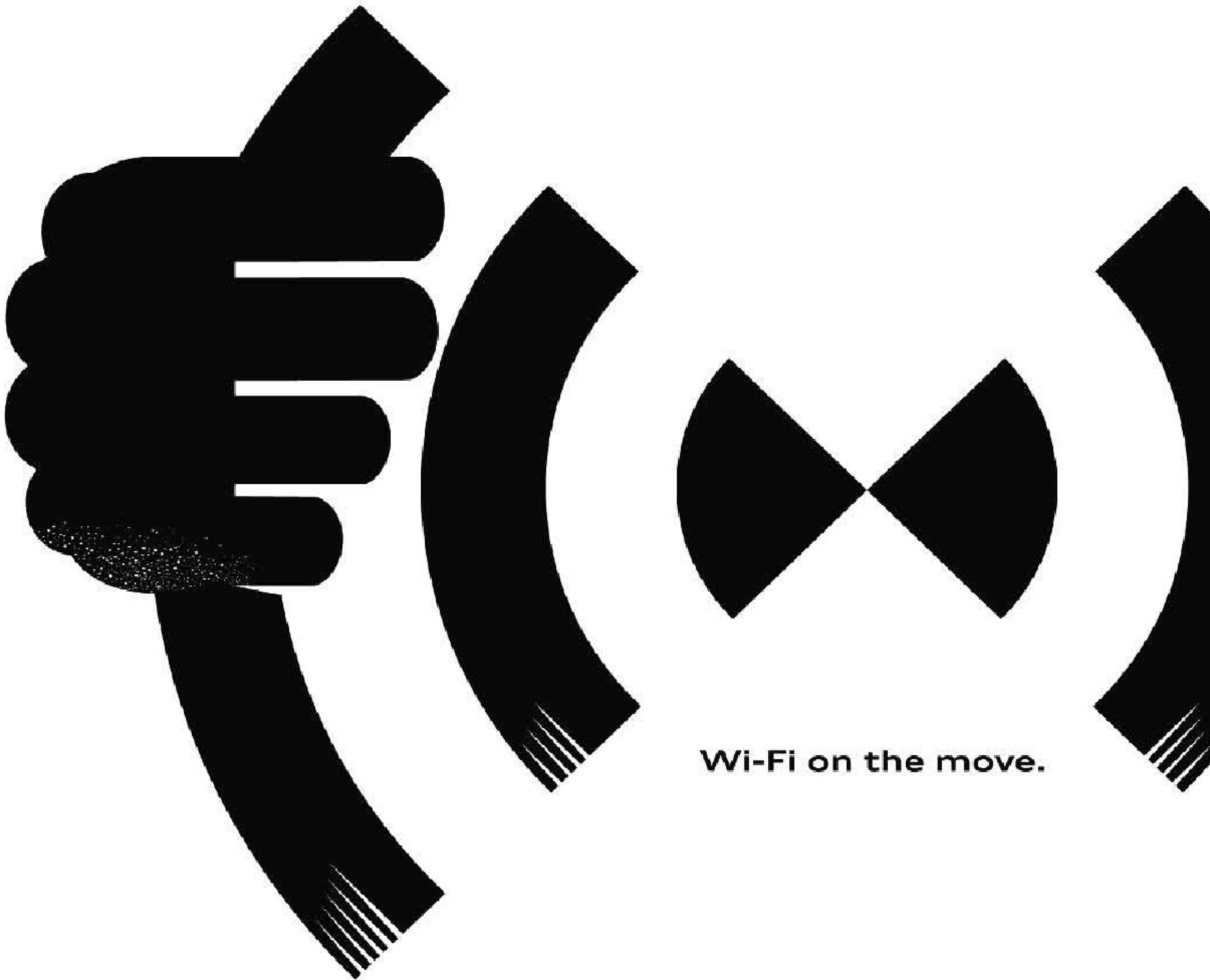
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Still worried about what Lotus is up to? So are we, so Harry 'Donal' Metcalfe has been to Hethel to find out. Elsewhere, BMW has unveiled a very cool lightweight M3 saloon concept...

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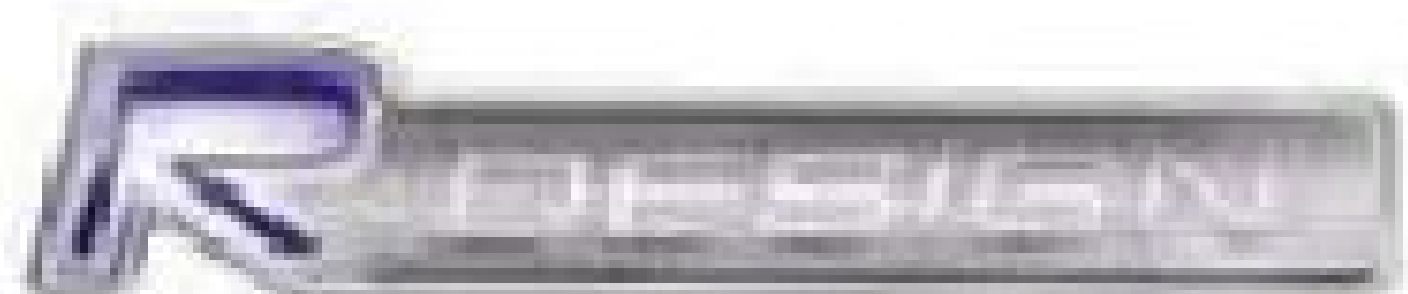
Leading our turbo celebration, four of the most exciting turbo cars ever created. Two of them are hot off the production line – the new Noble M600 (now with carbon body) and Porsche 911 GT2 RS – the other two are icons of the supercar dynasty – the XJ220 and the Ferrari F40. Chris 'TV' Harris nails the throttle in all four and waits...

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# ED SPEAK

There has never been a better time to dedicate an issue of **evo** to the turbocharger. This metal snail, designed over 100 years ago, is making a fierce comeback as manufacturers chase the holy grail of high-power/low-CO2 that a modern turbo-charged engine can deliver.

As the stories that constitute our 52-page celebration of the turbo flowed in, I couldn't help but giggle at the irony of the modern turbocharger's green credentials. In the 1980s, when 1.5-litre turbocharged F1 cars were producing almost 1bhp per cc, the cars were *visually* inefficient. There's a very clear demonstration of this on page 87 – just look at the huge gob of flame being purged from the turbocharger! That's unburnt fuel igniting – the very antithesis of the practice of reusing energy that has become commonplace in today's car.

The turbo F1 cars of the 1980s were the very definition of waste. In their highest state of tune (qualifying), they rarely lasted more than a lap before a rebuild was required and they often ran out of fuel before the race ended. The turbos were a rampant, parasitic plague on every other component on the car; tyres couldn't cope with the horsepower, and neither could driveshafts, gearboxes or even engine blocks. The quote of the issue? Page 88: 'the engine just melted.'

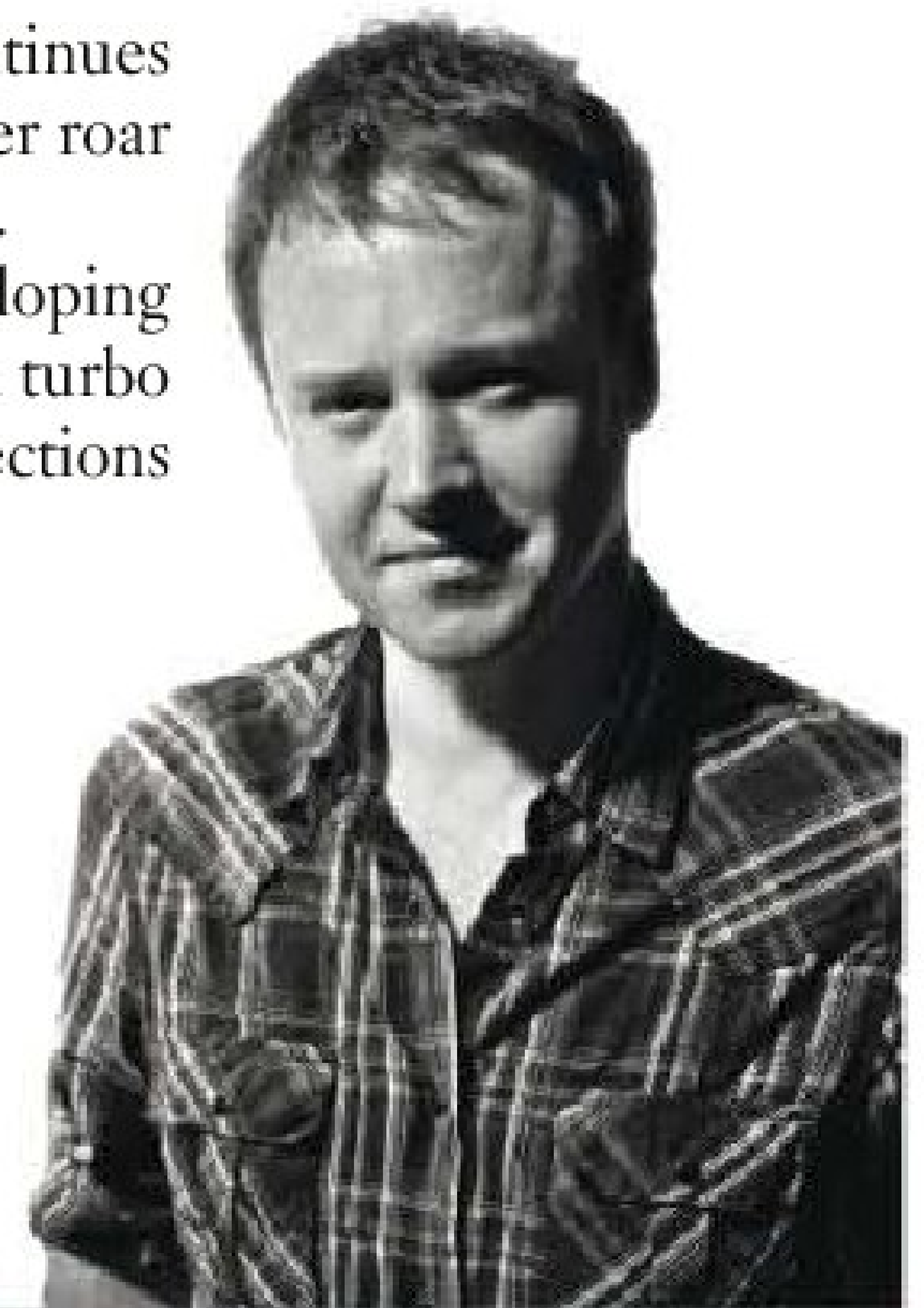
Naturally, I pulled rank this month and ensured I had a blast in all the key turbocharged cars featured in this issue. Bad move. My Clio V6 is now in danger of being replaced by a 911 Turbo, and I have an ache for an R32 GT-R that won't go away. I'm also looking very closely at the prices of 996 GT2s at the moment...

What struck me most as I drove the cars was that it was the turbo's imperfections that appealed to me the most – what a glorious contradiction! I like the fact that you have to think, really think, about when to explore full boost in the 911 Turbo, that the Escort Cosworth's engine continues to boost even as you lift off, and I love the death-eater roar from the R26.R's turbo and titanium exhaust combo.

I guess what I'm saying to any manufacturer developing a modern turbo engine is this: leave some old-school turbo raucousness in the engine's character. It's the imperfections that make them perfect.



Nick Trott, Editor

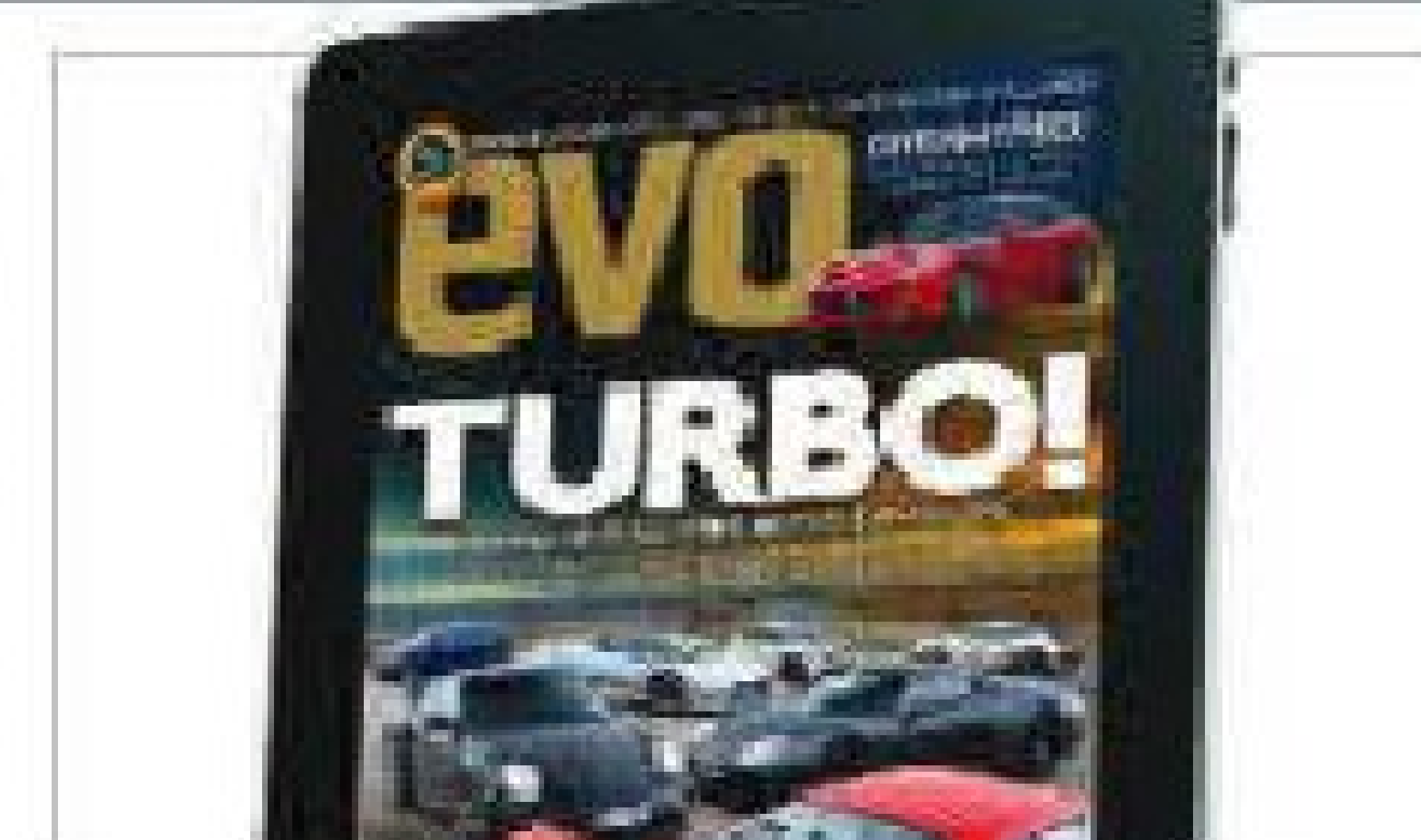


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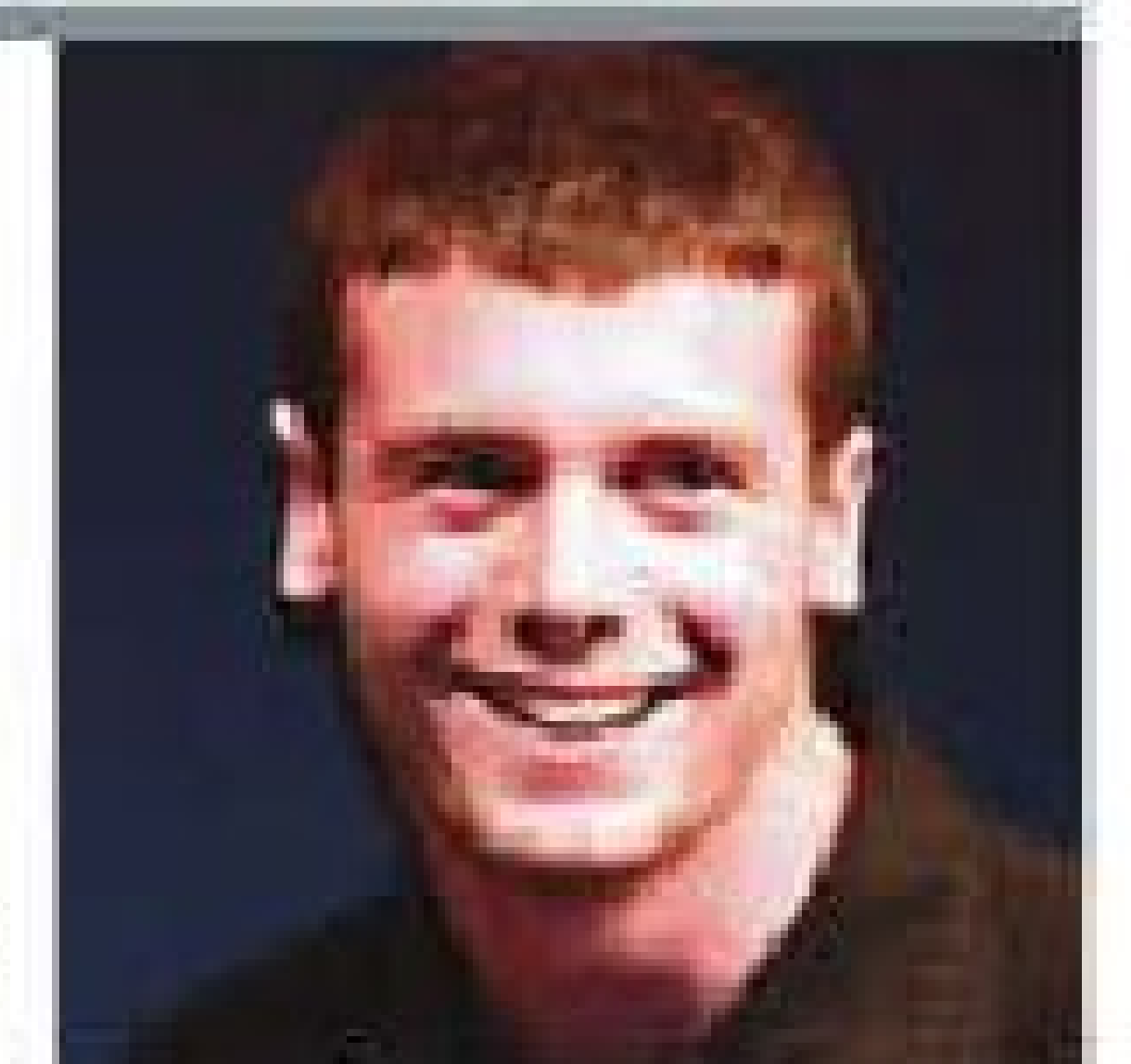
### EVO TRACKDAYS

■ The image above was taken at the first **evo** trackday of the year. It was quite a good turnout! Book your place quick at [evo.co.uk/shop](http://evo.co.uk/shop)

## HERO OF THE MONTH

### DEAN STONEMAN

■ Brit racer Stoneman caught our eye last year when he was crowned F2 champion and provided driving tips at **evo's** test of an F2 car. Then, late in 2010 (and just after he tested a Williams F1 car), Dean was diagnosed with cancer. Since then he has undergone intensive chemo but remarkably he accepted an invite to appear at an **evo** trackday at Bedford in April. It was the first time he'd been on track since the diagnosis, and it was clear that he's lost none of his skill and talent. Fingers crossed he will be back racing soon – Dean's an F1 star in the making. Follow him at [www.deanstoneman.com](http://www.deanstoneman.com)



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# NEXT ISSUE



In the next issue of **evo**, we give the extraordinary, 1115bhp, 250mph+ Koenigsegg Agera R a proper road test. Prepare to be blown away

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# LOTUS: A NEW



# DAWN (TAKE TWO)

LAST SEPTEMBER, LOTUS SHOCKED THE AUTOMOTIVE WORLD WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF FIVE NEW MODELS. SEVEN MONTHS LATER, THE KEY QUESTION REMAINS UNANSWERED – ARE THEY SERIOUS? EVO SPOKE TO CEO DANY BAHAR AND CHIEF TECHNICAL OFFICER WOLF ZIMMERMANN AND FOUND THEM IN FIGHTING MOOD

It's been seven months since Lotus shocked the motoring establishment by revealing five brand new Lotus models at the 2010 Paris motor show. They included a completely revised Elise, a brand new Elan with a V6 engine (appearing to be an Evora replacement in all but name) and a new Esprit model packing a 542bhp, supercharged Toyota V8 engine and

a striking new look. But it didn't stop there. Also unveiled at Paris were two completely new models to the Lotus range, a front-engined Elite, complete with folding hardtop, and, finally, the ultra-exclusive four-door Eterne, apparently a rival to Aston Martin's Rapide.

It was an incredible display of confidence, the likes of which the assembled pressmen had never witnessed before, but now that the

initial excitement has died down, some doubting voices have started to be heard, all asking one question: is this all an impossible dream?

It was time to find out, so we visited Hethel and talked to the two people who should know: Lotus Group CEO Dany Bahar and Wolf Zimmermann, the new Chief Technical Officer, the man responsible for every aspect of the new Lotus cars apart from styling.



Dany Bahar, the ex-Ferrari marketing supremo, needs no introduction but Wolf Zimmermann probably does. Unconventional in approach and appearance, his engineering-based CV is equally remarkable. Before joining Lotus, Zimmermann was doing a very similar role for AMG, joining the company in 1991 and working his way up from being responsible for engine and powertrains to becoming a member of the AMG board in 2001, overseeing the development and production of all AMG cars (road and race), his final AMG project being the Mercedes SLS.

I first met him at Pagani back in 2007 – he was also responsible for developing the incredible 7.3-litre, V12 AMG engine used in the Pagani Zonda (as well as the new twin-turbo AMG engine for the Pagani Huayra). So if anyone can make Bahar's dream of turning Lotus into a serious Ferrari rival come true, then it should be Wolf Zimmermann.

Right now his attention is focused on the Esprit supercar, due to go on sale in spring 2013, and the Elite, which will follow shortly after and will be closely related to it under the skin. The first big news post-Paris is that the original plan to use Toyota engines in the new models has been binned. According to Zimmermann there were packaging issues, but both he and Bahar agreed it would be better to have a bespoke Lotus engine, so shortly after Paris he began working on a proposal for an all-new in-house engine, which was given approval a few months later.

The end result is that the Esprit will get a brand new normally aspirated V8. 'I want to do cars with soul,' says Zimmermann. 'This new V8 will give a lot of driving pleasure. It is very light and high-revving.' And not supercharged or turbocharged. 'Where does real driving come from? It is always a normally aspirated engine. It will scream like anything!'

Then there's the gearbox – now that the Toyota engine is no longer in the running, the gearbox could change too. Zimmermann has never been a fan of dual-clutch transmissions, which he says 'add too much weight and unnecessary complication'. (Target weight for the Esprit is sub-1500kg.) The good news is there are plenty of alternatives available today and he is currently working on several options, all of



which will offer everything a DCT can but with much less weight. It also seems as if a traditional manual gearbox might still make an appearance – Zimmermann believes there is still a call for one from true enthusiasts. So if it's technically possible and the shift quality is good enough, Lotus will offer a manual option on the Esprit too.

To understand how closely related the mid-engined Esprit and front-engined Elite are going to be, consider that both cars will share the same engine and transmission, the only difference being that in the Elite they will be linked by a torque tube, rather than being bolted directly together, as is the case in the Esprit. The gearbox will be mounted in an almost identical position within the chassis in both cars, allowing the engineers to use the same suspension, driveshafts and hub assemblies. As Zimmermann points out, Lotus was always famous for having 'intelligent' technical solutions for engineering issues and he wants to see this emerge again as a core

#### WHAT IS LOTUS KEEPING AND DROPPING?



##### IN

###### Evora ■

Lotus will now develop the Evora model line further, rather than dropping it early, as it originally planned

###### All-new Lotus engines ■

Lotus is developing its own, normally aspirated V8 engine for the Esprit and Elite

###### Aluminium body panels ■

Future Lotus models like the Esprit and Elite will be largely clad in aluminium, unless styling dictates using composites

###### Hybrid Lotuses ■

Lotus sees new hybrid technology as an excellent solution for making sports cars future-friendly – but it must also add to the driving experience

###### Elise and Exige ■

Lotus will introduce replacements, after the Esprit and Elite development is completed.

The new models will offer more space in the cabin but weigh more



##### OUT

###### Elan ■

The V6 Elan proposal shown in Paris has been put on hold, helping to speed up Esprit and Elite development

###### Toyota V8 engine ■

Lotus has dropped plans to use Toyota/Lexus engines and gearboxes in their new range of road cars

###### Glassfibre body panels ■

Lotus will no longer use glassfibre sheets for bodywork on its top models

###### All-electric sports cars ■

Lotus engineers believe they will only ever be a niche purchase. Petrol engines, possibly in hybrids, will continue to dominate for at least the next 20 years

###### 'Purist' sports cars ■

Lotus will replace the Exige with a car with less compromised cabin ingress and more space inside. It will still have brilliant dynamics, but will be everyday useable

## DANY BAHAR INTERVIEW

Dany Bahar is in bullish mood when we meet him at Hethel. 'Whatever criticism and scepticism we get just spurs us on more,' he says. He appears to have no doubts that showing five cars at Paris was the right decision – to get media attention and also to get customer feedback.

It was feedback at Paris that led to the decision to drop the Elan and keep the Evora. 'People thought the Elan and Esprit were too close,' says Bahar. 'We have a lot planned for the Evora, it will be our car of the near future, so we have had to rethink the timing of the Elan. Perhaps at the end of the Evora's life cycle would be a better time.'

All the other cars are confirmed, he continues, with the Esprit and Elite due in March and October 2013 respectively. The new Elise is slated to arrive in October 2014, and the Eterne four-door in March 2015.

The current Elise, Exige and Evora will continue. 'All this

nonsense about leaving our roots to manufacture luxury cars comes from people who did not understand what we were communicating. What we want is to offer every sports car enthusiast the appropriate product, and there will always be an Elise and Exige. The new Elise will be an incredible, track-oriented car.'

He is, however, unabashed that cars like the Esprit and Eterne will be heavier – and more expensive – than the current range: 'I don't see why someone wanting to spend £130,000 on a car shouldn't be able to choose a Lotus.'

And will production stay in the UK? 'Our first car, the Esprit, will be manufactured here in the UK. It's a possibility that some might move abroad. It's about how you use your resources. I would rather spend £30m on new products than walls! I'd love to keep everything on one site here, but our plans need to make sense economically.'

SD



Left: technical chief Wolf Zimmermann. He's currently working flat-out on the Esprit (right). Four-door Eterne (above) and all-new Elise (below) will follow



value of the brand. He also reveals that Lotus is working hard to bring a new generation of hybrid technology to all its road cars. He hints that it will not only bring eco-benefits but will add to the driving sensation as well. And that's very Lotus.

It's revealing that both the Ferrari 458 and McLaren MP4-12C are mentioned as potential rivals to the new Esprit. Zimmermann suggests that it will undercut them by about 20 per cent (Dany Bahar hints at a list price of around £130,000) yet will offer similar performance, sound great and be more economical.

But there's a long way to go and much of the development of the Esprit and Elite will now take place at a new Lotus development centre being set up in Stuttgart. Zimmermann explains it's next to impossible to do the sort of endurance testing required around Norfolk, and they need to make maximum use of the open limits on the German autobahns. They will also be using the Ring on a regular basis. 'It gives you more information than

you find in normal driving,' he says. 'It helps to find solutions quickly.'

Many of Lotus's technical partners are based in Germany (e.g. Bosch) so having a base there will help speed up the development process. The plan is that the new V8 will be fired up for the first time this summer and the first mule will be running in October. The aim then is to reveal the Esprit in its production form in March 2012, all of which means development time is already incredibly tight.

As for the rest of the range, it seems as if the V6 Elan has been put on the back-burner and the Evora is going to get more attention instead (see Bahar interview, above). Lotus recognises that it needs to make the Evora more appealing to potential buyers, so expect plenty of revisions over the coming months. 'The Evora is in a very competitive area of the market,' says Zimmermann. 'If you make compromises, you are dead.' Expect convertible and targa models, as well as more hardcore versions to keep the more track-orientated Lotus fans happy too.

## ANALYSIS

Both Bahar and Zimmermann believe Lotus went too far down the purist path with the Elise and Exige. Now, it needs to 'step out of the margins' if it wants to earn money. That's why we'll be seeing Lotuses with more everyday useability. But the new cars also need more 'soul' and that's something Zimmermann understands very well. From the howling Pagani Zonda Cinque to the grumbling Mercedes SLS, the one thing all his cars share is a brilliant engine and the most incredible soundtrack. For that reason alone I'm much more hopeful about Lotus's future than I was six months ago.

The only cloud on the horizon is whether Brussels will allow Lotus to produce them. Lotus needs to be successful in its recent derogation application, in which it asks to be allowed to produce cars with double the CO2 emissions they were producing back in 2007. The

application argues that a car company should be allowed to radically alter its range, especially when, in Lotus's case, it has made losses on its current range of cars for the last ten years. Lotus claims its new models will be cleaner than those of its nominated rivals, Ferrari, Lamborghini, Aston and Bentley, and as production will remain well below 10,000 cars a year, their overall effect on emissions in Europe will be minimal. Brussels will give a decision within nine months; meanwhile it's full steam ahead at Lotus.

The new engine sounds a winner, the new Lotus design is refreshingly different and the engineering team now in place is remarkable. But will Bahar's dream come true? Well, I'm starting to believe it, and I reckon McLaren, Ferrari and Lamborghini will be watching with interest. In fact I've got a new definition for what Lotus might stand for now: Lots of talent, undeniably serious. **HM**

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RX Series MY 11 prices start from £44,530. The RX 450h Lifestyle accessory pack is available on all RX 450h SE-L derivatives, and the SE-L and SE-L Premier derivatives. Model shown is RX 450h SE-L priced at £49,514 including Lifestyle accessory pack at £499 (including cost of fitting) and metallic paint. The panoramic roof is available on the RX 450h SE-L grade only. Prices correct at time of going to print and include VAT, delivery, number plates, full tank of fuel, one year's road fund licence and £55 first registration fee. Car shown may not be exact to UK specification. Certain components within the Lexus Hybrid Drive system have a five-year or 60,000 mile warranty, whichever comes first. The RX 450h can travel up to 20mph for a distance of 1 mile without emissions at point of driving - this can be exceeded, dependent on conditions.

**RX 450h MY 11 fuel consumption figures: urban 43.5 mpg (6.5 L/100km), extra-urban 47.1 mpg (6.0 L/100km), combined 44.8 mpg (6.3 L/100km). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions combined 145 g/km.**

Release: StoreMags & FantaMag





# JAGUAR'S XK AND XF GET A NEW LOOK

COUPE, CONVERTIBLE AND SALOON ADOPT CUES FROM NEWER JAGUAR MODELS; 542BHP XFR-S RUMOURED TOO



**J**aguar has refreshed its XK and XF ranges, with the updated models due to arrive this September.

The XK and XKR borrow styling cues from the new XKR-S (see evo 155), with slimmer headlights and a larger grille cranking up the aggression, while leather sports seats have joined the options list. Both coupes and

convertibles benefit from the changes, with engine choices unchanged.

The XF, meanwhile, gets styling tweaks to echo the looks of the bigger XJ, and it now better resembles the C-XF concept of 2007, Jaguar having faced criticism for toning down those looks for the production XF.

That didn't stop it being a sales success, though, and that seems set

to continue with the introduction of a new, entry-level turbodiesel engine. It's a common-rail 2.2-litre unit with 188bhp and 332lb ft. With the help of stop-start and Jaguar's new eight-speed ZF auto, it returns 52.3mpg and emits 149g/km. Priced at £30,950, it's set to account for 60 per cent of XF sales. See p47 for our first drive.

The XFR still dominates the range

for us, however, and the 503bhp supercharged V8 model is still present and correct. The XF's new looks are at their assertive best when pumped up a little, too.

There's also a strong rumour of an XFR-S on the horizon, with the 542bhp XKR-S powerplant giving it the clout needed to fight off the new twin-turbo BMW M5. We can't wait.



**'THE XF NOW BETTER RESEMBLES THE C-XF CONCEPT OF 2007'**

## MERCEDES REVEALS C63 AMG COUPE

£56K COUPE SHARES SALOON'S 451BHP V8; 480BHP 'PERFORMANCE PACKAGE' AN OPTION

**M**ercedes is tackling BMW's M3 coupe and Audi's RS5 head-on by introducing a coupe version of its C63 AMG. The car will feature the 6.2-litre naturally aspirated V8 engine from the C63 saloon, producing the same 451bhp and 442lb ft of torque.



An optional AMG Performance Package adds a sportier leather and Alcantara steering wheel, carbon-ceramic brakes and, perhaps most importantly, the uprated pistons, connecting rods and crankshaft from the SLS AMG. The engine modifications increase peak power to 480bhp (torque is unchanged) and reduce the 0-62mph sprint time from 4.5 to 4.4sec. The top speed remains limited to 155mph.

As with the saloon, the only gearbox option is AMG's seven-speed Speedshift automatic, but the coupe will be the first C63 to offer launch control. The suspension



Below: 19in alloys optional. Left: Performance Package steering wheel

upgrades are identical to those on the saloon, namely thicker anti-roll bars, a wider track and revised spring and damper rates. Exterior changes include

a front splitter, rear diffuser, chromed exhaust tips and 18in AMG alloys.

The C63 Coupe goes on sale in July, priced at around £56,000.

# UNLIKE MOST PERFORMANCE CARS, THE NEW SPECIAL EDITION WRX STI 320R COMES WITH ADDED POWER AND SAT NAV AT NO ADDED COST.

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WRX STI 320R is a Subaru WRX STI with a performance upgrade added post-registration.  
WRX STI range fuel consumption in mpg (L/100km): Urban 20.0 (14.1). Extra urban 33.6 (8.4). Combined 26.9 (10.5).  
CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 243 (g/km).



**BRIEFS**



**RSR NÜRBURG WIN**

Good news for those planning a pilgrimage to the Nürburgring this summer: trackday specialist RSR Nürburg has won its legal battle against Nürburgring Automotive GmbH (see Planet evo, issue 155), allowing it to continue with its trackday, tuition and car rental activities at the Nordschleife in 2011. It marks a victory for small companies at the Ring. Circuit operator Nürburgring Automotive has been advised that it cannot abuse its monopoly position. The ruling also affects hotels and restaurants in addition to the more obvious track-based activities, and should help abate well-publicised fears for the future of independent activity at the Nordschleife.



**BTCC UPDATE**

The 2011 British Touring Car Championship kicked off at Brands Hatch in early April with Chevrolet Cruze driver and reigning champ Jason Plato taking an early lead in the drivers' standings, with two race wins. The new turbocharged NGTC cars (see p91) are proving competitive, though, arch-rival Matt Neal taking victory in the weekend's third race in his Honda Civic. Round 2 at Donington Park was imminent as we went to press – read race reports and keep up with the latest BTCC news on evo.co.uk. We've also got 15 pairs of tickets to give away for Round 4 at Oulton Park on June 5, including one pair with exclusive VIP access. Head to competitions.evo.co.uk to enter!



Left and below: Lightweight Concept is distinguished by a new front splitter and rear spoiler, black 19in alloys and a lowered ride height

# RETURN OF THE CSL?

## CONCEPT POINTS TO A HARDER, LIGHTER FOUR-DOOR M3

Is the BMW M3 CSL making a comeback? This M3 Lightweight Concept has certainly started the rumour mill churning. It was revealed quietly at a recent BMW M event, somewhat overshadowed by the unveiling of the M5 Concept (see p104) as well as the appearance of a number of past M rarities, including an E46 M3 Touring concept.

Unlike that car, though, this one looks set to make production. Soon-

to-depart BMW M chairman Kay Segler told us last month to expect something special wearing a CSL badge 'in the near future', and this certainly fits the bill.

While technical details are conspicuous by their absence, the car has a lightweight focus and would probably be the first four-door M3 to wear a carbon roof. Its power and price-point are expected to sit between the regular 414bhp, £53K

BMW M3 and the 444bhp, £117K M3 GTS, with a tweaked version of the former's high-revving 4-litre V8.

The decision to base the car on the four-door M3 is particularly interesting for us here at evo, as we have always found the saloon's handling slightly preferable to its coupe counterpart's.

There's set to be a similar car racing at the Nürburgring 24-hour race in June, with a limited production run expected to follow.



# AUDI'S X1 RIVAL COMING

## NEW Q3 SET TO CHALLENGE BMW'S ENTRY-LEVEL SUV

Audi has confirmed that its premium small SUV contender, the all-new Q3, will be on sale by the middle of this year. The much-anticipated baby brother to the Q5 and Q7 will come in both two- and four-wheel-drive forms and will be launched with a choice of petrol and diesel 2-litre four-cylinder turbo engines.

Abilities range from running to 62mph in 6.9sec in the 208bhp TFSI



Q3 shares its looks with the rest of the Q range, but is on a smaller scale

petrol flagship to sipping just 54mpg in the 138bhp TDI diesel. In between, there will be a 165bhp petrol and a 174bhp diesel, while all the engines have direct injection and feature energy recuperation and start-stop as standard.

Based around a steel monocoque structure with lighter aluminium for the bonnet and wrap-around hatch, the lightest version (with front drive and petrol power) weighs less than

1500kg. At 4.39 metres in length, the Q3 will fit into far tighter parking spots than its big brothers.

While the basic front-drive models will use six-speed manual gearboxes, the more-powerful all-wheel-drive versions will get the slick seven-speed S-tronic double-clutch gearbox.

The Q3 will be built at SEAT's Martorell plant, near Barcelona in Spain. Expect prices to start at around £25,000 in the UK.

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Official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for Ford Focus Titanium X range: urban 34.9-55.4 (8.1-5.1), extra urban 56.5-76.4 (5.0-3.7), combined 47.1-67.3 (6.0-4.2). Official CO<sub>2</sub> emission 139-109g/km. Active Park Assist is available as standard on Titanium X series only, and as an optional extra on Titanium series as part of the Convenience Pack.



**ROLLS-ROYCE MINI**

Put your Aston Cygnet order on hold: there's an alternative from Mini, the 'Inspired by Goodwood'. It's a Cooper S that's had some fettling by Rolls-Royce, with a bespoke cabin featuring a mixture of Corn Silk beige leather and walnut burr veneer. There's even lambswool fleece carpeting. Just 1000 will be made, but no pricing details have been announced. We'd anticipate paying well over double the £18K of a regular 181bhp Cooper S, though...



**MORE POWER FOR STI**

Wish your Subaru WRX STI was a bit more powerful? Well, Subaru UK has developed a new power pack that increases the former Impreza's 296bhp and 300lb ft to 316bhp and 332lb ft. This drops the 0-60mph time to 4.9sec – enough to beat a Porsche Cayman S and Lotus Elise. The power pack and a new touchscreen satnav are free upgrades on brand new, £32,995 WRX STIs until the end of June, but can be retrofitted to existing cars.



**NEW AVON TYRE**

Avon has developed a brand new high-performance tyre for mid- to large-sized performance cars, including the Lotus Evora, BMW M3 and Nissan 350Z. The ZZ5 was developed on the Nürburgring and the roads of Europe and features 'Intelligent Asymmetric Tread Design' to provide strong traction in the wet or dry. It also promises a quieter ride for more relaxed motorway cruising.



Above: concept takes shape in the Mugen workshop. Right: engine will do 20,000km on test bed. Below: concept renderings



# THE SUPERCHARGED CR-Z!

MUGEN TUNES HYBRID HONDA TO CREATE 175BHP CONCEPT

The hybrid Honda CR-Z may not be the obvious starting point for a Mugen project. But with the demise of the Civic Type-R and its high-revving VTEC engine, the CR-Z was suddenly on the radar. And even though the project is at an early stage, the engineering team at Mugen's Northampton base say they're happy with the initial results.

The CR-Z Mugen iCF (integrated Centrifugal Forced induction engine) is at present a one-off concept, but it will

be fully driveable and future upgrade kits for customer CR-Zs have not been ruled out.

By the time the car makes its debut at the Goodwood Festival of Speed in July, its suspension and bodywork will have been revised and its overall weight reduced by over 100kg to 1080kg, but for now the team are concentrating on the 1.5-litre petrol engine.

A small Rotrex supercharger has been added along with an array of internal upgrades to raise total power by almost

50 per cent to 175bhp, with a similar increase in torque. However, it's the mid-range where the most significant gains have been made. Mugen says that between 3500 and 6500rpm the iCF produces an 18 per cent increase in performance over a standard Civic Type-R, while comprehensively smashing its fuel economy figures.

We've been promised a pre-Goodwood drive to discover the full effect of these upgrades for ourselves. Watch this space.

# R8 SPYDER GETS THE GT TREATMENT

LIMITED-EDITION LIGHTWEIGHT AUDI SUPERCAR LOSES ITS TOP

One of evo's favourite soft-tops is getting even more extreme. Audi's R8 Spyder is to receive the GT treatment – which means it'll be lighter, harder and faster.

The Spyder will use the same high-revving 552bhp, 398lb ft 5.2-litre V10 engine as the GT coupe. Producing its peak power at 8000rpm, it is sure to provide the driver with one of the most scintillating aural experiences available in modern motoring. And like the coupe, the GT will use lightweight materials and thinner glass to skim around 100kg from the standard V10 Spyder's 1720kg kerb weight.

Power is transmitted to all four wheels via Audi's six-speed R-tronic automated manual gearbox, while



Design sketch shows how GT Spyder should look. V10 engine shared with hard-top GT (below)

styling tweaks include carbonfibre winglets and an unmissable rear wing.

The R8 GT Spyder will be revealed at the 2011 Le Mans 24hrs in June, with production limited to similar numbers as the GT coupe (333). Expect it to be priced at around £150,000.





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# OVERTAKING IN FORMULA 1

EVERYONE WANTS MORE OVERTAKING IN F1, BUT ACHIEVING IT ISN'T EASY, AS TOP ENGINEER **PAT SYMONDS** EXPLAINS

It was the start of lap 48 of the 2011 Australian Grand Prix. Jenson Button was bearing down on Felipe Massa, determined to find a way past. His earlier, brave move around the outside of turn 11 had been thwarted by a drive-through penalty after he was judged to have used more of the track than is permissible. This time he had to get past.

As he closed on Massa as they approached turn one, physics was applying its unbending rules. At three lengths behind he had already lost around 15 per cent of his precious downforce as he encountered the turbulent wake of the Ferrari. At one length, this had diminished by a further 25 per cent. He released the additional 80bhp of his KERS system, but so too had Massa, thereby negating any tactical advantage.

Button had already activated his moveable rear wing as he exited the corner onto the straight. This reduced the downforce at the rear of his car by some 750kg, but more importantly had given him the drag reduction he needed to make the pass on Massa. All he had to do was make it stick.

He hit the brakes hard 90 metres before he had to turn in for turn two. The carbon discs glowed and the car shed 100mph in just over 1.5 seconds, the 4G deceleration pushing Button forward against his seat belts. He eased off the brakes as the tyres started to lock and let the car roll into the corner, claiming his line. He waited for what seemed an eternity for the car to settle such that he could start squeezing the throttle again to pick up the momentum that would carry him through the flat-out kink. His efforts had succeeded, and the first successful overtaking manoeuvre using the so-called 'Drag Reduction System', or DRS, had taken place.

But was it really the DRS that had enabled this pass? If so, why had he not been able to pass earlier in the race in similar circumstances? The reality is that while the DRS had been an additional enabler, it was the tyres that had determined the outcome

of this sporting challenge. Massa had changed tyres 16 laps earlier, Button just 10. This simple difference outweighed all the technology brought to bear on the divisive subject of overtaking.

While there is a general cry for more overtaking, in a sport that respects meritocracy – and in so doing attempts to start a race with the fastest cars at the front – there is no reason to expect overtaking to take place. If the cars are of widely varying competitiveness then the field will inevitably spread out; if the difference in performance is small then they may bunch up. Yet while a bunched field may lead to anticipation of overtaking, it does not, *per se*, enable it.

If overtaking is to be made more common, it is important that the performance profiles of the cars differ throughout the race. Tyres with high degradation are the latest attempt at providing a varying performance profile but, if taken too far, this will inexorably lead to similarity.

Inevitably, one is led to the conclusion that the only sure way to enable overtaking is by artificial means. Current aerodynamic research centres on maximising clean-air performance. This, after all, is what gains pole positions and hence race wins. If, however, grids were reversed, or at least partially reversed, the aerodynamic geniuses would have to consider the performance of their cars while travelling in the wake of their competitors' cars. In one simple, sporting move the technocrats would have the incentive to study overtaking performance and, with the combined intellect found in F1 design offices, the results would likely be spectacular.

There is hope on the horizon, though. 2013 brings a new wave of turbocharged, hybrid, energy-efficient powertrains. Restrictions on fuel quantity will ensure that these cannot be run at full potential throughout the race. Maybe the turbo boost button of the 1980s will once again return as the saviour of sporting spectacle 30 years on from its inception.



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# ALFA GIULIA DELAY

FIAT CEO UNHAPPY WITH STYLING OF NEW FAMILY CAR

**F**iat Group CEO Sergio Marchionne has confirmed he has delayed Alfa Romeo's critical new Giulia mid-sized saloon by at least six months because its exterior design failed his 'gut instinct' test.

Speaking candidly in Balocco, Italy, Marchionne said he was worried a poor design would harm Alfa Romeo's US comeback, now due in early 2013.

'The pencil went wrong and I don't think it's an Alfa,' Marchionne admitted after the new car failed to pass through an executive 'check gate'.

'The Giulia is so critical. If we butcher that one, we are done in North America,' he insisted.

A product of the Fiat Centro Stile design team in Turin, which is headed by ex-Pininfarina chief designer Lorenzo Ramaciotti, the Giulia wasn't distinctive enough for Marchionne's liking.

'I don't think it's an Alfa,' he confessed. 'The 8C is clearly an Alfa and the Mito is clearly an Alfa. The car I have on my hands right now, I could take off the badge and it could be a boring German machine. My gut tells me to take a new sheet of paper and start again.'



Giulia's looks didn't have enough Alfa character for Fiat Group execs, so it's back to the drawing board

While the 4C, the small mid-engined coupe that debuted in concept form at this year's Geneva motor show (see last month's Planet evo), will still lead off Alfa's US charge, its introduction has been delayed until 2013 to minimise the time it will have to wait until the cavalry arrives in the form of the Giulia, the updated Giulietta and the company's upcoming compact SUV.

The wait for the Giulia will weaken Alfa's range in its European heartland, too, and will also delay the arrival of the Dodge and Chrysler versions that use the same architecture.

'This happens all the time and we are at the beginning stage,' said Marchionne by way of reassurance.

While he has issues with its styling, Marchionne insisted he was happy with the car's chassis and driveline. 'The architecture is sound, the transmissions and everything else is fine,' he said. 'I just don't like the design.'

The next all-new Alfa Romeo will be the SUV, which is due in late 2012 to early 2013 and leaves showrooms with just the Mito, the Giulietta and the 159 to sell until then.

Europe's best-selling premium brand, Audi, sold 125,700 cars and SUVs in March, while Alfa sold less than that for the full 2010 year. Whether the new models can change this we'll now have to wait a little longer to find out.

Michael Taylor

## BRIEFS



### MICHELIN COMP

evo and Michelin are offering the opportunity for one lucky evo reader to attend the UK launch of the Michelin Pilot Super Sport ultra-high-performance tyre, taking place at Silverstone on Saturday May 7, 2011. The winner will attend the launch with evo's very own Henry Catchpole, who will be on hand to offer driving tips and advice, and will test the Pilot Super Sports fitted to a selection of cars including a Porsche 911, BMW 330 and Audi TT. To enter, visit [www.michelin.co.uk/pilotsupersport](http://www.michelin.co.uk/pilotsupersport) and register your details.



### CHINESE PEUGEOT

Meet the Peugeot that's bigger than a Range Rover Sport. Unveiled at the recent Shanghai motor show, the SxC crossover concept has been designed and developed solely by the company's Chinese technical centre. It uses a 313bhp, 4wd hybrid powertrain and boasts a typically wild concept-car interior with suicide doors. It should make production with some tweaks, though, with Peugeot scheduling a new model for China every year.

## WRC MINI READY TO RACE

300BHP COUNTRYMAN TO MAKE WORLD RALLY DEBUT IN MAY

**T**he new Mini John Cooper Works WRC team will make its debut on the Rally d'Italia on May 5. Mini's return to front-line rallying is one of the big motorsport news stories of the year and is certain to attract considerable attention.

Mini's World Rally Car is based on the road-going, four-wheel-drive Countryman and is built by Prodrive in the UK. It uses the same 1.6-litre turbocharged direct-injection engine as the production car, albeit developed by BMW Motorsport for competition – the cylinder block and heads are retained but the rest is extensively re-engineered. Boost pressure runs at 2.5bar, but even with the 33mm air restrictor fitted it's capable of producing 300bhp-plus and over 295lb ft.



Above: WRC Countryman is built in the UK by Prodrive



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Official government fuel consumption figures in mpg (litres per 100km) for the new C-Class range: urban 30.4 (9.3)-50.4 (5.6), extra urban 52.3 (5.4)-76.3 (3.7), combined 41.5 (6.8)-64.2 (4.4). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 176-117g/km.

Model shown is a Mercedes-Benz C 220 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY SE Saloon with manual transmission at £28,515.00 on-the-road including optional metallic paint at £645.00 (on-the-road prices include VAT, delivery, 12 months' Road Fund Licence, number plates, first registration fee and fuel). \*Finance example based on a Mercedes-Benz C 220 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY SE Saloon (manual) on a 36 month (6+35 profile) Mercedes-Benz Operating Lease agreement, excluding maintenance. Advance rental of £2,034.00. All payments subject to VAT. A £180.00 acceptance fee is payable in addition to and at the same time as the advance rental. Based on 10,000 miles per annum. Excess mileage charges may apply. Rental includes first year's Road Fund Licence only. Written quotations available on request, including alternative contract lengths and mileages. Credit provided subject to status by Mercedes-Benz Financial Services UK Limited, MK7 8ND. Guarantees and indemnities may be required. This finance offer is available on C-Class Saloon models ordered/credit approved between 1 April and 30 September and registered by 31 December 2011 excluding Model Year 801, AMG and special request engines. Offers cannot be used in conjunction with any other published offer from the Retailer. Offer subject to availability. Terms and conditions apply. Prices correct at time of going to press (04/11). Visit [mercedes-benz.co.uk/offers](http://mercedes-benz.co.uk/offers)

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# EVO ESSENTIALS

FROM AN ART CAR T-SHIRT TO A 3D PRINTER, HERE'S WHAT'S BEEN CATCHING OUR EYE THIS MONTH



## M3 GT2 print and T-shirt

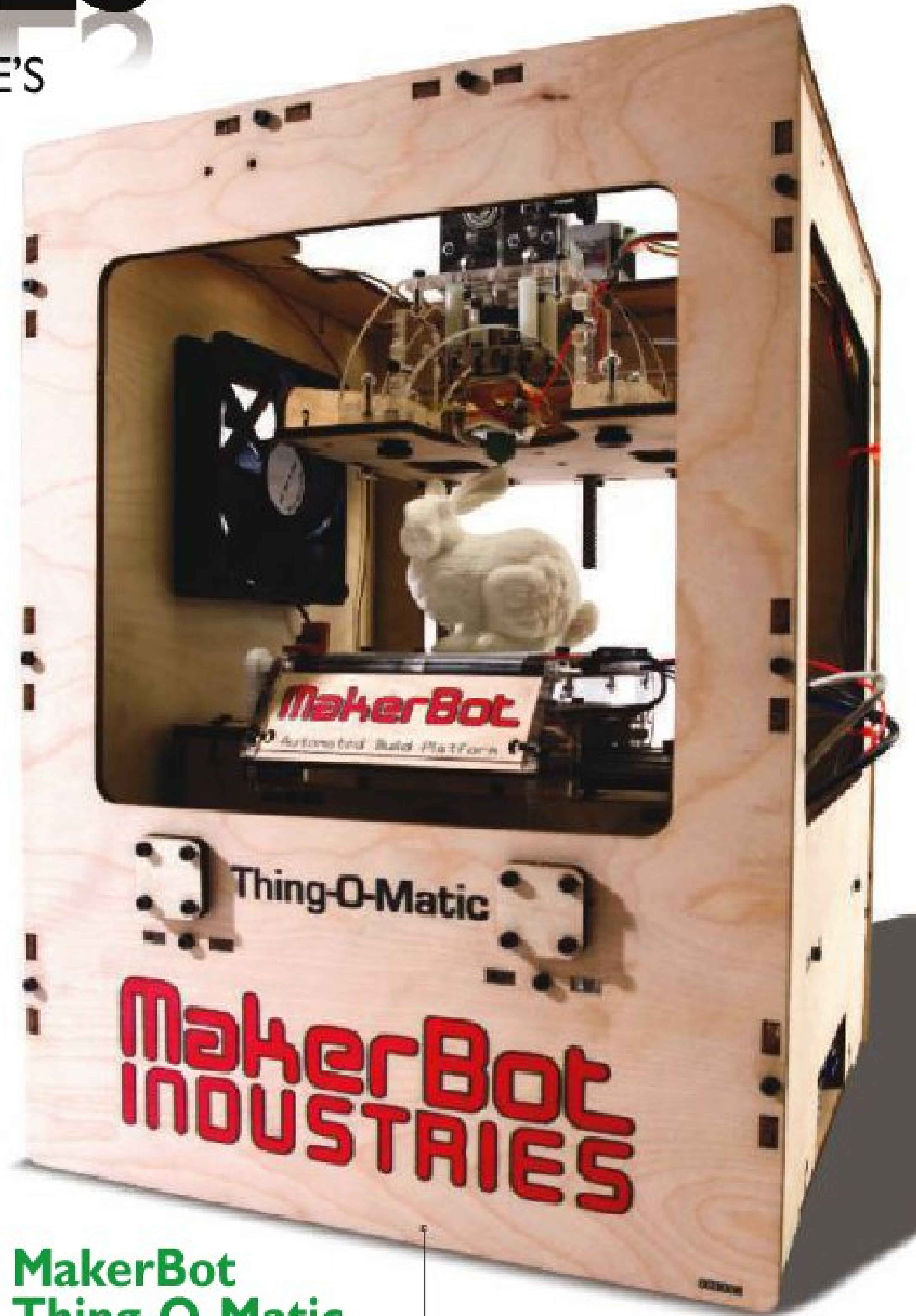
Price: £50 (print), £24.99 (T-shirt)  
From: [www.classicheroes.co.uk](http://www.classicheroes.co.uk)

BMW's 17th Art Car, the Jeff Koons-designed M3 GT2 that appeared at last year's Le Mans 24 hours, was one of the most striking in the series yet. This illustration by Guy Allen pays tribute to that car and is available as a T-shirt or a hand-signed, 420 x 297mm print. The latter is limited to 79 copies – 79 being the number the car wore in the race

## Arai X-Tend

Price: £319.99  
From: [www.whyarai.co.uk](http://www.whyarai.co.uk)

If petrol prices are starting to hurt and you're considering a motorcycle or scooter for commuting – or just for fun – then this new helmet from Arai is well worth a look. The X-Tend offers all the benefits of an open-face helmet – less bulk, improved vision, more fresh air on your chops – but with similar rigidity and protection to a full-face. It's built to Arai's usual, exacting standards and comes in a range of colours



## MakerBot Thing-O-Matic

Price: £1070  
From: [www.makerbot.com](http://www.makerbot.com)

If you thought our recent story on 3D printing (evo 153) was talking about a distant future, think again. The Thing-O-Matic is a 3D printer you can buy right now to connect to your computer at home. With it you can make plastic objects up to a maximum size of 300 x 300 x 410mm, but beyond that the only limit is your imagination

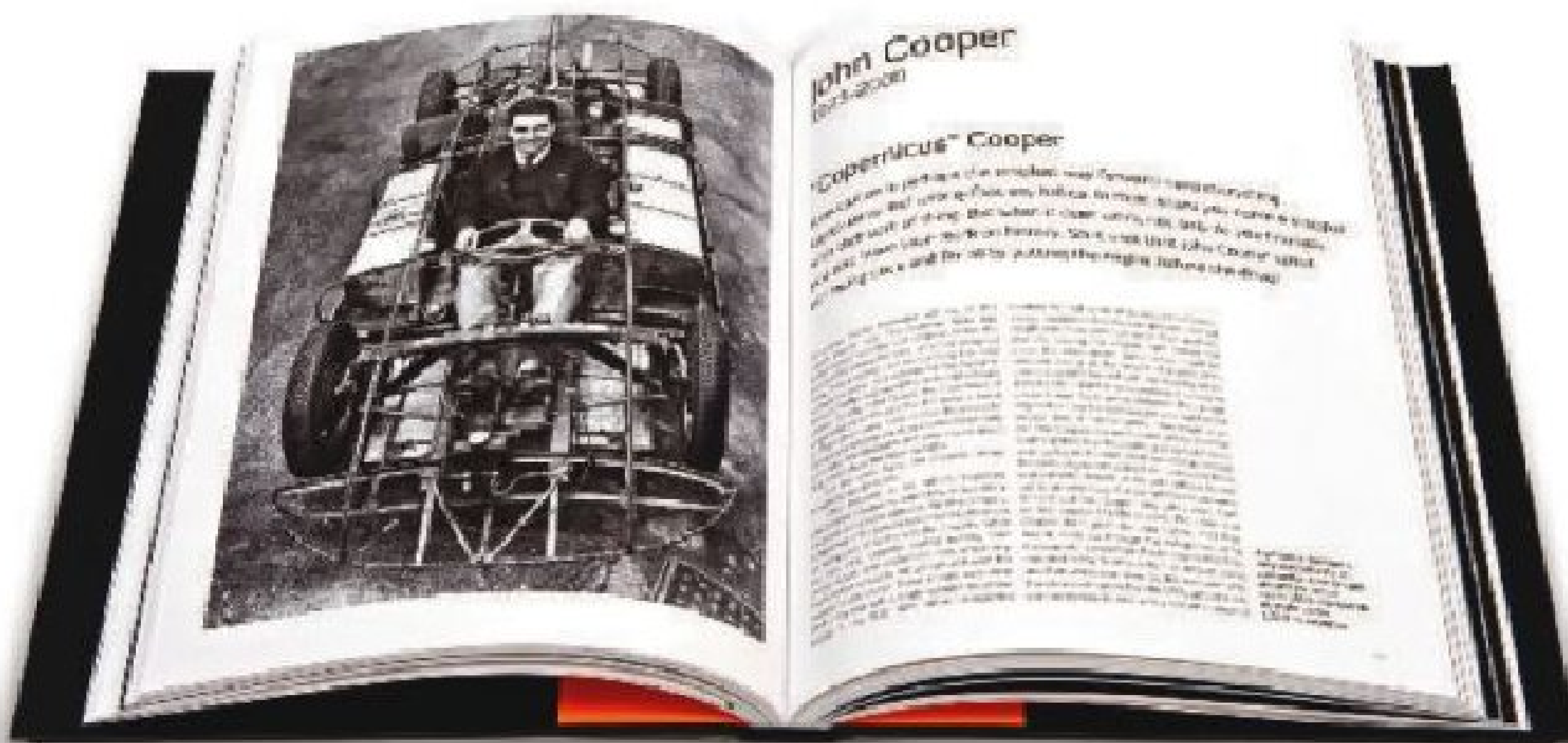


## iPhone Telephoto Lens

Price: c£22  
From: [www.photojojo.com](http://www.photojojo.com)

Yes, it does look a bit weird, but this big (by iPhone standards) lens makes whatever you are pointing your Apple's camera at appear eight times bigger. It screws into an accompanying case and also comes with a collapsible table-top tripod that will help you keep your iPhone steady while you shoot

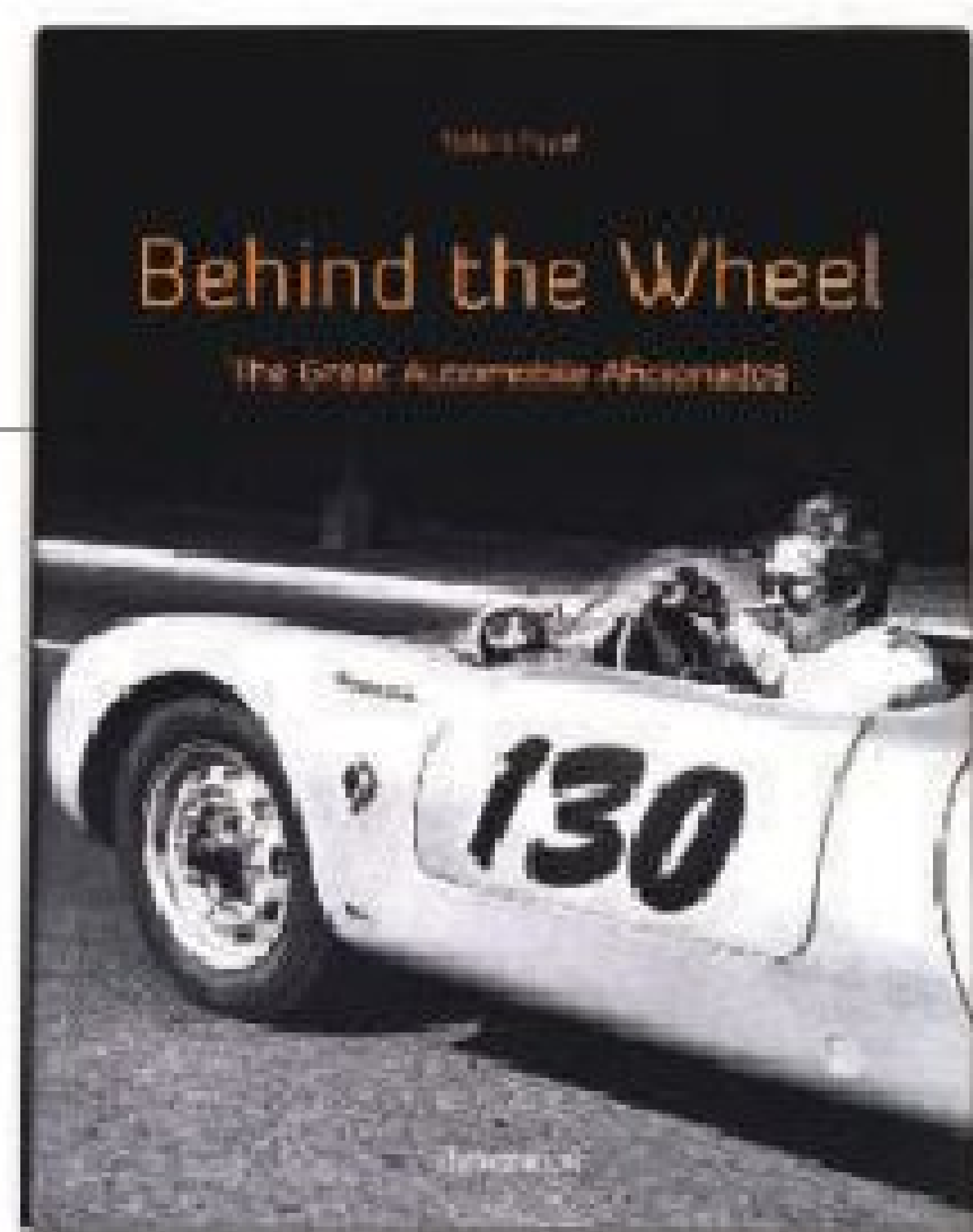
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## Behind the Wheel

Price: £27.50  
From: [editions.flammarion.com](http://editions.flammarion.com)

Subtitled 'The Great Automobile Aficionados', this book by Robert Puyal profiles the racers, engineers and celebrities who, over the last 100 years, have had an obsessive relationship with speed. Ayrton Senna, Soichiro Honda and James Dean are amongst over 50 big names featured, along with their cars

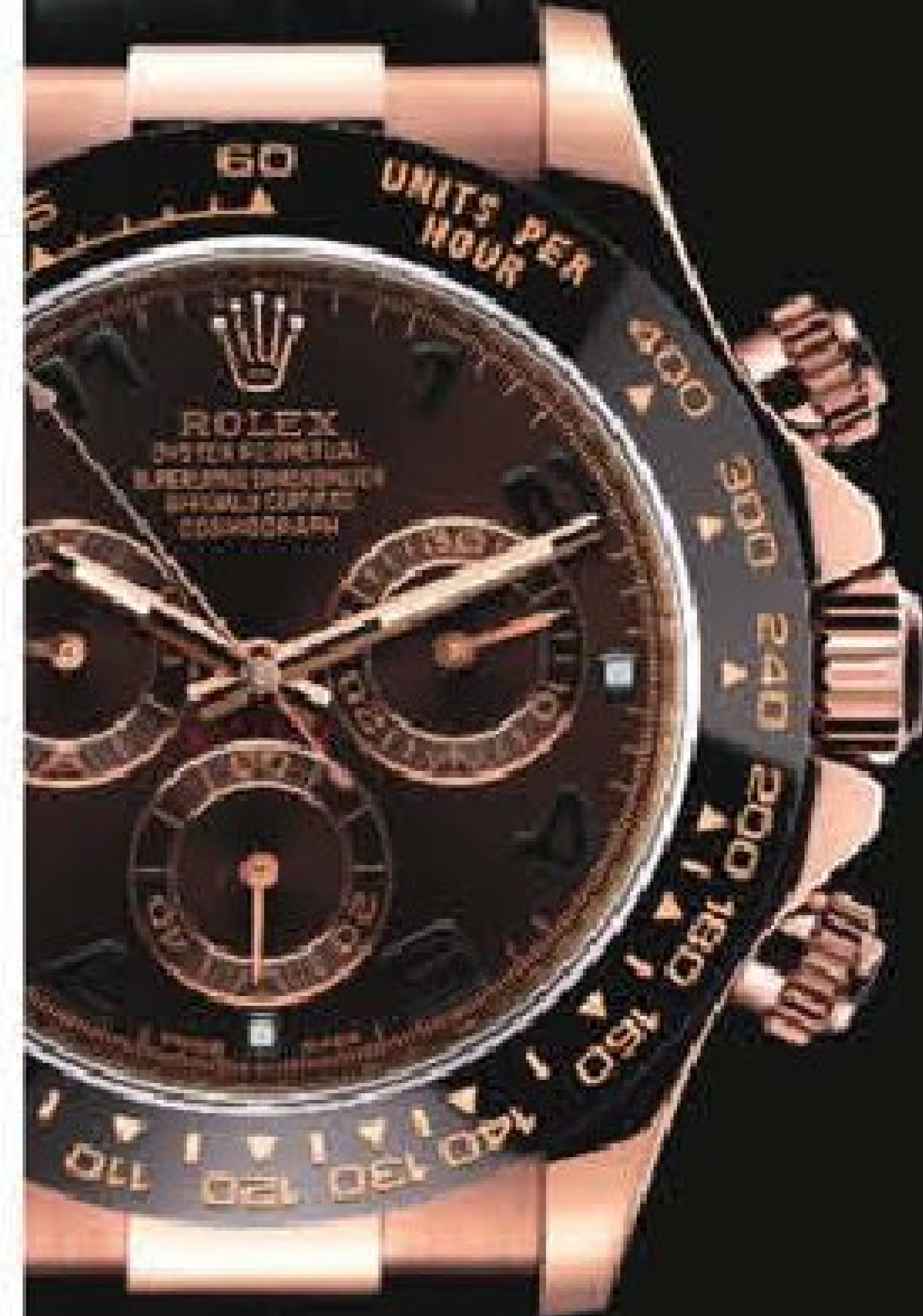




### Rolex Cosmograph Daytona Everose

Price: £18,650 From: [www.rolex.com](http://www.rolex.com)

The Cosmograph Daytona is up there with the Heuer Carrera and the Omega Speedmaster as one of the world's best-loved drivers' watches. Especially famed for its connection with the late Paul Newman who is said to have sported one in the 1969 movie *Winning* (although he always claimed never to have worn a Cosmograph until 1972 when he took up motor racing professionally), vintage versions with so-called 'Paul Newman' dials have fetched as much as \$500,000 at auction. The latest Cosmograph uses the time-honoured combination of black and rose gold to excellent effect and is a watch that will probably become more aesthetically pleasing with age. Rolex doesn't go in for fancy complications, preferring instead to perfect its tried and tested models – as a result, the new Cosmograph comes with practical features such as a scratchproof ceramic bezel, a non-magnetic hairspring and a case made from the brand's patented Everose gold. There are no alternatives to the chocolate brown dial and black alligator strap, but who cares? It looks great as it is.



# The Newman connection...

KICKING OFF OUR WATCH ROUND-UP THIS MONTH IS A CLASSIC ROLEX THAT WILL FOREVER BE LINKED TO FILM STAR AND RACER PAUL NEWMAN. BY **SIMON DE BURTON**

### Omega Speedmaster Co-Axial Chronometer

Price: £5090 (in steel)  
From: [www.omegawatches.com](http://www.omegawatches.com)

The first Omega Speedmaster chronograph came out in 1958 and quickly caught on with sports car drivers, a contemporary advertisement reading: 'Our picture shows two sports car enthusiasts racing the clock... the clock being no clock at all but the new Omega high-precision wrist computer. When the co-driver stops the large second hand at the end of the test mile, he reads off at a glance the time as well as the speed – the latter on the tach-productometer etched into the rim of the case.' The 'Speedy' became a horological legend when Buzz Aldrin made it the only watch to be worn on the surface of the moon during the 1969 Apollo XI space mission and it remains one of Omega's top sellers. This new version has two subdials instead of the three found on the 'Professional' model as the 12 hour and 60 minute counters are combined – and the brilliant Co-Axial movement can be seen through a full-width crystal case back.



Movement can be viewed through crystal case-back (right). Gold version costs £15,210



### Linde Werdelin SpidoSpeed

Price: 11,760 euros  
From: [www.lindewerdelin.com](http://www.lindewerdelin.com)

Linde Werdelin is one of the most interesting small brands in the watch game. Founded in 2002 by Danish designer Morton Linde and his lifelong friend Jorn Werdelin, a former banker, it produces high quality mechanical watches that serve as platforms for a range of clip-on wrist computers designed for diving ('The Reef') and skiing ('The Rock'). LW now hopes to extend its appeal to drivers with the limited edition (100) SpidoSpeed chronograph that features a skeletonised case inspired by the racing car world's relentless crusade for weight-saving. Complementing the pared-down exterior is an engine-turned dial based on the dashboard of an old Bugatti, drilled sub-dials that look like brake discs and a winding rotor resembling part of an alloy wheel. See the comprehensive website for an explanation of how it all works.



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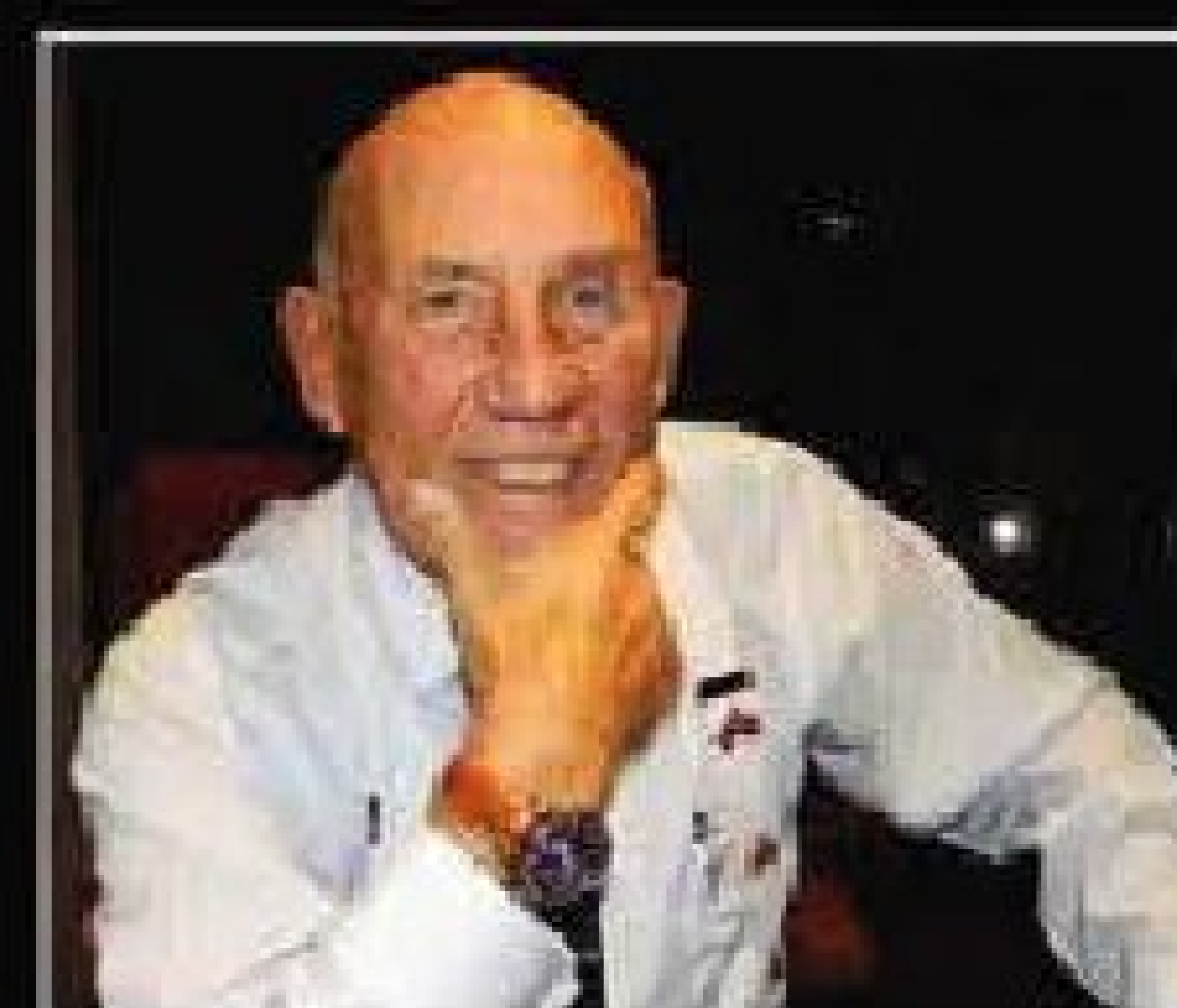
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# Petrolhead

Richard Porter

Some car makers understand the thrill of driving, others are just in it for the money, but Porter finds one particularly difficult to pigeonhole



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It's very easy to divide car companies into good and evil. The good are the ones that appear to understand that driving can be an enjoyable activity in itself. The evil are the ones that make it patently obvious that their primary business is making money and they intend to do it by serving up a million miles of driving misery. Oh, and would sir like finance on that?

We know the companies that are consistently good. BMW for example. Or Porsche. Or Alfa Romeo, who may not hit the spot all the time but can't be faulted for trying.

Lotus is as saintly as they come, even if its strange, hefty, identikit future models suggest a worrying desire to dance with the devil.

Peugeot used to be one of the good guys but has spent the last decade being almost relentlessly evil, though the RCZ suggests that there may at last be an angel on its shoulder again.

Ford was evil for years, plumbing new depths of devilry with the mkIV Escort, yet emerged from the shadow of the valley of death and now sits confidently on the side of good, a place that Vauxhall rarely visits unless it's mooched a free pass from Holden.

## 'THERE ARE GOOD CAR COMPANIES AND EVIL CAR COMPANIES. QUESTION IS, WHICH IS SUZUKI?'

These are easy distinctions to make. You can drive almost any model from any company and very quickly work out if it was made by people who care about driving or who don't. If it's a good company or an evil company.

Question is, on this arbitrary and binary scale, where would you put Suzuki? At first you might think back to the roly-poly Jimny and assume this is a company that has no interest in making you smile at the wheel. Unless what you always wanted in life was a recurring back problem. You might also recall microscopic blobs of misery like the old Alto and assume that Suzuki is just a large industrial concern that churns out cars in the way it might produce tumble dryers or lawnmowers or machines that get the glibly bits out of chickens.

Then you might remember the Sport variant of the outgoing Swift, a car so intriguing that this magazine managed to have one on its long-term test fleet, twice. I ran the little Suzuki during its first stay on the evo roster and I ruddy loved it. It wasn't perfect, not

by any means, but it had zing and vim and several other things that sound like kitchen cleaner. It felt like it had been designed by people who really, genuinely enjoy driving.

The little Swift made me realise that there is good within Suzuki and I've been reminded of this again after spending a week in the US with its new Kizashi saloon. In case you missed the memo, this is the company's new medium-sized saloon and the biggest passenger car it's ever made. It's quite a big deal for Suzuki, so much so that it constructed a brand new factory in Japan just to build the thing.

It looks alright, in a sort of slightly over-pumped way, like a well-drawn cartoon of a handsome but plain saloon. It has a 2.4-litre four-cylinder engine that drones away whilst making some power (actually 176bhp, so it's not especially brisk). You can have it with a slightly intriguing switchable four-wheel-drive system and a not-at-all intriguing CVT gearbox, both of which it will feature as standard when it comes to the UK later this year. Big

wow, you're thinking, I look forward to never seeing any of those on our roads.

Except that, the Kizashi is not a bad old thing to drive. It feels taut, dense, full of potential. And the more you poke around it, the more you spot things that can have been no accident, things that show it was designed by people who give at least some thought towards driving as a pleasure rather than a chore.

The seat can be set good and low to the floor. The adjustable wheel comes out further than in most cars. Especially telling is the plus/minus override on the gearlever. Most car companies go with a 'forward for up/back for down' layout, but the Kizashi's is orientated the other way round, allowing you to bang in downchanges under braking Gs like a BTCC warrior. The only mainstream car makers that do it the same way as Suzuki are BMW and Ford. Two of the good guys.

All of which makes me think that Suzuki must be full of goodness too. Dear Lord, let the next Swift Sport be a cracker.

Illustrations Simon Cooper

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# Crossed Up

Chris Harris

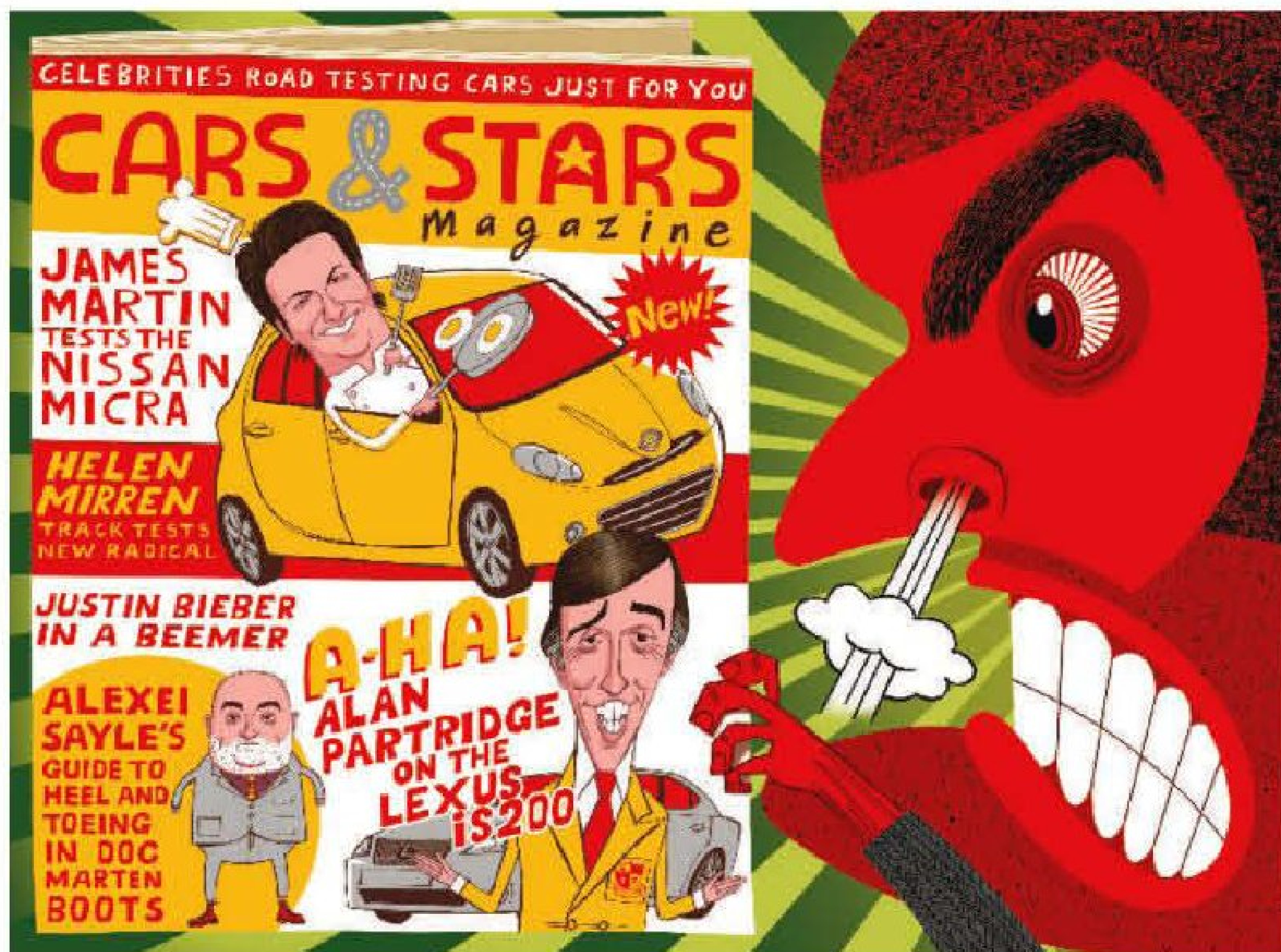
Harris has discovered that a celebrity chef is one of Britain's most-read road testers, and he's certain it's not a good thing

**E**ven die-hard *Top Gear* fanatics must have detected a seam of truth running through Steve Coogan's reactionary diatribe in protest at the show's bullying tactics, published in *The Guardian* recently. Of course you could argue that *TG*'s foundations are laid on its capacity to shock. No one quite knows when, or why, a television programme about the motor car became the unofficial home of free-speaking middle England, but it certainly has. Identifying general bigotry, xenophobia and offence on *Top Gear* is nothing more than a bear hunt involving woodland and Andrex.

I found myself kind of agreeing with Coogan, though, right up until he took a massive broadside at motoring journalists in general. That's right, I love it when other people take a tongue-lashing but hate it when the cold steel penetrates my own back. Actually, I mostly agree that mine is a shoddy trade, but it's a trade all the same, and if there's one thing more irritating than a bunch of cliché-ridden berks (myself included) who couldn't get a job as a proper reporter and therefore ended up testing cars, it's celebs convinced that fame and a few quid in the bank automatically makes them a good motoring journalist.

Coogan did this himself – he wrote a column for *Car* magazine a while back, which wasn't so much bad as disappointing given the high standard you might expect from the man who minted the relationship between Alan Partridge and Lexus. If memory serves, Alexei Sayle had a column in *Car* around that time too, and whenever I read either they were rarely as nourishing as those written by *Car*'s indigenous journalists.

Why is that? Coogan is a comedy genius, one who has expertly woven the motor car into his work. He gave us Gareth Cheeseman and the Ford Probe. But perhaps his particular brand of car enthusiasm – one concerned with style, character and the car set in social context – wasn't for me. As for Sayle, I just couldn't stop hearing 'Those Doctor Marten, Doctor Marten, Doctor Marten boots' every time I read something of his. Again, perhaps more my fault than his.



## 'ELECTING PEOPLE TO TEST CARS PURELY ON THE BASIS THAT THEY ARE FAMOUS IS NOT SOUND'

Thinking about it, the collective problem here is that they were columns concerned with the writer's own – quite particular – relationship with cars, and maybe that subject matter didn't chime with the majority of the readership.

Columns are one thing, the nitty-gritty of reviewing cars is another. I had no idea that chef James Martin led a double life as a motoring journalist until I watched that shambolic Mille Miglia programme on BBC2 recently. The Twitter massive advised me to read *The Mail on Sunday* (something I had never done), and sure enough there he was – the car expert for one of the UK's biggest-selling newspapers is a cook. This is difficult to understand. If I want to know how to boil an egg, I'll ask a cook; if I want confirmation of the new Nissan Micra's crapness, I'll ask someone who knows about cars, like Andrew Frankel or John Simister – both

career car testers with millions of miles of practical experience.

I'm being blatantly protectionist here, but electing people to test cars purely on the basis that they have made a name for themselves in another walk of life is not sound. It's the ultimate expression of a celebrity-obsessed media that will doubtless soon see Sir Patrick Moore replaced by someone from *Hollyoaks* (preferably with big hooters). In the past this cross-genre activity only worked if the 'star' brought something – a voice or a writing style – that truly added to the discipline. None of the current celeb testers achieve this.

There are a couple of exceptions to the rule. Boris Johnson in *GQ* had that wonderful knack of unearthing almost all meaningful information about a car without ever doing anything remotely sensible with it. His piece about snoozing in a Jaguar X-type at a

motorway services will forever be that car's elegy. Then there's the late, great Jean Shepherd, a US radio broadcaster who wrote a column for *Car and Driver*, which will probably never be bettered.

But good, rigorous testing is no longer cool or attractive enough for a newspaper. Everyone is trying to imitate *Top Gear* by spinning car reviewing into the entertainment domain, and that's how you end up with cooks writing about cars. The one positive to be drawn from the situation is that it means we now have a definitive answer for all those students who write to *evo* and ask how to get a job as a motoring hack. On the evidence above, it has to be this: get famous for something – anything will do; bigamy, egg-boiling, curling – and then express an interest in the good old horseless carriage. Bingo: you'll be sideways in a press-fleet Meriva before you know it.

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**EXOTIC & MISC:**

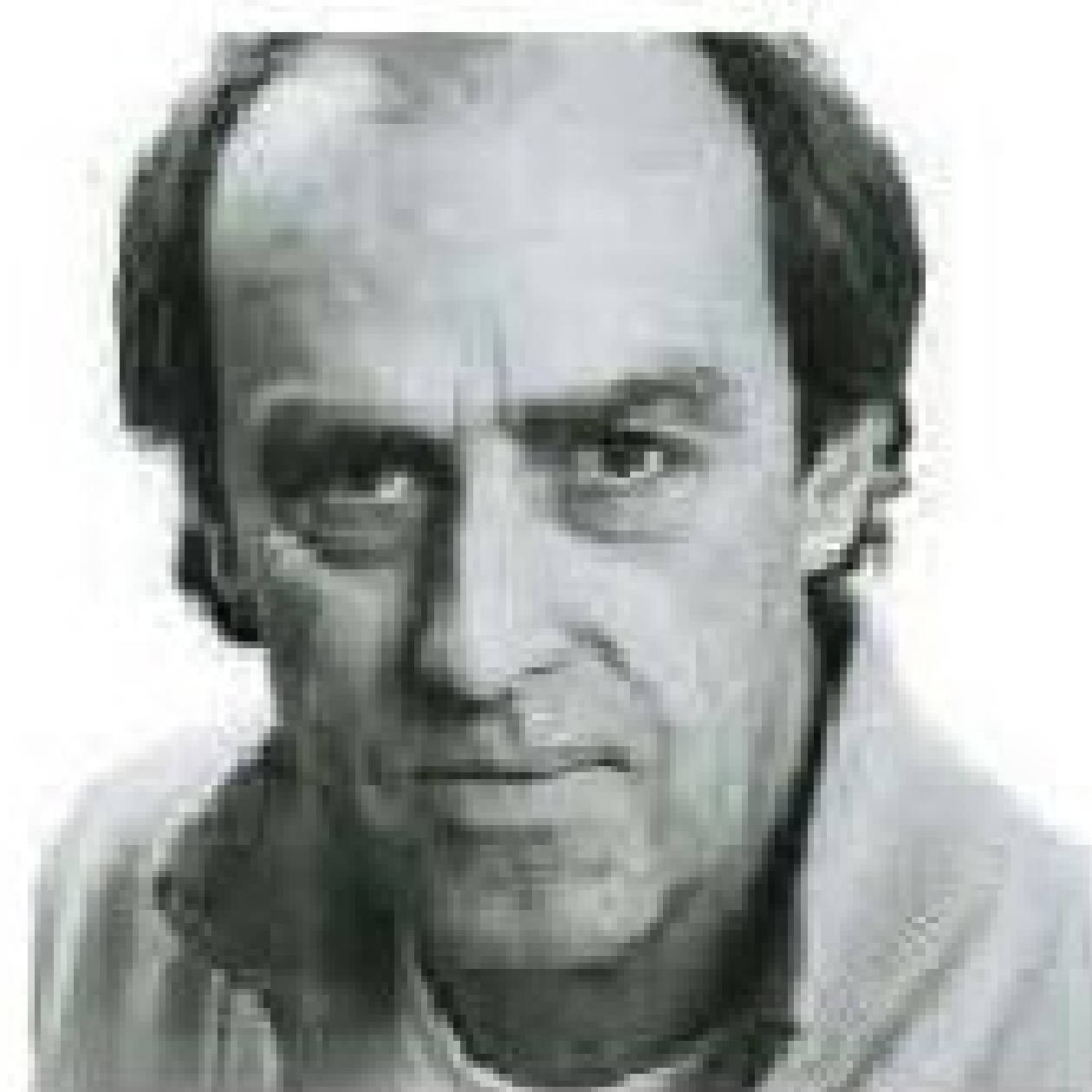
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# The Insider

## Harry Metcalfe

Why do some cars have *evo* appeal when others fall short of the mark? Metcalfe has a theory...

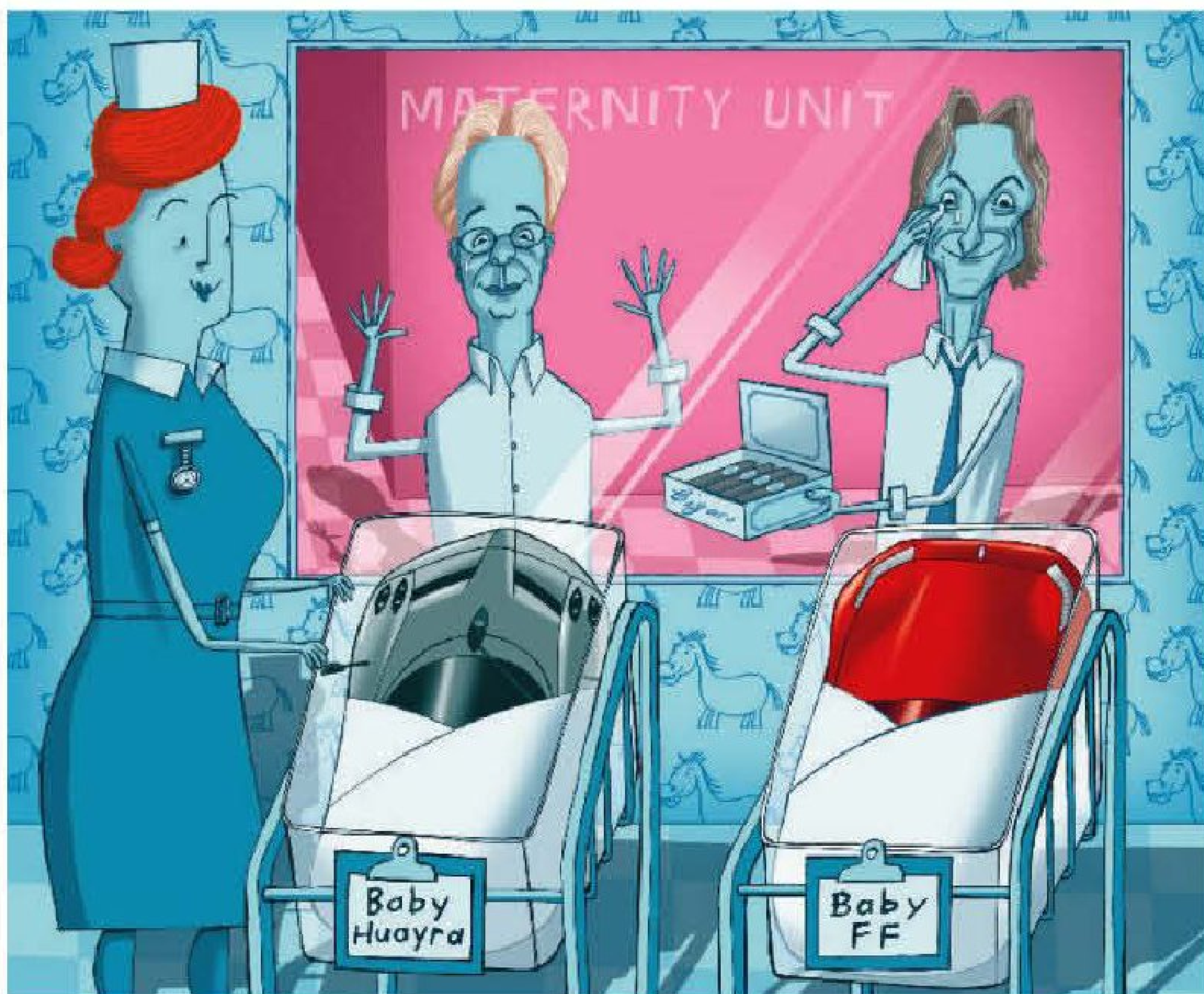
I'm surprised by how often I find myself having to explain to representatives of the car industry exactly what an *'evo'* car is. 'That's easy,' I say. 'It's one with a certain *je ne sais quoi* about it, a spark of greatness that lifts it above the herd.' Hmm, perhaps this isn't so easy after all...

Back in 1999, Russell Bulgin had a stab at defining what *'evoness'* is. He wrote about the 'quality of information', steering that was 'near perfect in weight, graininess, precision and feedback', the ability of a car to 'flow' with a difficult road, and the way the best cars only reveal all their qualities gradually. He was, as ever, spot on.

But it's when you step beyond the world of performance cars that defining what makes an *evo* car starts to get a little trickier. *evo* cars do exist out there in the wilderness; I'm thinking of the likes of the venerable Land Rover Defender and Mercedes G-Wagen, or the Citroën C6, or even the humble Fiat 500 TwinAir. These more diverse cars might not boast big horsepower and unfeasible 0-60mph times, but they still possess that special ingredient, something that turns them from being simple, run-of-the-mill devices into cars that owners can really love.

But what is the magic ingredient that links a Defender with a Paganì Huayra? As car makers turn out an ever-growing number of models, I'm becoming more and more convinced that it's to do with love. Now bear with me here, I'm not about to get all soppy on you. I'm talking about the amount of love that goes into making a car. Allow me to explain...

With the endless stream of new models being launched these days, logic would suggest that there should be more *evo*-type cars in production than ever before, but I worry that the opposite is happening. Take BMW as an example. When *evo* launched in 1998, BMW produced five distinct model lines: the 3, 5, 7 and 8-series, and the then recently launched Z3. Making a choice was incredibly simple, as each car had a distinct character of its own. Meanwhile the engineers responsible for these cars cherished their role



### **'WHEN A CAR HAS BEEN CREATED IN A LOVING ATMOSPHERE, IT BECOMES MORE LOVABLE'**

in attempting to create the ultimate drivers' machine within each sector.

Fast forward to 2011 and it's all very different. BMW now has *eleven* separate model lines on sale, and numerous different variants within each of those. For example, did you know that there are now 27 different varieties of 1-series on sale in the UK? The end result is that BMW's engineers are now incredibly busy creating new cars, rushing from one project to the next. But does this diversification bring us more loveable cars? I think not.

This thought was brought home to me recently when I met up with one of the engineers who had worked on the dynamics for the new 6-series. I asked him where he stood on run-flat tyres. He just shrugged his shoulders and

replied that they weren't a real problem as the extra weight of a run-flat carcass was minimal next to the huge wheels BMW designers insist on. But what about the effect of those shallow sidewalls and the increased unsprung weight on ride quality? He gave another shrug and pointed out that a run-flat might add a kilo or so, but over-designed wheels could weigh up to 3 to 4kg more, just for the sake of the looks. I could tell the 'love' had gone out of it for him. The designers had the upper hand; he just had to make it work.

It's so different at companies like Ferrari, Porsche, Lamborghini and Paganì. Here, they live, sleep and dream the perfect car. Talk to any engineer working on a new project and they'll know the weight of the wheel down

to the nearest gram because they're so enthusiastic about what they do. With a talented team focused on producing the best possible car, it becomes almost a religion to get everything right. And that's why it's no fluke that cars like the 458 and GT3 RS are so utterly brilliant – the engineers who created them were passionate about what they're doing. It's the same for the engineers who worked on the Land Rover Defender or the Citroën C6, and I believe it's when a car has been created in this loving atmosphere that it becomes loveable.

So next time someone tells you they really love their car, it's most probably because the team that originally created it did too. There, I told you it was easy to explain what makes an *evo* car. It's all to do with love.

# DRIVEN

- **FERRARI FF** P38
- **ABARTH 695 TRIBUTO FERRARI** P42
- **ARIEL ATOM MUGEN** P44
- **CATERHAM 7 SUPERSPORT** P46
- **JAGUAR XF 2.2D** P47
- **ROLLS-ROYCE PHANTOM EE** P48
- **DODGE CHALLENGER SRT8 392** P51
- **HYUNDAI VELOSTER** P53
- **RANGE ROVER EVOQUE** P53
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aving howled up the Sella Pass only ten minutes before, it's something of a shock as we round a corner to discover our return descent now blocked. Although this

is Ferrari's first four-wheel-drive car, an avalanche is too much even for an FF to drive over. A local assures us that a snowplough is already on the way, but faced with a choice of looking at a wall of lumpy snow for an hour or passing the time by heading back up the mountain for one more run through the switchbacks, there isn't really any contest...

The FF, as I'm sure you know, is the replacement for the 612 Scaglietti – Ferrari's four-seater. But because customers asked for a Ferrari that could realistically be driven every

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day, the chaps at Maranello decided to make the FF more practical and useable than any Ferrari before it. Such functional criteria have clearly dictated the FF's breadvan/shooting-brake/M Coupe profile, and although it's a shape that will undoubtedly divide opinion, I happen to like it. It's a very well proportioned car.

As you walk up to it, you realise it is also a very large car; from the grinning grille to the double diffuser at the rear, it is just shy of five metres, or almost exactly the same length as an Audi A6 Avant. However, what the shape,



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combined with the split folding rear seats, allows is for you to fit four people and their luggage inside for a weekend away, or three people and their bags for a week, or (perhaps most importantly) two people and their bicycles. It certainly comfortably accommodates Chris Rutter, Sam Riley and me, plus all their photographic and cinematic gubbins.

Of course, if the FF is to be considered a truly practical GT then it not only needs to be spacious but it also needs to be able to whisk its contents across continents in comfort. This it will undoubtedly do. The roads in Italy's Südtirol seem to be twinned with those of Surrey – they are terrible. There is barely a yard that doesn't have a pockmark, crumple or crater. Yet for the first half an hour of driving, and whilst trying to navigate and generally survive the insane Italian traffic, I simply didn't notice.

The FF has third-generation magnetorheological (easy for you to say) dampers and they provide an incredible ride. Even with the suspension set to Sport rather than Comfort, not once did I wince or jolt – the broken tarmac simply slipped underneath us. It slipped quietly too; at a 100mph cruise on the autostrada there was a cocoon-like hush about the cabin and no need to raise even my mumbling voice to talk to the others.

There isn't really enough space here to do justice to the complexities of the FF's 4RM (*quattro ruote motrici* or four-wheel-drive) system, but I'll try. First you need to picture the layout of the drivetrain, the V12 set a long way back in the nose behind the front axle and a single propshaft running to the rear axle, where the seven-speed dual-clutch gearbox sits

Top left: new 6.3-litre V12 has direct injection; power is up 109bhp over the outgoing 612's 5.8 V12, and is 31bhp up on the 599's 6.0. Right: brakes are CCM (carbon ceramic material) items; front discs are 398mm in diameter. Below: rear seats accommodate adults comfortably; central section can be lowered to allow long items such as skis to be pushed through







## **'THROW THE FF INTO TURNS AND THE GRIP IS STUNNING – FAST CORNERS BECOME A TEST OF YOUR BRAVERY'**

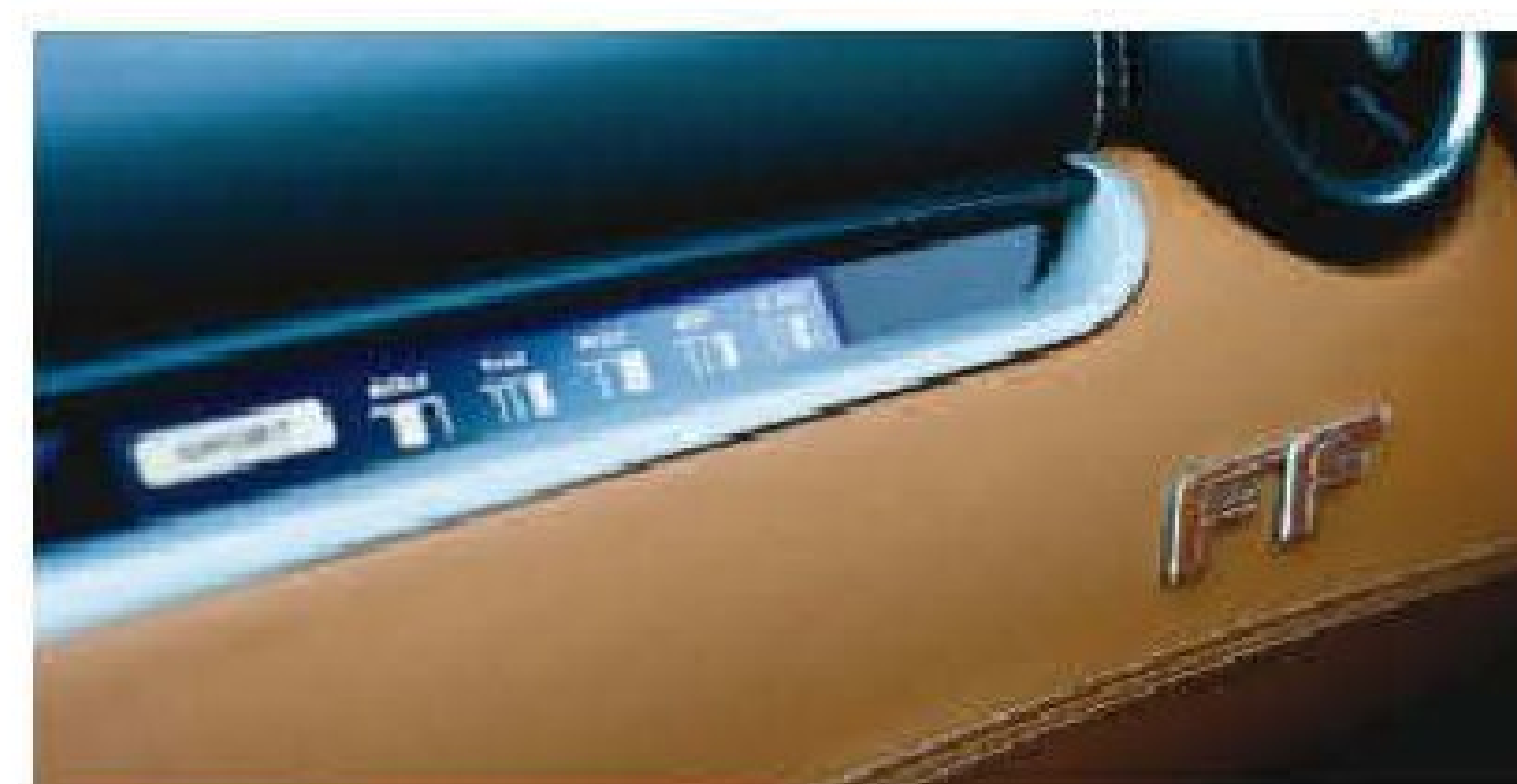
with the E-diff. It's a conventional transaxle arrangement, so how does power reach the front wheels? Well, ahead of the engine, over the front axle, is a very clever, very small Power Transfer Unit (PTU) containing two wet clutches – one for each front wheel. This PTU draws power from the crank via an integrated gearbox and then apportions it to either or both of the front wheels when required. The front gearbox has just two gears, so the desired wheel speed is achieved by slipping the clutches.

It's a system that means the FF is a rear-drive car most of the time (and all the time above about 125mph) with the front wheels only receiving power when needed. How readily they start working depends on where you set the manettino: Ice, Wet, Comfort, Sport and ESC Off all make different assumptions about the level of grip available and consequently how much work the rear wheels should do before they need help to keep the car stable. One of the main advantages of 4RM is that because it doesn't have a conventional centre clutch or a second propshaft, it weighs half what other four-wheel-drive systems weigh. Another advantage is that it allows torque to be distributed not only

front to rear but also left or right, with the E-diff commanding the rear wheels and the PTU's two clutches dealing with the fronts.

What all this information can't tell us is how 4RM affects the driving experience. It sounds like an FF should still feel very rear-wheel-drive, and fortunately Italian hairpins are a good testing ground to find out. The roads are bone-dry so it's ESC off, brake hard, first gear, sweep in wide and late, then get on the throttle aggressively... and the car simply fires itself out of the corner with supreme traction. I try it again, several times, and power oversteer simply never materialises. What's just as flabbergasting is that the moment when the front wheels start helping is so seamless.

Usually in four-wheel-drive cars you can feel the rear slip before an obvious transition and change in attitude of the car as the power is shuffled forwards. But, with the FF, in the same instant that your brain is expecting traction to break and the rear to start moving, you find that instead of going sideways you're riding one continuous and enormous surge straight forwards. All 642bhp is simply deployed through the Pirellis and the FF fires out of



Above: optional second display ahead of the passenger can show speed, revs, chassis settings and other data

the corner with complete grip and maximum forward momentum. It's so extraordinary that I think it might out GT-R the GT-R.

The only time the car oversteers is in one right-left flick-flack with the chassis fully loaded in second gear, and even then there isn't any need to lift off as each time the car seems to stabilise the slide so early. Even on a piece of gravel road later, still with ESC off and deliberately flicking the car on the way into the corner, the traction is quite incredible. So, with all this traction, combined with all the practicality, is the FF still a proper Ferrari?



## 'THE REAR TYRES SMEAR ACROSS THE ROAD, PUSHING YOU THROUGH CORNERS'

Should we view it with the same suspicion that we view a Porsche Cayenne – a part of the brand in badge but not in ethos?

No. The FF is still definitely a Ferrari. Quiet though it may be inside when cruising, you only have to drop the window and plunge into a tunnel to be immersed in the properly spine-tingling bark of a Maranello soundtrack. The new V12, Ferrari's first with direct injection, might have been tuned to make 370lb ft (out of a total of 504lb ft) available at just 1000rpm, but it still makes its maximum 642bhp right up in the stratosphere at the 8000rpm limiter.

But it's not just the heart of the FF that is demonstrably Ferrari. The steering wheel looks like it's been lifted straight from a 458 and it feels like it too when you first turn into a corner. There is a fraction more weight, but it is still helium light and incredibly responsive. This means that although the FF feels like a big car when you get in, it suddenly shrinks around you when you start really driving because the nose reacts like that of a much smaller, lighter car.

Throw the FF into turns and the grip is stunning – fast corners become a test of your bravery rather than limited as you think they should be by the capabilities of a 1880kg GT car. And don't think that because it won't do big lurid slides everywhere the FF is somehow boring. Right up to that point where the front driveshafts kick in and morph a showboating moment into forward momentum, the balance feels resolutely rear-drive. You feel the rear tyres smearing across the tarmac and pushing you through corners, rather than the fronts in any way pulling the nose up the road.

By the time the avalanche has been cleared, we're seriously late for returning the FF to



FF's steering wheel – like the 458's – has buttons for indicators, lights, wipers, dampers and stability control

the hotel. Plummeting headlong down the mountain in a car as big as the FF, three up, could be terrifying, but it's brilliant. The third-generation CCM brakes are better than ever, giving reassuring feel (still that distinctive, slightly grainy sensation) right from the top of the pedal and never wilting despite the huge punishment of braking late and deep into mile after mile of downhill switchbacks. And because the brakes give you confidence, you feel happy to use all the power on the straights too, hanging onto gears and flicking the right-hand paddle just before the limiter for another whip-crack change, preferably with the window down next to a rock face (although now I think about it, I hope it wasn't that which triggered the avalanche in the first place...).

If you want a Ferrari that is absolutely the last word in driver involvement, one that will really test your car-handling skills over the limit of grip, then it's available in the form of both the 458 and the 599. But if you want a Ferrari that can carry more than two people and transport them almost anywhere indecently and intoxicatingly quickly, then an FF is the incredibly capable car for you.

Henry Catchpole

## ABARTH 695 TRIBUTO FERRARI

FERRARI-INSPIRED 500  
BEST NEW ABARTH YET

### SPECIFICATION

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1368cc, turbo CO2 155g/km  
Power 178bhp @ 5750rpm Torque 170lb ft @ 3300rpm  
0-62mph 6.9sec (claimed) Top speed 140mph (claimed)  
Price £29,600 On sale Now



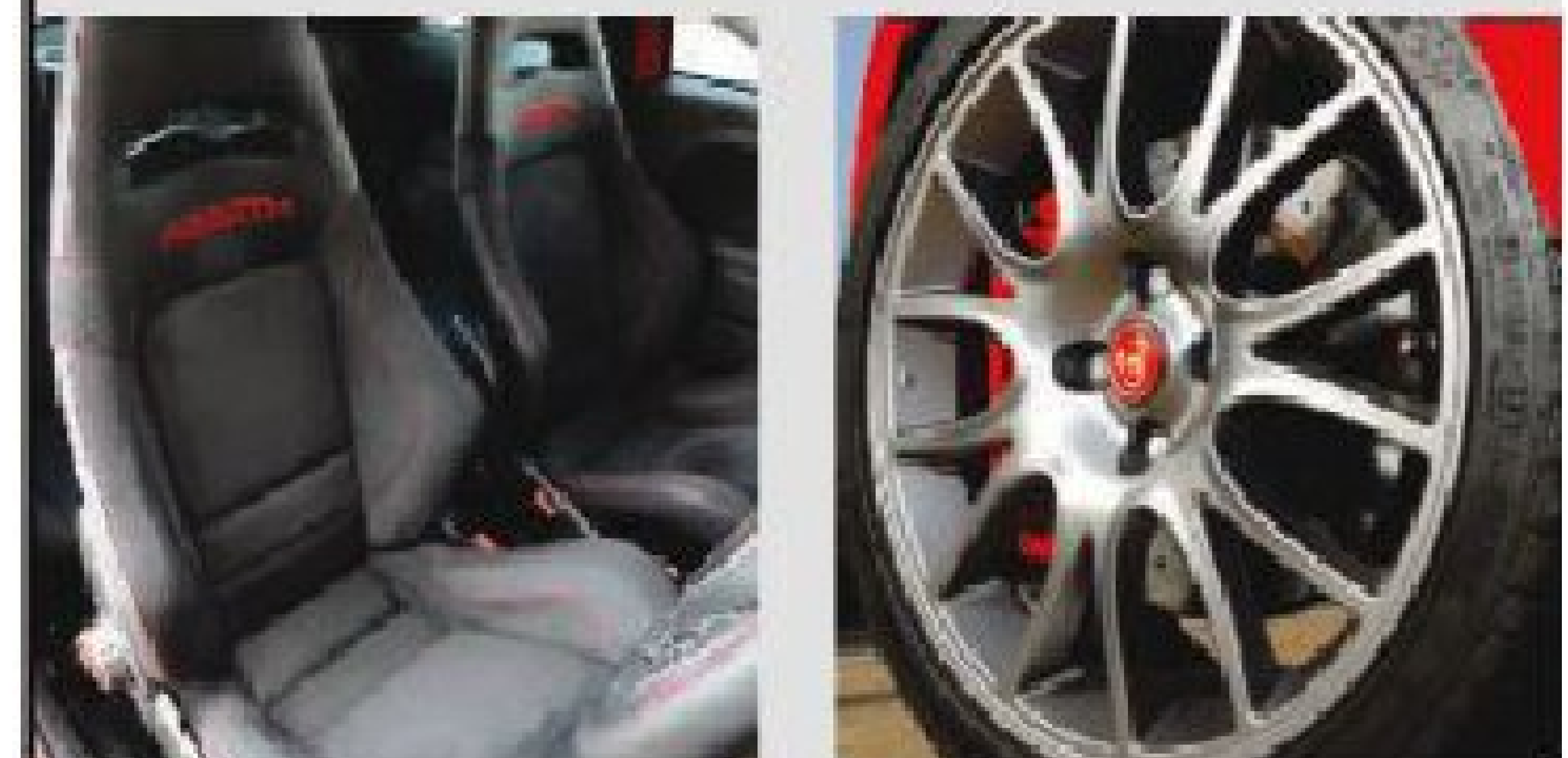
I t'd be easy to smirk at the 695 Tributo Ferrari and even dismiss it as nothing more than a marketing gimmick aimed at extracting every penny from committed Ferrari fanatics. At £29,600 it's an irrelevance, right?

Well, no actually. It's quite brilliant to drive and is easily the best of the Abarth 500 range. It's based on the Esseesse model, but here the tiny 1.4-litre turbo lump's wick has been wound up another 20bhp to produce a total of 178bhp, and with the addition of a variable-back-pressure exhaust it boasts a pretty manic soundtrack too, every upshift on the automated five-speed manual gearbox accompanied by a satisfying *whump!*

But it's in the corners you discover the biggest contrast. The Tributo is so much more responsive and precise thanks to uprated springs and well-judged dampers, so it's stiff but connected – you're never bounced across the road. The Michelin tyres are unique too and offer much sharper and better-defined responses, while braking has also been improved with 284mm discs and Brembo calipers up front. Inside, a pair of Sabelt seats lock you in place beautifully.

So yes, it's expensive, but all that extra cash has been well spent and thankfully this is more than mere badge engineering.

Roger Green



Sabelt seats give support in all the right places; new 17in wheels mimic those of 360 Challenge Stradale

### EVO RATING

★★★★★  
+ A great package  
- Costs quite a bit

### EVO RATING

★★★★★  
+ A proper Ferrari with four seats; clever 4WD  
- Styling may not be to all tastes



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Release: StoreMags & FantaMag



# ARIEL ATOM MUGEN

- MUGEN-BUILT ENGINE ■ 270BHP FROM A NATURALLY ASPIRATED 2-LITRE
- SUSPENSION FROM ATOM V8 ■ ONLY TEN BEING MADE

W

Without wanting to offend or irritate owners and devotees, I have a theory about the Ariel Atom. I do not think it is a trackday car. This is a generic term applied

to anything that is British, lightweight and unhelpful in a downpour. It is mostly applicable, but in some cases it is a poorly chosen phrase. The Atom is one such case. The Atom is a fun car, not a trackday car.

Of course you can use any Atom on the track, but even with sticky rubber and upgraded suspension, it has never felt like a track car to me. That isn't to say that Somerset's largest car maker by volume doesn't produce tackle that is good fun on a circuit, just that despite the styling, the Atom was never devised to beat a Radical. This is especially true of the hair-brained supercharged version whose torque delivery is so harsh, you always find yourself

## SPECIFICATION

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc CO2 n/a  
 Power 270bhp @ 8300rpm Torque 188lb ft @ 6000rpm  
 0-60mph 2.9sec (claimed) Top speed 150mph (claimed)  
 Price £55,000 On sale Now

primed to sluice great quantities of corrective lock at it – from 20mph to 140mph.

Strangely, the best-balanced Atom away from the public highway is the 500bhp V8 version. It has Intrax four-way adjustable dampers, firmer springs and, most importantly, a torque delivery better suited to the Atom's traction capability. Clearly, it's a chassis that would work very well with a less insane engine.

Here is that engine: a 2-litre Honda VTEC, with more power than the entry-level 245bhp Atom, but without any assistance to its induction system. The car it's fitted to is called the Ariel Atom Mugen, and it is the first Atom to sit happily under the 'trackday' banner.

The decision to go normally aspirated is spot-on, but the offer of using the Mugen name is also interesting. Honda is very protective of its skunkworks performance arm, and it's testament to the quality of the machines Simon Saunders' small company produces that Honda was keen for this project to happen.

In essence, this is a race-spec Civic motor (the Honda K20Z Type-R engine) running to sensible rpm in order to extend engine life. The claimed outputs are 270bhp at 8300rpm and 188lb ft at 6000rpm. The work required to extract such figures from 2 litres of swept capacity takes seven days per engine and happens at Mugen Europe's Northampton HQ. There, each engine is stripped, measured and blueprinted before being reassembled with higher-compression pistons, high-lift camshafts and new valve springs. A longer free-flow inlet manifold is also fitted, along with a bigger-diameter (64mm) throttle body, a lightened



**'I CANNOT THINK OF MANY CARS THAT KEEP A DRIVER'S LIMBS SO CONSTANTLY BUSY. IT'S COMPELLING ENTERTAINMENT'**



balanced flywheel, race-grade spark plugs and a full baffled sump. A limited-slip differential and close-ratio six-speed gearbox complete the drivetrain package.

The resulting machine is about as intense as something with number plates gets. Below 2000rpm, the motor is sleepier than Ken Clarke on Budget Day. It rouses a little at 3500rpm, then makes like an angry bee above 5500rpm. There are two cars here: something to tootle in below that point, and a raging mentalist above it. Anyone who buys it for the former activity should be incarcerated.

From 5500rpm to the 8600rpm limiter, the Mugen Atom flies. Induction noise is intense, wind buffeting is intense, your purchase on the wheel is intense. I cannot think of many cars that keep a driver's limbs so constantly busy. There's decent traction, but with the balance on this test car set to a reasonable (and very enjoyable) amount of oversteer, you are constantly adding



corrections, then reaching left for another gear, then catching another slide, then heeling and toeing for a braking zone. It's compelling entertainment – the type any car enthusiast should crave.

I don't doubt that there are faster ways of getting around a circuit, but this is the most sorted track Atom by far, with an infinite amount of suspension adjustment and very good levels of mechanical grip. It also has a much more natural torque-to-traction relationship than the supercharged versions. It still suffers from having so little weight at the front, though, so it takes time to find the ideal brake effort.

Of course, away from the track, you still have the ultimate fun car: everything exposed and lovingly finished. There will only be ten Mugen Atoms, with red chassis and the same trick dash as the V8. Driving doesn't come much more intense, or enjoyable.

**Chris Harris**



Top left: red chassis and white magnesium wheels mark out the Mugen Atom. Above left: brake pedal links to lightweight Alcon calipers. Above: LCD screen from Atom V8. Right: dash-mounted brake bias adjuster



**EVO RATING**



- + Perfect engine for the Atom chassis
- Rather pricey; only ten being made

# CATERHAM 7 SUPERSPORT

■ NEW MODEL ■ MINIMALIST SPEC ■ 140BHP 1.6-LITRE ENGINE  
 ■ RACE CAR-INFLUENCED SUSPENSION ■ JUST £19,995 IN KIT FORM

**V**ariations on a theme. Over the years there have been countless Caterham 7 models with incalculable combinations of engines, gearboxes, suspension and trim, so news of yet another slipping into the line-up might not cause many ripples. But this one should, for the Supersport is reminiscent of one of the very best permutations: the original Superlight from the mid-'90s, a 138bhp K-series-powered car that was so minimalist the weight of each of the options was listed alongside the price – and that included paint.

This modern interpretation is fitted with a 1.6-litre Ford Sigma engine, tuned to produce a raucous 140bhp that's transmitted to the tarmac via a 'sprint ratio' five-speed gearbox and a limited-slip differential. The suspension benefits from knowledge gained from the Supersport race series cars, meaning uprated springs, race dampers and stiffer anti-roll bars

## SPECIFICATION

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1595cc CO2 n/a  
 Power 140bhp @ 6900rpm Torque 120lb ft @ 5790rpm  
 0-60mph 4.9sec (claimed) Top speed 120mph (claimed)  
 Price £22,995 (factory built) On sale Now

than you'll find on the Roadsport range.

In terms of trim you get composite race seats, four-point harnesses and a flies-in-your-face aeroscreen. But the best bit is the price – all-in this car costs £19,995 if you build it yourself, £3K more if you get the factory to do it for you, making it one of the cheapest ways to experience Caterham motoring.

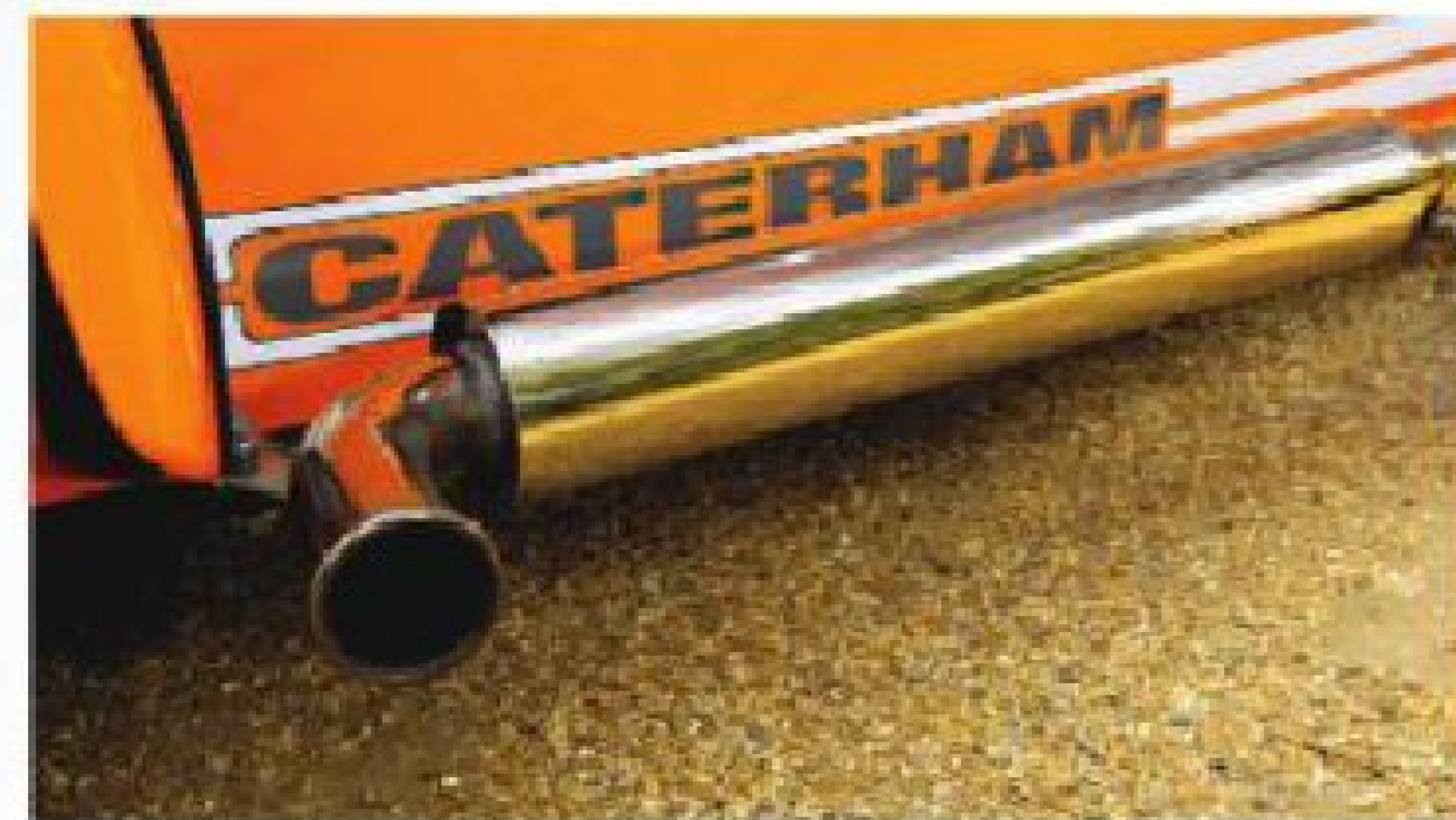
The only extras on our test car are the paint and the stripes (which obviously add a few hundred grams to the 520kg that makes up the rest of it). The result is a car that reads your mind. It reacts so fast to any input you'll barely be aware that you've physically requested it to alter course, and you're so connected to the intimacies of the tarmac you can place the Supersport anywhere

with absolute precision. It's very firm – over particularly bumpy roads it can hop and skip a little – but it's worth it for the payback. After all, if you're going to get something as focused as a Caterham, it seems churlish to sacrifice tactility and precision for a little comfort.

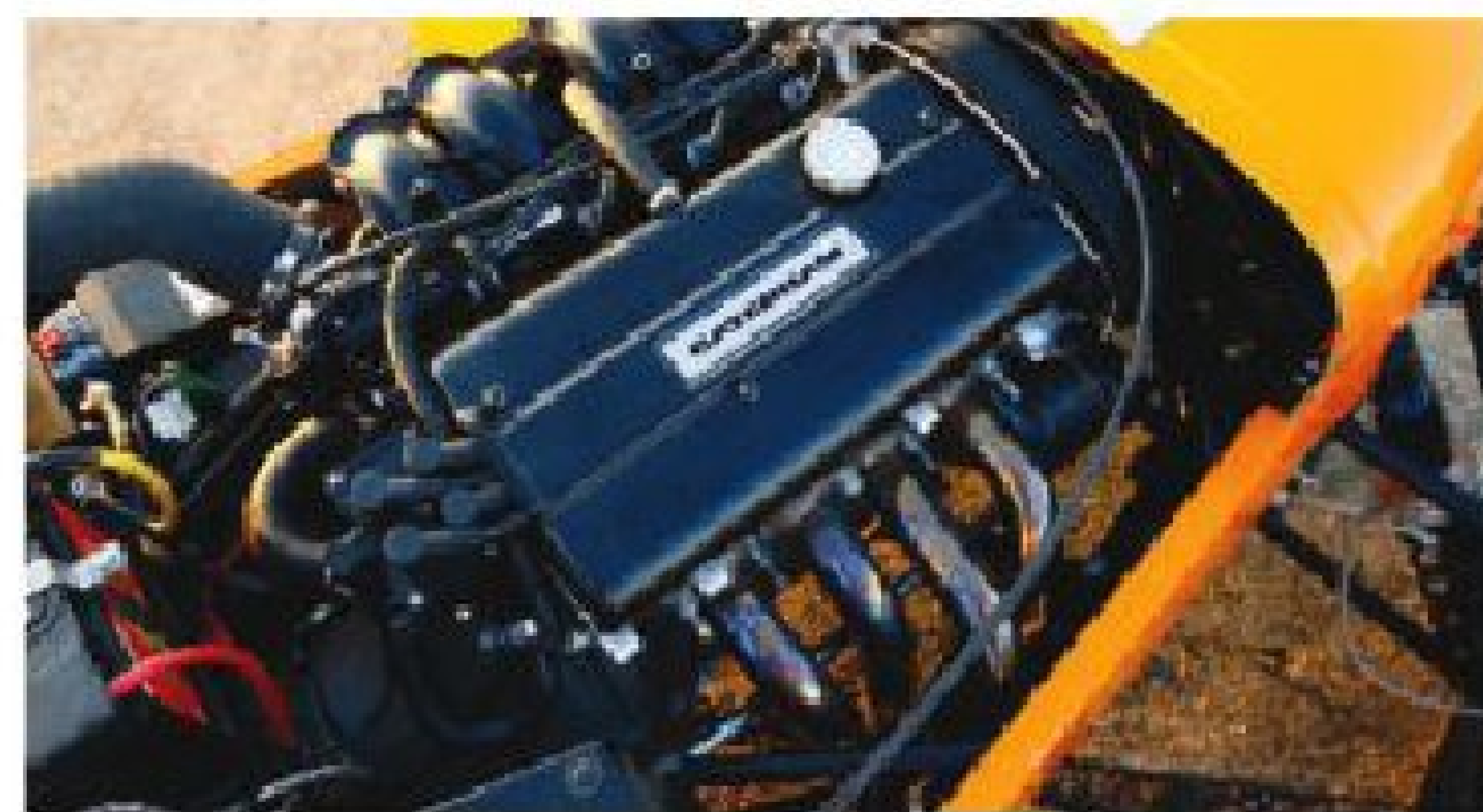
The engine's power is a perfect match for the chassis. More is obviously hilarious in something so small, but power begins to dictate proceedings. Here you still have enough for the acceleration to feel strong (0-60mph is sub 5sec) and plenty to be able to adjust your cornering angle with your right foot and some help from the LSD. Our test car had a smidge too much turn-in understeer for our tastes, but Caterham has promised to add a little pointiness to customer cars.

The Supersport comes with two exhaust silencer options: a trackday-friendly regular-looking can, or a skinnier, almost straight-through version that makes the sound rip like a mk1 Escort rally car. Our advice would be to get both, as it takes no more than a couple of





Left: noisier silencer emits some tremendous sounds, but might fall foul of trackday noise limits. Below: 1.6-litre Ford engine benefits from a lightweight flywheel



minutes to swap them over and you then get the best of both worlds.

But regardless of exhaust, the keenly priced Supersport makes a perfect first step into Seven ownership. In many respects, it's all the Caterham you need.

Roger Green

#### EVO RATING



- + A whole lot of entertainment for £20K
- You get wet when it rains

**'IT REACTS SO FAST YOU'LL BARELY BE AWARE THAT YOU'VE PHYSICALLY REQUESTED IT TO ALTER COURSE'**

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## JAGUAR XF 2.2D

- FOUR-CYLINDER DIESEL
- 188BHP AND 332LB FT

#### SPECIFICATION

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 2179cc, turbodiesel CO2 149g/km  
 Power 188bhp @ 3500rpm Torque 332lb ft @ 2000rpm  
 0-62mph 8.5sec (claimed) Top speed 140mph (claimed)  
 Price £30,950 On sale September

**H**ow do you more than double sales of your handsome, desirable, not-German saloon? By making it available with a four-cylinder diesel engine and charging less money. Those are the engines that real buyers buy in their Audi A6s, BMW 5s and Mercedes E-classes, and the only surprise is how long it has taken Jaguar to offer one in the XF.

This gap is plugged as of September, when deliveries of the new XF 2.2D will begin. We've been driving a late prototype (hence the eye-bending disguise – you can see the newly facelifted XF in the Planet Evo section), and we're impressed.

The engine is the recently improved Ford/PSA unit already seen in the Mondeo/S-Max/Galaxy and the Peugeot 508 GT. Here it has 188bhp and 332lb ft, and has been modified for longitudinal mounting and rear-drive with 'active' engine mounts, a new sump, lots of soundproofing and an eight-speed ZF automatic gearbox.

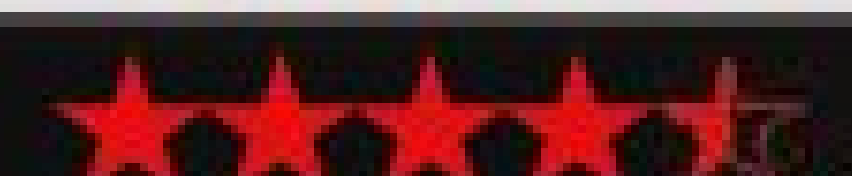
So, can an XF cope with the sound of a four-cylinder diesel and keep its dignity intact? It can. From the outside, with engine idling, you're aware of dieselsness but it's quiet and cultured. From the inside, there's just a distant, deep hum with no detectable percussiveness. And the engine pulls with easy vigour, making the XF seem lighter than it is. Eighth gear gives almost absurdly relaxed cruising with just 1600rpm showing at 70mph, helping towards the low 149g/km CO2 figure, and the gearbox shifts smoothly and quickly with an alert manual mode.

The lighter nose makes the already sweet-handling XF more instantly agile; in fact it feels the smallest and handiest of all XF's. And it rides beautifully, of course. What's not to like? Nothing.

John Simister



#### EVO RATING



- + Fewer cylinders fail to spoil XF experience
- All those gears can confuse in manual mode



## ROLLS-ROYCE PHANTOM EE

■ BATTERY-POWERED ■ 388BHP AND 590LB FT ■ CONCEPT ONLY... FOR NOW

**T**

wo Rolls-Royce Phantoms are swishing along the Sussex roads near their Goodwood birthplace. Silence, in this case, is relative. I'm driving the regular V12 article, and

the only evidence of mechanical activity comes when I floor the throttle and try to sink the power reserve meter to zero. Then there's the distant hum of 12 cylinders at work, enough to tell you there's a heart beating ahead.

Thing is, the pale blue Phantom in front has just pulled away from us, despite my throttle-flooring. True, we'd catch up again if the road was clear and limit-free, because the blue car stabilises at 'just' 100mph. We'd also get quite a lot further than the 125 miles it manages if driven with decorum and no air-con. But there's no doubting the blue car's accelerative powers.

Now I'm driving it, the car called Project 102EX or Phantom Experimental Electric. Work on it began a year ago, to see if the idea was feasible and to gain knowledge for possible future hybrid and fuel-cell projects. And if the electric Phantom does work, it could become a production car suitable for local posh-hotel transport or Lord Sugar's commute.

### SPECIFICATION

Engine Twin electric motors CO2 193g/km 'well-to-wheel' on UK electricity Power 388bhp @ n/a rpm Torque 590lb ft @ n/a rpm 0-60mph sub-8sec (claimed) Top speed 100mph (limited) Price TBA On sale In the future

It has a pair of electric motors, each of 194bhp and 295lb ft, giving totals 65bhp down and 59lb ft up on the V12 car. These motors are mounted just ahead of the rear wheels, which they jointly drive via a differential. The 71kWh battery pack is under the bonnet and made up of 96 lithium-ion cells, constituting the biggest battery pack yet seen in a modern road car. A full recharge takes eight hours with a three-phase power supply, or an inconvenient 24 hours with a regular single-phase supply.

However, you don't have to plug the Phantom in: there's an induction-charging plate underneath, which you align with a similar plate on your garage floor. Electrons can then flow from floor to Phantom with a surprising 92 per cent efficiency. And no, it won't fry your cat if the creature crawls under the car.

There has been little BMW input with this project. Instead, Rolls-Royce's UK-based engineers devised the parameters, and Lotus created the conversion. It works extremely well.



Above: trio of charging packs sits above the batteries

I put my foot down and 102EX surges forward with breathtaking silence and pace. The figures suggest a slightly slower 0-60mph time than the petrol car, but out on the road it has a better getaway with even less effort. Up front you hear only distant wind and tyre noise; in the back there's a very slight motor whine.

In 102EX the power reserve meter takes on the new role of power consumption meter, also showing when energy is put back into the system when slowing or braking. The needle moves in instant, precise little jerks, which the engineers think wrong for a Rolls-Royce but are actually extremely informative.

There are no suspension changes, so the extra 200kg of mass has firmed the air suspension's ride, which is now merely excellent. The steering is crisper, too, adding to the surrealism of guiding 2.7 tonnes of silent behemoth with such ease. The quietest Rolls-Royce ever is also one of the most entertaining to drive. Amazing.

John Simister



Above: battery symbol flashes blue during inductive charging. Right: cabin gets unique aluminised foil weave trim



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### EVO RATING



- Seldom is silence so eloquent
- Short range means no grand tours





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**Ultraleggera HLT**

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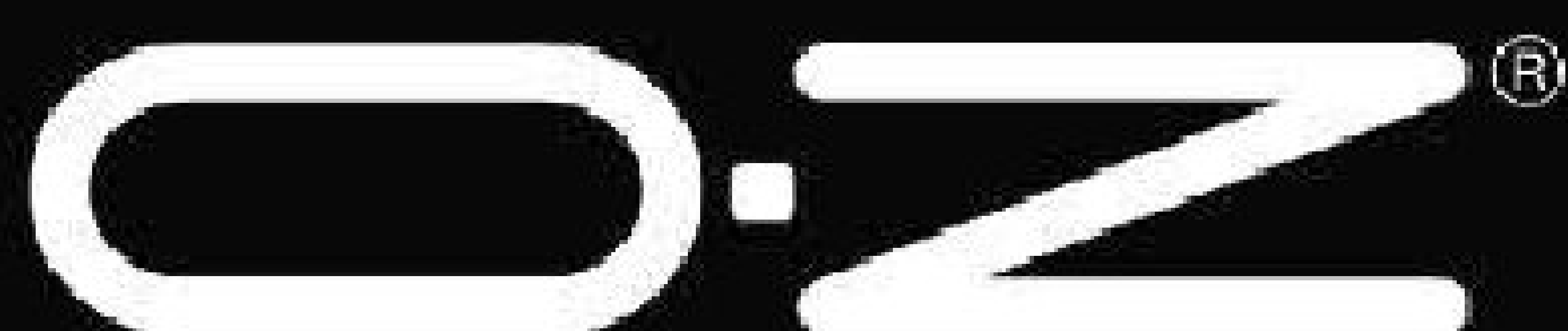


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# DODGE CHALLENGER SRT8 392

■ NEW 470BHP 6.4-LITRE V8 ■ TWEAKED SUSPENSION AND TRANSMISSION ■ FRIES TYRES AT WILL



Everything about the SRT8 is on an epic scale, from its bodywork to its 6.4-litre V8 to the noise it makes

# T

he key part of the latest Dodge Challenger's title is '392', as in cubic inches – or 6.4 litres in engine-speak that the rest of the world understands.

In previous SRT8s, the 6.1-litre engine was strong on horsepower but relatively weak on mid-range torque, so Dodge has redressed that with a 0.9mm wider bore and a 3.6mm longer stroke, a new intake manifold and variable cam timing. The upshot is 470bhp and 470lb ft of torque, up from 425bhp and 420lb ft. More tellingly, there's an additional 90lb ft at 2900rpm.

While they were at it, the engineers at Dodge's Street and Racing Technology division made a bunch of other changes. The clutch was upgraded and throws for the six-speed manual gearbox were shortened. (Shockingly,

## SPECIFICATION

Engine V8, 6424cc CO2 n/a  
Power 470bhp @ 6000rpm Torque 470lb ft @ 4200rpm  
0-60mph 4.8sec (claimed) Top speed 180mph+ (claimed)  
Price c£27,700 (in the US) On sale Now, in the US

50 per cent of Challenger SRT8s are sold with manuals, putting to bed the idea that Americans can't change gear of their own volition.) New Bilstein dampers, larger anti-roll bars and a quicker steering ratio were among changes made to the SRT8's chassis.

Dodge's large retro-style coupe doesn't change much externally, gaining a bigger front splitter and some unobtrusive 392 Hemi badges. The interior gets a smaller-diameter steering wheel and new instrument graphics. The garish blue-and-white seats in the Inaugural Edition car we drove are an outbreak of bad taste from somewhere in the 1980s.

Luckily, the Challenger SRT8 392 doesn't drive like an American car from that era. The new engine sounds magnificent, with a barely-legal growl as the revs climb to the 6400rpm red line. Mind you, there's so much mid-range torque that high revs aren't really needed for rapid transit. Using the onboard GPS system, we got a 0-60mph time of 4.8 seconds, which is quick but not startling, and about three-tenths faster than the old car's time. Managing wheelspin at launch was about as easy as bathing a cat. Dodge claims a 180mph top

speed, but we chickened out at around 130.

The gearchange is still a little notchy, but the new linkage has much shorter throws for more satisfactory shifting. The big Brembos stop the 1891kg coupe with authority, too. All that weight means that the Challenger lacks the back-road poise and quickness of a BMW M3, for example, but it's actually pretty well mannered: initial understeer can be dialled out with throttle to give a neutral balance in fast corners. In second-gear bends, the right pedal re-vectors the car in the requisite rubber-burning, tail-out manner. The revised steering is more accurate and lively than before, although it's not the most talkative around, while the ride is pretty firm around town.

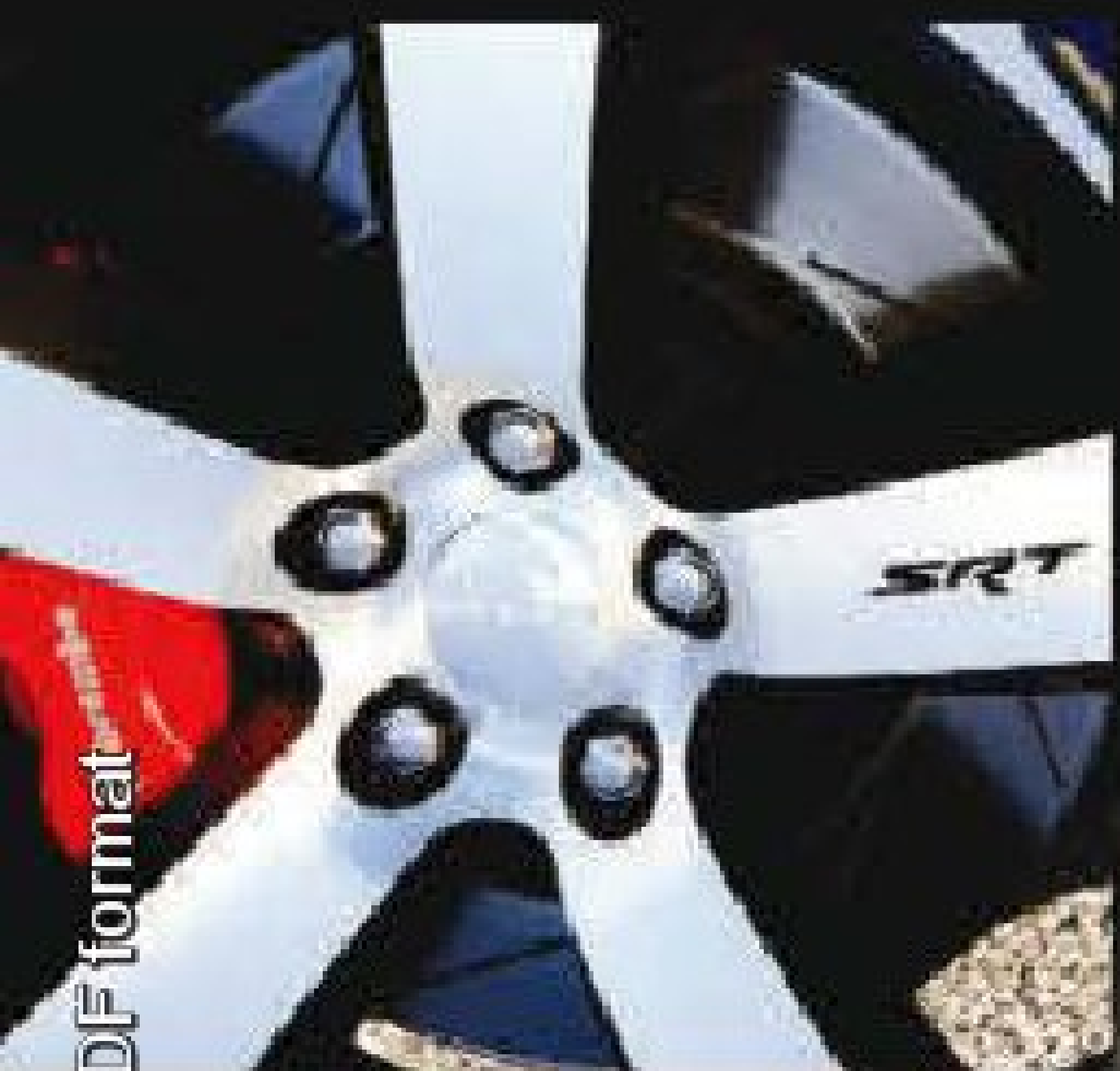
In the States, the Challenger SRT8 392 starts at \$44,380 (about £27,700). Sadly, it'll only come to the UK as a 'grey' import, and will undoubtedly cost rather more.

Mark Gillies

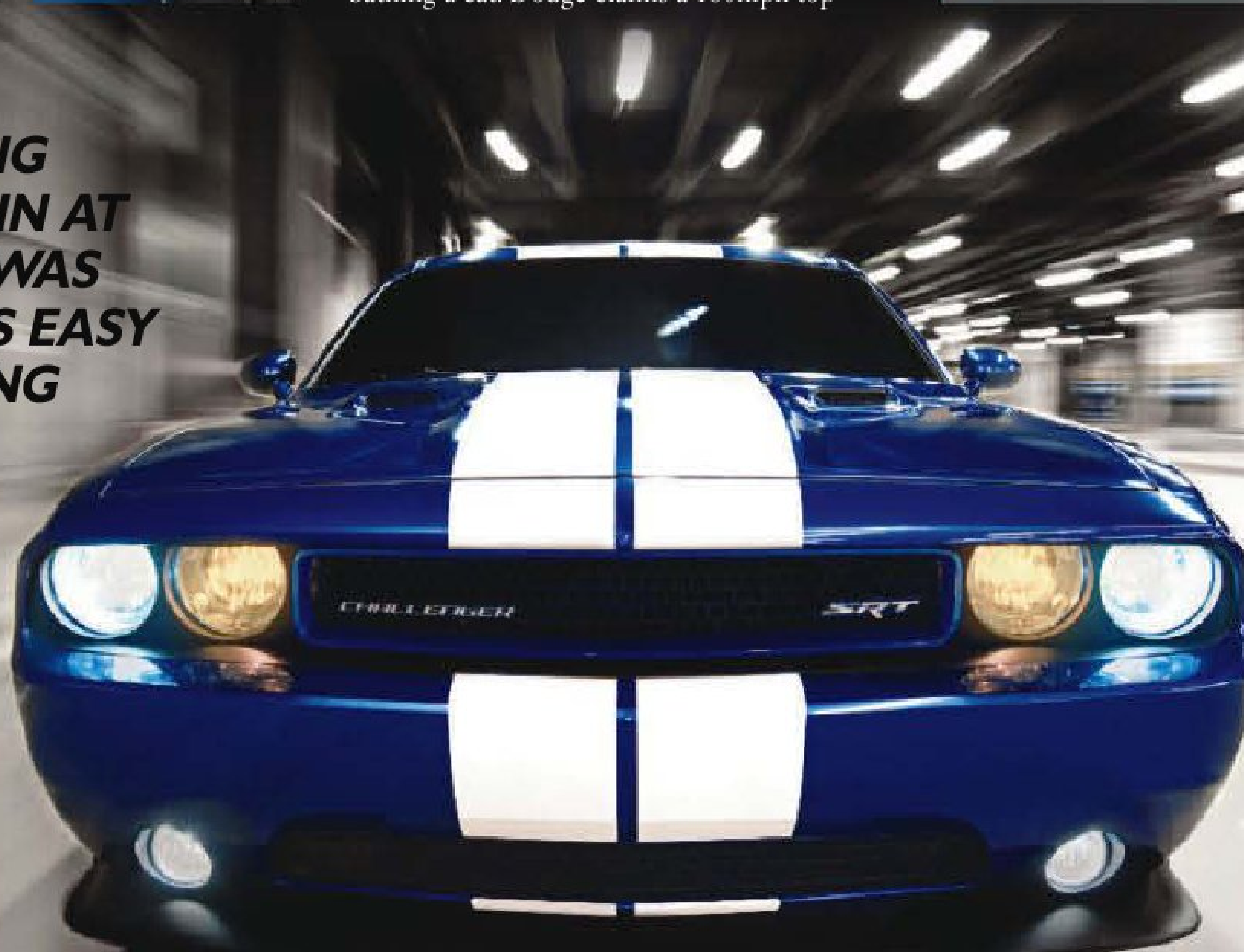
## EVO RATING



- + NASCAR-style soundtrack (and grunt)
- Size and weight. Grey import only for UK



**'MANAGING WHEELSPIN AT LAUNCH WAS ABOUT AS EASY AS BATHING A CAT'**

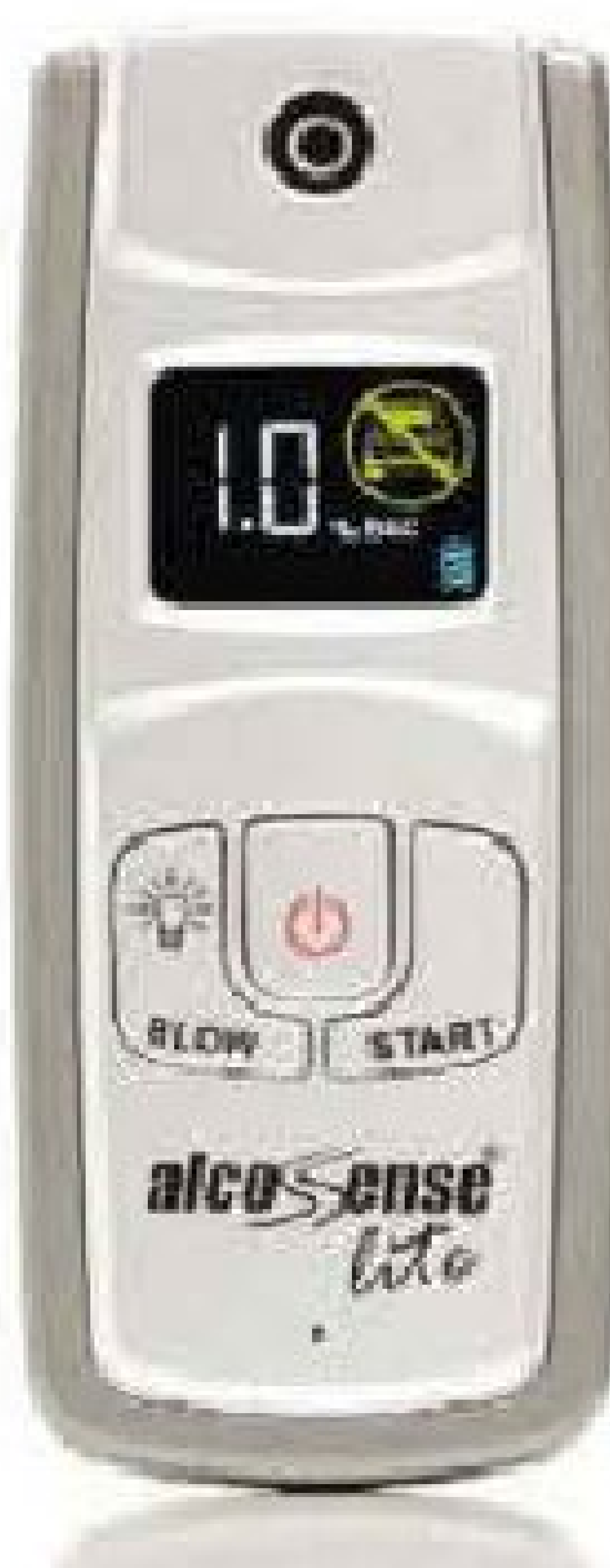




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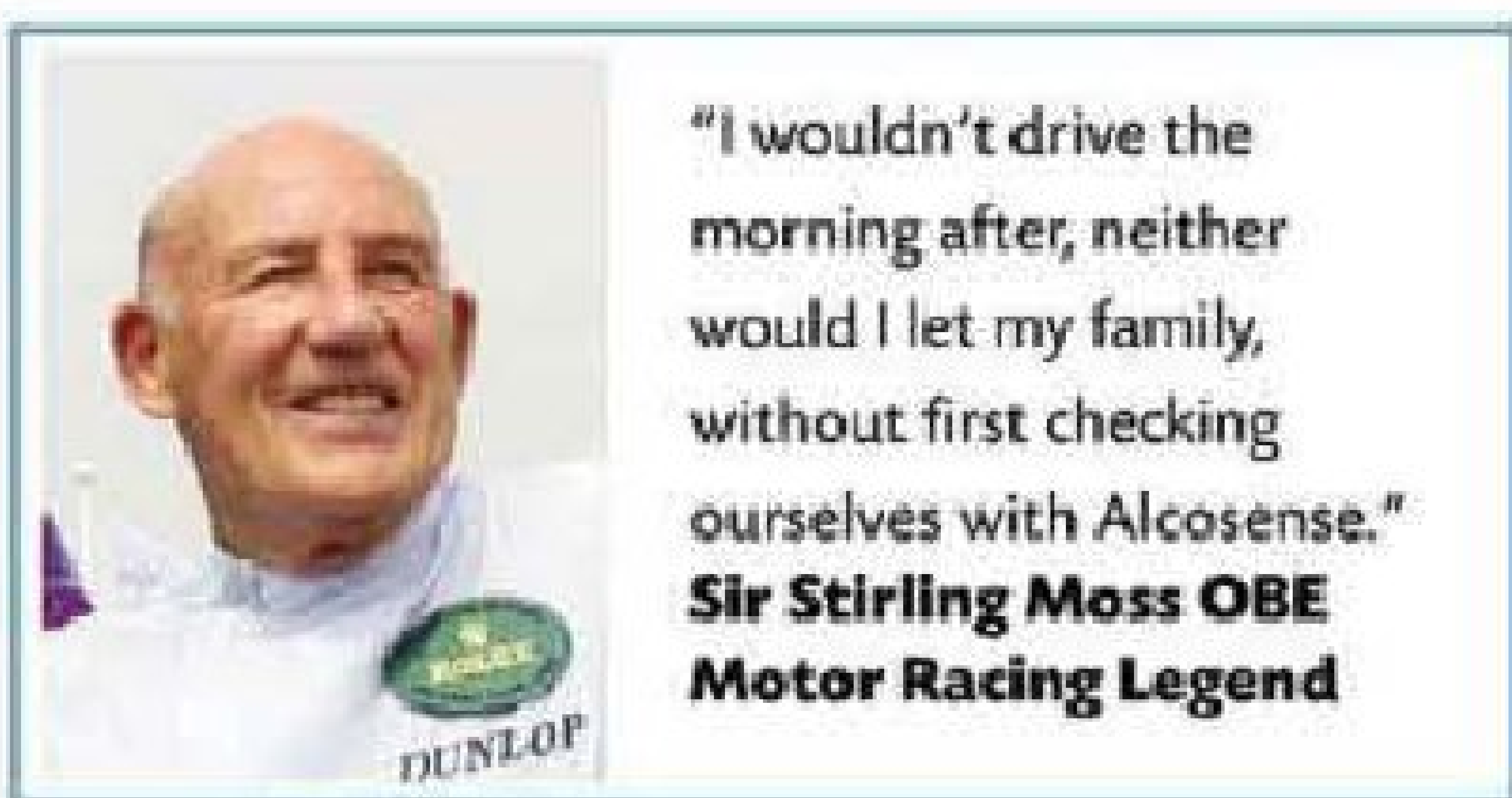


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## HYUNDAI VELOSTER

- FASTBACK BODY ■ ASYMMETRIC EXTERIOR DESIGN
- WILLING CHASSIS ■ LACKLUSTRE 138BHP ENGINE

**T**

his is a car like no other. Its rivals are as diverse as a Renault Mégane Coupé and a rather squarer Mini Clubman. That's because Hyundai's Veloster has a low, fastback tail but two doors on one side and one on the other.

Unlike the Mini estate, the two-doored side will be on the left for right-hand-drive cars. It's a neat concept; the driver always gets to see the racy side while rear passengers can enter with dignity intact. Once they are in, they will find their heads perilously near the roof if over about 5ft 6in, but legroom is good.

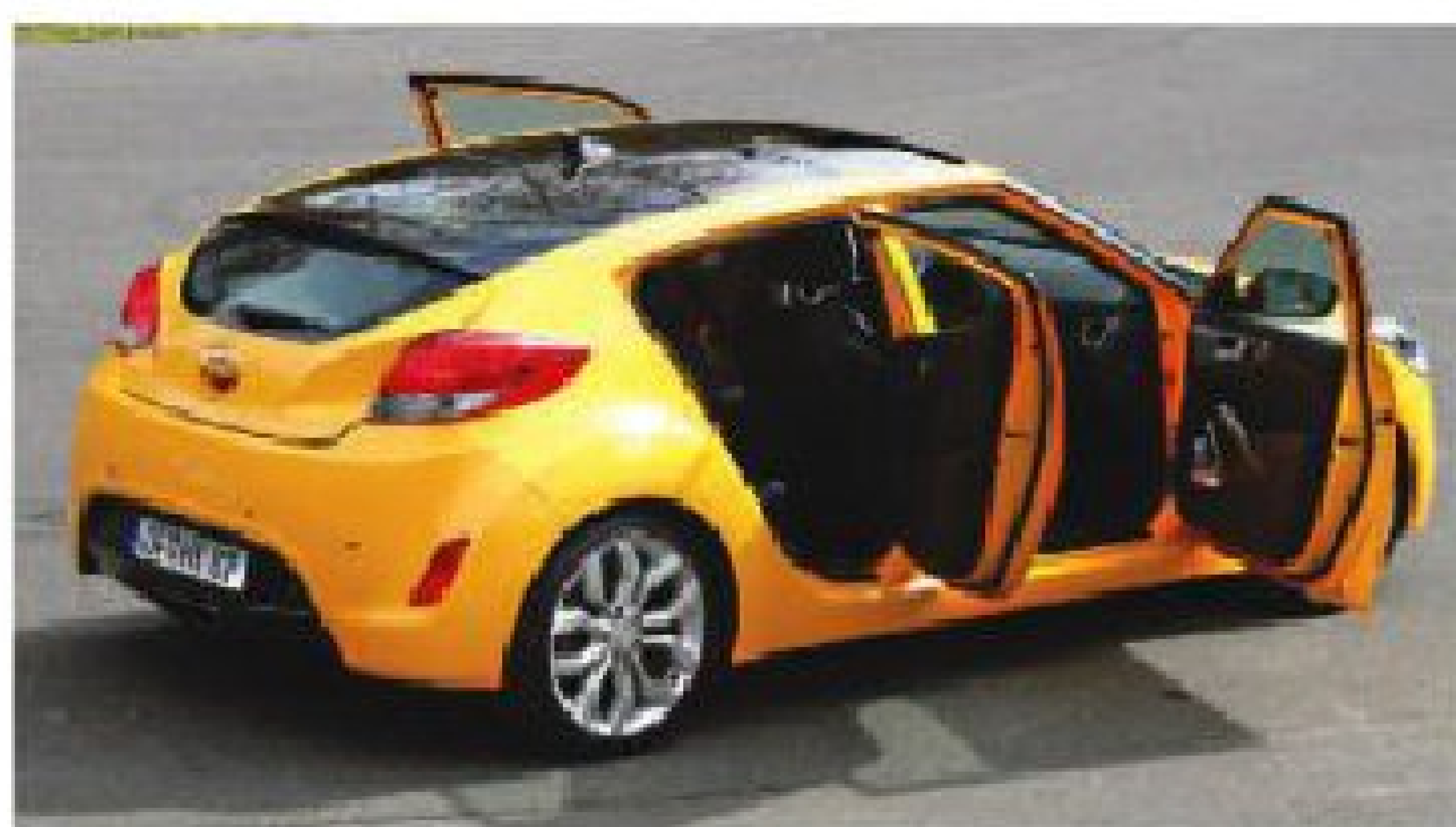
You won't confuse the Veloster with anything else. Beyond the door-count it has a bold, trapezoidal front grille, ample arches and a tailgate whose window cuts far into the glass, tiltable roof. A flattened pair of central tailpipes expels spent gases from a new 138bhp, 1.6-litre petrol engine. The standard transmission is a six-speed manual, as in the prototype we drove. A double-clutcher will be optional shortly after the UK launch in November.

You sit low behind a dramatic-looking dash whose centre stack resembles Darth Vader's mask. There's much fake aluminium detailing but the plastics are mainly yielding to the touch. First impressions on the move are of an easy, precise gearchange, similarly precise steering with a more natural feel than some other electric systems, and an engine lacking in thrust at the lower end of the range. You have to work it hard, and still it feels a bit flat.

What the Veloster badly needs is an additional turbo version of this engine. That would put it in line with the thinking of most major European manufacturers and give the

### SPECIFICATION

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1591cc CO2 132g/km (with DCT)  
 Power 138bhp @ 6300rpm Torque 123lb ft @ 4850rpm  
 0-62mph 9.2sec (est) Top speed 120mph (est)  
 Price c£18,000 (est) On sale November



Top: Veloster was styled in California. Above: third door is on the 'right' side. Below: heavily styled dash suits the car, but metal-look details are really plastic



Veloster the pace to match the projected image. Otherwise there's a danger that the car's introduction to Europe will go off with a whimper instead of a bang.

That would be a shame, because otherwise the Veloster shows promise. It handles keenly with enough line-tightening on lift-off to make it fun, and the firm ride doesn't degenerate into choppiness. There's work to do on the suspension bushings, though; our test car thumped and banged over sharp breaks in the road surface and transmitted much road noise. The trick will be to eradicate these snags and keep the keenness.

John Simister

## RANGE ROVER EVOQUE Si4

- EXCELLENT PACKAGING
- IMPRESSIVE DYNAMICS

### SPECIFICATION

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1999cc turbo CO2 199g/km  
 Max power 237bhp @ n/a rpm Max torque 251lb ft @ n/a rpm  
 0-60mph 7.1sec (claimed) Top speed 135mph (claimed)  
 Price £38,995 On sale September



It could have been a fatally compromised car, the Evoque. Retaining the sporty, compact, coupe-like styling of the LRX concept could have scuppered the packaging, and deciding to endow the Evoque with proper off-road ability *and* car-like on-road dynamics could have resulted in it being no good at either. But it doesn't take long in the company of this distinctive – and from some angles handsome – urban SUV to discover that it delivers everywhere.

It's like a four-wheel Tardis, offering a remarkable amount of space inside; even the coupe-like three-door is roomy in the back for six-footers, and it can be made even airier with the optional, full-length glass roof. Permutations of trim, equipment and mechanicals run to hundreds of thousands.

We drove the top-of-the-range 'Dynamic' with the 237bhp turbo petrol engine, which comes solely with a six-speed auto; the 187 and 149bhp turbodiesels can be had with a manual. Performance is solid – 0-60mph in a believable 7.1sec – and it gives the 19in Conti CrossContacts a good workout. The electric power steering is convincingly natural and there's none of the suspension squidge that betrays some off-road-competent 4x4s. As standard, top models get MagneRide continuously adjustable damping – a first on an off-roader – and although there is appreciable roll and pitch, the ride is quite firm and the handling remarkably poised and biddable.

On sale in September, priced from £28,700 to £44,300, the Evoque looks like a winner. The even more agile front-drive models arrive early next year.

John Barker

### EVO RATING

- ★ Dynamics, space, four-wheel-drive ability
- ★ No manual option with petrol engine

### EVO RATING

- ★ Clever packaging, keen handling
- ★ Flat-feeling engine, crashy ride



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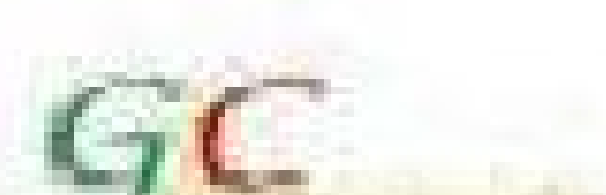
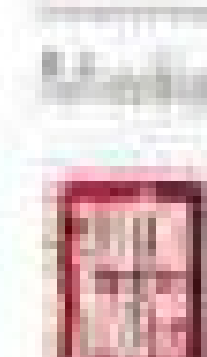
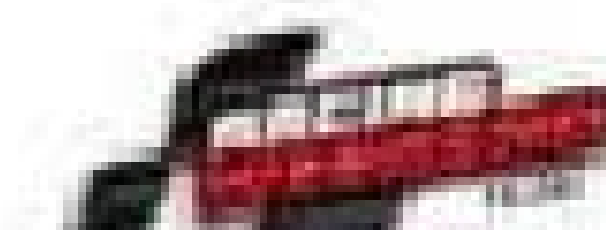


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# RADICAL SR3 SL

■ ROAD-LEGAL SR3 ■ 2-LITRE TURBO ENGINE FROM NEXT FOCUS ST ■ 300BHP ■ SEQUENTIAL GEARBOX

**T**

his isn't the first road-legal Radical. We've seen SR3s converted for highway use before. However, this SL (Street Legal) is the first specifically designed to wear a tax disc.

It may not look particularly different to the rest of the SR3 range, but underneath the multi-coloured 'art car' bodywork sits a turbocharged 2-litre Ford EcoBoost engine, the one that will be powering the new Focus ST later in the year. Final tweaks to the remapping by ECU specialist Life Racing are still ongoing, but **evo** has been granted an exclusive run – on track and the road – in a pre-production SL to get an early taste of what it's all about.

'For a long time now we've been getting requests from our European customers for a Euro 5, fully type-approved car,' says Radical MD Phil Abbott. Confirming this ready-made audience, the company already has orders for over 20 SLs, all adding to a busy workload for the factory, which is enjoying something of a boom at the moment.

This SL is putting out 260bhp, but final versions will produce 300bhp, which will be



## SPECIFICATION

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 2000cc, turbo CO2 n/a  
Power 300bhp @ n/a pm Torque 340lb ft @ n/a rpm  
0-60mph 3.0sec (est) Top speed 165mph (est)  
Price £81,300 On sale Now

plenty for a car tipping the scales at 675kg. In fact, ensuring that the torque is delivered in a smooth flow is where all the engine work is currently being concentrated, as during early tests it was lighting up the rear tyres everywhere. It is much more composed now, though – even on wet roads I have no problem at all. Unsurprisingly, there's plenty of pace wherever you are in the rev-range, but you really need earplugs as the whines and whistles are so loud it feels like your head is actually inside the turbine. Weirdly, from the side of the road it makes hardly any noise at all.

At least as impressive as the engine is the paddleshift system, which is as fast as that on any other road car I've ever driven and incredibly smooth too. You seamlessly flick your way up and down the six-speed sequential Quaife transaxle, only using the clutch to pull away. It's superb, and the damping is well sorted too. The Intrax set-up would easily allow you to be the king of a trackday – the SL corners hard and flat in the same way as Radical's racers. The



SL can be used to nip to the shops (above) or a trackday (bottom). Above left: ST engine will produce 300bhp. Below left: interior lacks creature comforts

overall grip levels are obviously slightly lower, but only slightly, and the balance is much the same, while on the road it manages to pull off the same trick as a GT3 RS, namely a stiff set-up, but with enough composure and compliance to soak up bumps and not crash, jar or have a fixation with cambers. It's very neat.

So is it a viable road machine? In the same way as a Caterham that doesn't have a roof, or an Ariel Atom or a KTM X-Bow, yes. You do need a helmet for anything other than short drives and you will get wet in the rain, but if you want a trackday car that you can drive to the track and have fun with in the summer, then this really does fit the bill. Further down the line, it's also likely to form the basis of a coupe, and on this evidence that really should be something.

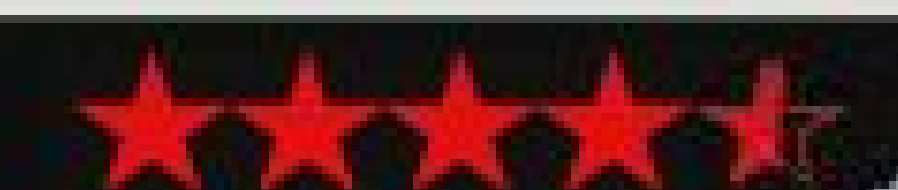
Roger Green



**'THE SET-UP WOULD EASILY ALLOW YOU TO BE KING OF A TRACKDAY'**



## EVO RATING



- + Incredible performance on road or track
- Pricy, and you'll need to be in the mood



## SUPERCHIPS MÉGANE 250 CUP

■ 302BHP UPGRADE ■ STANDARD HANDLING UNFLUSTERED ■ £455

**W**

hen it comes to ultimate hot hatches, Ford and Renault's RS brands reign supreme. Fans of the former understandably love the 300bhp Focus for its raw power and occasionally wayward handling, while supporters of the latter willingly trade the Ford's punch for the Mégane's sensational chassis. Who's right? Both, I guess, although personally I prefer the Renault's pin-sharp agility, strong traction and on-track ability. That's not to say I wouldn't like the Ford's muscle to go with it, though...

A few months back we tried K-Tec Racing's comprehensively modified 290bhp 250 Cup (evo 153) and, while very exciting, it sacrificed too much of the standard car's refinement and subtlety. Now Superchips has released a remap that produces peaks of 302bhp and 288lb ft (increases of 55bhp and 37lb ft over Renault's figures for the

Left: Renault's optional Recaro seats provide suitably enhanced support. Below: needles now sweep through their arcs quicker than before

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### SPECIFICATION

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc, turbo CO2 n/a  
 Power 302bhp @ 6100rpm Torque 288lb ft @ 5000rpm  
 0-60mph 5.9sec (est) Top speed 160mph (est)  
 Conversion price £455 On sale Now (www.superchips.co.uk)

standard car) yet promises to retain a completely OE feel. And all for £455, fitted.

The performance uplift is significant and hugely addictive. You feel the increased muscle right from the off and there's simply more meat everywhere in the power and torque curves, with the bulk of the torque coming on strong from 3000rpm. Maximum power arrives at 6100rpm – 600rpm later than standard – so the top-end feels much stronger too.

Unlike some remaps, there are no steps, hollows or surges in the delivery, and the throttle response remains linear, so the Superchips car is as sweet and smooth as the regular one, only much quicker in any gear at any revs.

These are big gains, and they really do transform the RS 250. Yes, it still gives best to the Focus for outright grunt (288lb ft vs 324) but at least now it's in the same ballpark. There's a fraction more torque-steer, but the Cup's standard limited-slip diff still finds plenty of traction and the handling is as precise, exploitable and entertaining as ever, so it'll still run rings around a Focus on a challenging road or race track.

At less than £500 it's hard to think of a more dramatic or cost-effective performance upgrade, especially as the end result is so discreet and factory-like. Indeed, I'd go so far as to say this is how the RS250 should be as standard. Over to you, Renault...

**Richard Meaden**

### evo RATING



- ➕ Serious power and torque gains
- ➖ Very slight increase in torque-steer

## RENAULT LAGUNA MONACO GP

- SPECIAL EDITION
- 178BHP, 295LB FT DIESEL
- FOUR-WHEEL STEERING

### SPECIFICATION

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1995cc, turbodiesel CO2 150g/km  
 Max power 178bhp @ 3750rpm Max torque 295lb ft @ 2000rpm  
 0-62mph 8.5sec (claimed) Top speed 139mph (claimed)  
 Price £23,805 On sale Now



**A**rare sight, the Laguna Coupe. It has apparently accounted for a quarter of Laguna sales since its 2009 launch, but since total sales for the whole range barely top 3000 a year in the UK, that equates to a pretty small number.

It perhaps deserves to be bigger. While it's no out-and-out performance car, the torquey 2-litre dCi 180 turbodiesel fitted to this Monaco GP special edition provides brisk progress, the steering boasts BMW-like weight and the ride is compliant. Turn in is keen, too, helped by the 4Control four-wheel steering. The car can feel more than its 1539kg at times, but the system helps the tail round tighter bends and lessens the understeer that often results from a heavy diesel engine in a front-driven car.

But despite its name, the Monaco GP is unlikely to be driven on its doorhandles too often. It's more a plush rival to the Audi A5 than a sporty alternative to a TT. And this is where its strengths lie: space for four adults, a big boot and a plethora of standard kit make it a useable, good value car (49.5mpg combined, £5K less than a similarly powered A5) with pleasing dynamics and good looks. And rarity value...

**Stephen Dobie**



Monaco GP gets unique upholstery, a Bose stereo, rear parking sensors and a satnav as standard

### evo RATING



- ➕ Great looking, great value coupe
- ➖ But not a sports car





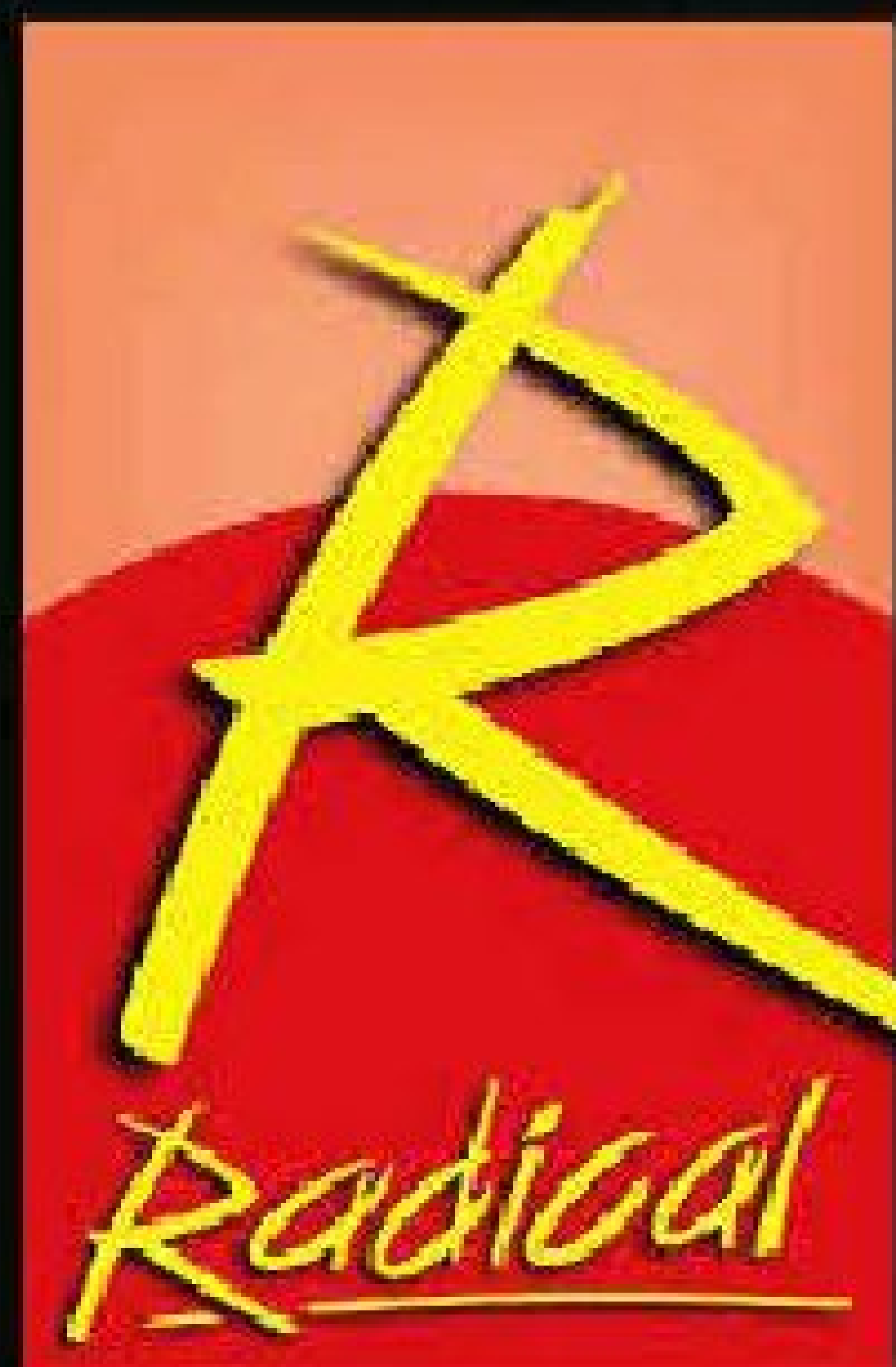
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## Letter of the Month

## The thrill of rear-wheel driving

Richard Porter is wrong (Petrolhead, evo 155). Front-wheel drive is wrong-wheel drive. FWD is an engineering method to save money and space. A costly driveshaft from engine to rear wheels is avoided, and space is saved by not needing a transmission tunnel. You end up with a better packaged, safer if duller-handling car for most, and a cheaper car to build and sell. Not the stuff of evo greatness.

That's not to say front-wheel-drive cars do not have their place – they do, but they are merely appliances to get you from A to B. Renaultsport

'Front-wheel drive is wrong-wheel drive'

hatchbacks and Integras buck the trend, but the way a well-sorted BMW, Merc or Jag will flow along a road gives a feel of neutrality that a hot hatch can never match, never mind the wet roundabout moments that can be savoured and enjoyed.

A question was posed: Renault Clio Cup or BMW 116d? For me the Beemer would win, not only on a B-road for uncorrupted steering but also for day-to-day costs. We know which will lap Bedford quicker, but I suspect a 1-series would have a depth of feel even a Clio Trophy couldn't hold a candle too if you delved deeper into its RWD dynamic.

All of this is why you'll never see a front-wheel-drive supercar or proper FWD sports car. RWD cars are simply better. End of.

**Stephen Taylor**



Unlike our own Richard Porter, reader Stephen Taylor believes a rear-wheel-drive car will always make for a more satisfying driving experience

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Andrew Fearon reckons we missed the point of Audi's RS3 when we compared it with a tuned Impreza and Focus RS



## Quattro qualities

I read with some interest your story on the RS3, the (non-standard) Ford and Subaru, and the awesome Enzo (evo 156). I found the article somewhat amusing and rather comforting.

I should be one of the first to take delivery of a new RS3 in June as a runaround for my wife (and occasionally me). The car sounds perfect for what she wants, I want and indeed most people want, and I think you need to recognise that these cars are for getting from A to B in comfort, at speed and within a quality environment. Neither the Subaru or the Ford could match the Audi for this, and therefore your article is flawed.

I own a number of other cars – an M3 convertible, which is useless in the snow, but the folding hard-top makes

up for it in the summer; a 355 GTS, which reminds me of what cars used to be like, and a 458, which I've had for three months and is just unbelievable, but only in the dry! We also have a Q7, but that's just a big people-carrier.

My point is that each of these cars has a purpose and the purpose of the RS3 is not to thrill at the limit – few people can handle the limit, particularly on public roads – it's to do what you said it does very well in your article. For that reason, and the fact that all 500 UK cars are pre-sold and hence residuals will be better than the Subaru or Ford, I am very pleased.

**Andrew Fearon**

## Hyper or just hype?

When I bought issue 156 of evo I was intrigued by the cover story. It seemed

such a ludicrous comparison to make between hypercar and 'hyper' hatch. I fully expected to read about how the three hatches were in some way comparable to the Enzo, even in raw pace, but they weren't at all. However nice it was to see a £900,000 Ferrari being thrown around with the best 'hyper' hatches in production, the conclusion was an obvious one. Three £40,000 hatchbacks are no match for (slightly dated) engineering perfection. Enzo killers? Not even close.

**Alex Duniec**

## Car bores

So Chris Harris thinks the McLaren MP4-12C may be too perfect and flawless for its own good (evo 155).

I imagine McLaren's engineers and executives will probably be burning with frustration. Here they are, building arguably the most advanced supercar in the world, and what does that journalist do? Calls it too perfect, too competent, says it lacks the element of rubbishness that would create character and give it soul and perversely make it more desirable.

Imagine you're getting up at some ungodly hour for a B-road blast before all the traffic wakes up, or booking a holiday for a tour across the continent, or having your car

shipped to your favourite circuit for some exclusive laps. Does it really add to the experience that just when you need it, the car will not start? Or that after just one or two hot laps it needs serious TLC? Would it not be so much better if you could simply rely on the car in those special moments? Doesn't flawless just mean fantastic without any of that pleasure and pain stuff?

I drive a BMW 530 Touring. Well, I've got two kids, a dog and occasionally need to transport a surfboard, too, and I reckon a BMW straight-six is one of the sweetest engines my payslip allows; couple this with a very nice rear-wheel-drive chassis and I always believed I was on to a winner, a jack of all trades.

However, recently a certain feeling of boredom has crept up on me. And that's where the Chris Harris/McLaren connection comes into play. My car does everything I want it to, all the time, like clockwork. But it doesn't have any edges to rub myself against. It's just so perfect, I can't help starting to feel less passionate about it. It's more like daily transport than 'the ultimate driving machine'. Is that what's going to happen to McLaren MP4-12C owners? I would love to hear the views of some supercar owners...

**Jens Klingenstein**

### Mac attack

I write with more than a modicum of certainty that this letter will not be published in the hallowed pages of your illustrious magazine. However, I am unable to restrain the following rant against McLaren Automotive.

The design of the MP4-12C (sounds like the numerical code for an inexpensive all-in-one printer/copier for home office use) is soporific beyond imagination. If not for the (lovely) dihedral doors and the (hopelessly dated) early '90s horizontal vent slats, this 'supercar' would be nothing short of mind-shatteringly dull.

This is an unforgivable travesty for the engineers and craftspeople who invested so much toil to produce what will undoubtedly be a great drive.

Any of the current Aston Martin range is light years ahead in terms of painstakingly sculpted and sensuous shapes. A wide-bodied 911 has more road presence. By comparison, and with the exception of the sophomoric headlights, the Ferrari 458 is taut, voluptuous and enthralling in equal measure.

**Alan Hardy**

### McLaren sighting

I live and work in the Guildford area (spitting distance from McLaren HQ) so I've been lucky enough to see the 12C in the metal twice now. The second occasion, on a dreary Thursday morning, it was the orange 'RX60' that Chris Harris drove in the review and I must say it was fantastic. For a petrolhead, it was instant goosebump time – the sound (even stuck in traffic at idle), presence, colour, styling – everything about it was how you'd want it to be.

What people quickly forget is that a journalist must review a car against its competitors to give the reader an understanding of how it feels and drives



Is it dull or is it dramatic? McLaren's MP4-12C continues to divide opinion

should they be lucky enough to have £160K+ in the bank. But for people like me, and I'd guess 90 per cent of readers, a supercar like that is a rare, dramatic and special machine.

**Matt Bowyer-Crombie**

### Biter bit

I note that Chris Harris 'still has some reservations' about the new McLaren. I still have some reservations about Chris Harris.

**Ned Lambton, Northumberland**

### Jaguar E-hype?

As a 23-year-old, I'm a bit too young to have got caught up in the E-type hype. If only I'd been born 30 years earlier, things might have been different. But as it is, it doesn't really interest me a great deal. For this reason I almost flicked past your feature on the E-type's 50th birthday (evo 155), but the photos drew me in. I just loved the way it looked as though someone had taken a 21st century camera back to '61. So I turned back and read it, and I'm glad I did, as Mr Tomalin has converted me with a brilliantly written feature.

I've always hated Jags, to be honest. I've always considered them old and fuddy-duddy, but all of a sudden I felt like I was a 23-year-old in the days of black and white, yearning to be on that motorway-less road trip across France, before rolling smartly through the Geneva streets. It was right about



Jaguar drive story helped Darren Cassey appreciate E-types at last (see 'Jaguar E-hype?')



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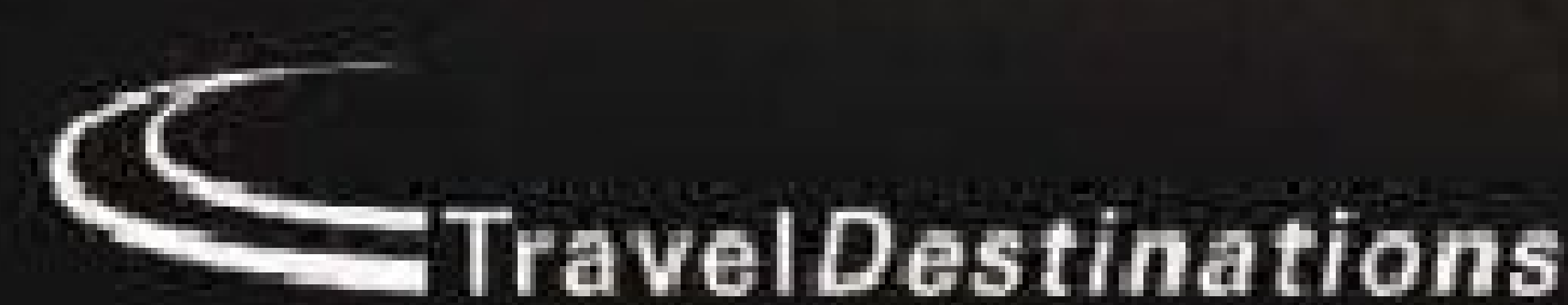
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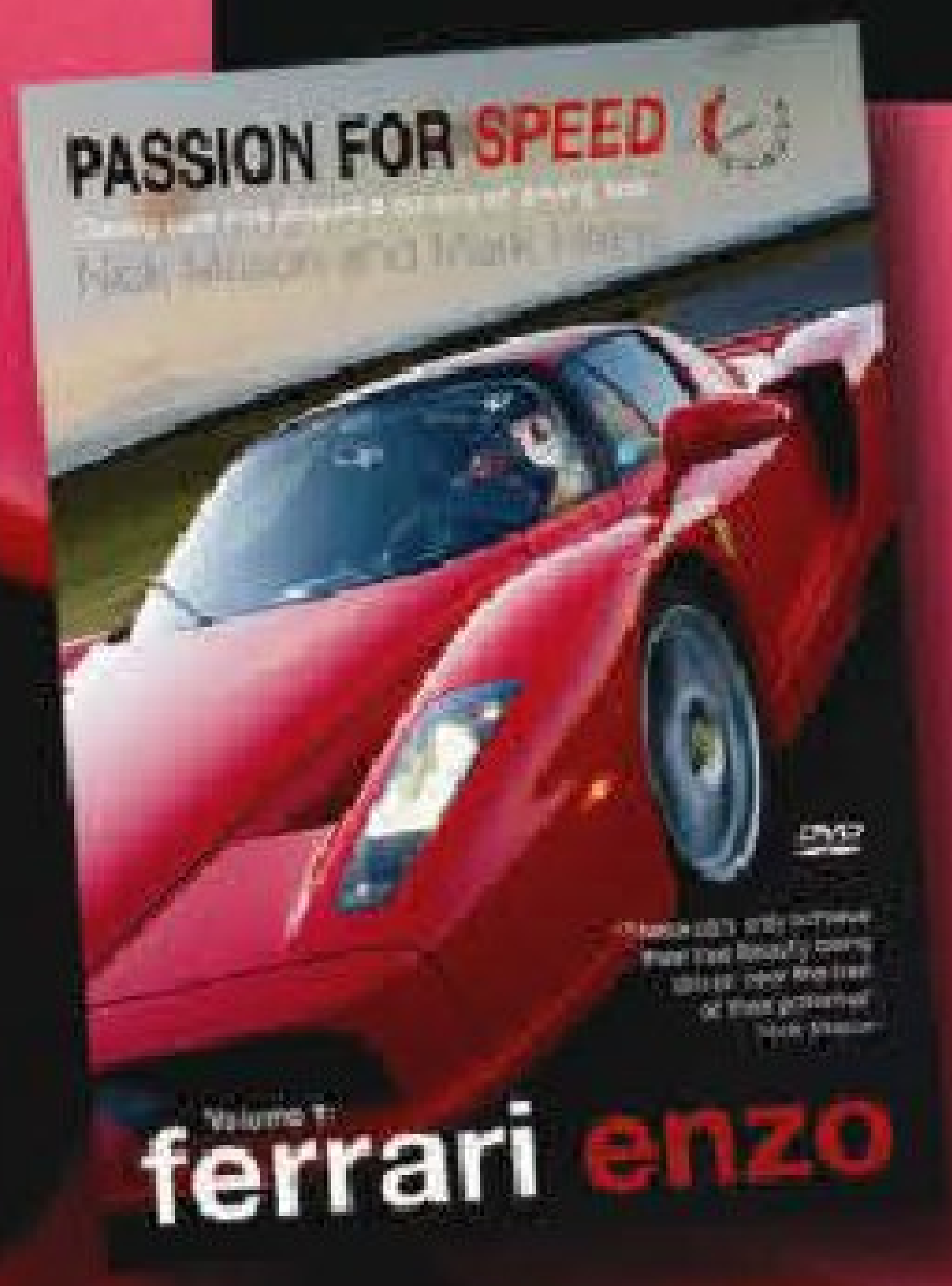
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## evo mail



Above: even a Ford Transit Connect can deliver the thrill of driving (see 'Van mail')

then that the elegant beauty of the thing suddenly clicked.

So thank you for waking me up to the E-type, and also, I expect, thank you from my father, who could never quite interest me in his favourite piece of metal in the way you have!

**Darren Cassey, Huddersfield**

### Van mail

Seventy-five brake horsepower. Two tons. Not the best of starts. It's 8 o'clock on a Sunday morning, and I'm off to my first job in my van, a Ford Transit Connect. I have an hour and a quarter's drive across the Peak District ahead, the sun is shining and the road stretching out in front of me is deserted. This, for me, is the thrill of driving.

For the next hour or so, I happily deploy every last one of those horsepower and generally hoon around as best as I can. We all know that wonderful feeling, the elation and sense of freedom that comes from just you, the car and the empty, winding road. Picking lines through a series of open corners, controlling the horrendous pitching, rolling and general bouncing around, working to maintain every last hard-won mph! It must have looked hilarious.

Later, while fiddling with a broken boiler, I started thinking, I can't remember driving anything and not enjoying it. From my wife's Jazz to a 911 Turbo, I just love the feeling of working a car, and turning it into something to be enjoyed and exploited. What I'm getting at is that the 'Thrill of Driving' should be exactly that, the thrill of driving – whatever you're lucky or unlucky enough to be in at the time.

**Steve Kimberley**

### The soft option?

Harry Metcalfe (*The Insider*, evo 154) wonders whether punters are being unduly influenced by car salesmen (rather than by motoring writers) when spec'ing their new cars.

I'd like to propose an alternative view. I believe that, in the main, the buyers of new cars – and especially performance

cars – choose the options they want, regardless of what either salesmen or journalists tell them to do. In much the same way that Harry chose not to put electric seats in his Maser, so many punters choose to put a soft top on their 911s.

If truth be told, most drivers, and perhaps even most enthusiast drivers, cannot tell the dynamic difference between a 997 coupe and convertible, even in a back-to-back test. I've owned both, and I would struggle to do so. Motoring journalists can often be fixated on a narrow band of the spectrum of capabilities provided by modern performance cars. But, for many buyers, a soft top or a PDK gearbox are more important than the ultimate degree of technical performance, not because a salesman told them so, but because it is what they like.

Having said all that, thanks very much for a wonderful magazine. I always take your advice most seriously.

**Steve Asher**

### The devil on my shoulder

Stunning mag! And thanks for making it available in electronic form. I live thousands of miles east, tucked away in a small country in Southeast Asia. By the time your magazine gets here, it is four times the price! Online, it's on time and very reasonable. Although I currently only subscribe to the non-interactive version, next year, I'll be on the iPad app. That's a promise.

Let me tell you, though, that your magazine is like the devil sitting on my shoulder. Every week, I promise to keep the mileage down on my Lancer Evo III. Evo IIIs are pretty rare over here and this one we built to 400bhp and 380lb ft – quite an accomplishment for a man on an economic short leash held at the other end by his better half. But after receiving my latest evo, my imagination fills with stories of powerslides, exotic driving roads, man and machine in a desperate embrace, and all manner of acceleration and deceleration. Resistance is futile. And, despite its age, I'm almost immediately in the Evo and the hammer is down. To work, to the grocery, to a coffee shop in the mountains 100km away. Every pointless journey – I don't care.

So, for the broken chin splitter, the scratched-up paint, the chipped alloys, the blown turbo, four sets of tyres and the 80,000km I added because of your excellent writing and car-porn levels of photography, thank you. No, really.

**Jason Isip, Makati City, Philippines**

**From the forums: Cars to drive before you die**



Above: Ariel Atom V8 around the TT course is on Orange Cola's list of dream drives

**Orange Cola:** These are the cars I'd like to drive purely to see what they're like in their intended environment. Atom V8 round the TT course. Zonda F through Europe – need I say more? F1 car – for the sheer pace. Moonbuggy – driving with a lot less gravity. What would you lot like to experience before you shuffle on?

**16vcento:** DBR9 – Circuit de la Sarthe. That would do me just fine.

**OllieInGear:** I'll always feel unfulfilled as a driver until I've had a pedal in an Enzo, and a McLaren F1.

**BP:** F1 car – doable btw if you have £4000 or so to give to Renault. Defo plan to do that someday. Veyron SS – on the autobahn and then to the Ring, and perhaps Spa after that. Mac F1 – anywhere.

**GraniteV8:** Black Ferrari 512TR with caramel leather interior.

**DeskJockey:** 288 GTO, F40, F50, Enzo on any track (complete set). Veyron SS on full chat somewhere long and straight. Bloodhound SSC on full chat somewhere even longer and straighter.

**Bunta:** MotoGP bike, Rossi, with me hanging on for dear life on the back.

**Steve H:** Good idea for a watch, sorry I mean thread! Anyway I would like to... Drive a proper Grp C car (956 or maybe an XJR14) at Le Mans or the Ring or both! Take a Prodrive Metro 6R4 round the closed roads of the Isle of Man. Pedal an ex works Lancia Delta S4 around Corsica, carefully!

**Dan:** Before I die? Some kind of flying car that does a thousand miles per hour and drives itself while I lounge about in the passenger section with five Playboy bunnies.



Bunta fancies riding pillion on the back of Valentino Rossi's MotoGP bike

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**JG** WINS A JORG GRAY  
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# *The* *Cult* *of the* **TURBO**



**N**o other word, when added to a car's name, promises high performance and excitement quite like 'Turbo'. But rather like the delivery characteristics of the device itself, the career of the turbocharger has been a bit on-off. There have been periods where its development has been frantic and others where its

popularity has faded, like a passing fashion. Right now, in road cars, the turbo is most definitely approaching full boost again. They're everywhere, on everything from superminis to the latest supercars. Which is why this month we're celebrating the cult of the turbo, revisiting some iconic turbos and peering into the turbocharged future.

Words **John Barker**

**THE CULT OF THE TURBO**  
A BRIEF HISTORY

“The feeling of the power ramping up exponentially in a potent turbo car is a real thrill”



## Thank emissions tests for

the renewed popularity of the turbocharger. The simple fact is that for any given output a turbocharged engine can return a lower CO2 figure than a naturally aspirated engine. It's a quiet, almost peaceful revolution this time, the laggy *fizz-bang!* delivery and chatter and chuff of turbocharged engines of a decade or so ago replaced by progressive power delivery and more subtle, light-pressure boost.

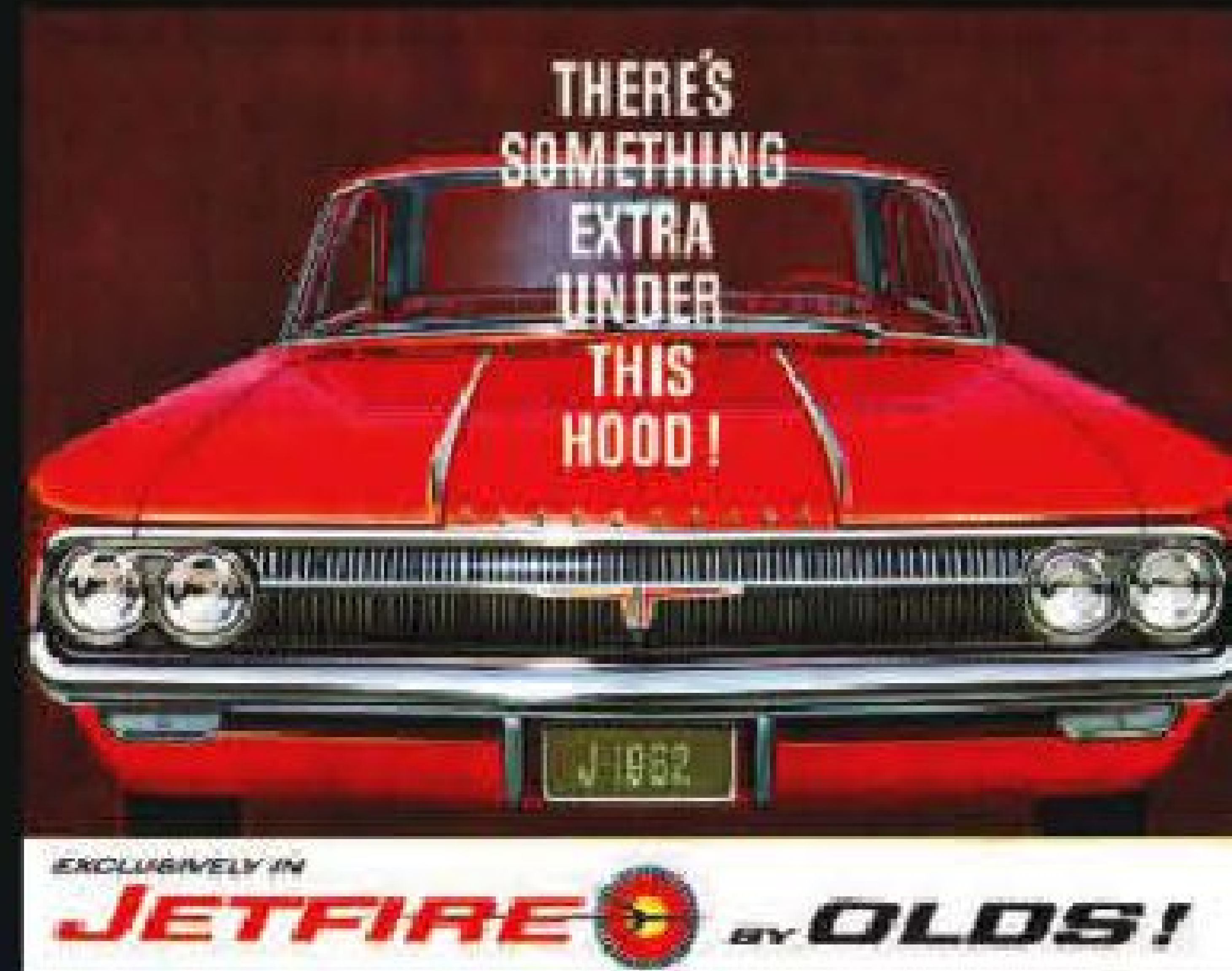
A small-capacity turbocharged or supercharged engine can match or exceed the horsepower of a bigger, naturally aspirated engine because it crams a greater mass of air into the cylinders, which means more fuel can be burned and thus more work can be done. The supercharger and turbo achieve this in different ways; the supercharger is an air pump driven directly from the engine, and thus saps some power, while the turbocharger is driven by the flow of exhaust gases being expelled from the engine, using energy that would otherwise be wasted. It's this greater efficiency that is now being exploited.

The turbo gets its name from the vaned turbine wheel that sits in the exhaust flow. It is mounted in a housing usually close-coupled with the exhaust manifold and is connected via a spindle to another vaned wheel, the compressor, which draws in and compresses the fresh air that is fed into the engine. It's easy to see how the output could escalate – more air in means more power, which means more exhaust gases out, which means more turbo speed which means more air in...

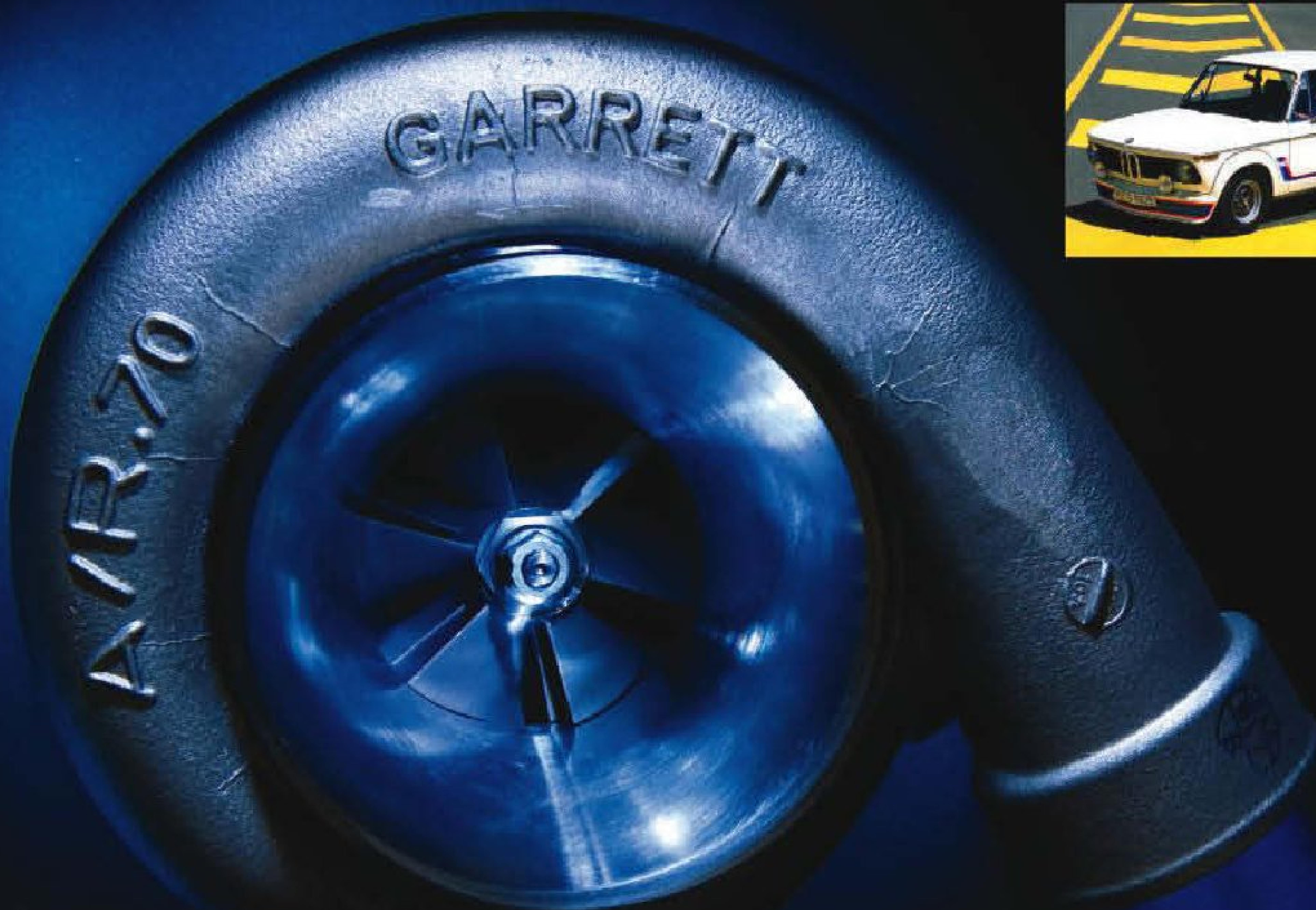
The feeling of the power ramping up exponentially in a potent turbo car is a real thrill. Trouble is, it takes time to get the turbine spinning and get the process going – nothing much happens until the turbine is at 20,000rpm, while peak speed can be 300,000rpm. The delay between pressing the throttle and the engine picking up is what's known as 'turbo lag'. It can be a real frustration in a road car, but it wasn't much of a concern in the earliest applications of turbocharging.

The potential benefits of supercharging or 'overcharging' were well understood at the start of the last century, and the turbocharger as described above was devised and patented in 1905 by a Swiss engineer, Alfred Büchi. But while the engine-driven supercharger was firmly established by the 1920s, epitomised for the English by the Blower Bentley with its protruding, crank-driven Amherst Villiers supercharger, the turbocharger took decades longer to get there.

Initially, the turbocharger was used to boost the outputs of aeroplanes and huge maritime diesels, to which it was well suited. The two World Wars drove turbo development on aero piston engines – by 18,000ft, the air is so thin that a naturally aspirated engine will have lost half its power, but with a turbo there is no drop-off. The jet engine made that application redundant and in the '50s turbo development moved to truck diesels. With their limited operating rev-range, low demand for pick-up response and throttle-less, direct injection, diesels were a better match for turbocharging than petrol engines. But the petrol turbo was coming...



Left: the first turbocharged production car was the Oldsmobile Jetfire of 1962, which mated a Garrett turbo to a 3.5-litre V8 (the same engine that would later be taken up by Rover). It wasn't a huge hit. Below: turbos really took off in the '70s, starting with the BMW 2002 Turbo in 1973. Suddenly turbos were sexy





Given its fondness for using big cubes to make decent power, it's a little surprising that America gave us the first turbocharged production road car. And the second, within months! Neither the Oldsmobile Jetfire nor the less sophisticated Chevrolet Corvair Spyder was a success. The Jetfire had a very high compression ratio so that its 3.5-litre V8 had some torque before the turbo spooled up, but this meant it had to have an octane boost to prevent pinking (detonation of the charge before the spark). This was provided by injection of a water/methanol mix, sold by dealers as 'Turbo Rocket Fluid'. Trouble was, it was up to the owner to keep the reservoir topped up. Reliability issues ensued.

It was Germany that really got the turbocharged road car going, first with the BMW 2002 Turbo in 1973 and a year later with the Porsche 911 Turbo. It's no coincidence that Bosch introduced its first electronic fuel injection system at this time, which made control of the fuelling much more accurate. Porsche had gained valuable experience in Can Am racing with its 917/30, whose turbocharged flat-12 produced up to 1100bhp (!), and successive generations of the 911 Turbo neatly illustrate the development of the petrol turbocharger installation.

The original '74 911 Turbo had a bypass valve for the exhaust gases so that the small turbo (for less lag) wouldn't be overworked at high revs. The second generation Turbo ('79) gained intercooling, helping its output rise from 260 to 300bhp. Compressing air raises its temperature – as you'll know if you've put your thumb over the end of a bicycle pump – and makes it thinner, so cooling it through air-to-air radiators, or intercoolers, increases its density and allows a lower boost pressure to be used for the same output.

Renault brought turbocharging to Formula 1 in 1977. There were blow-ups and fires but quite soon its 1.5-litre engine was producing the same horsepower as the dominant 3-litre DFV. It went very well on high



Top left: Saab took up the turbo theme in a big way, starting with the 99. Left: Porsche Can-Am cars had over 1000 turbocharged bhp. Below: in Formula 1, turbos could squeeze 700bhp from just 1.5 litres, even more in qualifying. This is a TAG-Porsche V6

## “The word “turbo” entered the common lexicon and

altitude circuits and not so well on tight, twisty ones but development was intense and it was soon a winner. By the end of the era, the turbo engines had 3.5bar boost and 700bhp, a third more power than the DFV. The turbo had evolved. Ceramic turbines and low-friction ball bearings helped response and Ferrari even dabbled with anti-lag – burning fuel in the exhaust to keep the turbine spinning when the throttle was shut.

In 1978, Saab launched the 99 Turbo, making the most of the slant-four it had acquired from Triumph, and so brought turbocharging to the working classes (as long as your work was designing buildings or fixing people's teeth). This period enshrined the word 'turbo' in the common lexicon and there was soon a turbo model in almost every car maker's line-up. 'Turbo' ended up on a bizarre range of products, too, from aftershave to joke toilet paper: 'one wipe and you're away!'. You'd need a whole roll given the all-or-nothing behaviour of some installations, the sudden arrival of boost playing havoc with the grip and handling. It wasn't a sophisticated, precise feel, and you could cook the turbo's lubricating seals and bearings if you didn't let the engine idle for a couple of minutes after a hard drive, but, heck, it was exciting.

Meanwhile, generational refinements of the 911 Turbo continued with pressure-controlled engine mapping, allowing finer tuning of the fuel





## there was soon a Turbo in almost every model range'

and ignition settings for greater efficiency. That was nothing to the 959 though, which had a turbocharger per bank and ushered in a second wave of turbo development in motorsport in the form of Group B. The culmination of this was Lancia's Delta S4, which had a supercharger for low-rev response and a turbo for boost at higher revs. Years later, Volkswagen gave us the more timid but technically similar 'Twincharger', a 1.4-litre engine with a turbo and supercharger and the performance of a naturally aspirated 2.3.

At the end of the '80s the first code-crackers started tinkering with the factory map settings, their mission to increase fuelling, raise boost and so liberate more power and torque, exploiting some of the factory safety margin. The penalty for re-writing a small section of code badly or running the turbo too hard was a melted turbine or a grenaded engine but the chipping companies are still with us, better at their job and only a step, if that, behind the car makers' programmers.

The first flourishing of the turbo in road cars died away because many weren't very economical and they all had some degree of lag. What has helped renew interest is more responsive turbos and ever-more accurate boost control and fuelling. The current 911 Turbo has variable turbine geometry (VTG), which increases efficiency by tailoring the angle of

the vanes to the load. For instance, the vanes are set for full capture of the exhaust gases at low revs to spin up quickly. With an eye on history, Porsche launched VTG on the 100th anniversary of Büchi's patent.

What is really making turbos attractive, though, is the all-important CO2 test. It favours small engines (less mechanical friction) with turbos (not much time is spent on boost). So, a small, low-compression engine does most of the test, while out in the real world, clog down, we have decent performance. Win-win, then? Not for enthusiasts, because lots of big, naturally aspirated, character engines – V8s, V10s and V12s, even sixes – are being retired so they don't drag down the corporate CO2 average. Shame.

What would bring back some excitement would be if the currently proposed Formula 1 regulations for 2013 are approved. They specify a 1.6-litre, four-cylinder turbocharged engine, with a limited fuel flow rate and integration with energy recovery systems. Much of which could feed back into road cars. Some car makers have experimented with a small electric motor to spin up the turbo at low revs, but the power required is considerable. However, if that power came from a storage device topped up by energy recovered from braking, such as KERS, we might be on to something. Viewed this way, 1.6 turbos in F1 don't look so bad.

# THE



# BUNCH





# WILD



*Jaguar XJ220, Noble M600, Porsche 911 GT2 RS and Ferrari F40 – four of the scariest turbo-engined supercars ever made. **Chris Harris** drives them, and finds out why they're all the better for being blown*

THE CULT OF THE TURBO  
SUPERCAR GROUP TEST



'After the F40, we forgot that a supercar was supposed





**E**xperience now teaches us that it is nigh-on impossible to discuss the Ferrari F40 in general terms. There we were, myself, Barker and Catchpole, in the presence of Maranello's greatest ever street car, and every time a lone voice looked like it might offer a neat summary of its greatness, and perhaps a link to the conceit of this story – turbochargers in supercars – it would be lost in a flurry of huffing hyperbole.

The mode of delivery was the same. We all began sentences with, 'The thing about the F40 is...' and I would stand there primed with the dictaphone to record tasty morsels of wisdom, only to see the wistful look return to the eyes as snippets of that last F40 fang filtered back into the memory and swamped any chance of general comment. 'It's just so sharp, and that engine... Can you believe how strong it feels from 4500rpm?'

No, no, no! I wanted us to take three steps away from the car's actual performance and think about it as perhaps the ultimate turbocharged object, but the hypnotic power of the F40 driving experience is all-consuming. It leaves you entranced, limp and desperate for another fix. It precludes group conversation

Left: M600 is now production-ready and wears a full carbonfibre body, saving around 50kg over the earlier versions we've tried. Below left: button to disable the Noble's traction control is beneath a fighter-jet-style cover, just to make sure you don't press it by accident

to be a few aluminium panels encasing a V12 motor'



of a general theme, because as you begin to contemplate its role, the sheer pungency drags you back into those moments behind the wheel: the noise, the thrust – the comedy headroom. So the dictaphone was re-introduced to the jeans pocket and we three just stood there on a windy moor and talked like seven-year-olds about specific aspects of the Ferrari F40.

Turbocharging wasn't deemed to be the acceptable face of supercar powertrain development until, perhaps, 1985. Sure, Porsche had been force-feeding a 911 for a decade by the time the Ferrari 288 GTO

## THE CULT OF THE TURBO SUPERCAR GROUP TEST

arrived with 400bhp and coachwork by the gods themselves, but the 911 Turbo always occupied its own little sub-supercar niche. It was too useable, too efficient. More importantly, its 300bhp output didn't quite tweak the pelvis of the teenage magazine reader with the same ferocity as a Countach or a Testarossa.

This was strange on Porsche's part, because on the race-track its use of turbocharging was reaching its zenith in the 962, a 650bhp ground-effect Group C weapon that remains one of the most winning racing cars of all time. During its 15-year turbocharging adventure, Porsche would produce a blown flat-12 with over 1100bhp (917/30), a 2.1-litre six with over 500bhp (RSR Turbo) and the majestic Moby Dick with 750bhp. But the street representation of this lunacy was tame: it began with 260bhp, graduated to 300bhp and was switching to 330bhp when, in 1985, Ferrari decided to squeeze big numbers from a 'little' V8.

Two years later, we heard about the F40, and we conveniently forgot that a supercar was supposed to be a few aluminium panels encasing a vast V12 motor. The F40 changed everything.

Its legacies – its imitators – are assembled here today, attempting to deflate the F40 myth. The Jaguar XJ220 was the British response to a global economy flushed with liquidity and desperate to spend it on fast motor cars, although were we to judge eligibility for this test on the blueprint drawings for each of them, the Jag would not be here. It was never supposed to run a twin-turbo V6, and when depositors found that the promised normally aspirated 6-litre V12 had shrunk back into a



‘Within minutes the curious driver will have felt a surge



steroidal version of the Metro 6R4 motor, so too did prospective owners shrink away from the order book.

The XJ220 was a commercial disaster, but its convoluted mechanical gestation unwittingly represents the core philosophy of turbocharging – attaching exhaust-driven superchargers to ordinary engines with the aim of producing big, cost-effective horsepower. I will never forget skiving off double German to nip into town and buy *Autocar* on June 23, 1993. ‘0-100 in 7.9sec.’ Its performance potential was unfathomable to a 17-year-old.

Strange that Porsche didn't celebrate its experiments into the outer reaches of forced induction while it was still making turbo race-cars, but this was a problem finally resolved last year with the arrival of the 911 GT2 RS. ‘It's a 935 with licence plates and traction control,’ said someone from Weissach. Better late than never. Of course, the 911's reasons for being turbocharged are entirely different to the

others. Whereas their vast engine bays are one-part engine, three-parts plumbing apparatus, there isn't room for anything more than a flat-six behind the rear wheels of a 911.

The GT2 RS is modern, extreme turbocharging at its most impressive, but it certainly doesn't subscribe to the lag-free driving characteristics expected of these new installations. Last year the semantics of GT2 RS road testing were unfashionably consistent: ‘old school’, ‘terrifying’, ‘ditch-magnet’. Many of us loved this car because it was unashamedly turbocharged – it didn't attempt to hide how nature had given it 611bhp, and we christened it ‘old skool’. But how old school does a GT2 RS feel in the presence of a cackling, wheeshing F40?

Or, for that matter, the new Noble. For the F40, meeting the M600 must be like looking in the mirror and seeing a younger version of yourself from the future – thankfully without a DeLorean and Dr Emmett Brown. The M600





Below: GT2 RS interior should feel largely familiar to drivers of lesser 911s; driving experience is something else (left). Bottom: XJ220 cabin is the most plush here



of boost and spied a yellow triangle flickering on the dash'



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worships at the feet of the F40 and its basic recipe is undiluted flattery: twin-turbo V8, plastic-over-metal construction, a pair of driven wheels and a stark message on the inside front cover of the owners' manual: 'So, you think you're f\*\*\*ing handy, do you? Well, think again.'

When the roads are damp and the four protagonists' collective power output confirms that my adding skills stop at 2200, there is only one car you drive first. The one with full stability control. Ignore the lips, lumps and flashes of colour and there's little indication that this is the most powerful production Porsche ever made. All of the contact points are familiar to anyone who has driven a 911 – the key, the seat, the wheel – and when the motor fires it's the clatter of single-mass flywheel rather than any intake or exhaust noise that gives the suggestion of oversize performance.

Is the performance intimidating? At first, yes. The throttle springing is light enough to encourage your right foot to venture deeper into the footwell and, it can be assumed, within a few minutes of first being acquainted with the GT2 RS, the curious driver will have felt a surge of boost and spied a yellow triangle flickering on the dashboard – he just won't know if it was the traction control warning or the shift light, because his brain will be busy piecing together those last few moments. A few seconds ago, I was there; now I'm here. How did that happen?

The shove is addictive. To me, it just doesn't matter that the GT2 RS is so mute you sometimes wonder if it's propelled by an internal combustion engine at all: what you lose in aural gratitude you gain in *squeeeeeeeze*. It's the surging nature of the performance that is so addictive, but also the reason why those sage, purist voices side with natural aspiration as the optimum specification for enjoyable motoring. I'm not sure I agree. I arrived at this test in my GT3 and for the first few miles I drive the GT2 RS badly because I make the mistake of imposing the same driving method onto the turbo car. It just doesn't work.

Powerful force-fed machines require a level of anticipation that is at first unsettling, but quickly becomes absorbing: you no longer react to the message of the vehicle and apportion throttle, brake and steering – instead you look further down the road, scouring everything from surface condition to camber, to glean information that will allow you to make the best possible deployment of *boost*. This way you find rhythm, you expose the brilliance of the Porsche's chassis and the inherent benefits of 325-section rubber and a rear-mounted motor. The suspension is firm but supple enough to stop the car being deflected. You admire the steering's transparency and you relax into a shockingly rapid form of motoring. Is it as good as a GT3 RS? No. Does it do things the normally aspirated car cannot? Absolutely – scare you shitless, to name just one.

Minutes later, I'm in the F40 – cramped, the wheel set too high and the fixed bucket

All four cars have twin-turbocharged engines. The Porsche's (top left) is a 3.6-litre flat-six with 611bhp. The F40's 2.9 V8 (middle left) gives 'just' 478bhp, but it's in the lightest car. Jaguar's 3.5 V6 (bottom left) puts out 542bhp. Right: Noble's 4.4 V8 is the most potent, with 650bhp





pinching my midriff. It is over 130bhp weaker than the Porsche and those huge Pirellis are pretty fresh. The road is drying fast enough to tempt the unsuspecting driver (me) into waking that Veglia boost needle. In second gear, I push the pedal down, register the needle crossing 3000rpm, hear the gurgle-stammer of flat-plane-crank V8, wonder what all the fuss was about with this shoddily assembled kit car and then with virtually no warning, I'm left wondering if Thrust SSC has just rear-ended me. The car erupts with a violent hissing – like some angry snake – and launches itself forwards. But not for long: the shove lasts a fraction of a second and abates, but the noise continues. Slipping clutch? Slipping rear wheels – calmed by a small amount of corrective lock and greeted with grinning respect by the bloke behind the wheel.

Back at base, John Barker is wearing the perma-smile of a man recently enlightened: 'It all goes nuts behind, the hammering engine note almost consumed by the whoosh and hiss of the blowers. And the chassis twitches and then the rear tyres are unstuck and – this is the magic bit – it feels comfortable with it, and so do you. You don't back out, you steady your right foot, steady the boost, and the rear wheels paint lines as they scabble on a smidge of opposite lock this way, a smidge that.'

In fact the throttle springing of the F40 might just define the way the car drives. It is much firmer than the GT2 RS's and of course it is actually connected to something mechanical. Whereas in the Porsche you push to add extra performance, in the Ferrari you learn to add throttle, then hold it there and wait for the boost to arrive – it's almost like pre-selecting the shove you require, and it demands accuracy. Genuinely, the Porsche feels normally aspirated next to the F40.

Matched against the delay in power and torque delivery is a startling lack of inertia in the rest of the car. As Henry points out: 'The whole car just feels so light, you can't believe they strapped an engine that potent to something so insubstantial. Just to get in it, the car feels light – unlike this, which after the F40 feels like a sitting room on wheels. One of these side bolsters probably weighs as much as an F40 seat.' For the avoidance of doubt, we're sitting in the Jaguar XJ220.

A few minutes into driving the 542bhp XJ220 I have to resist the temptation to head back to find John Barker and bow down before him. The heavy controls, vast exterior dimensions, vast interior dimensions and utter recalcitrance of the powertrain at normal road speeds simply do not square with the machine John hustled around the West Circuit just 1.6sec shy of a

'The F40's chassis twitches, the rear tyres unstuck and – this



Lambo LP640 (evo 131). The force required to push the accelerator down is shocking after the Porsche and the gearchange isn't interested in being hurried. Right now, I can't even summon the courage to wake the turbochargers, which leaves me driving a 3.5-litre normally aspirated V6 in something the size of a whale shark. Remind me why we plonked an XJ220 into this test? Intimidation has a new name.

The big Jag needs speed and space to uncover its character. Get it up and planing and the ride smooths, the car finds balance and you are granted a window into what was, for a while, the world's fastest car. The gearing is preposterous by modern standards – you almost have to ride the clutch to get it rolling – but the need to reach 220mph with just five forward ratios was more important to the marketing department. In powertrain terms, this is not a communicative car: the long-travel throttle and heroic turbo lag combine to demand a concentrated version of the anticipation technique learnt in the GT2 RS. Only here you choose your moments more carefully and give the gearchange plenty of time.

You find yourself chastising the car for being in possession of such a characterless engine, then your eyes sneak a glance at a speedometer that reveals startling information, and in that split second you understand the XJ220. This is



Above: twin-turbocharged supercars require frequent fuel stops. Left: F40 still feels incredible, and requires you to plan well ahead with your throttle applications. Below: cabin finish isn't the best, but you don't tend to notice...

is the magic bit – it feels comfortable with it, and so do you'





‘The Jaguar XJ220 was built to deliver numbers, which it does in impressive quantities’



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**THE CULT OF THE TURBO**  
SUPERCAR GROUP TEST



‘The Noble is a newer, faster interpretation of the

a car unconcerned with the manner in which it delivers forward motion. It was built to deliver numbers, which it does in impressive quantities, but after the F40 it is a flat experience.

The unassisted steering is a highlight at speed, even if it does kick-back at times, and the chassis has uncommon balance and excellent damping – but again, you have to be travelling very fast to unravel these aspects of its performance and the car never fizzles with exuberance the way the Ferrari does.

Seems John finds the XJ220 a very different beast on the road too: ‘You never feel totally relaxed with it here – you want to see what happens over the edge of grip to feel comfortable. It has loads of adhesion but the weight of the steering gives it an old-school supercar feel. You get it straight before giving it the beans.’ Too right.

The last time I drove a Noble it broke traction on me in a straight line at a not insignificant speed somewhere in Scotland, with the company’s MD in the passenger seat. I loved it for being so raw. This is the finished production







## F40 formula: simple, lightweight, terrifyingly fast'



Left: Noble's interior can be trimmed to the owner's taste. Above: carbon-shelled seats designed specifically for the M600; five-point harnesses are available

car and it now has a carbon body, which Noble claims takes the kerb weight down below 1200kg. If ever a car didn't need an improved power-to-weight-ratio, it was this one.

Think of the M600 as the antidote to the 911 Turbo S and McLaren MP4-12C, and you'll be much closer to understanding why, despite not offering ABS or stability control for £200K, it will always be a car we adore. It is a newer, faster interpretation of the F40 formula: simple, lightweight, terrifyingly fast.

You have three engine maps to choose from: Road (450bhp), Track (550bhp) and Race (650bhp). In shandy mode, the car is considerably faster than my GT3. Switched up a notch, it demolishes the Jag and F40, and matches the Porsche. Those brave enough to use everything the twin-turbo Yamaha V8 can offer will experience a level of performance far removed from even the new McLaren. Yet there are no paddles behind the steering wheel, no chassis electronics to allow the driver to hold full throttle and then leave the computer to decide how much of that request should be

routed to the rear wheels. The driver asks, the powertrain responds; the rear Michelins decide if they can cope. In third gear, on cold, damp asphalt, they cannot.

The carbon body is beautifully finished, the cabin sparse and well built. The Ford switchgear is naturally unbecoming of something that costs Ferrari 458 money, but just as the F40 was forgiven its shoddy interior fittings, so should this car be cut some slack. It is all about the driving experience: the thrill of deploying 650bhp onto the road surface with no assistance. The car rides well at low speed and settles further once up and running, all the time giving that delicious feeling of low mass and limitless torque. John reckons losing 50kg in body mass and keeping the same suspension settings has slightly altered the car's balance, though: 'It feels different; a bit firmer, less supple in detail. I preferred the previous one myself, but it's a proper car, a legendary turbo car already. Love it.'

In fourth gear, at relatively low speeds, it squirts past traffic with disdain, and it somehow



Above: M600 has a slightly more alert feel with its new, lighter carbon body; finish of the exposed weave is of the highest quality. Right: one of the pair of turbos that feed the M600's Yamaha V8 with compressed air



makes a virtue of its lag characteristic. In this respect it neatly dissects the Porsche and the Ferrari, being a little slower to respond than the 911, but better than the F40. All the whooshing and chattering is there in abundance, building as the acceleration burgeons from around 3500rpm and pulling all the way to 6500rpm.

In fact the M600 helps us define what it is about certain turbocharged cars that really matters, because turbocharging done well, and by that I mean giving brutal performance and theatre, adds to a car's greatness. I cannot say for sure if the Noble would be a greater car if it had a 600bhp non-turbo V12 that revved to 9000rpm, but the suspicion is that it would lose that barmy roll-on characteristic, those blissful moments on full afterburner when the car almost takes control of itself and leaves the driver breathless. These things, only turbocharging can deliver.

Which brings us back to the F40, for me the greatest road car ever built. There are dozens

of aspects that contribute to its greatness – among them steering, appearance and historical significance – but once you drive the car, and you find yourself feeding opposite lock into its countless little slithery moments, laughing aloud at how easy it is to do such things in a 478bhp turbocharged, mid-engined Ferrari, you are left under no illusion that the F40 is a better car for being turbocharged. So much of its overall performance, be it objective speed against the stopwatch or the peripheral theatre that comes through noise and even those great silver intercoolers that dominate the engine bay, the car owes to forced induction.

And here we are, poised to enter a new era of turbocharged performance. If these cars prove anything, it's that there are exciting times ahead.

*Huge thanks to Don Law Racing ([www.donlawracing.com](http://www.donlawracing.com)) for the loan of the XJ220, and to Albert Vella for bringing along his F40.*



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SPECIFICATIONS

	JAGUAR XJ220	NOBLE M600	FERRARI F40	PORSCHE 911 GT2 RS
Engine	V6, 3498, twin-turbo	V8, 4439cc, twin-turbo	V8 2936cc, twin-turbo	Flat-six, 3600cc, twin-turbo
Location	Mid, longitudinal	Mid, longitudinal	Mid, longitudinal	Rear, longitudinal
Power	542bhp @ 7200rpm	650bhp @ 6800rpm	478bhp @ 7000rpm	611bhp @ 6500rpm
Torque	475lb ft @ 4500rpm	604lb ft @ 3800rpm	425lb ft @ 4000rpm	516lb ft @ 2250-5500rpm
Transmission	Five-speed manual gearbox, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip differential	Six-speed manual gearbox, rear-wheel drive, traction control	Five-speed manual gearbox, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip differential	Six-speed manual gearbox, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip differential, PSM
Front suspension	Double wishbones, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar	Double wishbones, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar	Double wishbones, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar	MacPherson struts, coil springs, PASM dampers, anti-roll bar
Rear suspension	Double wishbones, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar	Double wishbones, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar	Double wishbones, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar	Five-link, coil springs, PASM dampers, anti-roll bar
Brakes	Ventilated discs, 330mm front, 304mm rear	Ventilated discs, 380mm front, 350mm rear	Ventilated discs, 330mm front and rear	Ventilated and cross-drilled carbon-ceramic discs, 380mm front, 350mm rear, ABS, EBD
Wheels	9 x 17in front, 14 x 18in rear	9 x 19in front, 12 x 20in rear	8 x 17in front, 13 x 17in rear	9 x 19in front, 12 x 19in rear
Tyres	255/45 ZR17 front, 345/35 ZR18 rear	255/30 ZR19 front, 335/30 ZR20 rear	245/340 ZR17 front, 335/35 ZR17 rear	245/35 ZR19 front, 325/30 ZR19 rear
Weight (kerb)	1512kg	1198kg	1100kg	1370kg
Power-to-weight	364bhp/ton	551bhp/ton	441bhp/ton	453bhp/ton
0-60mph	3.7sec (claimed)	3.0sec (est)	3.7sec (claimed)	3.5sec (claimed, 0-62mph)
Top speed	217mph (claimed)	225mph (claimed)	201mph (claimed)	205mph (claimed)
Basic price	£403,000 (1993)	£200,000	£193,000 (1987)	£164,107
<b>evo RATING</b>	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★

“Turbocharging done well, to give brutal performance and theatre, adds to a car’s greatness”



# God of Thunder

No turbo celebration would be complete without something tuned, Japanese and a bit bonkers. **David Yu** meets a 900bhp GT-R called Thor

**S**evern Valley Motorsport has been creating some of the world's most outrageous turbocharged cars for decades. Probably best known for building insanely powerful Escort and Sierra Cosworths in the '90s, owner Kevan Kemp has recently turned his hand to R35 GT-Rs – with startling results.

Just a few weeks ago, a car belonging to one of his customers (known only as 'F-Man') set a new European R35 drag-strip record of 9.67sec and 145mph at Santa Pod. Producing well over 900bhp (on C16 race fuel), this is the car I am just about to drive. On the road.

F-Man's car, nicknamed Thor, looks suitably menacing in black, with a subtly lowered stance on its KW coilovers and black Volks G2 rims shod with Toyo R888s. Unlike some of its SVM siblings, Thor sports no aftermarket carbon frippery: only the round air intakes cut into the bumper and the blue-tipped GTC Titan exhaust system hint at what's beneath. Well, besides the subtle '900R' logos...

Fire up the twin-turbocharged 3.8-litre V6, however, and the normally innocuous, smooth but slightly whiny tickover of a standard GT-R is replaced by a raucous, cabin-shaking, lopey idle as the 280degree Tomei high-lift cams make their presence known. Thankfully the lightest touch of the throttle smoothes things out immediately, and the car pulls away much like a standard GT-R, albeit with a bit more chatter from its uprated first gear set.

Don't be deceived. This is one seriously modified GT-R. It would take the rest of this article to detail all the work, but it includes forged rods and pistons, ported, big-valve cylinder heads, Stage 3 IHI turbos, high-pressure fuel pumps and 1000cc injectors. Running 1.6 bar of boost pressure, it makes 791bhp; with 1.8 bar that rises to 861bhp, and at 2.1 bar it's making 900bhp-plus and around 850lb ft of torque. How fast? 0-60 in well under 3sec, 0-100 in about 5.5. And did I mention 0-145mph in 9.6 seconds?

Low-speed behaviour is remarkably civilised. But once the needle swings past 4000, the whole world is flung into reverse and the GT-R catapults itself down the road at something approaching *Spaceballs*' 'ludicrous speed'. Nothing I have ever driven has prepared me for the sheer colossal thrust of this Mecha-Godzilla, and expletives and simple boyish shouts of glee burst forth involuntarily as I experience the full 2.1 bar.

Unlike some supercars, this GT-R doesn't overstate its performance with a shrieking engine note, and despite the name there is no god of thunder lurking up the 90mm titanium exhaust system. This thing simply pummels you with sheer accelerative force, the shock of which does not appear to diminish with repetition. This is performance you are never likely to tire of. On the – thankfully dry – roads, the massive R888s dig in to give huge traction, and



'Once past 4000rpm, the whole world is flung into reverse'





amazingly there is still directional control and great handling balance, even whilst over 800lb ft of torque is being deployed. This is just as well, because the only way to drive the car without constant interruption from the electronic nannies is to turn them all off...

The gearbox shifts ratios as seamlessly as the standard item, taking you straight past licence-closing territory into serious jail-time if you're not careful. And the KW coilovers combined with the non-runflat R888s are actually a good deal more compliant than the standard set-up – useful on these bumpy B-roads.

Despite the suspension geometry still being in F-Man's preferred drag-racing configuration, the GT-R changes direction with agility and unimpeachable grip – even second-gear corners demand only the slightest dab of corrective lock on exit.

Only the completely standard brakes let the car down slightly, urgent braking requiring considerably more forethought, as corners or obstacles arrive much earlier than your brain would normally anticipate. I understand that Thor is still a work in progress and will be

receiving suitably uprated brakes shortly.

As for SVM's next project, its sights are set well beyond making merely *Europe's* fastest GT-R. I caught a glimpse of their next demo car and I can tell you that it continues the Marvel comics nomenclature, going by the name of Hulk. It also sports discreet 1200R logos...



Above: blue-tipped Titan exhaust hints at 900R's potency. Our thanks to all at SVM, Ben Linney of GTC-R for mapping, Michelle Worthington at RAF Museum Cosford for the photo location. And of course F-Man for the loan of his GT-R 900R



FIVE LEGENDARY GT-Rs



**KPGC10 SKYLINE GT-R**

■ First race Skyline GT-R, with the S20 DOHC six, triple side-draughts, electronic ignition, five-speed box and LSD. Pretty special by any standards in 1969, let alone Japanese ones.



**CALSONIC R32 GT-R**

■ One of the legendary racers that dominated Group A racing in Japan and led to the banning of 4wd turbos from Group A worldwide. Made E30 M3s and RS500 Cosworths look slow.



**JUN SUPER LEMON R R33**

■ Celebrated drag car, famed for being one of the first to reach a claimed 1000bhp. Has been in the UK for most of its life and campaigned regularly on the UK drag scene.



**TOP SECRET DRAG R33**

■ Peak of the late-'90s bhp wars. Featured in the infamous Max Power vid *Beasts from the East* where Smokey Nagata hit 205mph. Made a claimed 1200bhp and is also now in the UK.



**NISMO R34 GT-R Z-TUNE**

■ In a rare move for a manufacturer, Nissan authorised Nismo to source the 20 best R34 GT-R V-specs it could find, rebuild them, fit a 500bhp 2.8 Nismo engine and resell them for £120K a pop.

Picture: Alan Thomas

Picture: Nissan

Picture: Ozman Hussain

Picture: Ozman Hussain

Picture: Nissan



Lancia Delta S4 (above), Nissan R90CK (below) and Toleman TG181C (right) – three highly demanding 1980s turbo cars



# TURBO TAMERS

The absurdly powerful turbo cars that dominated top-level '80s motorsport separated the best drivers from the merely very good. **Stuart Codling** talks to three men who mastered these machines

**F**or most drivers, turbocharging means two things: ferocious power, along with an occasionally inconvenient pause before it arrives. To a racing driver, deftly balancing their car at the limit of adhesion where delicacy is everything, the arrival of those extra horses can signify an imminent trip to the gravel trap.

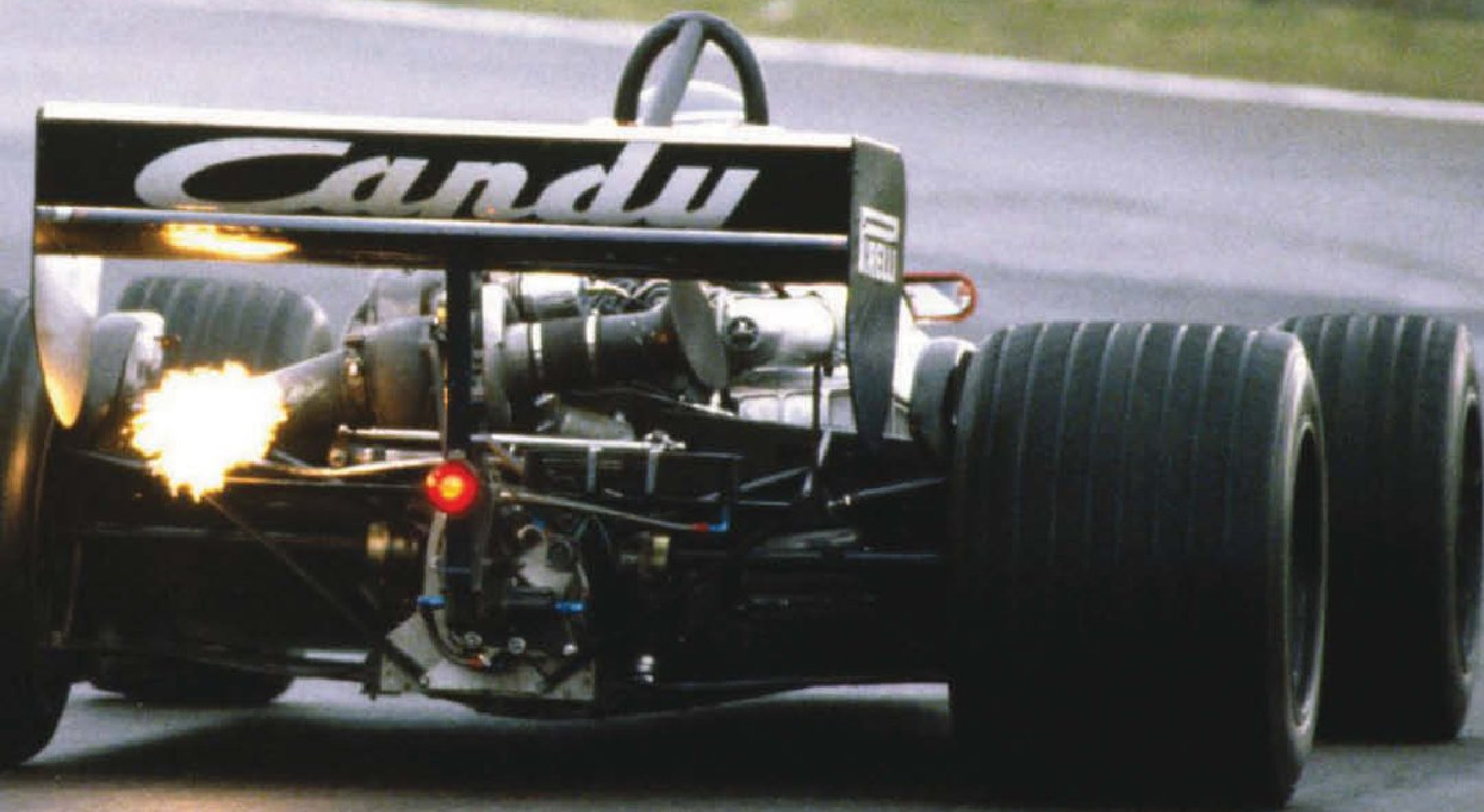
In terms of skill requirements, turbocharged cars separate the best from the merely very good, yet turbocharging brings a vital hit of extra performance – that's why, almost since motor racing began, engineers have been stoking up racing engines with varying means of forced induction, and racing drivers have willingly submitted to the bedevilment of

having to tame them. Often this has meant power outputs that absurdly overreach the abilities of the chassis, tyres and brakes. Stirling Moss described the supercharged 1.5-litre BRM V16 he tried to race at the 1952 Tourist Trophy as 'the most dangerous car I've ever driven. It was *awful*'.

Turbocharging's heyday arguably arrived in the 1980s as forced induction became the de facto choice in Formula 1, the World Sportscar Championship and the World Rally Championship. During that decade motorsport lost some bright talents: the horrifying deaths of Elio de Angelis and Henri Toivonen in 1986 brought home the inherent risks of the increasingly powerful machinery. Group B rally cars were outlawed and the FIA placed increasingly heavy restrictions on F1 turbos

before banning them entirely for 1989.

But, to a racing driver, danger goes with the territory. We've spoken to three men who put their stamp on the most recent turbo era: Derek Warwick, who raced turbocharged F1 cars for Toleman and Renault before taking the place of de Angelis at Brabham, driving the bold but compromised 'skateboard' BT55; Markku Alén, who drove one of the signature Group B rally cars, the Lancia Delta, and had to shoulder the burden of team leadership after Toivonen's death; and Mark Blundell, who, as an up-and-coming racer at Le Mans in 1990, disobeyed team orders to abandon his sole qualifying lap because of a sticking wastegate in his 1100bhp Nissan R90CK, only to become the youngest polesitter in the history of Le Mans. These are their turbo stories.



## F1 DEREK WARWICK

'It was a great time to be around Formula 1 because the cars were pretty raw beasts. You had a manual gearbox and no power steering. They weren't necessarily great to drive but they were interesting and challenging. It brought the best out of you as a driver because you had to drive around the problems.

When I was at Toleman in '82 and '83 we were on a very low budget and used a turbocharged Hart engine. In those early days the car was almost impossible to drive because the turbo was in the wrong place – it was too far away from the inlet – and we were using off-the-shelf Garrett turbos because teams like Renault had exclusivity on the latest stuff. So we had situations where the lag could be counted in seconds rather than milliseconds.

## 'THE TURBO LAG WAS ABOUT FOUR OR FIVE SECONDS...'



Without really realising it, we were among the first people to left-foot brake because there were situations where you had to stay on the throttle to keep the boost up. That was one way of anticipating the lag.

At Zolder you're flat-out down the back straight and then there's a left-right-left chicane over the top of the hill, just before where Gilles

Villeneuve was killed. In the Toleman I had to get on the throttle again as I was braking, even before turning into the corner, then I'd go left, right, left – and then the power would arrive. The lag was about four or five seconds.

At Renault [in 1984, with a twin-turbo V6] the lag was much better, but it was still there. At Kyalami we tested with four turbos. The



Above: Warwick's Toleman at the '82 British GP. Right: S4 debuted on the 1985 RAC, taking a 1-2 finish for Lancia

idea was to have a smaller turbo on each side giving an initial boost before the second one cut in. It didn't really work, though when it did kick in, the power was just phenomenal. It just locked you into the back of the seat. But it was undriveable because the lag cost too much time over the whole lap.

We had a button to turn up the boost, a little bit like what they're trying to do in F1 now with Kinetic Energy Recovery Systems. But then so did everybody else, so it didn't always work. At Dallas I was running second behind Mansell in the Lotus and I used the overboost to try to get around the outside. But he turned his up as well and we arrived at the next corner absolutely together, so I clipped the barrier.

When I drove for Brabham-BMW in 1986 we were qualifying with 1350-1400bhp on tyres that were only good for one lap. Getting that lap right – and making sure the engine survived – was an art form. We had a lot of blow-ups and other breakages associated with the power of the turbo – differentials, driveshafts and so on.

Gordon Murray's concept for that car was to get it as low as possible to make it more aerodynamic. In doing that we had to lay the engine down at about 45 degrees and that gave all sorts of oil scavenging problems. It was a sad situation anyway because Elio [de Angelis] had died in testing when the rear wing failed, and

that's how I got the drive. You always thought, as a driver, that Gordon was such an amazing engineer that even if he built a bad car he'd turn it around and it would be ready to win by its second race. Unfortunately because it was so low, it used to flex a lot so it didn't handle. It was a dog of a car.

For qualifying we would take the wastegate off and put a blanking plate on. Nobody really knew how much power that gave us, but Paul Rosche of BMW reckoned it was anything between 1350 and 1500bhp. At Monza I went out to do my qualifying lap, and even though we'd raised the limiter by 1500rpm in each gear, anticipating running out of revs, on the main straight past the pit exit I did four or five hundred yards on the limiter.

I can remember that lap like it was yesterday. I had a smile on my face all the way until the end of the lap. And then, as I was going out of the Parabolica, the engine just melted.

Back in the pits they couldn't even take the gearbox off because the engine had broken in half. They had to take it out with half the engine still attached to it.

Although it was a very dangerous time, it was fantastic to be a driver and I'm glad I was part of it. The only downside was that sometimes you had to manage your fuel economy, which I'm not a fan of.

## WRC MARKKU ALÉN

'The 037 [Lancia's Group B entry for 1982-'85] had a supercharger because it meant less lag – the power came in easily. In the Delta Group B car [the S4, which arrived at the end of 1985] we had the four-cylinder engine with a turbocharger *and* the Volumex supercharger. It was a long time ago but I still remember. All the time you were wondering what would be your next accident!

It was a very light car [minimum weight for the class was 890kg] and when we started it had maybe 470bhp. In our last race, in the USA, it was about 600, maybe more – 620. Yes! I liked it very much. More power, more easy. That's the business, you know.

We had to work very, very hard to beat the Peugeot [the mid-engined 205 T16]. They always seemed to be one step ahead. We were quite late with the Delta, but it had lots of power. Certainly more power and a lighter car than they have in WRC today.

Asphalt I didn't like so much with the S4. In







## 'YOU WONDERED WHAT WOULD BE YOUR NEXT ACCIDENT'

the 037 yes, but in the S4, no – in my hands it was not very good on asphalt. Maybe I was scared or fed up! It was not an easy car and I think maybe I braked too hard when I was left-foot braking. So after 40 or 50 kilometres I would overheat the brakes and there was nothing left.

I did not have so many accidents in Group B – plenty in Group A [the less powerful formula for modified road cars, brought in for 1987], but in Group B I rolled once, maybe. I remember a big fight with [Juha] Kankkunen and I rolled – maybe, I don't quite remember, but it was some

accident. Before that, I think the only high-speed accident I had was driving a Fiat 131 in Helsinki, 1979. I was so lucky.

After Henri's crash [at Corsica in May 1986, in which both Toivenen and his co-driver Sergio Cresto died in their Delta S4] it was just terrible. I had to take things step by step. I had one month out, completely, no driving. After that I went to Col de Turini to do some testing to see what my feeling was. They were terrible times and not easy.

But I think this was a great time in rallying. The cars were so quick. In the Lancia 037 I

won twice in Corsica and that is special for a Scandinavian driver, to win on asphalt and on greasy roads. Sometimes it was hard to control. In Monte Carlo and Sweden, with 500bhp and no snow spikes, not easy, but we won first time out with the S4 at the RAC in 1985 with Henri and I was second. With more kilometres it became more easy, but it was very tough to come in and to be flat-out straight away.

We were missing a handbrake for the first six months in the S4. If something happened you braked, otherwise it was maximum attack. If I was on ice I would just have to hope it would all go well. In the hairpins – no, all the time in rallying – a handbrake is very important, eh? But on the power I was never scared, absolutely not.

Rallying now, it's like working in an office – open at 8 o'clock, close at 7 o'clock. No night-time driving. It's still difficult, like it was in our time, but there's something missing. To drive a fast car in the fog and the darkness – yes! Nothing like it...'



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Blundell drove through the Nissan R90CK's turbo problems to take pole for the 1990 Le Mans 24hrs. The car wouldn't complete the race, however

## LE MANS MARK BLUNDELL

'I took a bit of an unorthodox route to F1, and part of that route involved doing the World Sportscar Championship with Nissan. Even so, I was racing against people my age – Michael Schumacher, Karl Wendlinger, Heinz-Harald Frentzen – who would also go on to F1. It was a great platform for us young racers, and it's one of the best forms of racing I've done.

We were associated with some of the biggest manufacturers in the world, so there was quite a lot of rivalry, and none more so than with Nissan. Le Mans was the big one. They'd been there for the first time in 1989 and it hadn't gone according to plan. They were among the first people to run carbon brakes there, but the car didn't last very long.

We pitched up in 1990 with what was effectively a qualifying car [the twin-turbo V8-engined R90CK]. We struggled throughout the whole week. We couldn't get it to run cleanly so we couldn't do enough laps to work out which were the right tyres to use, how long they'd last. Most importantly we couldn't even tell what it could do with your right foot flat to the floor, because it wouldn't run properly. We had issues with the engine management and with the turbo overboosting. As soon as we went out on track we had to go back in again.

Come the end of the week, there was a huge reluctance to actually go out and try to qualify. Nissan wanted to save face because for a major manufacturer it wasn't looking too good. So the decision about who was going to qualify the car came to the toss of a coin between me and Julian Bailey.

I pulled out of the pitlane on a hard set of race tyres, because we had no idea whether a set of soft qualifying tyres would last, and I took it very gently. As I built up through the

speed range it felt reasonably clean, and very powerful. But towards the end of the lap, as I was putting a bit more speed into it to warm the tyres up, the guys came on the radio and told me to abort the lap because it was overboosting again. I was very frustrated. It felt pretty good to me, which is why at that point my radio lead sort of fell out of its socket so I couldn't hear anything from the pits anymore...

The first time I got an idea of what was under my right foot was as I came out of the little chicane to start the qualifying lap. We only had a five-speed gearbox and the car was still

kept spinning up I had no reference for what gear I was in or how much throttle travel I had left. It almost didn't matter because the power was either on or off.

The other thing I had no reference for was where to get on the brakes. I was hitting speeds we hadn't come anywhere near before – 238mph on the Mulsanne Straight, even with the two chicanes. It was a total suck-it-and-see lap. Every input was pure reflex – things were coming at me everywhere I looked. For about 50 per cent of the lap I felt like I was on the verge of a massive accident.



## 'IT WAS ALL OVER THE PLACE. THE POWER WAS ON OR OFF'

spinning its wheels in fourth gear as I went up the straight.

If you look at the in-car video on YouTube you can see me going from lock to lock on the steering through the Dunlop chicane, just after the bridge. It was completely sideways. That's what 1100bhp feels like. I nearly lost it even before I went under the bridge. But I never had second thoughts about whether I should have started the lap. I was too busy concentrating on where the car was going to go next.

It was an exhilarating lap. The car was a handful; it wasn't the best-handling car of its day anyway, but with that amount of power behind you it was something else. It was all over the place. I was taking handfuls of lock on the way into every corner, and because the wheels

After I crossed the line at the end of the lap, I plugged the radio back in. The guys in the pits were pretty pissed off that I'd taken no notice of them but on the other hand they were ecstatic because I'd just stuck the car on pole.

I suppose I could have blown the engine up or done some damage to myself and the car, but it had been a long week and I think that by the time I was halfway round the lap, everyone was with me. If we'd understood a little more about the car and I'd had the right tyres on, we could have been on pole by eight or nine seconds rather than six.

After the weekend they made me a little plaque with one of the cylinders from the engine. I'm still really proud of the job I did that day.'

# RETURN OF THE TURBO

## Formula 1

From 2013, turbos will not only be back in Formula 1, they'll be mandatory. Why the change of heart a quarter of a century after banning them? For F1 it's a question of economic survival.

'Stability can only come through the long-term involvement of the automotive industry,' says McLaren team boss and Formula One Teams Association chairman Martin Whitmarsh. 'In recent years we have not done enough to keep some of these manufacturers in our sport, nor have we done enough to attract others in. In the future, as well as attracting them in the first place, we must give them compelling business reasons to stay. As a sport, we cannot simply sit around and wait for wealthy benefactors – friendly billionaires, internet gaming companies, whatever the next new big thing is.'

F1, therefore, has to stay relevant – and that means showing technical leadership, acting as a proving ground for technologies that help us stay mobile as oil becomes increasingly scarce. BMW, Toyota and Honda recently quit the sport because the costs outweighed the marketing benefit. Ford bailed out years ago. The Renault name lives on, albeit through a team that spent much of 2010 splashing the logos of obscure financial institutions on the side of its car in exchange for loans to keep the team afloat. VW/Audi regularly cites its other motorsport interests (such as Audi's Le Mans project) as better drivers of return on investment than F1, which is why it has no immediate plans to join.

The planned 2013 engine regulations stipulate 1.6-litre four-cylinder motors, turbocharged (although this was actually omitted from the FIA's announcement), with a rev limit of 12,000rpm and high-pressure fuel injection up to 500bar. It's the latter element, rather than the return of turbos, which is hoped will attract fresh interest from the automotive sector. Currently only common-rail diesel engines operate with those kind of injection pressures. An F1 car is one of the most mechanically hostile environments on earth; if a high-pressure petrol injection system can



LAT/Corbis

be made to work reliably there, the technology will trickle down to road cars quickly and to the benefit of the increasingly squeezed enthusiast as well as everyday motorists.

Of course, not everyone is on side, and the new engine rules have been sucked into the dreary and self-destructive world of the sport's politics. Ferrari and Bernie Ecclestone have voiced their dislike of the proposed engine format, Ferrari because rorty multi-cylinder engines are part of its brand cachet and Ecclestone because he fears that spectators won't find the noise

thrilling enough. However, Bernie, the teams and the FIA are currently limbering up for a three-way scrap about how the sport's commercial revenues are divvied up, so it can be difficult to divine whether the objections to turbo engines are genuine or simply another cheap shot in the ongoing war of words over who gets what percentage of F1's TV money. But the FIA is adamant that the changes will happen – and that the new engines will offer performance on a par with the current 2.4-litre V8s.

What do the drivers think? None of the class of 2011 has driven turbocharged cars at the top level, although Jenson Button and Lewis Hamilton have tried 1980s McLarens at historic events.

'At first I pushed the throttle and nothing seemed to happen,' says Button of his experience in Alain Prost's 1986 title-winner, propelled by a 1.5-litre V6 TAG turbo, at the Goodwood Festival of Speed last year. 'Then the power came in all at once and it just charged forward. The delivery characteristics of the turbo engine are completely different from what we have now.'

## Touring Cars

Formula 1 isn't the only motorsport category to be struggling to align itself with the age of austerity. Factory interest in tin-top racing has been at what feels like an all-time low and private entrants have found commercial backing hard to come by. The Next Generation Touring Car (NGTC) proposed by BTCC supremo Alan Gow aims to make racing more cost-effective and turbocharging is at the heart of the formula.

The NGTC engine is a 300bhp 2-litre turbocharged petrol unit limited to 7000rpm. Teams can use an engine from the manufacturer they represent, or a control engine which can be bought or leased.

Existing cars are still allowed to race until the end of the 2012 season, provided they run with the new engines. After that the whole car, including bodyshell, brakes and suspension, must meet the NGTC spec. The Scandinavian Touring Car Championship is going to adopt the NGTC rules next year.

**'F1 HAS TO STAY RELEVANT – AND THAT MEANS SHOWING TECHNICAL LEADERSHIP'**



# BLAST MASTERS

From original 911 Turbo to Mégane R26.R, via Skyline GT-R, Escort Cosworth and Ghibli Cup, **Richard Meaden** revisits five definitive turbocharged performance cars

Pictures **Chris Rutter**



If there's one car that embodies the potent myths and legends of forced induction it's the original Porsche 911 Turbo. With its fat wheelarches, trademark whale-tail spoiler and badass reputation, this late-'70s superstar still has a magnetism and charisma to make enthusiasts of a certain age go weak at the knees.

This particular example is an immaculate early 3.3-litre car, owned by Paragon Porsche proprietor Mark Sumpter. It's probably the ideal specification, for with the jump from 3.0 to 3.3 litres, the Turbo gained an intercooler and approximately 40bhp, lifting peak power and torque to 300bhp and 304lb ft respectively. It wasn't all change, though, for the long-striding four-speed manual transmission was retained until well into the '80s.

At 1300kg, the 930 Turbo is a flyweight

compared with modern metal. The unassisted steering has some meat to it, but it's not hefty like, say, the later 964 RS, and the suspension is way softer than you might expect. The driving position is excellent, although the floor-hinged pedals will feel odd if you've never driven an old 911 before. The long, wand-like gearlever has a protracted throw and a slightly notchy feel, but it has a sense of connection that matches the talkative steering.

The engine has a breathy, respiratory sound. It's smooth and sweetly responsive, but it takes a while for the boost to start swelling. You know the gearing is tall – stands to reason with only four gears to take you from a standstill to over 160mph – but you only come to truly appreciate the length of the 911 Turbo's stride when you decide to wind it up in second gear and watch the speedo needle sweep rapidly to just beyond 90mph. This is an

effortlessly fast car, even in 2011.

It copes with its prodigious pace too. Yes, the suspension is soft, and yes when you're making rapid progress on a bumpy B-road you feel its head begin to nod with the undulations, but it never gets deflected from your chosen trajectory. It turns in well and generates strong, if soft-edged grip from its modern 205/55 x 16 front Conti SportContacts.

Unsurprisingly, most corners worth the name can be tackled in second gear. Tighter bends can leave you becalmed in the boost-free lower reaches of the rev-range, but with practice you learn to anticipate the turbo boost, pressing on the throttle pedal a moment before you would do normally. Get it right and the Turbo is magnificently rewarding, settling into the corner by squatting onto its outside rear wheel, tail *j-u-s-t* stepping out of line as the boost builds. You barely need to apply any conscious



## 'The 911 is fun in the dry, but I suspect a wet road demands

opposite lock, for the steering seems to find its own corrective balance point.

It pays to keep your wits about you, though, for pre-empting the lag is a bit like threading a needle. Get too greedy and the tail will kick wide more quickly and less progressively than you expect. It's all good fun in the dry, but I suspect a wet road demands rather more circumspection. The Turbo's reputation is well deserved.

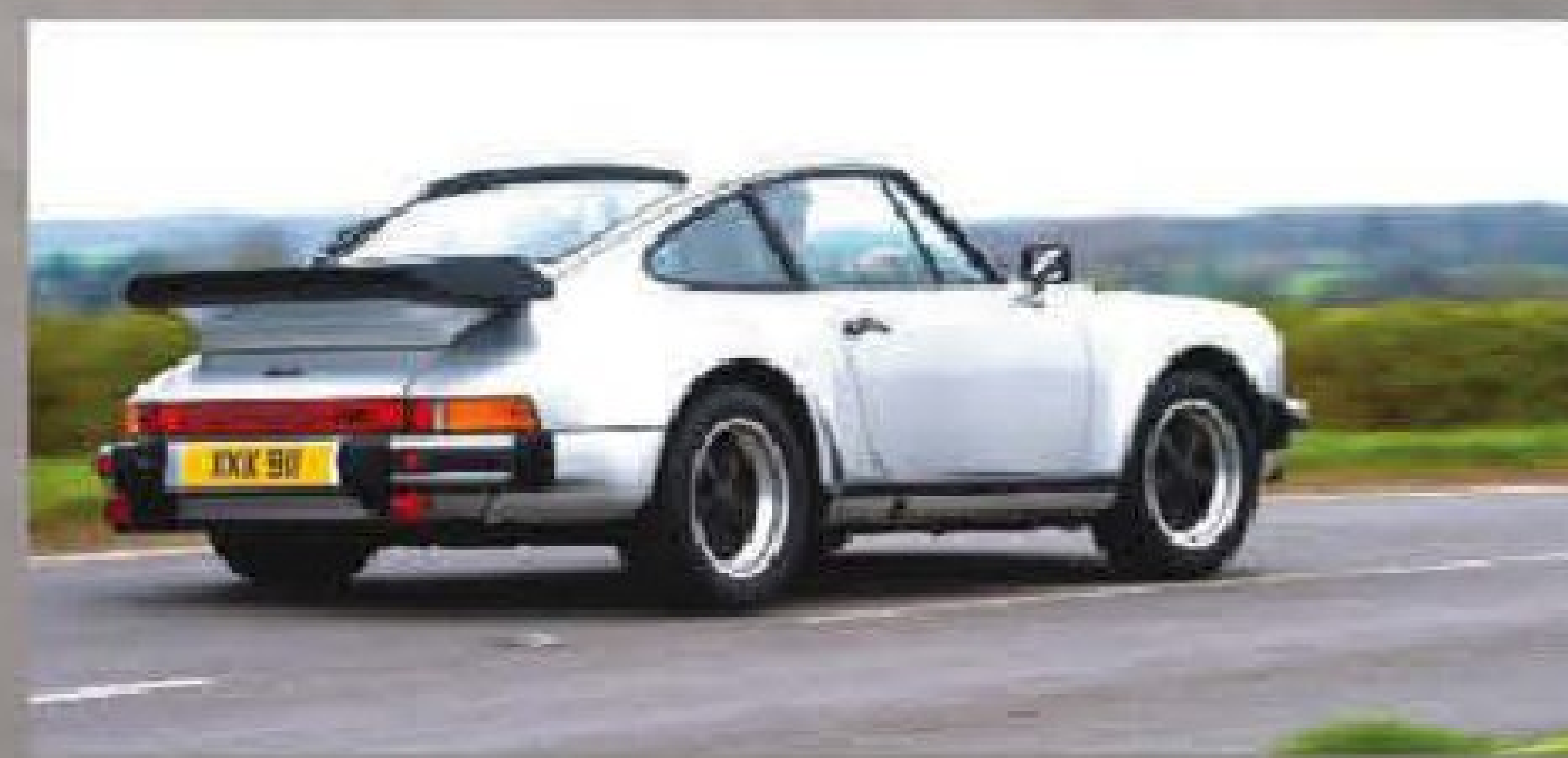
Next up from our gathering of five turbocharged heroes is the R32 Nissan Skyline GT-R. It's about as far from the 911 Turbo as you can get, with its front-mounted, twin-turbo 2.6-litre in-line six-cylinder engine and mildly bonkers Super HICAS all-wheel drive. That said, rather like the 911 Turbo, the R32 – the first GT-R to get a turbocharged engine – must have seemed like a spaceship when it was launched in 1989. Not that we knew about it here in the UK, as we never really saw Nissan's cultish GT-R until grey importing became all the rage for petrolheads with imaginations fuelled by PlayStation's *Gran Turismo* driving game.

Now, as then, good, straight R32s are like rocking horse droppings. Many have been crashed, more have been heavily modified, which is a great shame, for as evidenced by this

perfect example – loaned to us by Paul Brace of Eagle E-Types fame – a sympathetically tweaked R32 is a hugely desirable car. Not that I blame GT-R owners for chasing power. After all, that's the beauty of turbocharged engines, and the Skyline's RB26DETT motor is famous for delivering 1000bhp in the days when 500bhp was some serious mumbo. In this context, Paul's car is barely breaking sweat at an estimated 320bhp or so.

These old GT-Rs all have the same sense of quality and tremendously robust mechanicals. The engine starts with a deep rumble and settles into a rock-solid idle. The clutch is firm and the gearshift of the five-speed manual 'box is magnificently mechanical, with zero slack and maximum precision. The steering is power-assisted, but only enough to make parking easy; once up to speed it feels weighty and immediate – not too quick, but not slow-witted either. Already this car's sense of purpose is unmistakable.

The engine is a real character, snorts and chuffs and *tis-choo* sneezes coming with each squeeze and relax of the throttle. It builds revs slowly at first, but once the turbos begin to blow there's a hardening of the engine note and a more insistent embrace from the forces of accelerative G. It's a busier sensation than the





rather more circumspection. Its reputation is well deserved'

elastic performance of the Porsche, but it shares a similar muscularity.

This car has HKS dampers, though they've been wound back for road use. They still make this R32 a firm-riding machine, but the sharp responses are a trade-off worth making. It's been a while since I've driven an R32, and for a while the handling balance feels bizarre. Even at modest speed you can turn into a corner and immediately feel the tail step out of line. Unnerving at first, you soon learn to drive with a bit more commitment, applying the power while turning in and adding a measured amount of pre-emptive opposite lock, as though you're letting the Skyline know you're dialled in to its antics.

If there's a weakness it's that this propensity for oversteer only seems to increase with speed, so you find yourself peeling into fast corners with mildly perspiring palms. Be calm with the steering, make one smooth input and the Skyline tracks straight and true, but there's no question the real fun – and some truly outrageous handling characteristics – can be fully enjoyed in the low- and medium-speed corners. If you want a truly unique driving experience, the R32 is hard to beat.

The Escort Cosworth is a strange car. It looks utterly in-yer-face and has plenty of

Above: 911 Turbo chases Skyline GT-R. Below: high-backed leather seats in the 911's understated cabin. Below right: Mégane R26.R's interior looks almost race-car-like in comparison, with lightweight Sabelt seats, harnesses and half cage

motorsport pedigree, yet when you're sat in the thing its brittle plastic dash, cheap switchgear and too-high driving position create a horrid driving environment. The engine isn't exactly a peach either, both feeling and sounding coarse and strained, while the gearshift is long-winded and a bit imprecise. First impressions certainly give you the sense that this car is more Escort than Cosworth...



Top: classic 930 shape still looks great; whale-tail spoiler (left) made the Turbo unmistakable in its heyday. Above: 3.3-litre flat-six puts out 300bhp; earliest 911 Turbos had a 260bhp 3-litre engine



Stick with it, though, and the Cossie begins to shine. That motor might feel rough and a bit reluctant, but work it and it delivers the goods. This is a late model, or 'small turbo' as it's also known, a name reflecting its swap from early homologation specification with a bigger, laggier Garrett turbo for more motorsport potential to the smaller T25 Garrett for more responsive road behaviour.

With the drop in turbo size came a reduction in peak power, from 227bhp to 217. That seems laughably modest compared with today's average hot hatch output, and makes it hard to believe the Escort Cosworth had such a hardcore reputation in the '90s, but what it manages to do with that less-than-spectacular power remains impressive and entertaining.

There's decent compliance to the damping, so you don't have to worry too much about bumps or cambers. The steering is quick and the front end has the grip to cope, so the Cossie feels brilliantly agile. Once you get used to the power delivery you begin to trust in the torque rather than wringing it out for top-end power. There's plenty of mid-range muscle to exploit in third and fourth gears, so you can use this to punch you between the corners without suffering the high-rev coarseness.

Despite four-wheel drive, the Cossie has a hot hatchback-like feel: all front-end bite with a playfully mobile tail. The combination of a super-pointy front end and 33/67 front/rear torque-split is a clever and expressive one, for it allows you to set the car up on the way into a corner, turning in with a deliberate lift of the throttle to get the tail moving, then using the quick steering and rear-biased torque split

“The Cossie feels brilliantly agile and has plenty of mid-range torque to exploit”

to power through. It's something you need to reserve for open, clearly sighted corners, but it's a treat you'll never tire of.

It's not everyone's cup of tea, and there's no question the car's humble origins and four-cylinder engine lack the kudos of a more exotic body and a sweet-spinning six-cylinder, but the Escort Cosworth is a vivid reminder of the days when rallying still gave us exciting road cars.

If there's a manufacturer that fully embraced forced induction it's Maserati. Looking back, it seems like a strange chapter in the Modenese car maker's history, but I'm sure you, like I, recall the boxy Biturbo family with curious



Above and right: Ghibli's boxy styling is a world away from Maserati's current offerings. Left: infamous clock looks rather out of place on such a sporty dash, but Meaden's a fan nonetheless





Cosworth (far left) has 16in alloys (above), a longitudinally mounted 2-litre four (below) and a boost gauge (left). Right: GT-R's 18in Nismo alloys



affection. Students of Maserati's turbo era will be slightly disappointed it's not a Shamal that's next in our line-up. I am too, but of all the cars Maserati built in the '80s and '90s, the Ghibli Cup is by far the most complete and impressive model.

It's a car we hold in great affection here at **evo**, for our own Harry Metcalfe owned one during the formative years of this magazine. I was lucky enough to drive many thousands of miles in Hazza's Maser, so it's great to have the chance to drive another, this one owned by John Conner.

It's a rare car, the Ghibli Cup. Only 26 right-

hand-drive examples were built, and a few of those have gone the way of many biturbo Maseratis: backwards through hedges. Small with a square jaw and broad shoulders, the Ghibli is a handsomely understated coupe. Front-engined, rear-drive, with a six-speed gearbox and no traction aids, it was a car for the discerning purist and a classy, unorthodox rival to the BMW M3.

Its 2-litre biturbo V6 is a gem of an engine, with a gutsy delivery, vocal character and free-revving nature. Producing 330bhp and 279lb ft, it's part of an impressive package that never got the recognition it deserved when the model

was launched. Part of that was down to then-traditional Italian failings, such as the peculiar long-arm-short-leg driving position. You never quite get comfy behind the chunky Momo wheel, but it's not a deal breaker.

The gearshift is a bit indistinct, but the ratios are closely stacked. Combined with the Ghibli's force-fed torque, this means you need to reappraise your choice of gear for any given corner, often finding it quicker and smoother to opt for third instead of second, and fourth instead of third.

The steering is nicely weighted, but does initially feel a little slow. Much like the driving





Left: Maserati's V6 displaces just 2 litres, but a pair of turbos takes its output to 330bhp. Above: R32's twin-turbo in-line six was rated at 276bhp in factory spec – but few stayed that way

position, it's a feeling that fades with miles. Indeed, once you settle into a rhythm you find the Maser's steering is a real asset, for its rate of response makes for smooth, accurate progress. In the dry there's tons of grip and traction, especially if you work your way to the stiffer of the four suspension settings offered by the dampers. You really have to try hard to break traction, and even when you do it's progressive and intuitive to catch. Experience suggests this isn't the case in the rain, but so long as you pay it respect the Ghibli Cup is a poised and sweetly balanced car to drive quickly. The clock's pretty cool too.

Our last turbocharged blast from the (recent) past is the Renaultsport Mégane R26.R. A legend in its own lap-time, this track-ready hot hatch is every bit as special as a GT3 RS, with race seats, plastic windows, carbon bonnet, titanium exhaust and no radio. Such an extreme diet sheds 125kg from the regular Renaultsport Mégane's kerb weight, increasing the 227bhp R26.R's power-to-weight ratio to an impressive 189bhp per ton.

It's this lack of mass you notice first, for from the moment you start driving the R26.R it feels



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‘The GT-R’s engine is a real character, snorts and chuffs and *tis-choo* sneezes coming with each squeeze and relax of the throttle’

‘Driving an R26.R quickly on a B-road is right up there with the greatest behind-the-wheel experiences you can have’



R26.R's weight-saving measures include a carbonfibre bonnet (left), no radio (below) and manual mirrors (so make sure you adjust them before tightening the harness!); 227bhp 2-litre turbo engine (right) feels stronger for these losses





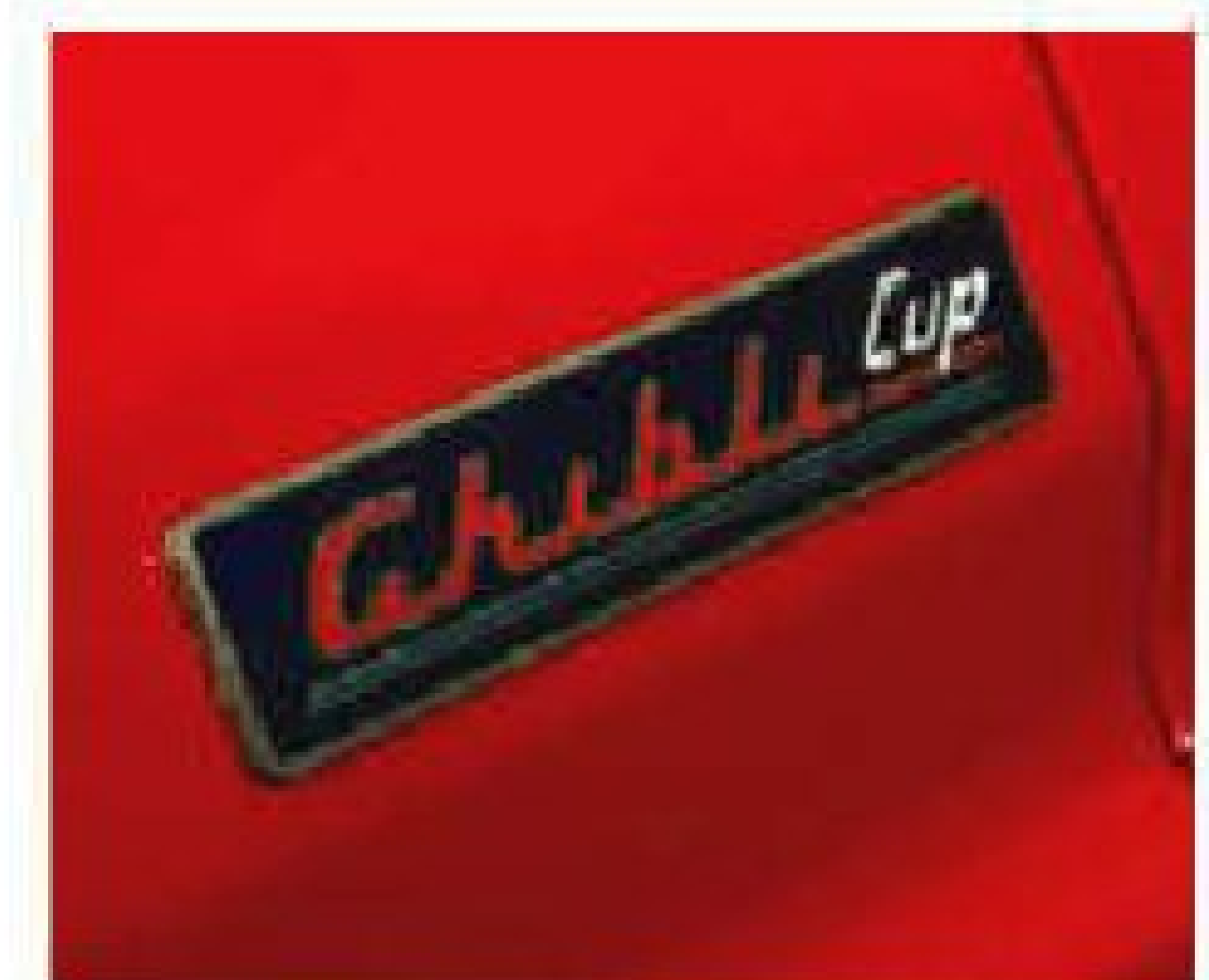
empty, a bit like picking up a large suitcase filled with feathers. With your shoulders pulled down into the seat by the red Sabelt harness and your rear-view mirror filled with a scarlet lattice of roll-cage, it's genuinely like driving a racing car on the road. Stones ping round the wheelarches, flung there by the sticky Toyo R888 trackday tyres, but where you expect the mega Mégane to hop and skip on super-stiff track suspension, it breathes with the road thanks to springs and dampers softened to account for the reduction in weight.

The whole experience is completely absorbing, as much for surprises like the supple suspension as for the frankly ridiculous levels of grip, traction and corner speed the car generates. It takes you a long time to appreciate just how much speed you can carry on turn-in, and once you do, you realise such commitment has little place on the public road. Still, even at less than maximum attack the Mégane engages you like few other cars, so although you know it has plenty in reserve, you don't feel cheated when you don't fully exploit it.

As you'd perhaps expect from the newest turbo car here, it's also fabulously tractable, with all 229lb ft arriving at 3000rpm. That's not a rippling amount of torque, but given the R26.R only weighs 1220kg it makes for a grunty-feeling road car that doesn't need constant gearshifts to keep it simmering. With a limited-slip differential to ensure the front wheels are always digging for grip and a throttle-adjustable balance that lets you place the Mégane with millimetric precision, driving an R26.R quickly on a great British B-road is right up there with the greatest behind-the-wheel experiences you can have.

These five cars are so different there's no point in even trying to rank them in order of preference and ability. In their own way they are all exceptional machines, in some cases capable of impressing more than three decades after they were first introduced, and in all cases leaving you with a sense your life would be all the richer for having one in your garage.

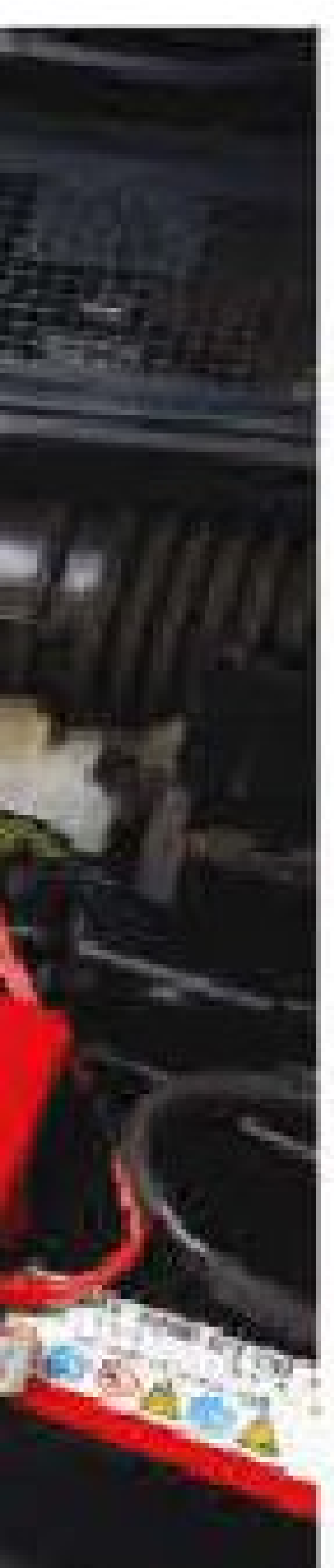
There's a lot to be said for the instant, unadulterated feel and sound of a great naturally aspirated engine, but this quirky, curious and eclectic quintet of turbocharged cars proves the allure of forced induction is real and well deserved.

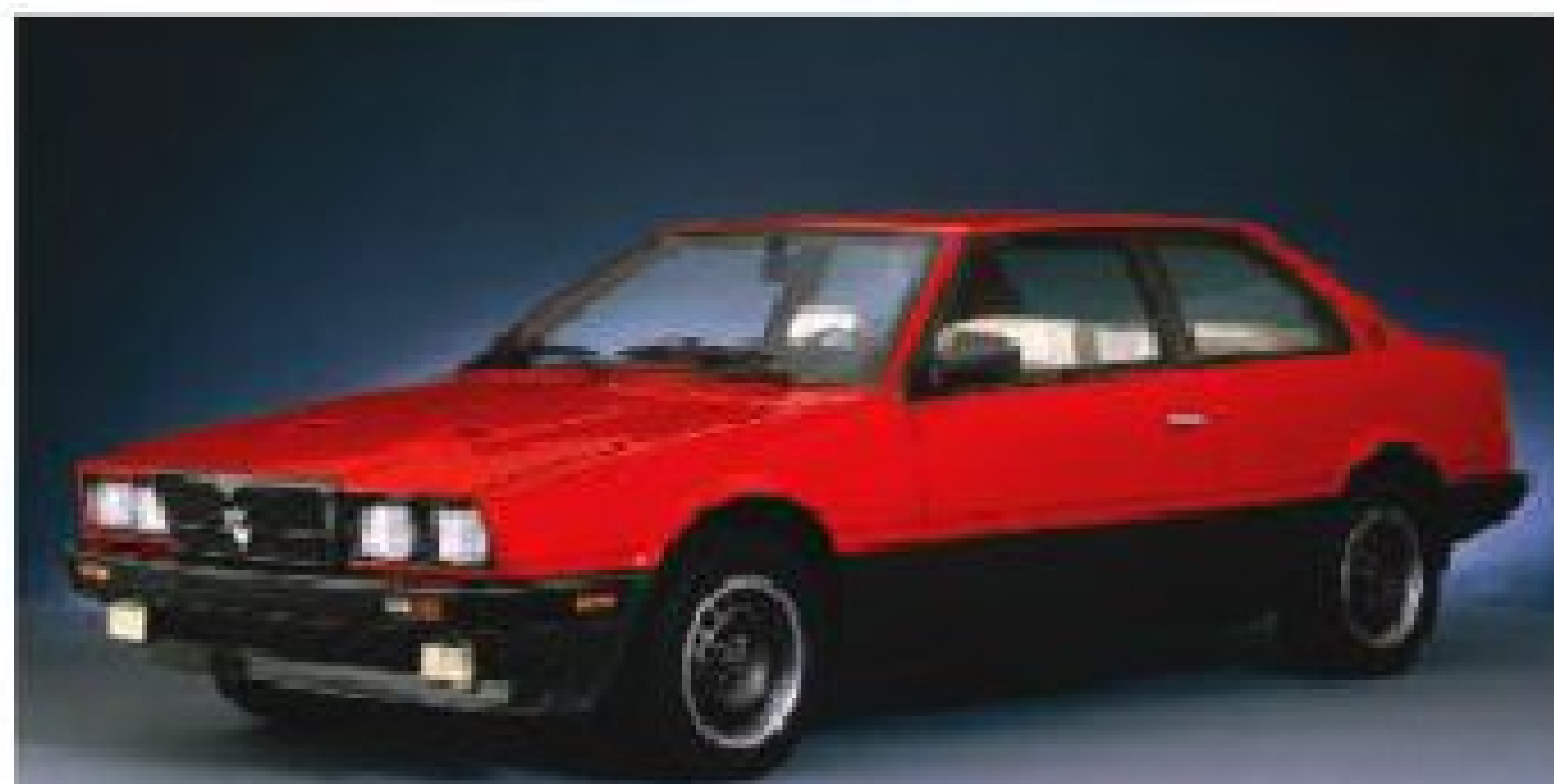


With thanks to Bill McGrath Maserati ([classicmaserati.co.uk](http://classicmaserati.co.uk)) for sourcing the Ghibli Cup, Mark Sumpter for the 911, Paul Brace for the GT-R, Ford Heritage Collection for the Cosworth and Renault for the R26.R

SPECIFICATIONS

	ENGINE	MAX POWER	MAX TORQUE	WEIGHT (KERB)	POWER-TO-WEIGHT	0-60MPH	TOP SPEED	PRICE WHEN NEW	ON SALE	EVO RATING
<b>PORSCHE 911 TURBO (930)</b>	Flat-six, 3299cc, turbo	300bhp @ 5500rpm	304lb ft @ 4000rpm	1300kg	258bhp/ton	5.4sec (claimed)	162mph (claimed)	£42,444 (1986)	1975-1989	★★★★★
<b>NISSAN SKYLINE GT-R (R32)</b>	In-line 6-cyl, 2596cc, twin-turbo	276bhp @ 6800rpm	260lb ft @ 4400rpm	1430kg	196bhp/ton	5.6sec (claimed)	156mph (claimed)	c£42,500 (1991)	1989-1994	★★★★★
<b>FORD ESCORT RS COSWORTH</b>	In-line 4-cyl, 1993cc, turbo	217bhp @ 6250rpm	214lb ft @ 3500rpm	1320kg	167bhp/ton	6.1sec (claimed)	136mph (claimed)	£26,750 (1995)	1992-1996	★★★★★
<b>MASERATI GIBLI CUP</b>	V6, 1996cc, twin-turbo	330bhp @ 6500rpm	279lb ft @ 4000rpm	1365kg	246bhp/ton	5.6sec (claimed)	168mph (claimed)	£46,000 (1995)	1995	★★★★★
<b>RENAULTSPORT MÉGANE R26.R</b>	In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc, turbo	227bhp @ 5500rpm	229lb ft @ 3000rpm	1220kg	189bhp/ton	6.0sec (claimed)	147mph (claimed)	£23,815 (2008)	2008-2009	★★★★★





### MASERATI BITURBO

This was Maserati trying to build a 3-series but not getting the point. All versions had a strange 90deg twin-turbo V6, some had knife-edge handling, and all were disastrously thirsty. Very quick when wastegate jammed shut...



### NISSAN FIGARO

Micra-based retrocar and popular grey import had a tiny 988cc engine and a three-speed auto. Its turbo gave it 75bhp so it could at least get out of the way.



### MITSUBISHI LANCER EX2000 TURBO

Here, in the second-gen Lancer, began the engine line that powered rally-flavoured Lancers right up to the Evo IX. In this primordial form, devised just for Europe, it managed 168bhp, but this was upped to 280bhp (the Japanese voluntary 'limit') for EX2000 rally cars. These early Lancers are ultra-rare in the UK, where they wore Colt badging in place of Mitsubishi.

# THE GOOD, THE

*Turbocharging has produced some memorable performance cars over the years, and*



### OLDSMOBILE F-85 JETFIRE

Adding a Garrett turbo to a 3.5-litre V8 (the engine that later became Rover's) to create this first-ever turbo production car was a bold move in 1962, but 215bhp and 301lb ft was the relatively meagre result. It came with bucket seats, a vacuum/boost gauge and an optional four-on-the-floor. But they forgot to firm-up the suspension, so it still handled like a boat. A speedboat, in this case.



### FIAT UNO TURBO

Smooth, gutsy engine in a loose, inert chassis, which was a shame. Mike Spence Motorsport conversion built on the standard 120bhp, added water injection and outdragged a Testarossa in fourth.



### FERRARI 208 GTB

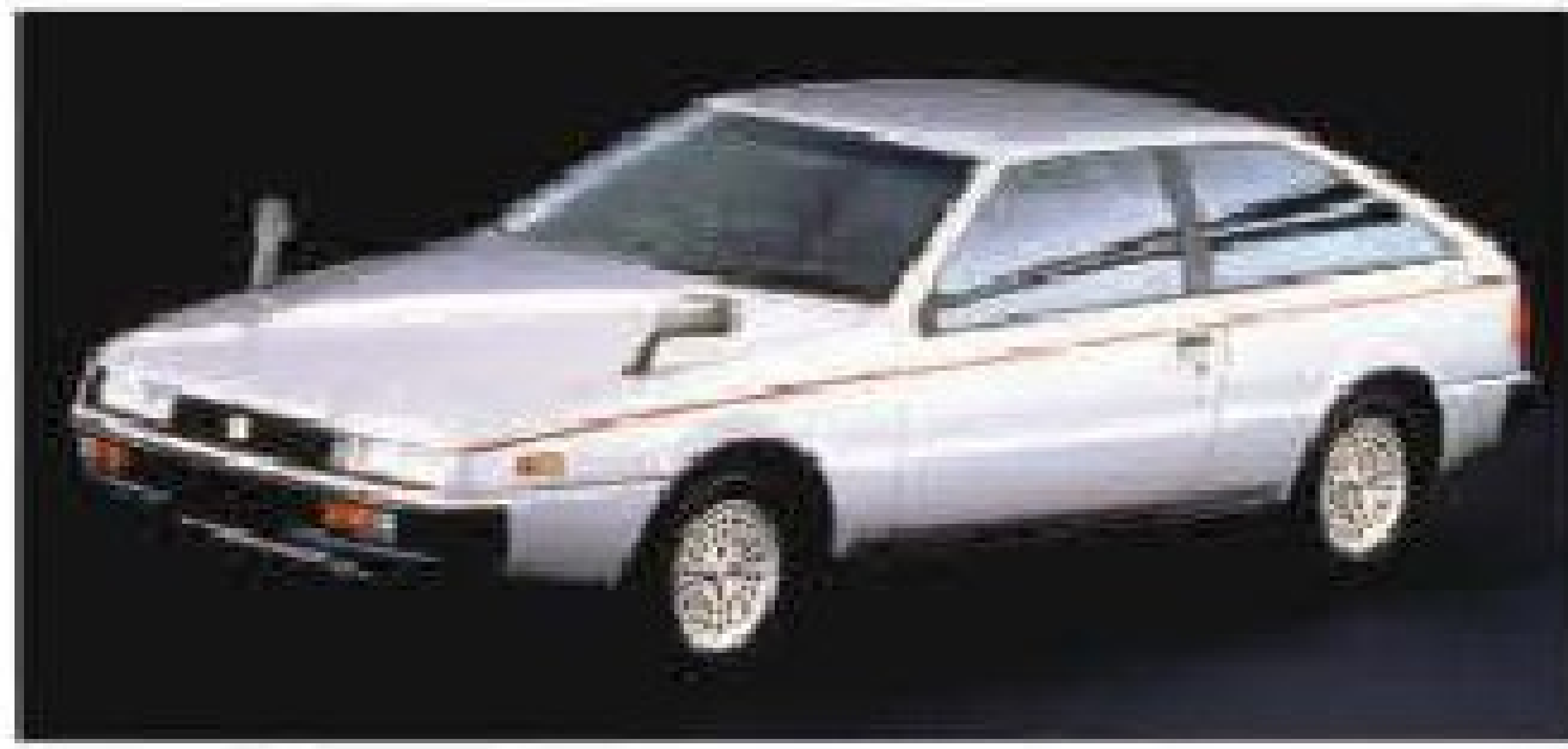
This 1991cc tax-break special for the Italian home market made do with just 155bhp until a turbo and fuel injection came to the rescue in 1982. Now the smallest V8 ever made could release 220 sweet-spinning if somewhat lag-prone bhp, not too far short of the regular 3-litre 308's outputs. The ultimate turbocharged version of this Ferrari line, of course, was the 288 GTO, which nudged 400bhp.



### BENTLEY MULSANNE TURBO

Putting a puffer on Rolls-Royce's venerable V8 raised output from 'adequate' to 'ample' and re-established Bentley as more than a re-grilled Rolls. The ease with which this drawing-room on wheels could light up its tyres never ceased to amuse.

Only three other cars in the world make your heart thump, your nerves tingle and your muscles go dry in anything like the same way as the Bentley Mulsanne Turbo...



#### TVR TAIMAR TURBO

Britain's first turbocharged car used a Broadspeed single-turbo conversion on its Ford Essex V6, with 230bhp and a 5.7sec 0-60mph time. The Taimar hatchback's name blended 'Tailgate' and 'Martin' (Lilley, TVR boss). There were also turbo versions of the 3000M and 3000S.

#### ISUZU PIAZZA TURBO

'Handling by Lotus', it said on later cars' flanks, Hethel having helped the antiquated, Vauxhall Chevette-derived underpinnings handle 147bhp of 2-litre turbomotor. Mutton dressed as lamb.



#### LANCIA Y10

This tiny turbo terror could have been the new Mini Cooper with 85bhp bursting through its little wheels, but the chassis had other ideas. Few cars bucked and torque-steered like the Y10.



### THE CULT OF THE TURBO: BEST & WORST OF THE REST

#### RENAULT FUEGO TURBO

Final incarnation of Fuego gained a rather laggy turbo for its 1565cc four, giving 132bhp and 0-60 in a decidedly lukewarm 9.5sec.

# BAD & THE UGLY

one or two that might be best forgotten. *John Simister* torque-steers down Memory Lane



#### MG MAESTRO TURBO

As if the Montego Turbo didn't torque-steer enough, Tickford put the engine in a Maestro and turned the wick up to 150bhp. For a time it was the hottest hatch you could buy, with 0-60 in the mid-sixes.



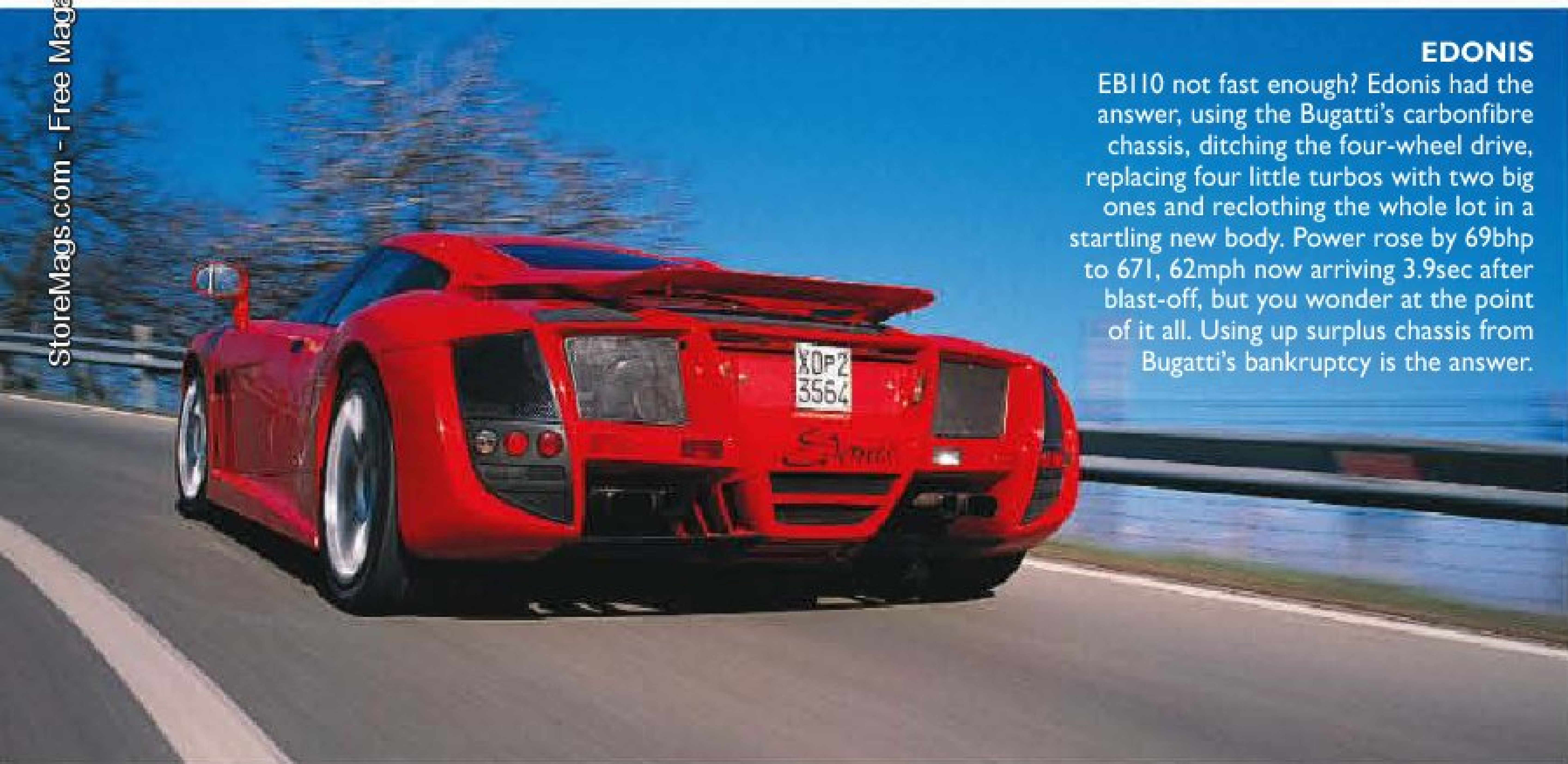
#### EDONIS

EB110 not fast enough? Edonis had the answer, using the Bugatti's carbonfibre chassis, ditching the four-wheel drive, replacing four little turbos with two big ones and reclothing the whole lot in a startling new body. Power rose by 69bhp to 671, 62mph now arriving 3.9sec after blast-off, but you wonder at the point of it all. Using up surplus chassis from Bugatti's bankruptcy is the answer.



#### SAAB 900 CARLSSON

The first volume-production European turbo car was the 99 Turbo, which evolved into the 900. That last all-Saab Saab spawned numerous turbo versions, of which the first with the final 185bhp engine was the special-edition Carlsson (above right), named after Saab's favourite rally driver. The deep, hollow exhaust note and the languid torque-steer hold a special place in the Saabophile's heart, but violent standing starts could trigger mechanical carnage (jammed gearboxes, smashed rotor arms). Larger 9000 Turbo (also pictured) with Fiat-shared basic bodysell also had a Carlsson version.



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# Turbocharged

These concepts from Audi, Alfa Romeo, Saab and BMW all point to future production models, and they



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**W**e've seen the future, and it's turbocharged. We're entering a new age of forced induction that seems set to sweep almost all before it. So far this has been a quiet revolution, but now it's gathering pace with an exponential acceleration not unlike that of a spinning turbine blade. Within the next few years, performance cars fitted with naturally aspirated engines are set to become a small, old-fashioned minority.

The turbo never died, of course. Even when the forced-induction petrol engine dropped out of mainstream favour – its decline mirrored by

the growing ubiquity of its industrial cousin, the turbodiesel – some manufacturers kept the faith. But many others were glad to be rid of the unreliability and off-on performance that had been associated with early, lag-prone turbos.

Which is why BMW's decision to turbocharge the next-generation 'F10' M5 is such a big deal. When the previous M5 was introduced, as recently as 2004, BMW's M division went to the considerable expense of engineering a naturally aspirated 500bhp V10 to power its halo model, a decision that was justified at the time by the stated ambition not to compromise the M5's manners through forced induction. Barely half a

decade later, BMW has rotated its position 180 degrees, with the new M5's twin-turbocharged V8 set to make it the fourth force-fed M-car (following on from the X5M, X6M and 1-series M Coupe). What's more, the company's senior management is prepared to admit that the previous-generation car's combination of a high-revving V10 and snatchy single-clutch SMG automated transmission was a technical blind alley.

'The V10 will go down in history as one of the most sophisticated engines ever built,' says Kay Segler, M division's outgoing boss, 'but it's now clear that the combination of eight



# cars: the future

all feature turbocharged engines. Yet boosting performance isn't the main reason why, as **Mike Duff** explains



cylinders and our specific turbo system is a better solution for the new car... With the previous M5 and M6 we leaned towards a very, very sporty driving experience. And in traffic jams, yes, there were limits to it. The new M5 is a business car and a sports car in one, without any compromise, but built with the principle of "character first, technology follows".

Not that BMW is releasing too many details of the new, force-fed M5 at this stage. Officially an external styling concept, the car you see here was shown at April's Shanghai motor show, while the production version is set to make its debut at the Frankfurt show this autumn. Aside

from what it will look like, we also know that it will feature a twin-clutch gearbox, upgraded suspension and steering, and the familiar character-changing 'M' button. Performance is said to be 'incrementally faster' from that of the E60 M5 – there are no official numbers yet – thanks to the combination of the new engine's fatter torque curve and what's believed (although not yet confirmed) to be the extensive use of carbonfibre panels to save weight.

But M division bosses admit that the primary engineering directive given for the new M5 wasn't to dramatically increase performance, rather to slash CO2 emissions.

'We're not living on another planet,' admits Segler. 'We have to recognise that CO2 is an issue for a growing number of people and we have addressed that.'

The official line is that the new M5 will emit up to 30 per cent less CO2 than the old one, which – if delivered – would cut emissions to around 250g/km, enough to earn tax breaks in many European countries. It would also translate into a fuel economy figure of around 25mpg – pretty remarkable considering the amount of performance on offer.

Turbocharging has been vital to combining M-car levels of performance with these new-

## THE CULT OF THE TURBO THE FUTURE

found green ambitions. Despite the profligate habits of their fuel-gargling predecessors in the '70s and '80s, the best modern turbo engines are far more efficient for a given level of performance. The M5 is set to use an evolved version of the 4.4-litre blown V8 that's already been seen in the X5M and X6M, which uses two small turbochargers mounted inside the 'V' of the engine. These are of a twin-scroll design and are plumbed into what BMW calls its 'Cylinder-bank Comprehensive Manifold', which 'pairs' opposed cylinders to minimise the disruption caused by separate pulses of exhaust gas. The result is minimal turbo lag, strong low-down responses (the X5M delivers its peak torque from just 1500rpm) and a very un-turbo-like ability to rev. Albert Biermann, M's head of development, promises that the M5 will have a similar red line to naturally aspirated rivals like the Mercedes E63 AMG.

Power? There's no official number yet, but we're prepared to bet that BMW will send the M5 to the crease with slightly more than the 547bhp of the current X5M and X6M, although Biermann cautions against expecting any 'shock and awe' numbers: 'At M it's not our target to have a car with the highest horsepower. We deliver a package where we think everything fits nicely together – suspension, engine performance, torque, aerodynamics. That's what makes a winner, and if it's 10bhp more or less than other cars then we don't care.'

The key to understanding this move towards turbocharging is to appreciate the inherent



Twin-turbo V8 of the new M5 (below) promises to be easier to live with than the old V10 – and more economical – but not at the expense of performance

efficiency benefits that a well-sorted installation can bring. Turbochargers are powered by exhaust gas – the engine's waste product – with compressed intake air improving volumetric efficiency and enabling smaller capacity engines to burn more fuel and develop more power. This doesn't just mean that engine size can be reduced, it also gives designers the possibility to downsize a powerplant to reduce the frictional losses of moving parts – replacing a naturally aspirated V8 with a V6, for example.

The McLaren MP4-12C is a perfect case in point, standing as one of the first in what's likely to be a whole new generation of force-fed supercars.

'I think that for the high-performance market it's definitely going to be the way forwards,' explains Richard Farquhar, McLaren's powertrain boss, 'not just for performance, but mainly from an efficiency perspective. On the MP4-12C we're able to get nearly 600bhp from a 3.8-litre engine along with 279g/km on the European drive cycle. Not that long ago, any car in this market would have a 4.5- or 5-litre engine – or even bigger – and would be putting out over 400g/km.'

Of course, turbocharging has traditionally



brought other downsides, with the best-known being lag, or the delay in throttle response caused by the time it takes for the turbocharger's turbine (in the exhaust flow) to react to an increase in engine output and spin up the compressor. In the days of early turbo road cars – many of which used big turbochargers originally designed for use with trucks – it could take more than a second for an engine to come on boost. Modern turbochargers dramatically reduce the problem by being smaller and using lighter components, which reduces inertia, and by reducing the distance that exhaust gas and air have to travel from and to the engine.

But manufacturers have come up with some more innovative solutions in the battle against lag, with next year's Alfa Romeo 4C set to



'The new M5 will have minimal turbo lag, strong low-down responses and a very un-turbo-like ability to rev'

benefit from a particularly clever one. The mid-engined coupe will share the 1750 TBi direct-injection motor that we've already seen in both the 159 and the Giulietta, and Alfa has confirmed that it will feature the same 'scavenging' system when it gets fitted to the 4C. This uses the variable timing of both inlet and exhaust valves to help kick-start the turbo with a period of overlap – having both inlet and exhaust valves open on a cylinder simultaneously – to create airflow between the inlet and the exhaust manifolds to help the turbo spin up. The system works even at low speeds, and Alfa claims it can sharpen response times by more than 50 per



Left: Alfa 4C – shown in concept form at this year's Geneva motor show – will use variable valve timing trickery to get the best responses from its mid-mounted 1750cc in-line four-cylinder turbo engine



cent. We already know that Alfa is targeting a sub-5 second 0-62mph time for the 4C and the use of an efficient petrol engine means it should be able to combine that with fuel economy of better than 40mpg.

Saab was a forced-induction pioneer – the 99 Turbo of 1979 was Europe's first front-driven turbocharged production car – so it is fitting that the newly independent Swedish brand is turning once again to turbocharging as it seeks to save itself. The slashy styling and aggressive aerodynamics of the company's Phoenix concept attracted a fair amount of attention on the stand at Geneva – not all of it positive – but, underneath the surface, this show car is pretty much identical to the range-topping versions of the next-generation 9-3. That means a BMW-sourced turbo petrol engine (the same motor normally found in the Mini Cooper S) driving the front wheels, and a 34bhp electric motor powering the rears.

'What you see here is everything you are going to see with the new 9-3,' confirms Jason Castriota, Saab's new design boss. 'It's a new platform with a shorter front overhang and the front wheels pushed forwards. The torque-vectoring electric all-wheel-drive system and the BMW-derived motor is all in the new car.'

The thinking behind the system is that it will enable Saab to use a smaller and more efficient turbocharged engine with about 200bhp, and yet – thanks to the on-demand electric motor – deliver performance similar to that achieved by the near-300bhp versions of the current 9-3. Saab also hopes to licence the system to



Audi Quattro concept (bottom left) features the acclaimed 2.5-litre five-cylinder turbo engine from the TT RS (left). If the car makes production – as seems likely – this arrangement should remain

other manufacturers. That's the plan, anyway, although as we went to press an ongoing production shutdown at Saab's Trollhättan factory was raising increasing concerns about the company's future.

The fourth of our predicted turbocharged stars of tomorrow is the Audi Quattro. Officially, the Quattro is another motor show concept that hasn't been confirmed for production, but well-placed sources seem confident that a green light is imminent for a low-volume run of road cars.

Based around a shortened version of the RS5's chassis, powered by an upgraded version of the five-cylinder turbocharged engine from the TT RS and RS3, if it does get the go-ahead – and stick to the show concept's

recipe – then the combination of 400bhp and a 1300kg kerb weight should make for memorable performance. In a recent interview, quattro GmbH's boss Stephan Reil confirmed that Audi regards forced induction as being the way forwards for its highest-performance models, as long as 'it brings benefits without compromises'.

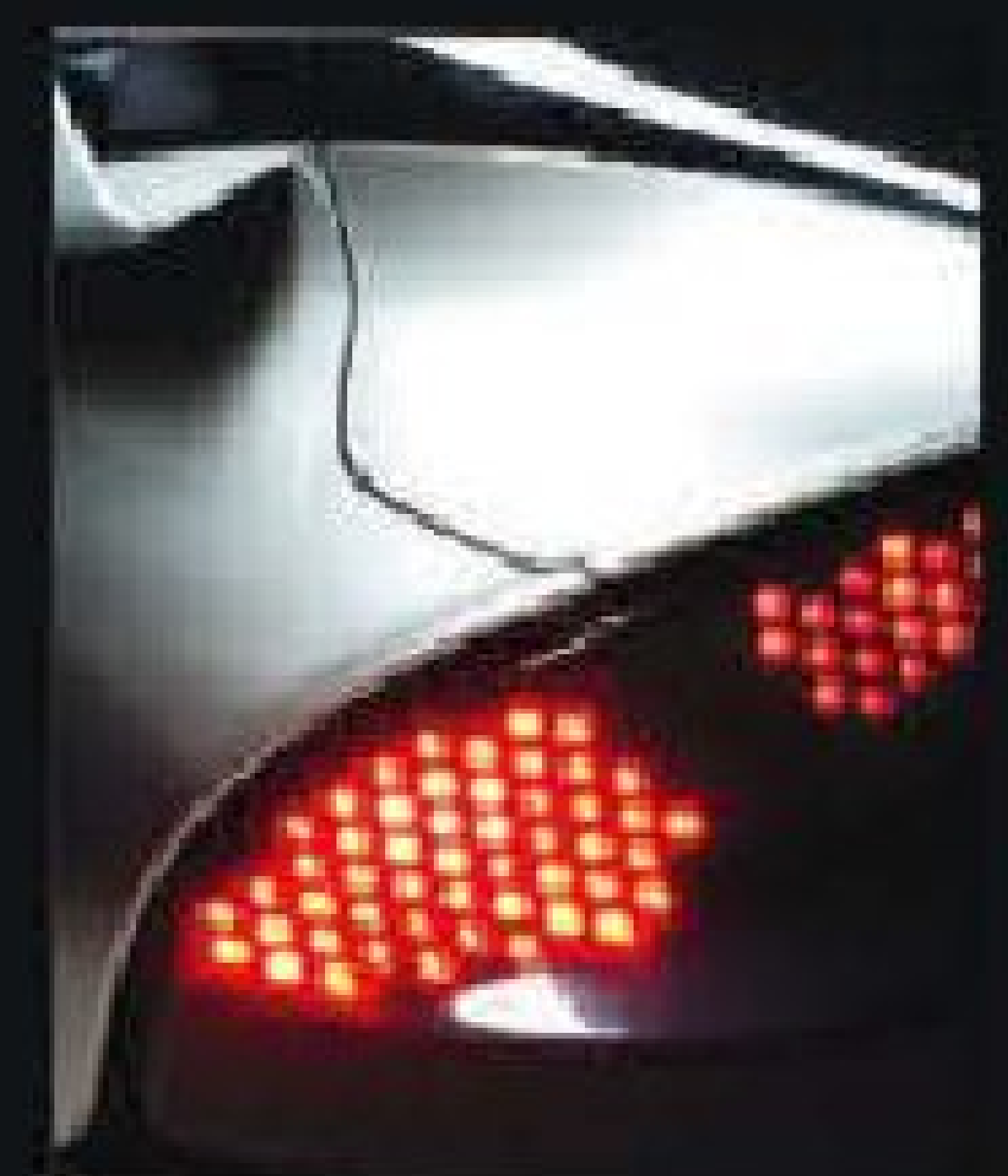
That seems to be pretty much the view of the whole industry. And as the technical issues that once compromised turbocharged engines have been systematically eliminated, so it becomes increasingly likely that their conquest of the performance car market will continue unabated. Don't be surprised if this revolution continues to include the manufacturers of even the most exotic performance machinery. Read on...

**'It's likely that the turbo's conquest of the**





Saab's Phoenix concept combines a BMW turbo engine with an electric motor, and points the way to the next 9-3. Space-age styling will be toned down for production, though



performance car market will continue'



# More future turbos

The horizon is littered with new models that are turning to turbos – here are the ones we're looking forward to most



## 2012 FERRARI 'ENZO'

■ Speculation is rife that Ferrari's next hypercar will be powered by a twin-turbo V8, rather than a development of the V12 used in both the Enzo and 599 GTO. Ferrari is moving to turbo engines to keep engine size and weight to a minimum while ensuring performance is as extreme as ever. The 'new Enzo' is also expected to feature hybrid technology, first seen on the 599 HY-KERS concept, including a KERS-type boost button on the steering wheel

Concept rendering by Pobleto



## PORSCHE PANAMERA TURBO S

■ Porsche never lost the turbo faith – and the new Panamera Turbo S is the firm's quickest four-seater ever thanks to 543bhp and a 190mph top speed



## RANGE ROVER EVOQUE

■ The new baby Range is set to feature Land Rover's first ever turbocharged petrol engine, with range toppers getting a 237bhp 2-litre four-cylinder motor



## VAUXHALL ASTRA VXR

■ The next Astra VXR should make the old one look almost tame. We're expecting 300bhp from a 2-litre turbo engine, along with a limited-slip differential



## FIAT ABARTH COUPE

■ There are no official details yet, but the upcoming Abarth Coupé – sister car to the Alfa 4C – is highly likely to share its sibling's clever 1750 TBi powerplant



## AUDI S6, S7 & S8

■ The new S6 will get a 4-litre turbo V8 in place of the old model's V10. Power will be around 450bhp, and the same engine will propel the S7 and S8



## BENTLEY CONTINENTAL GT V8

■ The Audi V8 will also form the basis for Bentley's new entry-level Conti GT, which is claimed to cut CO2 emissions by over 40 per cent compared with the W12



## RENAULTSPORT CLIO

■ No announcement has been made yet, but we'd be amazed if the next RS Clío didn't get a version of the new compact turbo engine that Renault is developing



## TOYOTA FT-86

■ The FT-86 will debut with a naturally aspirated four-cylinder boxer engine, but the shared Subaru underpinnings mean a turbo version should follow



## McLAREN MP4-12C GT3

■ The race-spec 12C mates a version of the road car's 3.8-litre twin-turbo V8 to a Ricardo competition gearbox. It will make its racing debut in 2012



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# One man & his TURBO

Andy Frost's 2200bhp, twin-turbocharged, V8-engined Vauxhall Victor was already the world's fastest street-legal car, but now he's rebuilding it to go even faster. **Jonny Smith** gets the low-down

**T**hree thousand bhp. 1200kg. 2500bhp/ton. 2500lb ft. 'This time it's right on the fringe – the absolute limit – of streetability. But we'll still be able to take it to the shops. Just.'

The third incarnation of Andy Frost's treasured V8-engined Vauxhall VX4/90 Victor drag racer has begun. The 1972 three-box saloon started out as a £60 family hack in 1980 and gradually became the focus of his life. Three decades of fettling has seen Wolverhampton-based Andy reach global infamy with the world's fastest street-legal car.

It made its strip debut in the late '80s as Red Victor 1, the name Andy chose after he fitted it with its first V8. When it was rebuilt around a tube frame a decade later, it became Red Victor 2. Numerous upgrades followed, including the addition of twin turbos to its Chevy V8, and the car set drag records on treaded tyres, normal fuel and with its original steel body. But 0-190mph in 7sec simply isn't fast enough any more...

'Before now I'd made a street car for racing. This time it's a race car turned into a street car,' says Andy, who has torn apart his beloved drag toy and is totally rebuilding it to do 0-220mph in 5sec – but still with an MOT.

Two years ago this notion was pure pie-in-the-sky, but circumstances quickly changed when Vauxhall's brand managers' ears pricked up. Now the company's VXR arm is backing Andy's efforts to achieve the world's first street-legal competitive Pro Modified dragster.

He's also got backing from another – highly unlikely – source. 'When my local council got in touch to offer financial support I thought it was a hoax,' says Andy. An overdraft meeting with his bank manager had got the local media interested. 'Next thing I know I get a call from Wolverhampton council saying there were grants for local projects available. I've got backing from the local council. Seriously.'

The bloke who by day runs an auto gearbox reconditioning workshop and by night builds dragsters with number-plates has become the local Rocky-style hero of horsepower.

So what exactly will Red Victor 3 be made of? We've taken a closer look...

## CHASSIS

'I got to a point with the old car where it couldn't go any faster in competition without radically altering the safety and chassis,' says Andy. Red Victor's chromoly twin-rail tubular chassis has now been massively redesigned by Webster Race Engineering (WRE) to pass scrutineering for Pro Modified-level drag racing and to keep Andy (plus a passenger) safe with a full 'Funny Car' cell cage. While this is great for racing, it's not brilliant for visibility on Wolverhampton High Street...

So far WRE has spent 1000 hours on this car – a typical race car is normally 600 hours from start to finish. Every little extra detail demanded by Andy piles on the hours.

## BODY

The bespoke bodyshell has been the trickiest part of the third Victor project. It started in August '09 with a £300 donor Victor shell that, over five months, was carefully stretched 14in in wheelbase, had its roof chopped by 2in, its windscreen raked by 5 degrees, lost its rear doors and had its front doors lengthened by 6in. Andy insisted on maintaining all of the trim and detail on what then became a master mould for a bespoke carbonfibre and glassfibre body.

The doors, bonnet, boot and spoiler are carbon but (due to cost) the rest is glassfibre. The result is an artistic/aerodynamic interpretation of a Victor VX4/90. 'A bad decision in monetary terms,' says Andy, 'but I set out not to just build a Pro Mod, but a Victor Pro Mod. You could run a steel body, but anything over 2800lb [1270kg] and there isn't an approved competition chassis in the world that could make it run 5 seconds [for the quarter-mile]. I didn't want to build a car that couldn't legally go faster than sixes.'

## TRANSMISSION

The entire chassis has been designed around the gearbox, which is a very road-unfriendly (because of its separate shift levers for each gear!) Lenco CS1 planetary-design three-speed. This has the optional air-shift system, to help Andy snatch cogs in a split second.



Opposite page: Red Victor owner and creator Andy Frost, with one of his car's two massive Garrett turbos. This page, from top: rear axle and brakes; colour-coded pipework awaits fitting. Below: one of the V8's giant Teflon-coated pistons





Right: Andy beside Red Victor 3's new carbon and glassfibre body, currently part-way through the painting process. Above: 1.5-gallon oil tank for the dry sump system came from Peterson Fluid Systems in Colorado. Below: 8.8-litre Chevrolet iron block is the only part of the engine carried over unchanged from Red Victor's previous incarnation



## 'You see turbos this large on earth-movers... Not many

It's £8000 worth of kit, excluding Andy's choice of bombproof Neal Chance 10.5in billet alloy and steel torque converter. All 2500lb ft of twist will be sent to a custom Strange Engineering 3.5in chromoly propshaft and £6000+ Tim McAmis 9.5in floating back axle, before handing the baton on to 20in wide slicks.

### ENGINE

The V8 is king in Pro Modified. Andy's Dart 8.8-litre Chevy iron block is carried over from Red Victor 2, but *everything* else has been revised to cope with a projected 3000bhp methanol-drinking habit on track. Cue a large shopping list of drag goodies from the US...

There are billet alloy conventional-style GM heads, a billet steel Windeg crank, Teflon and anodise-coated Diamond pistons, billet conrods and a Waterman 20-gallon-per-minute(!) belt-driven fuel pump that delivers fuel to a gang of 16 matched Injector Dynamics ID2000 3370cc injectors operating at 130psi.

Whether Andy and Red Vic are idling or cracking 0-60mph in one second, the ignition duties are catered for by a Motech M800 EFI ECU unit that sends spark commands to chunky 10mm Magnecour HT leads via eight individual Pantera EFI coils. Off track, he'll run super unleaded with octane booster. All mechanical behaviour is captured on a Motech Sport Dash Data Logger.

As with Red Vic's previous guise, Andy is building it to double as a show car, meaning the engine has to look exquisite. This time he's gone for red, black, silver and grey coatings or anodising. Good for looks, but it also identifies what's what with hoses: black is fuel, red is oil, silver/grey is anything else.

### TURBOS

There are two Garrett GT55-91R roller bearing snails with 91mm inlets. It's these that deliver those potty performance figures. You'd normally see turbos this diameter

on large earth-movers, but in this instance they feed a 105mm Wilson throttle body. As methanol burns very cold there's no need for an intercooler to keep the dog-sized pair of Garretts contented.

As you can probably guess, not many of these components have ever ended up on a road car. Seven years ago the cost to buy and tune this turbo technology to work on a streetable level would have been prohibitive, but using the Motech engine management, detailed boost maps can be created so as to dial in power progressively during a quarter-mile run. The turbos can be numbered right down for street use or wound up to 40 psi (2.8bar) when the visor's down at Santa Pod.

### THE TOUCHES OF FROST

Andy doesn't preach about it, but he's a loon for detail. 'I wanted it to look like a street car inside,' he says. 'My seats are leather with a fireproof certificate. It has carpet and there's a



Top: conrods are made by Denver-based race-engine connecting-rod specialists GRP. Above: artist's impressions show what the completed Red Victor 3 should look like

## of these components have ever ended up on a road car'

### SPECIFICATION

**Engine** V8, 8800cc  
**Location** Front, longitudinal  
**Power** 3000bhp @ 7500rpm  
**Torque** 2500lb ft @ 5000rpm  
**Transmission** Three-speed torque converter gearbox with air-shifted lever system, rear-wheel drive  
**Fuel** M1 methanol for racing, super-unleaded for road  
**Front suspension** Strange Engineering aluminium double adjustable struts with Hyperco springs  
**Rear suspension** Penske double adjustable aluminium coilovers with Hyperco springs  
**Brakes** Strange Engineering single-pot calipers with forged steel discs front, Hi-spec six-pot calipers with forged steel discs rear. Plus twin Simpson parachutes...  
**Wheels** 4 x 15in front, 16 x 16in rear for racing, 15 x 15in rear for road  
**Tyres** Mickey Thompson ET slicks for racing, Mickey Thompson Sportsman radials for road  
**Weight (kerb)** 1200kg  
**Power-to-weight** 2540bhp/ton  
**0-60mph** 1sec  
**Quarter mile** sub-6sec  
**Top speed** 230mph+

VX4/90 Vauxhall glovebox badge on there too.'

Red Victor features lightweight electric (Lexan) windows, just for the hell of it. Andy even spent hours fully colour-coding the transmission that no-one will ever see because it has to be covered with an explosion-proof blanket to comply with racing rules.

Even the Victor's old 3.3-litre metal badge on the back has been painstakingly modified to say 8.8-litre. For racing, Andy has to use 16x16in rear wheels. However, you can only get slicks in this diameter, so for the street he will be driving on 15in rims with police-friendly rubber.

### THE CLASS

The Pro Modified class that Red Victor 3 will compete in is for full-bodied V8 drag cars that typically run on methanol and use turbos, superchargers or nitrous oxide to reach 230mph on the quarter-mile in late-five to mid-six seconds.

Bodysells are always composite (glassfibre

and/or carbonfibre) with an approved chromoly tubular chassis and a maximum wheelbase of 115in. Two parachutes are compulsory to aid braking.

THINK OF THIS project as the ultimate one-man automotive mission, stretching the elasticity of road legality beyond all before it. Much of the Red Victor surgery was performed by Andy in his humble pre-fab concrete single garage, but for this next chapter he's taken more of a project managerial role – with sponsored backing, his dream had to be realised faster.

'If I'd built it alone it would take a decade – meaning I'd have no backing and be nearly 60,' he says. 'Eventually this is going to do a 5-second quarter, so it has to be proper.'

*Red Victor 3 is scheduled to make its track debut at Santa Pod's Main Event on May 27-30. To catch up on the car's progress go to [www.redvictor1racing.co.uk](http://www.redvictor1racing.co.uk) or [www.facebook.com/Redvictor](http://www.facebook.com/Redvictor)*





PART ONE

# 1911 Vauxhall Prince Henry

*The machine you see here is widely acknowledged as Britain's very first sports car, and if **evo** had been around 100 years ago, this would have been our cover car. **Henry Catchpole** takes a trip back in time*

**T**he engine fires on the second turn of the cranking handle, clearing the trees of roosting birds and startling two horses working in the neighbouring field. The mechanic bustles round and leans in. 'This will be quite unlike anything you've ever driven before, sir!' he shouts.

'I've no doubt it will Jenkins!' I reply, setting my cap at a suitably jaunty angle. 'Tally ho!' Up comes the left pedal, there's a slight jerk as the leather-faced cone clutch engages, I catch the revs with the throttle and we're off...

It was a lucky game of squash in the new clubhouse that fixed it. I'd bumped into young Archie at Algy's the night before, and, after one too many something-and-sodas, he told me that his game had improved beyond recognition since school and insisted on a rubber. I wasn't in a position to say otherwise and so the following afternoon we toddled down to the gargantuan new RAC premises

on Pall Mall where, with a following breeze, I gave him a light thrashing. Left-handed.

Anyway, turns out young Archie is nephew or goddaughter or some such to Percy Kidner (top bod at Vauxhall and all-round good egg, in case you're unfamiliar). Knowing I do a spot of scribbling for *The Evo Magazine*, Archie said he could swing an introduction to old man Kidner. Sure enough, two days later we toddled down to Brooklands for lunch. We had a decent bite to eat, I produced the old top hat anecdote, we watched a Bleriot preparing for the Daily Mail Air Race and by tea time it was all fixed that Kidner would let me have a go in his company's new automobile the week before George's coronation. It'd be right up my street, he said.

The street it was going to be right up, in fact, was the hill at Shelsley Walsh, where Kidner is something of a specialist, having won the Handicap in 1908, 1909 and again just a few days before my own sprint up the 1000-yard

One hundred years old and still going strong: a Prince Henry Vauxhall returns to Shelsley Walsh, scene of one its many sporting exploits in the years before the First World War. This is one of only nine surviving examples in the world

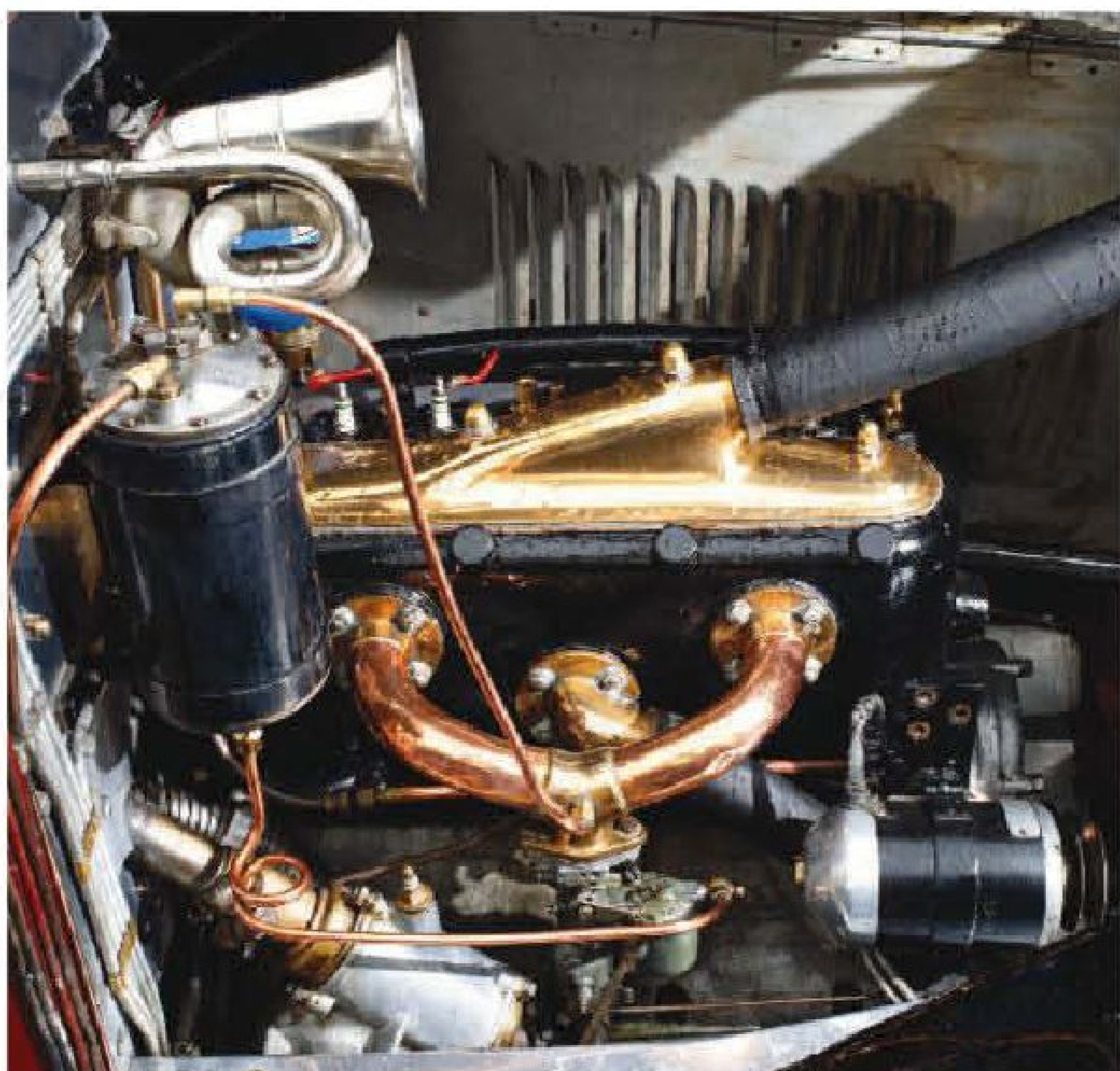
track. The car I was to drive, however, earned its nickname from a rather longer and more arduous event...

You might recall my article last year on the Prinz-Heinrich-Fahrt, that epic 1230-mile German trial designed to find the finest automobiles in the world. The event was won by some bounder called Ferdinand Porsche driving an Austro Daimler, but three specially prepared Vauxhall C10s driven by Messrs Kidner, Hancock and Selz also took part and did splendidly. All three completed the event at an astonishing gallop and as a result these replica versions, available to those with the requisite means, have become known as a Prince Henrys.

Examples are so scarce that this is a pre-production model, but the very notion of building a sort of racing car that can be driven round Piccadilly Circus is a terrific one in my eyes and unlike anything that has been done before. With 60bhp – three times the output of a Ford Model T (and over twice the price) – quite clearly it's not the sort of machine that any fellow without the sharpest of minds and fleetest of reactions should be allowed to drive. Unless he has an excellent yarn about top hats...

In truth you don't need the responses of C.B. Fry (jolly good to see him back at the top of the averages this season) to get it moving, but quickly one finds oneself hunched behind the screen as the wind starts blurring the vision and the banks begin rushing by. There are four forward ratios and you're soon into the second of them as you leave the start line and the big farm barns behind. The new wire wheels, which are becoming commonplace on the finest motors, ride the ruts and bumps

Below: who else to drive the Prince Henry than our very own Henry, of the Catchpole variety. Period whiskers and cloth cap acquired specially for the occasion.  
Bottom: 3-litre four-cylinder sidevalve engine good for 60bhp



Above: mounted in the centre of the steering wheel is a hand throttle (on the right) and an ignition advance/retard control. Left: manoeuvring the Prince Henry into position for its run up the Shelsley Walsh hillclimb. Right: Catchpole powers up the famous track

admirably with very little wobble and there's a decent sense of connection through the driving gloves.

If a chap were thick-headed enough, he could look behind at this point and see a cracking view of the Worcestershire countryside as well as a healthy plume of dust rising in his wake. As it is, all concentration needs to be bent towards the tricky bottom 'Ess'. Shelsley is a fearsomely steep proposition as it rises towards the woods, and maintenance of momentum is critical. Gird the loins, grip the wheel a little more tightly and point that distinctive V-shaped radiator into the corner...

With Jenkins back in the paddock rather than riding as ballast, I confess that I lost a little nerve and took my foot off the middle pedal a touch as the Prince leaned into the corner, then, panicking that the next incline would prove too tough, I jumped back on the throttle a little over-vigorously. Not since grandfather was with the regiment in the Crimea has the notoriously dormant Catchpole courage been so sternly called upon! The rear wheels started to lose grip and I found myself like a skinny,



‘Shelsley is a fearsomely steep proposition. Gird the loins, grip the wheel a little more tightly...’



Above: crouching down below the windscreen, 'riding mechanic' alongside, just like it was a century ago. Below: buttoned leather trim and spindly wire wheels shod with replica Dunlop Cord tyres



bow-tied Hercules grappling with a motorised Nemean lion. The resulting arc slowed progress, which for a few seconds was more akin to the Mary Rose tacking into a strong prevailing wind, but eventually everything was relatively under control. Such is the torque of the 3-litre engine that retarding the ignition a touch saw us to the top of the next slope.

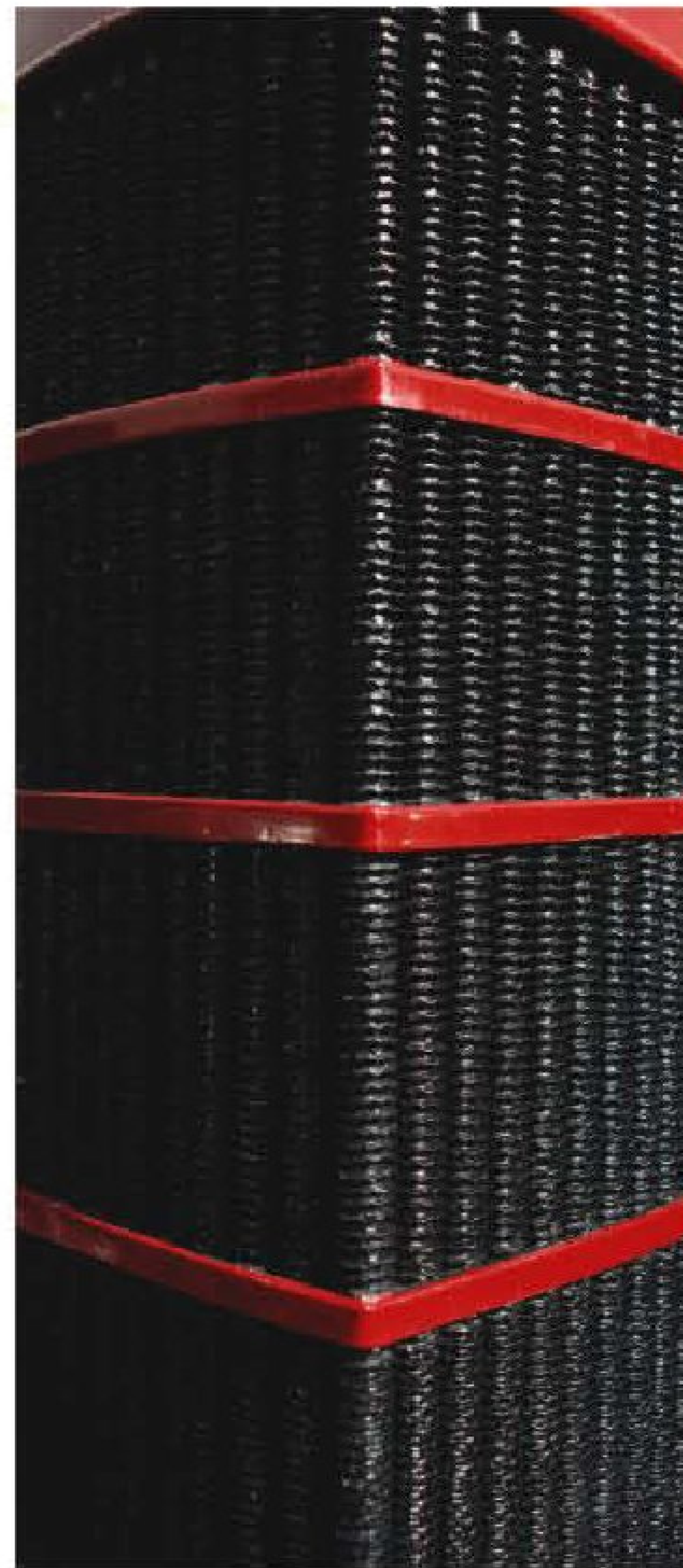
Then it was through the top esses where that excellent man Gregory was waiting with his faithful Kodak Box, and on through the fields to the finishing line, not quite at the 70mph she's capable of, but at a fair lick nonetheless. What a machine. And of course the real wheeze is that this is not a motor just for racing; you can drive it on the open highways, which is where I convince an anxious Jenkins we should venture next...

ONE HUNDRED YEARS LATER, the Prince Henry is a no less jaw-slackening sight on the byways of Worcestershire. For the modern-day driver, I reckon it is also probably even more terrifying than it was a century ago. The centre throttle (ubiquitous in 1911) is quite an easy concept to master, but it is the lack of braking which is likely to pucker the buttoned leather seats...

Before that, though, you've got to get up to speed. The gear lever, a huge bar of metal topped with a wooden ball, is down by your right calf and the ratios are arranged in a reverse H-pattern, so across to the right and up for first. The clutch is actually quite easy to master, although you treat it like a switch to avoid wearing out the leather facings.

With barely 10mph on the patented Stewart Speedometer Mileage Recorder, you need to go for second gear, which involves a very long-winded double de-clutch. For those of you unfamiliar with the process, it requires you to depress the clutch pedal, move the gear-lever to neutral, let the pedal come up, wait and wait for the revs of the cast-iron four-cylinder to die, then depress the clutch again, keep your fingers crossed and move the gear lever into second, hopefully without any graunching. Then you release the clutch pedal once more and you're away and hurtling towards 20mph.

In all seriousness, when you've made your way through all four gears, it's quite possible to travel at 45-50mph, which feels jolly quick when you're perched up high with the wind in your sideburns. And that brings us back to the subject of stopping. There is a brake pedal (on the right where you'd expect the accelerator to be) but it acts on the transmission and I'm advised instead to use the brake lever, which sprouts from the running board outside the main bodywork. There are no front brakes at all (they were considered dangerous at the time!) and the rear drums don't feel keen to create much friction until a long way back in the lever's action. The most nerve-wracking thing was coming down the hill at Shelsley



because despite only weighing a relatively light 1250kg, having to use a handbrake to prevent the Prince Henry from becoming a runaway and crashing in an extremely rare heap was terrifying. I can still feel the muscles aching in my arm, shoulder and hand where I was hauling desperately at the big lever to try to keep it all at a manageable pace. To be honest it felt almost as futile as trying to halt a slowly rolling car simply by hanging on, leaning back and digging your heels in.

On the open road, you need to plan well ahead. In 1911 there were about 125,000 cars in the UK; today there are over 31 million, or in other words quite a few more to bump into. This presents a dilemma because not only do you need to carry speed to make it to the top of a hill, but you also need to take control of that speed before going over the crest, in case something suddenly hoves into view.

Even slowing for junctions takes a lot of planning: you need to haul on the handbrake, then release it so that you can change down a gear (clutch, neutral, revs, clutch, third) then haul on the brake a bit more before releasing it again to go down another gear (clutch, neutral, revs, clutch, graunch, wince, revs, clutch, second) and then... well, you get the idea. There's more noise and panic than a one-man-band trying to put the pin back in a grenade.

Shelsley is the oldest motorsport venue to have been open continuously since its creation



Above: Prince Henry in the paddock at Shelsley, which itself dates back to the early years of the 20th century. Right: central throttle pedal (the brake is on the right) takes a little getting used to, but Catchpole (far right) is soon giving it his all







'I can't remember the last time 50mph felt so fast'



and it has changed amazingly little in the last hundred years. Period photos show the same barns and the same fencing that can be seen on today's primrose-strewn banks. The biggest transformation to take place is the surface, which morphed from gravel to asphalt in the 1930s. The Prince Henry's suspension, which would have had to cope with the gravel, comes in the form of semi-elliptical leaf springs, which means that although it rides well, it also rides with a slight bounce, like a large pram. The steering wheel and its angle might be more at home in a bus, but it does actually have some feel to it and because the tyres don't have a very large contact patch it's not dreadfully heavy. I'm not sure how much grip the Dunlop Cord tyres would have generated though...

Having spent a day with it, the Prince Henry's reputation as Britain's first sports car certainly seems well deserved. And in an age where a perfect, millisecond gearshift can be executed by flexing one joint on one finger, I love the fact that it takes a huge dollop of mechanical empathy to get the best out of it. In an age of computer-formed plastics and composites, I love the character and feel of the hand-crafted metals and materials. And I can't remember the last time 50mph felt so fast. With the sun out, it seems only right to tweak the cap to a more aggressive tilt and go for one more run. The thrill of driving, 1911 style.



#### SPECIFICATION

##### VAUXHALL C10 'PRINCE HENRY'

Engine In-line four-cylinder, 3054cc  
 Cylinder block Cast iron  
 Cylinder head Cast iron, side valves, side cam  
 Fuelling and ignition Single carburettor, HT magneto  
 Location Front, longitudinal  
 Power 60bhp @ 2700rpm  
 Torque n/a  
 Transmission Four-speed manual gearbox, rear-wheel drive  
 Suspension Semi-elliptic leaf springs, front and rear  
 Brakes Foot brake operating on transmission, hand lever operating on rear drums  
 Weight (kerb) 1250kg  
 Power-to-weight 50bhp/ton  
 Top speed 65mph  
 0-60mph n/a  
 Price then £565  
 Value now £300,000+ (estimated)

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# Fast Fleet

LONG-TERM TESTS

**B**arker says goodbye to the M3 Competition, while elsewhere we've been lavishing plenty of TLC, with a rebuilt V8 for the Capri, a titanium exhaust for the GT3, a new timing belt for the Clio V6 and refurbished wheels for the Clio Williams

## END-OF-TERM

**'F**rozen Grey. It's got to be, no question.' So said my colleague who'd been on the launch, and 11 months on he's still right. I've seen red, white and even yellow M3s, but if I was specing another one today I'd find it hard not to tick the box for this matt paint finish, even though it costs almost £2K.

I'd probably go for the pack that makes this an M3 'Competition', too, not so much for the EDC (Electronic Damper Control), because I didn't use it much, but for the 10mm suspension drop and the gorgeous 19in Y-spoke M alloys. The box I wouldn't tick would be the one for the M DCT gearbox, but we'll get to that later.

On a sunny day last May, the M3 rolled into our car park with 2502 miles already under its wheels. It looked stunning. The flat paint had the appearance of unpainted steel and contrasted the spangly alloys and glossy carbonfibre roof to dramatic

effect. The care instructions warned: 'Never polish the car. This may lead to glossiness.'

The sound of the V8 firing up tickled my tickly bits – every time – and the pace it could summon up when exercised near its 8200rpm red line never failed to get the adrenalin flowing. Initially, the Efficient Dynamics sticker in the rear window struck me as incongruous, but soon it was cars whose engines didn't cut out at the lights that seemed odd. Mind, given that we recorded an average of 22.5mpg over nearly 18,000 miles, I'm not sure how much effect it had. It would probably have been of more use had this been a city-dwelling M3, as would its twin-clutch gearbox. All credit, the 'box was superb mooching around town or making snappy red-line upshifts, but it gave nothing in between, at a moderate pace, and was one reason why at first I felt curiously disconnected from the car.

Another was the handling. The M3 is a very fine car, dynamically, but not as playful as you might expect a rear-driver with a 414bhp V8 in its nose to

### BMW M3 COMPETITION

Date acquired	May 2010
Duration of test	11 months
Total test mileage	17,765
Average mpg	22.5
Costs	£926 (four tyres), £32 (tyre weld), £370 (service), £17 (oil)
Purchase price	£64,885
Trade-in value	£45,000
Depreciation	£19,885

be, thanks to a combination of lots of grip and power that's delivered at high revs. Personally, I'm never quite comfortable with a car until I know what happens beyond the limit, and once I'd driven the M3 in the wet and got my head around its sharp responses, I was much happier.

The steering-wheel-mounted 'M' button helped. You can program it to your choice of damper setting (most supple), shift speed (medium), stability control (off) and power (all of it, thanks) and then, when opportunities appear, press it to set the car how you want in an instant.

Left to its own devices, in full-throttle kickdown the gearbox would

**'THE PACE THE V8 COULD SUMMON UP WHEN EXERCISED NEAR ITS**



Above: seven-speed DCT made slick changes but was otherwise uninspiring. Right: M3 visited an evo Run What Ya Brung event at Santa Pod; best quarter-mile run was 12.99sec @ 109mph





## 200RPM RED LINE NEVER FAILED TO GET THE ADRENALIN FLOWING'

appear to respond crisply, the revs rising, but there would be a noticeable delay before it actually engaged the lower gear and gave full power. Not unlike a conventional auto, then.

The class of the chassis was fully appreciated at a wet evo trackday at Silverstone. Unfortunately it wasn't me but features ed Catchpole doing the appreciating. It went on track later in the year, too, this time with staff writer Stephen Dobie on a novice's day, a freebie offered to all purchasers of a new BMW. Young Dobie went to Snetterton, where he loved the V8's power but was surprised that the big push was so high up the rev-range.

He also felt a bit intimidated by the car's weight, so left stability control on. Oh, and on handing back the key he apologised for the grumbly brakes; there's no doubt that M3 brakes have improved, but there's still scope.

I turned YD10 CJU into a six-seater halfway through the loan period, thanks to a company called Multimac. This British firm has developed a bench-type child seat and managed to squeeze a four-seater version into the rear of the M3. It sounds pricey at £1546 but means that those with lots of offspring don't have to drive people carriers. My three boys (ages 4 to 9) loved it, and the race-style harnesses

stopped them lolling around generally, as well as in high-G cornering!

In an attempt to make the M3 rather friskier in the dry, I replaced the original Michelin PS2s with Conti SportContact3s, as fitted to the earlier and more playful M3 'Edition'. I'm not sure they did the job, robbing the car of some precision but still gripping hard. Even so, just how much is right about the M3 was reiterated by the arrival of the new Audi RS5. We group-tested the Audi with the Mercedes C63 AMG, Lexus IS-F and M3 (evo 151), and the BMW was the pick of the bunch. I must confess to some slightly guilty hankerings for

# Fast Fleet

||| LONG-TERM TESTS



Left: Contis gripped hard, but didn't make the M3 any more playful. Above: Multimac seat allowed four children to share the M3's rear quarters. Below: chasing the RS5 on the West Circuit

the C63 and its effortless low-speed oversteer... but not its lazy auto gearbox and lesser dynamic clarity at speed. The RS5's only success was a faster lap time around the West Circuit, but with the original Michelins and non-rumbly brakes, I reckon the M3 would have gone faster. So there.

The first service was carried out efficiently and courteously by Sycamore in Peterborough at just shy of 17,000 miles. However, the bill was

bumped up by more than a third, to a hefty £370, by an air conditioning microfilter change. I'd have declined that, had I been given the choice.

At 20,000 miles our M3 showed few visual signs of use, just lightly polished leather on the outer bolster of the driver's seat and a few paint-chips around the nose, plus the odd nick in the matt grey here and there too, though perhaps no more than you'd expect with conventional paint.

The magnificent V8 was as vocal, rev-hungry and potent as ever, but for the use we put the M3 to, I'd have preferred the six-speed manual to the dual-clutch 'box, for the greater involvement and connection with the car it brings.

It was a mighty thing, our M3, playing family car (occasionally a six-seater!) and sports car with equal aplomb. It'll be a very tough act to follow.

**John Barker**

**'AT 20,000 MILES, THE MAGNIFICENT V8 WAS AS VOCAL, REV-HUNGRY AND POTENT AS EVER'**





**'THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THE ROVER V8 HAS BEEN ASKED TO GIVE ALL IT'S GOT'**

#### FORD CAPRI V8

Date acquired	October 2001
Total mileage	901
Mileage this month	5
Costs this month	£2200 (engine rebuild), £450 (rolling-road tune)
mpg this month	Not many

This is it, then. The note of the Capri's V8 goes much deeper than it has before and the rear of the car squats as the tyres dig into the rollers – this is the first full-throttle, all-revs power run. Engine builder Quentin Nicholls and I have flattened ourselves against a wall of the TVR Power dyno room, buffeted by the gale from the cooling fans and assaulted by the combined noise of said fans and the V8's bellow as our clothes, skin and hair gradually infuse with fuel and exhaust fumes.

I don't know which of us is more nervous as the note hardens and the trackday tyres strike up a banshee wail on the rollers. It's mostly the volume of noise the Capri makes going all-out at a road speed of well over 100mph that terrifies me, while for Quentin this is the moment where anything amiss with his rebuild will be exposed, possibly with dramatic consequences.

This 5.3-litre Rover V8 has idled and mooched, but this is the first time it's been asked to give all it's got...

There have been a few odd, niggling issues, each analysed and puzzled out by Mark Adams, the master of setting up Rover V8s, and Jason Oakley, the TVR Power technician sitting at the wheel of the Capri beside him. They wear intercom headphones and talk quietly to each other as we look on, caught in the teeth of a high-octane

gale. The chat continues, Mark adjusts the mapping, the Capri digs deep for another run, and so it goes on.

After three hours on the rollers, I'm handed a printout. I'm initially disappointed at the power figure of 257bhp – it made about the same last time, back in 2006, before Quentin rebuilt it. 'That's power at the wheels,' says Jason. Aaah. 'We work on 15 per cent transmission losses, Mark works on 20.' Let's call it 17.5, then, which

makes... 302bhp. That goes nicely with the 337lb ft of torque! Precision rebuild, then, and made the most of by Mark's tuning, with a proper margin of safety built in, of course.

Sounds bloody lovely, too, at idle and going for it. And, by heck, does it go. I've only driven it half a mile so far, but the signs are it's turned the Capri into the effortless oversteerer I always wanted. Chuffed to bits, me.

**John Barker**

Top: John's Capri goes flat-out on the rollers at TVR Power. Jason Oakley (right, under the bonnet) and Mark Adams (far right) work on the tuning to get the best from the rebuilt V8 engine



# Fast Fleet

||| LONG-TERM TESTS

## JAGUAR XJ SUPERSPORT

Date acquired	December 2009
Total mileage	5006
Mileage this month	2206
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	19.0

**F**or the past year, on my regular trips to a certain race track in northern Germany, I have ridden in a pal's Panamera Turbo – and this is why my own opinion on that car differs from the official evo view. I think it is brilliant: fast, hushed and spacious. It is the ultimate racing drivers' express and, until last weekend, the best fast touring device I'd encountered. That's right, the SS is better.

For covering big distances, at very high speeds, in comfort, this car is astounding. At 110mph you can chat without raising your voice, the ride



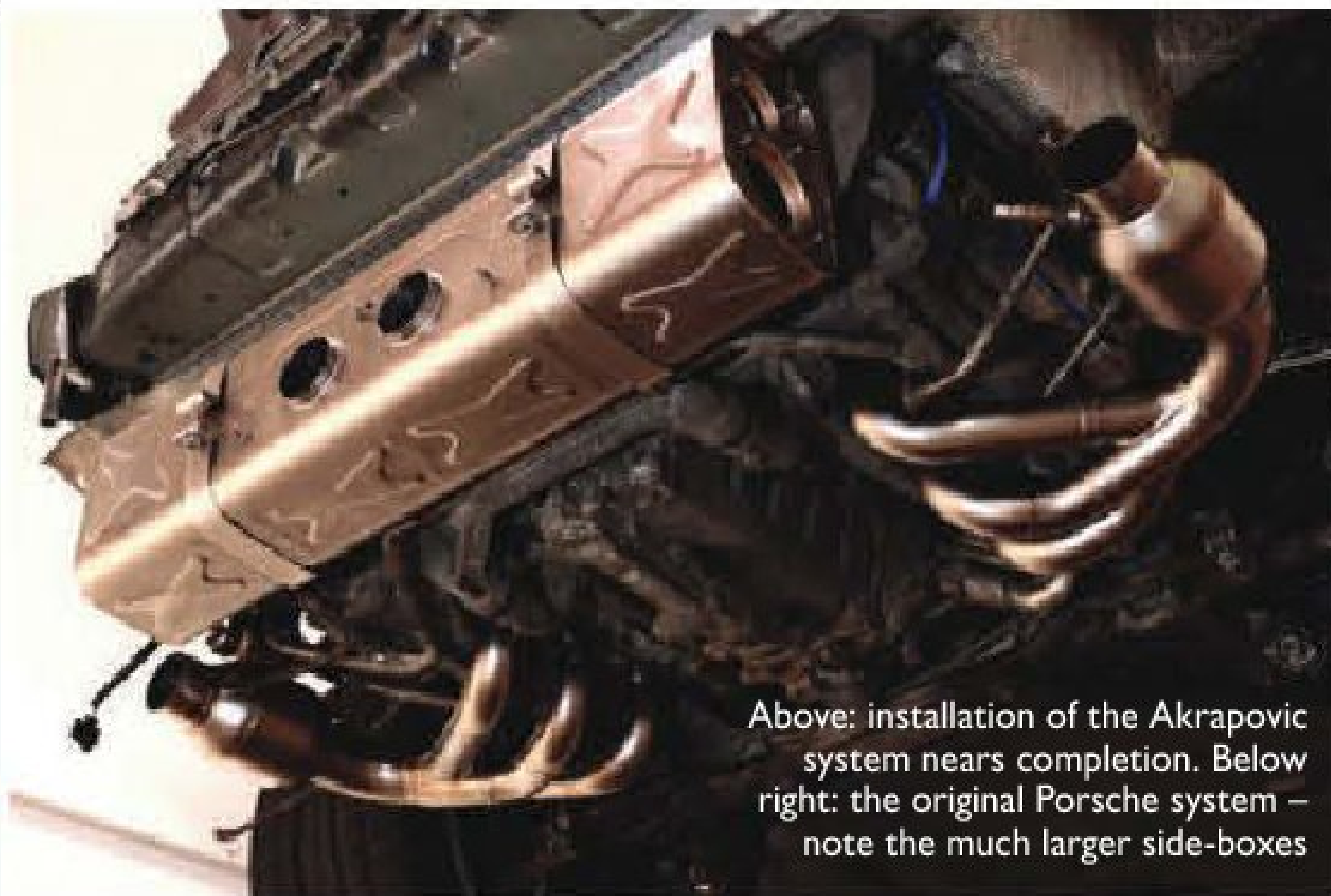
**'IT HITS 164MPH BEFORE THE LIMITER CALLS TIME'**

remains supremely level and the steering gives you total confidence in very-high-speed direction changes. It hits an indicated 164mph before the limiter calls time. In fact, I could do with the limiter being removed.

There are very few cars that operate in this category because most of the obvious contenders are either not spacious enough or too unrefined: I am immensely fond of the E63 AMG, but it doesn't share the SS's limousine qualities. The only genuine rivals are the Mercedes S63 and the aforementioned Porsche – neither of which have such a compelling performance/refinement balance. Put simply, the Jag is just as fast as the Germans, but much more supple. It is also very discreet, which for me is a critical factor in the make-up of the ideal transcontinental bruiser. At péages the gendarmes ignore the SS in the fog of M5s, RS6s and the like.

Being so light for its size brings benefits in the Jag's performance and agility. On the motorway you just leave the dampers alone; on fast A-roads you hit the Sport button, alter the gearshift, and the experience sharpens – the TFT dash produces a manual gearchange readout, the background turns red and you are left with a machine that ranks as one of the most surprising driving experiences on sale. 'Effortlessly brutal', that's what Jag should call it. What a car.

Chris Harris



Above: installation of the Akrapovic system nears completion. Below right: the original Porsche system – note the much larger side-boxes

**T**he last time I fitted an aftermarket exhaust to a car was 1997. Since then I've never really seen the point: I don't

like the extra noise, cost and, if the car is relatively new, the potential warranty invalidation. I had assumed that I wouldn't touch the exhaust on the GT3, until Richard Harfoot of Titanium Performance ([www.titaniumperformance.co.uk](http://www.titaniumperformance.co.uk)), the UK arm of Akrapovic, made contact.

Akrpovic is exhaust royalty in the motorcycle world, but has been making waves in car-racing circles for some time – the Manthey VLN/24hr 911 has been running an Akrapovic system for a few years, and that is effectively a factory car. So when Porsche wanted some lightweight exhaust components for the 997 GT2 and GT2 RS, it approached the Slovenian specialists.

Even with the factory connection, I wasn't that fussed. Then Richard sent me a link to something called the 'Evolution race exhaust system for GT3/RS' and I had a read. Blah, blah, 100cpi cats, blah, horsepower gain, blah, 25.86kg weight saving – I'm sorry, come again? A 25.86kg weight saving? To remove that amount of weight from the back of a 911 is a very interesting proposition. Nearly as eye-opening is the price of this titanium masterpiece: £7720. The claimed power gain is 16.5bhp, with an additional 16.7lb ft of torque. I won't be checking these figures because I just couldn't care about the increases. This car is more than fast enough already.

The entire product is so beautifully presented that it seems a shame to lump it under a 911 and have it get all

## PORSCHE 997 GT3

Date acquired	December 2010
Total mileage	25,500
Mileage this month	1000
Costs this month	£7720 (exhaust)
mpg this month	22.0

dirty. If the weight-saving claim seems improbable, you just need to see the OE system and the Akrapovic one together to understand the difference: those vast side-boxes disappear and the pipes that connect the manifolds to the main box are like bits of paper.

It's a doddle to fit – there's a DVD and detailed PDFs – and the attention to detail is remarkable. Unlike the standard system, this one has no fancy 'Sport' valve, which leaves a redundant vacuum pipe, so you get a little rubber bung to seal it from the elements and a tie-wrap to locate it safely. That's attention to detail.

From start-up, it's clear that removing the large silencer boxes releases the Metzger six's full noise potential. Any suspicion that it was going to be just a little louder than before evaporates the moment you blip the throttle. It's as loud as a GT3 Cup race car. But meatier. On the move, the sound is persistent, but utterly glorious. I've become old and tedious on the subject of excessive noise, but this sounds so good at 6000rpm in second gear, I'm rediscovering my inner yobbo.

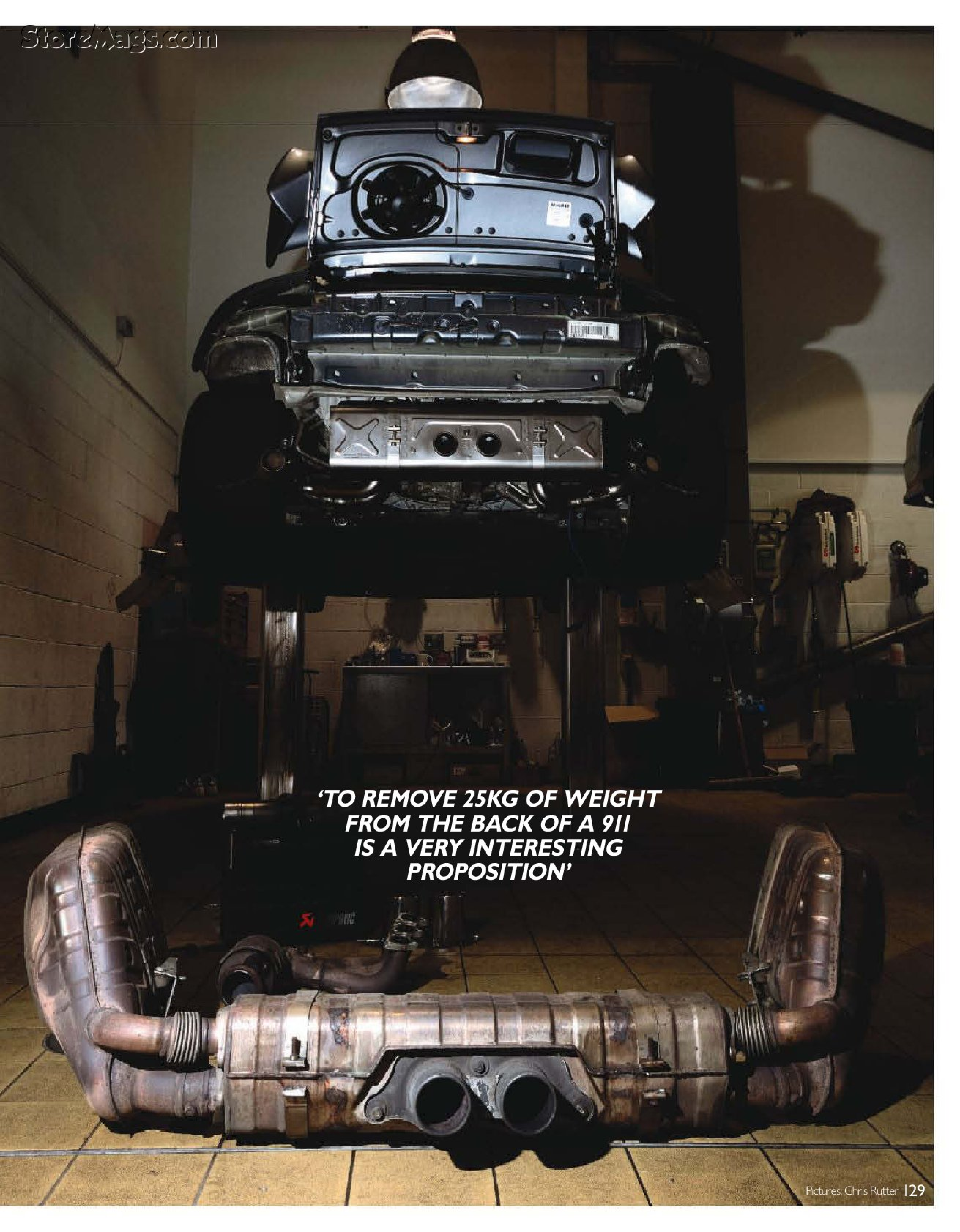
Can you feel the weight reduction? Absolutely: the car changes direction more fluently, and immediately feels a touch more agile. This is a good thing because next month the car gets new suspension. Then we'll really see what this added lightness will feel like.

Chris Harris

Above: Jag's cabin is limousine comfortable. Below: performance on A-roads is astonishing







**'TO REMOVE 25KG OF WEIGHT  
FROM THE BACK OF A 911  
IS A VERY INTERESTING  
PROPOSITION'**

# Fast Fleet

||| LONG-TERM TESTS

I was dreading this. I bought my Clio just a year before the 'big one' was due – the timing belt service. I knew it was going to be expensive before I bought the car and, being a bloke, I simply ignored this fact. Then, after a year, I could ignore it no more. The car was five years old, and, despite it having covered just 14,000 miles, it was time for some major surgery.

Approved Renault dealer R Sport in Wimbledon (0208 540 7366) took on the job, with Andy Cochrane doing the dirty work. It would be a five-ish hour procedure, but contrary to popular myth it's not an engine-out job.

## RENAULT CLIO V6

Date acquired	January 2010
Total mileage	14,642
Mileage this month	265
Costs this month	£1194 (timing belt service)
mpg this month	22.9

'There's a bit more room under there than people think,' said Andy of the V6's mid-mounted engine position. You do need to remove the rear subframe, though, and to do that you need to take the rear wheels off. 'However,' explained Andy, 'one of the biggest problems is getting the wheels off in the first place.' I found this myself when I attempted to give mine



**'THE TIMING BELT CHANGE WOULD BE A FIVE-AND-A-HALF HOUR JOB'**



a clean last year. With all the bolts out, the wheel hung on the hub and could not be shifted with a mallet, a boot or swearing. I gave up in the end. Andy has a theory as to why this happens: 'I think the alloy paint was too thick from the factory, so when the wheel warms up it effectively bonds itself to the hub.' It won't happen again on mine; all four wheels have now been appropriately copper-greased.

With the subframe removed and the engine supported, it was time to attack the bolts that hold the timing-belt cover in place. Like the wheels, these can be tricky to remove, and care is needed not to strip the threads.

Finally, with the cover off, the belt was visible for the first time.

'Yours didn't look too bad at all,' explained Andy, 'but you did the right thing getting it replaced. We've seen pistons holed, valves bent and engines destroyed from timing belt failures.' With the new belt fitted and tensioned, Andy started the engine. It sounded fine, and a test drive confirmed it. Now I just needed to get the car home. Which is where the problems began.

As I opened the door to my lock-up to return the Clio to its winter slumber, I slipped on some ice and broke my wrist. Seems Clio V6s are dangerous even when stationary...

R Sport did a cracking job and charged £1194, of which around £700 was parts costs. I'd steeled myself for a £1700 bill, so while the actual cost didn't stop my wrist throbbing, it certainly made me feel a little better about things. Shame I couldn't drive the Clio for six weeks after...

**Nick Trott**

Above: Clio's rear subframe rests between the rear wheels. Right: timing belt idlers and the timing belt tensioner surrounded by the new accessories belt (left) and timing belt (right)



## SEAT LEON CUPRA R

Date acquired	September 2010
Total mileage	10,585
Mileage this month	1012
Costs this month	£960 (four tyres)
mpg this month	29.3

My search for new tyres has been successful – the Cupra R now wears a full set of Michelin's brand new Pilot Super Sports.

I'm always amazed by how different a car feels on fresh boots, so for some greater insight I handed the keys over

to Roger Green, our resident racer and track monkey, who had driven the Leon on its old Pirelli P Zeros beforehand for comparison.

'The Pirellis performed well,' he said, 'even though they were well worn. The Cupra R's front tyres do have a pretty unenviable task with 261bhp going through them, so it's no surprise wear rates are quite high. The new Michelins feel sharper on turn-in as they have squarer shoulders to lean on and work with. They also provide good levels of traction, but it comes at a cost: road roar has risen and the rumble

permeates the cabin. It'll be interesting to see if this changes as they bed in a little more.'

I'm sure they'll be thoroughly bedded in after the first evo trackday of the season, which will have happened by the time you read this, but I've already made some headway by taking the Cupra to Santa Pod for our inaugural Run What Ya Brung event. Also representing evo were Nick Trott in an Audi R8 Spyder V8, John Barker in the M3 and my nemesis for the day, Fireball Green in the Veyrog, our 309bhp Audi TT project car.



Above: old Pirellis have been replaced by new Michelins, which cost £240 a corner; fitting was taken care of by the ever-helpful Tyres Northampton

Far left: cover for the front bank of camshaft pulleys.  
Left: lower engine stabiliser bar was also removed to improve access to the engine



The Cupra R lines up for another run against the Veyron at Santa Pod

It was my first ever go on a quarter-mile strip, and I enjoyed every second. After a couple of runs I was totally fixated on improving my reaction at the lights and getting those big yellow digits at the finish line to display a time a few tenths faster and a speed a couple of mph higher.

With the traction control off, even the combination of the new Michelins and the sticky track couldn't stop the Cupra spinning its wheels all the way through to third gear, but, with a more measured right foot, my best run saw me cross the line at 96.8mph after

14.6sec. That's my target to beat for next time, then!

Every one of my runs was up against the Veyron, and with more power, trackday tyres, four-wheel drive, a competition clutch and a seasoned racer behind its wheel, it wasn't easy for me in the Cupra R. Not surprisingly, Roger beat me five times out of five – but not by the huge margins I was expecting. On some runs he was only a tenth faster, while the biggest difference was just over a second. The Leon did me proud.

**Paul Lang**

# Fast Fleet

LONG-TERM TESTS

**'DESPITE 80,000 MILES OF TRACK USE – EQUIVALENT TO AROUND 30 LE MANS 24HRS – MAINTENANCE IS STILL MOSTLY ROUTINE'**



**R**ewind to July 2004 – not the most auspicious of months for yours truly, as I had recently got the elbow from British Gas for consistently failing to meet sales targets. Not surprising, really, as I had spent much of the company's time at property auctions attempting to kick-start a 'buy to let' business.

Fast forward a few months and the plot was finally lost when I remortgaged the lot to fund a

30-grand deposit for a brand new, £187,000 Lamborghini Murciélago. Life's too short, as they say, and the sheer exhilaration of piloting home one of Sant'Agata's finest masked the unnerving fact that I had just enough cash left to cover three months' finance repayments...

Happily a way out was found when I trained as a race instructor to bring in some much-needed cash before joining forces with a friend to start a supercar driving experience business. Six and

a bit years later, and with another 26 supercars to tinker with, one might be forgiven for thinking the passion for the Murciélago might have waned a little. But it hasn't yet...

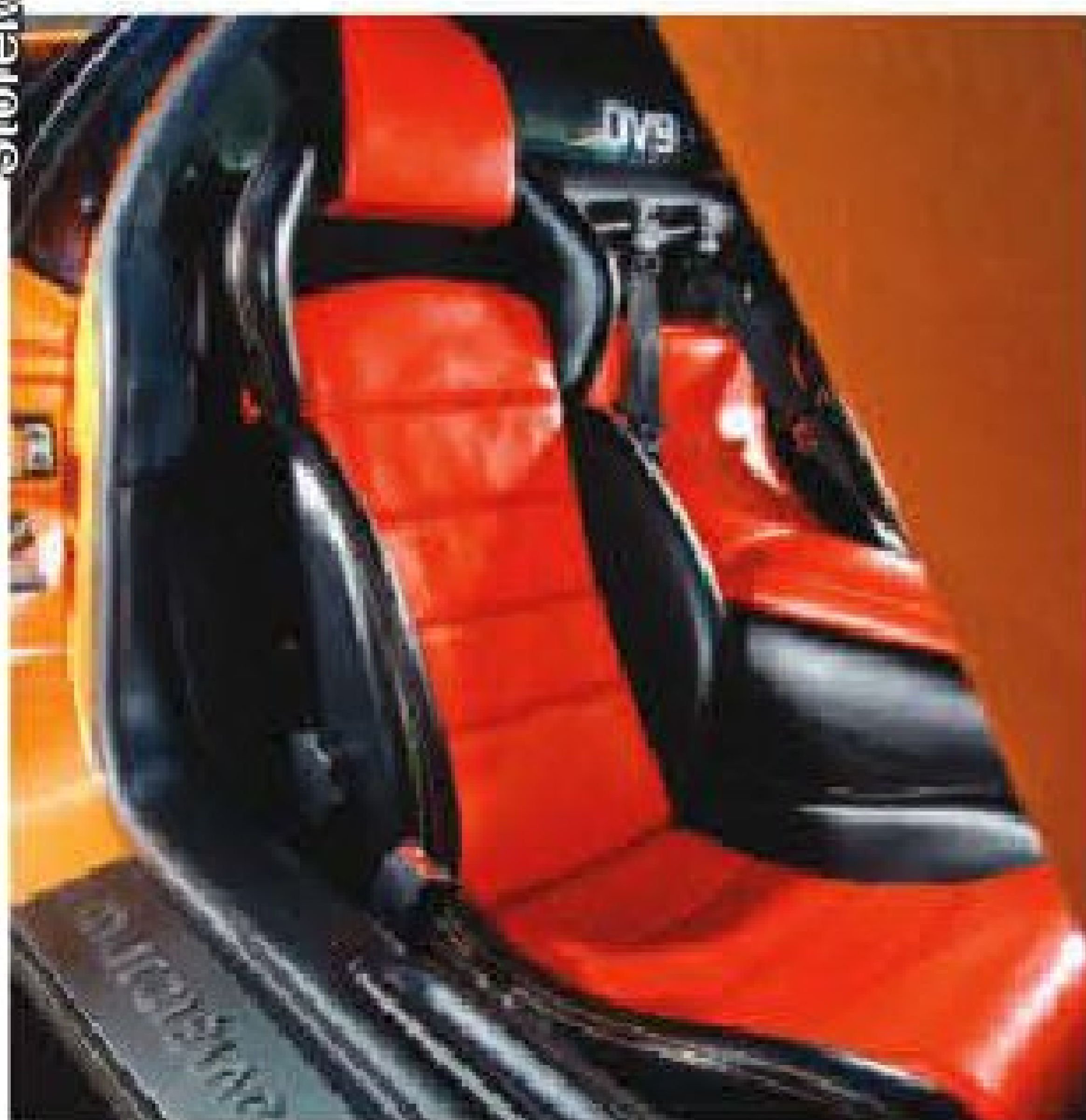
From the 64 miles on the digital odometer that warm September morning to the 201,443 showing today, it's been one heck of a journey for the Deerhunter – the new nickname SG54 acquired after its recent unfortunate encounter with Bambi that resulted in a smashed windscreen and front wing.

## LAMBORGHINI MURCIÉLAGO

Date acquired	September 2004
Total mileage	201,443
Mileage this month	1337
Costs this month	£2500 (interior retrim)
mpg this month	13.5

Regular readers may remember SG54 LAM has been updated over the years. Later-style 'Hemera' rims replaced the earlier telephone dial types, and behind the front ones came an upgraded LP640 brake set-up – a pig to fit, but very effective. Throw in the latest LED rear lights and an SV-style paint-job and suddenly we're in 2011. The latest project has been a stunning new leather interior, and for this I got lucky in finding a talented leather upholsterer who re-covered the lot (except the dash) to factory spec for a very reasonable £2500. Want the same? Drop an email to [julia.wade70@btinternet.com](mailto:julia.wade70@btinternet.com)

What's been astonishing about my experience with this car is the overall



Far left: interior has been retrimmed. Left: later rear lights also help the leggy Lambo look fresh. Above: SG54 is now known as 'the Deerhunter'



Before and after shots show how the Willy's alloys have been returned to the correct shade of gold, complete with the all-important diamond-turned lip

### RENAULT CLIO WILLIAMS

Date acquired	September 2009
Total mileage	85,007
Mileage this month	753
Costs this month	£336 (wheel refurb)
mpg this month	33.5

**W**ith a clean mechanical bill of health from renowned Clio Williams obsessive Mat Brown, there was nothing to stop Stephen Dobie and me finally turning our attention to the cosmetics of our car. Top of the list was its alloys. The 15in gold Speedlines had really been in the wars before we bought the car, with scuffs, scrapes and a re-spray that

had covered the diamond-turned lip around each wheel's edge.

There's a guide to refurbishing the wheels yourself on the Clio Williams owners' club website, but we decided we'd rather some professionals did the job correctly. Pristine Alloy Wheel Refurbishers in Milton Keynes ([www.pristinealloywheels.co.uk](http://www.pristinealloywheels.co.uk)) came highly recommended, not least because their particular blend of Williams Gold is said to perfectly replicate the original paint.

Pristine had the car for two days while they did the job, which comprised numerous stages. First the corrosion and brake dust was removed by coarse blasting, then the old paint was stripped and the wheels

re-blasted using fine particles. Next the scuffs and dings were repaired and welded, then the wheels were computer-lathe turned for a smooth finish. A chemical treatment to prevent corrosion followed, then each wheel was powder-primed and had its lip diamond-turned before, finally, the gold colour and then lacquer were applied.

The result simply makes this car. It now looks like a real Clio Williams, not a shabby pretender, and I feel even more privileged to drive this hot hatch icon. £336 is more than a tenth of what we paid for L97 JUD, but the *Ten Years Younger* effect is worth every penny.

**Adam Shorrock**

lack of mechanical issues. Take, for example, the dampers, which are a well-known Murciélago weak-spot, with leaks being common. On SG54 they're all still original.

In fact, despite over 80,000 miles of track use – equivalent to around 30 consecutive Le Mans 24hrs – maintenance is still mostly routine. Not bad for a near two-ton leviathan. OK, so there's been the odd calamity, like in 2006 when an expensive top-end V12 rebuild was required as a result of a pulley shearing off the end of the crankshaft. But, to its credit, and despite the Murciélago being out of warranty, Lamborghini helped fund the £12,000 bill.

So the big Lambo will be staying put for at least another couple of years, because based on its performance so far there's little doubt it has more to give. More importantly, it's still great fun. And that, in my opinion, is what owning a Lambo is all about.

**Simon George**



The Clio's wheels at various stages during the refurb: 1) stripped back to bare alloy, 2) powder primed, 3) lip reinstated, 4) gold applied

### RADICAL CLUBSPORT 1100

If you follow our Fleet Tweets on @evomagazine you will know that our Radical Clubsport was stolen recently from evo's HQ. It was in a locked Brian James covered trailer that was wheelclamped, had its tow hitch facing a wall and had a hitch-lock fitted. The police said the thieves were 'determined' – which is an understatement.

Co-owner Rog and I are gutted. The car had just had a chassis refresh at the Radical factory and a stunning vinyl wrap by Creative FX ([www.fxuk.net](http://www.fxuk.net)) – see pics at [evo.co.uk](http://evo.co.uk)

So here's an appeal: if you know anything, or are offered Clubsport spares on the QT, please contact me on 0207 907 6310 or email in confidence to [nickt@evo.co.uk](mailto:nickt@evo.co.uk)

**Nick Trott**



Above: police alert for the stolen Radical



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## AUDI RS5

Date acquired	December 2010
Total mileage	6575
Mileage this month	1412
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	21.6



## MASERATI GRANTURISMO

Date re-acquired	June 2010
Total mileage	26,090
Mileage this month	1511
Costs this month	£1034 (tyres)
mpg this month	21.7



## HARRY'S GARAGE ROUND-UP

I've been doing plenty of miles in the Maserati GranTurismo this month and it's been fascinating comparing it with our Audi RS5. The two cars could almost be considered rivals, as you'll pay similar money for a new RS5 as you would for a year-old GranTurismo.

My Maserati has now covered 26,000 miles, and it's nice to be able to report that it still feels almost brand new. There isn't a squeak or rattle to speak of, and the only current fault is with the rear parking sensors, which have recently gone on the blink (I suspect it's just a wonky connection.) The only expense of late has been for four new Pirelli P Zero tyres. The previous set seemed to suit the car better than the original Bridgestones, and also lasted 14,000 miles to the Bridgestones'

9000 (although that did include some performance testing), so I decided to stick with the Pirellis.

The biggest difference between the two cars is performance, as the RS5 can show the Maserati a clean set of heels in the sprinting stakes (we've recorded 10.6 and 12.7sec respectively for the 0-100mph dash). But the Maser flows down the road far better than the rather lumpen Audi. It might not be perfect, but the reward factor from a spirited drive in the GranTurismo is off the scale in comparison – there's a real feel of chassis balance, especially as you pour on the power out of a corner.

The big paddles positioned behind the Maser's steering wheel feel more natural to use than the Audi's tiny affairs, too, and left in auto mode the Italian's torque converter 'box exposes

Right: Maserati's front seats slide forward electrically to aid access to the rear. Far right: Audi's front seats barely fold and have to be slid forward manually



## 'FOR PURE OWNER APPEAL, THIS CONTEST ISN'T EVEN CLOSE'

how the German's dual-clutch gets it wrong more often than it gets it right.

The bottom line is that, for pure owner appeal, this contest isn't even close. The Maserati looks, drives and accommodates passengers so much better than the Audi, it's almost embarrassing. But then the Maserati is

really a V8 Ferrari 2+2, while the RS5 is simply a sporting coupe version of the A4. Sounds cruel, but it's the best way to explain why these cars feel so different. It's also why I'm very glad it's the Maserati with my name in the logbook, not the Audi...

**Harry Metcalfe**



Infiniti's cabin feels like it's been built for the long haul, and it doesn't want for kit

In the Infiniti's class, interiors matter. That's why one of the things the company did when it arrived on this side of the pond was to go through the cabins of its cars with a fine-tooth comb and bring them up to our fussy standards.

It worked. I noticed it the first time I drove our G37S, and it still stands today, with over 15,000 miles on the clock: this car's cabin feels expensively finished, and every button, knob, lever and handle feels built to last.

Styling-wise, the interior may not have the flair of, say, a BMW's, but effort has still clearly gone into its

## INFINITI G37S COUPE

Date acquired	July 2010
Total mileage	15,202
Mileage this month	1788
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	25.4

appearance; witness the tasteful brushed aluminium strips on the dash and doors, the racy Infiniti logos stitched into the leather seats, and the surrounds of the satnav, heater and stereo dials that glow purple (Infiniti's signature colour) at night.

And, of course, this car is not short of kit. The driver's seat has adjustable

thigh and abdomen bolsters, the touchscreen satnav has speed camera warnings and Michelin guides, and the 11-speaker Bose stereo not only sounds superb but has one of the best iPod interfaces I've come across.

Would I change anything? Some softer, less shiny leather on the steering wheel rim would be nice, as would the ability to lower the driver's seat a fraction more, but otherwise, I haven't found myself wanting for anything different in the Infiniti's cabin. No wonder I'm still a long way from tiring of spending time in it.

**Ian Eveleigh**

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It's been a frustrating month with the RCZ, one which has seen it make three separate trips to the garage. First up it became another statistic, another victim of our pockmarked highways, when evo's film-maker, Sam Riley, hit a large pothole, creating an impact so large it kinked a wheel and tore the rubber. The journey home required two cans of tyre weld, took an age to complete at a very steady 50mph, and was pretty uncomfortable with so much shimmy from the imbalance.

The Peugeot press office replaced the wheel for us as dealers don't yet have a supply of these optional rims, and while it was there I asked them to

**PEUGEOT RCZ GT THP200**

Date acquired	December 2010
Total mileage	11,234
Mileage this month	2480
Costs this month	£0 (see text)
mpg this month	34.2

take a look at the water temperature sensor, as that had started chiming out spurious alarms. One moment the gauges would all be fine, the next the water temp needle would be off the scale, before settling down again a moment later. Turns out this is a known fault on some early cars that is being corrected under warranty. It's the thermostat housing that causes the problem, but as the press office didn't

have the part in stock the RCZ had to go back a week later for the fix.

When they had the car this second time they noticed a small crack on the windscreen – so they suggested it should return to them a third time for it to be replaced. Hopefully that will be the end of these yo-yoing trips, as even despite these inconveniences the little Peugeot coupe continues to rack up the miles at a fairly rapid rate. We need it here on the fleet because it's both entertaining to drive and, at 34.2mpg, pretty economical for something with a 197bhp petrol motor. A useful combination with pump prices as high as they are right now.

**Roger Green**



Above: encounter with a pothole led to a damaged wheel and a puncture



**'THE JOURNEY HOME TOOK AN AGE TO COMPLETE AT A STEADY 50MPH'**

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With the recent spell of dry weather, the Mazda 3 has regained some of its composure and I feel much more confident about putting the whole 256bhp down more often. This and the fact that the car is feeling much more lively as the miles roll on is making it a fun place to be for my 55-mile commute to the office.

However, it came as a slight surprise when, after almost 17,000 miles, the LCD screen in the dash flashed up a tyre rotation warning this month. It

**MAZDA 3 MPS**

Date acquired	May 2010
Total mileage	16,879
Mileage this month	1350
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	29.6

used to be pretty common practice to swap the front and rear wheels to make the most of one set of tyres, but I haven't seen it recommended so much recently, and certainly not for any of the cars I've run for the last ten years or so. So I thought that it was a

little odd that it's a routine procedure for a car like the MPS.

The message showed itself far too late anyway, as the front tyres are close to needing replacing. So rather than go to the hassle of swapping the wheels around, I think I'll just hold off and get some new rubber.

I'd be interested to hear what you think about rotating tyres. Do you do it, or do you simply run them until they wear out? Post your thoughts on the forum at [evo.co.uk](http://evo.co.uk)

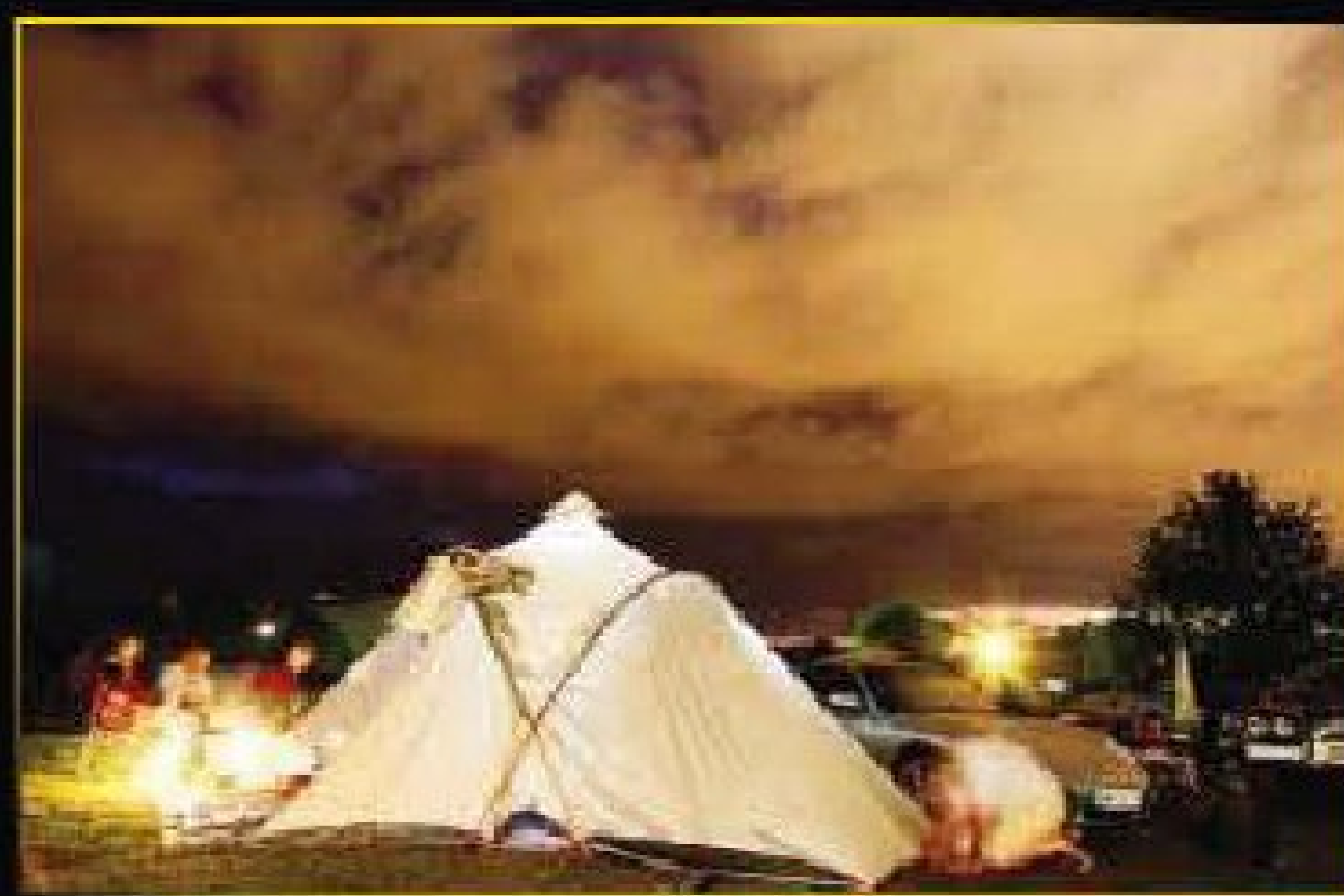
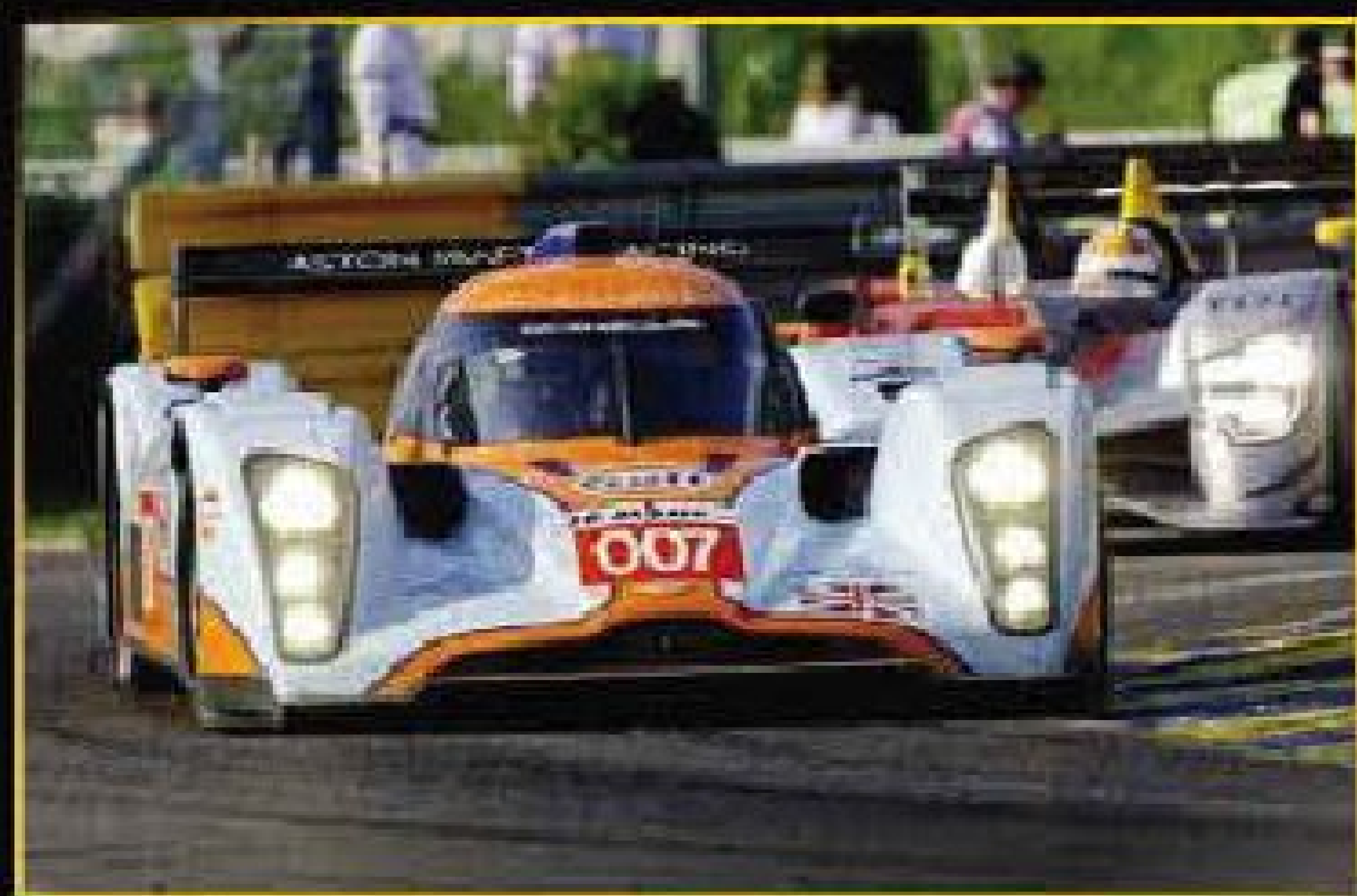
**Chris Rutter**



Tyre rotation request has come too late – the fronts are close to the limit

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# Fast Fleet

## CITROËN DS3 1.6 DSPORT

The DS3 is going back soon, so it's frustrating that it's only now, with the roads drier and Continental rubber fitted, that I've started to really enjoy this car to the full. In fact it's been an absolute hoot of late. If you have a DS3, let me know your thoughts about it at [fastfleet@evo.co.uk](mailto:fastfleet@evo.co.uk)

**Adam Shorrock**

## SKODA YETI 1.8 TSI

I had the chance to do some minor off-roading whilst filming the Veyrog around Silverstone from the dirt road that follows the track. With the Yeti in off-road mode it performed brilliantly, climbing with ease to viewpoints other cars would have struggled to reach.

**Sam Riley**

## VAUXHALL INSIGNIA VXR

The Insignia is booked into the local Vauxhall dealer to investigate the steering wobble under braking. Otherwise, 20,000 miles in, life with the big blue bus is very good indeed. It really doesn't deserve to be such a rare sight. Ian Eveleigh thought he'd seen another one in the distance the other day. Turned out it was me, taking a different route into work.

**Peter Tomalin**

## JAGUAR XJR

The Jaguar has developed a tiny zizz from the leading edge of the rear side window, bang slap next to my right ear. It's letting down what otherwise feels like an extremely tight and solid car, so it will have to be dealt with. I'm just not sure how.

**Richard Porter**

## RENAULT MÉGANE 250 CUP

Still piling miles on the Meg, and enjoying every one of them as it feels and looks like a different car since the swap to 18in wheels. It's also wearing extremely well, which is an improvement over the old-generation Mégane. There's no hot hatch I'd rather be driving.

**Richard Meaden**

**[fastfleet@evo.co.uk](mailto:fastfleet@evo.co.uk)**

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## PEUGEOT 106 RALLYE

Date acquired	March 2009
Total mileage	57,501
Mileage this month	191
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	29.1

A settled spell of beautiful spring sunshine meant I had my first proper hoon of the year in the Rallye the other day.

And great fun it was too.

Whenever I begin to think that perhaps I might sell the little Pug, I go out for a drive and it hooks me all over again. True, in the past something would fall off it or break shortly afterwards to test my resolve, but it's

actually been running with flawless reliability for a long time now. Which, being a natural pessimist, has begun to worry me. But enough of my French automotive trust issues...

One thing that always surprises me about the Rallye is just how physical the little car is to drive quickly. The weight of the unassisted steering reduces a little once you get moving, but it's only really around the straight-ahead that you sense a lessening of required effort. Once you apply some lock the weight returns and you need a firm hand to guide it through a quick series of corners. Tight corners need forearms like Popeye.

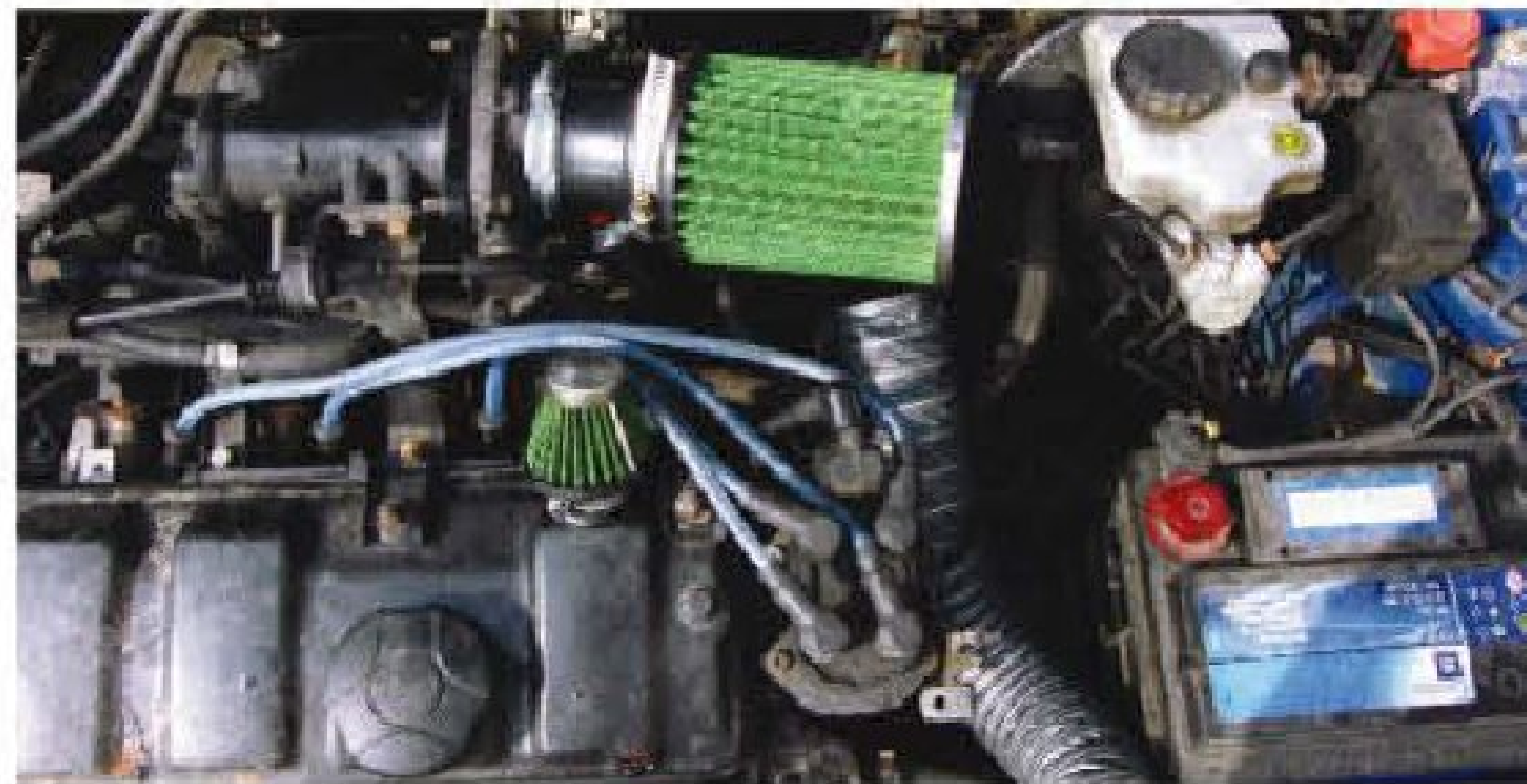
Where it really tests you is if you need to apply opposite lock. That's

not something modern hot hatches ask of you very often, if at all, but in the Rallye it's all part of the fun. On a twisty B-road you're very busy, simply because the nose is so tightly nailed to the road that the tail naturally adopts some old-school Peugeot attitude as soon as you turn-in, perhaps with a wheel in the air for good measure.

It's fun, but quite tricky to master, thanks to '90s Pugs not being renowned for taking mid-corner prisoners and the heavy steering that takes a real heft to get your corrective lock in quickly enough. It's not knife-edge stuff exactly, but you certainly think twice before provoking it and occasionally wish you hadn't!

Buoyed by fine weather and renewed enthusiasm, I took the 106 to its second home at Paragon in Northampton to have them fit the Green induction kit kindly donated to the cause by a philanthropic evo reader. It all went on fine, but the full-throttle induction noise is a bit much and I'm sure it sucks more hot air than cold. As the Peugeot Sport exhaust is already pretty boomy I'm not sure I can live with a double dose of rortiness. I've kept all the standard intake parts, so may well end up asking Paragon to swap them back for a quiet(er) life.

**Richard Meaden**



Below: 106 is a workout on a twisty B-road. Above: induction kit is on the noisy side

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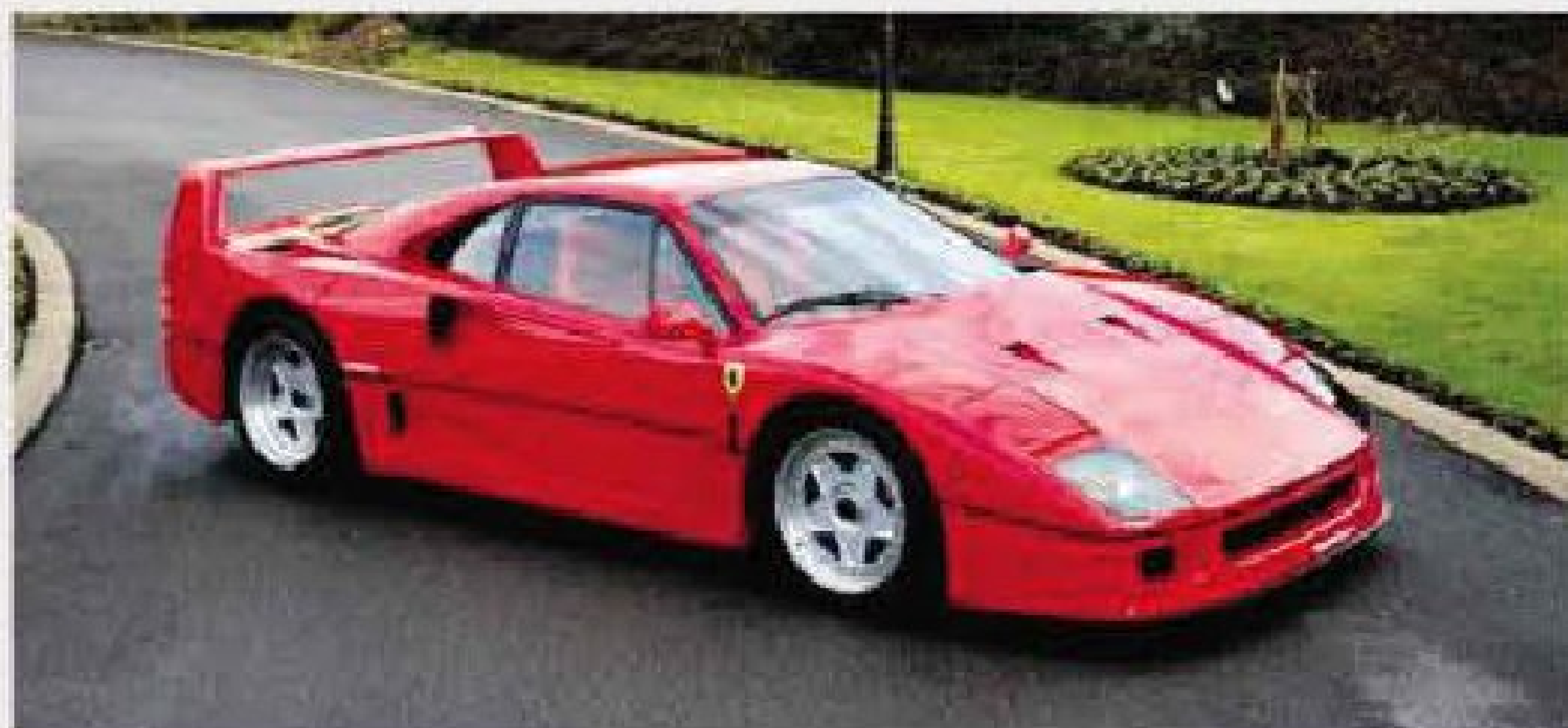
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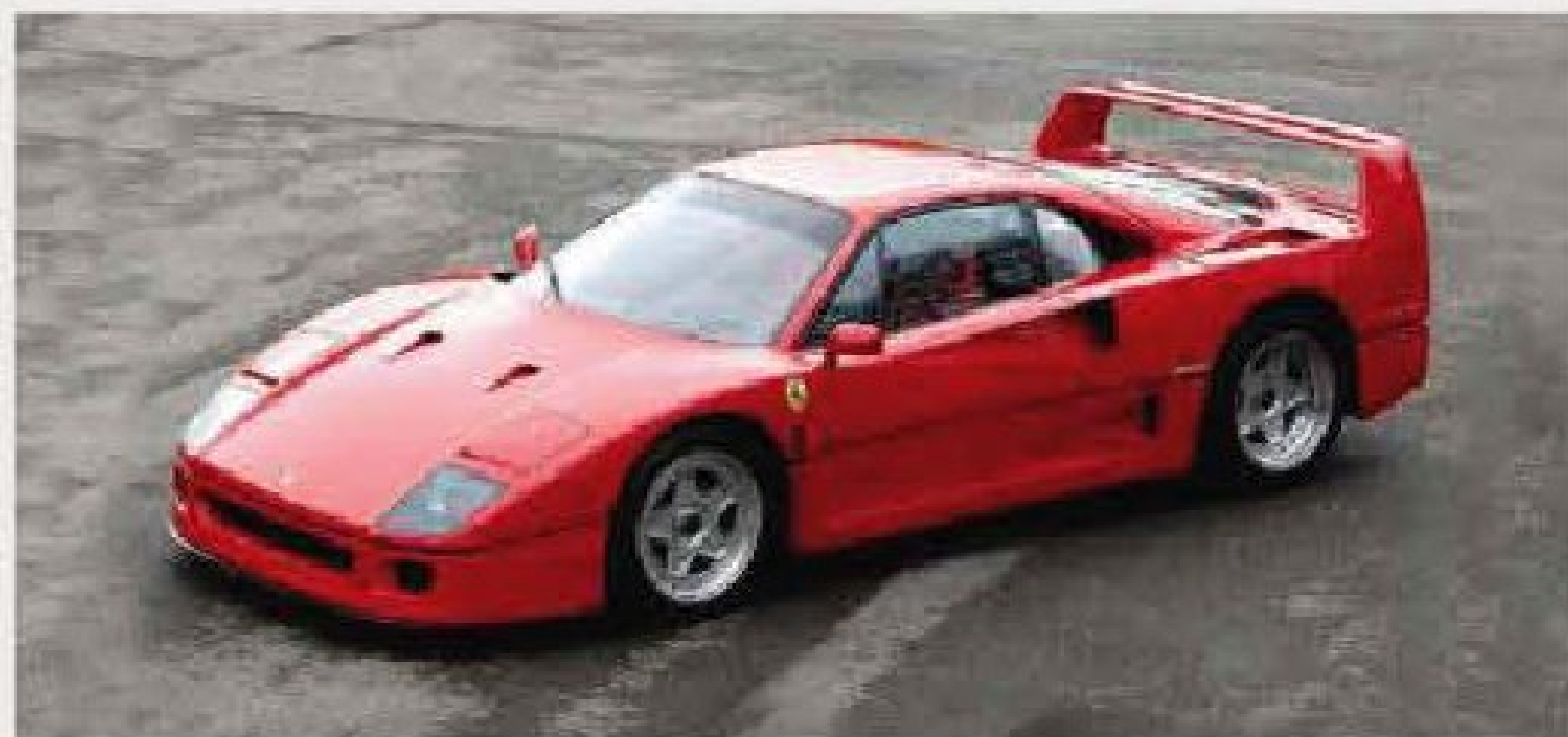
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## BUYING GUIDE

### FORD FOCUS ST A great all-rounder, with prices from £6K

With its soulful-sounding turbocharged five-cylinder engine and plenty of tuning potential, the ST has a strong following

#### 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 Ferrari 360 (above) and a Maserati Quattroporte

#### THE KNOWLEDGE p154



#### TRIED AND TESTED

Facts, figures and our verdict on every drivers' car. Plus the latest products reviewed: this month a new wax shield to keep your car looking its best

#### ASK THE EXPERTS p171



#### YOU ASK, WE ANSWER

Why did a reader's Lotus Exige S suddenly go bang on a trackday? This and other questions are answered by our resident panel of experts



# Ford Focus ST

*Slightly overshadowed by the RS, the Focus ST is a fast and capable hatch in its own right. Here's all the essential buying information*

**A**t its launch in 2005, most of us thought of Ford's Focus ST as a Golf GTI alternative with more pace, a sexier sound and a lower price. Since then it has developed a strong following of its own, helped by the arrival four years later of the ST-derived Focus RS. Some of that car's glory has filtered down to the ST, with the result that owners are keener than ever to modify their STs to RS power levels and beyond. Far beyond, in some cases.

There are great thrills to be had by going that route, of course. Great heartbreak if it's an early car, too, as we shall see. But the ST is a highly

appealing machine even in Ford's factory form, because it was created by Ford's 'Team RS' (today's version of AVO or SVE) as a proper job.

For a start, it got a 2.5-litre, 222bhp, five-cylinder turbo engine borrowed from Volvo, with 236lb ft of torque from 1600rpm right up to 4000. So it sounded nothing like any Focus before it. Compared with Volvo's version of the engine, the ST motor got variable valve timing for both camshafts, a lighter flywheel and a recalibrated throttle map. And it got a 'sound symposer' in the intake tract, the better to direct the off-beat, five-pot warble into the cabin when you're enjoying the engine's keenness to

Above: bigger grilles, aluminium-trimmed foglight housings and distinctive alloys marked out the ST from regular Focuses

Words **John Simister**Pictures **Chris Rutter**

nudge its 7000rpm limit with the aural edge fully hardened.

Compared with a regular Focus, the ST sat 15mm lower on 30 per cent stiffer springs and suitably recalibrated dampers. There was a strut-brace and the front subframe was made of thicker steel. The rear anti-roll bar was stiffer, creating greater weight transfer across the rear wheels to help counteract the heavier nose, the steering rack's response was speeded up by eight per cent, and the brakes were bigger. All of this on top of what was already probably the best-handling mainstream hatch then on offer.

Then there was the way it looked, most dramatically in the Electric Orange that was the signature launch colour. The standard Mk2 Focus was a bland-looking machine after the Mk1's 'surface entertainment' (as Mk2 designer Chris Bird described it), but the ST remedied that with a bigger front grille sitting above an even more enlarged lower air intake, the latter flanked by aluminium-outlined foglight housings. That motif was repeated at the back, where the bumper grew cartoon-like 'whoosh-lines'.

Inside, huggy Recaro seats could have their bolsters trimmed to match the paintwork, the steering wheel had a thicker rim, the pedals were of rubber-studded aluminium, and a three-dial pack atop the dashboard displayed oil pressure and temperature plus turbo boost. Three trim levels were offered: ST1, 2 and 3, with ESP absent from ST1 until the 2008 facelift with its new nose, curvier tail detailing and generally less-fussy look. The ST3 got full leather trim, with the rear seats shaped for two people only.

That ESP absence is interesting, because it meant the handling had to be absolutely failsafe without it. Some carmakers recalibrate the suspension if ESP is fitted, to allow greater pointability before the system intervenes, but Ford did not. Fans might disagree, but it meant that the ST can feel more ponderous and unreactive to the throttle in a corner than you might expect of a fast Ford. That apart, it's a great if somewhat thirsty drive – made even greater by the Ford-approved Mountune conversion which brings power up to 260bhp. Find one of those if you can.

## SPECIFICATION

- Engine 2522cc 5-cyl, dohc, 20V, turbo
- Max power 222bhp @ 6000rpm
- Max torque 236lb ft @ 1600-4000rpm
- Transmission Six-speed manual, front-wheel drive
- Tyres 225/40 R18
- Weight (kerb) 1317kg
- Power-to-weight 162bhp/ton
- 0-60mph 6.7sec
- Top speed 150mph (claimed)
- Price when new from £17,495 (2005)

## PARTS PRICES

(Supplied by Plans Motorsport, Dunsfold, Surrey. Tyre prices from blackcircles.com. All prices include VAT at 20 per cent)

- Tyres £139.00 each (Continental Sport Contact 3, fitted)
- Brake pads (front set) £98.95
- Brake discs (front pair) £114.00
- Clutch (RS cover and plate only) £190.00
- Oil filter £8.50
- Air filter £16.80
- Exhaust system, aftermarket cat-back £430.00
- Catalyst, aftermarket £450.00

## SERVICING

(Prices supplied by Profile Auto Evolution)

- 12,000 miles £145.00
- 24,000 miles inc brake fluid £185.00
- 36,000 miles inc spark plugs £260.00
- Cambelt change due at 120K miles

## WHAT TO PAY

■ Pre-facelift STs can be found for as little as £6000 if the mileage is high, and £7000 buys a presentable one. There are dozens of examples between £8000 and the £10,500 at which 2008-onwards facelift cars typically start, while very low-mileage pre-facelift cars can edge as high as £12,000. Modifications don't tend to add value, but if done well they don't reduce it. Production ended last year but a few virtually as-new cars with the top trim level might nudge £19,000.

## IN THE CLASSIFIEDS



**2006, 59,000 miles, ST2**

Graphite wheels, Pumabuild mods with Dreamscience remap, Piper exhaust

**£7000**



**2007, 31,000 miles, ST2**

Mountune 260bhp conversion, Frozen White, two owners, full Ford history

**£10,495**



**2008, 21,000 miles, ST3**

Electric Orange, facelift model, heated seats, black leather, full history

**£14,999**

# Marlow Cars

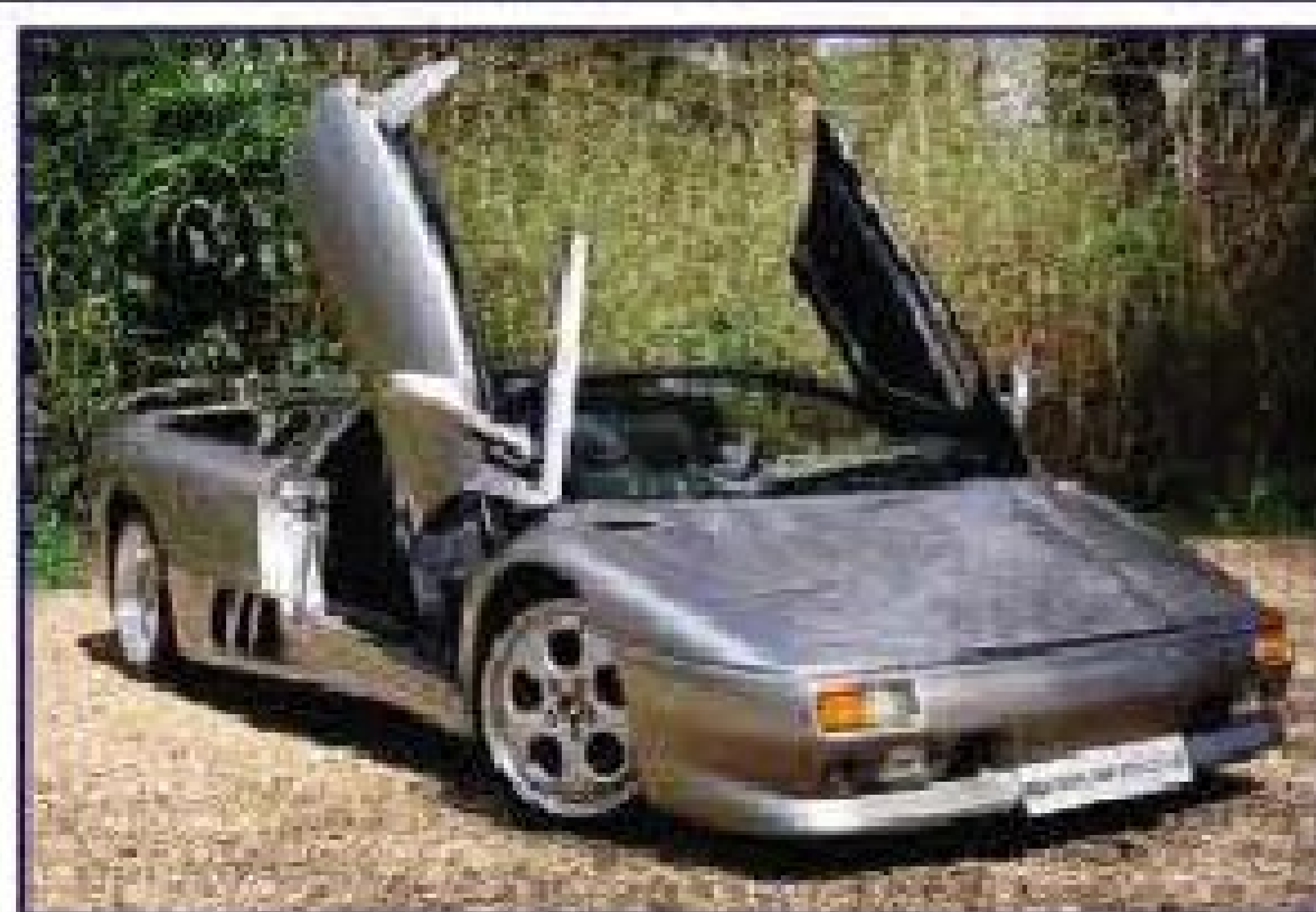
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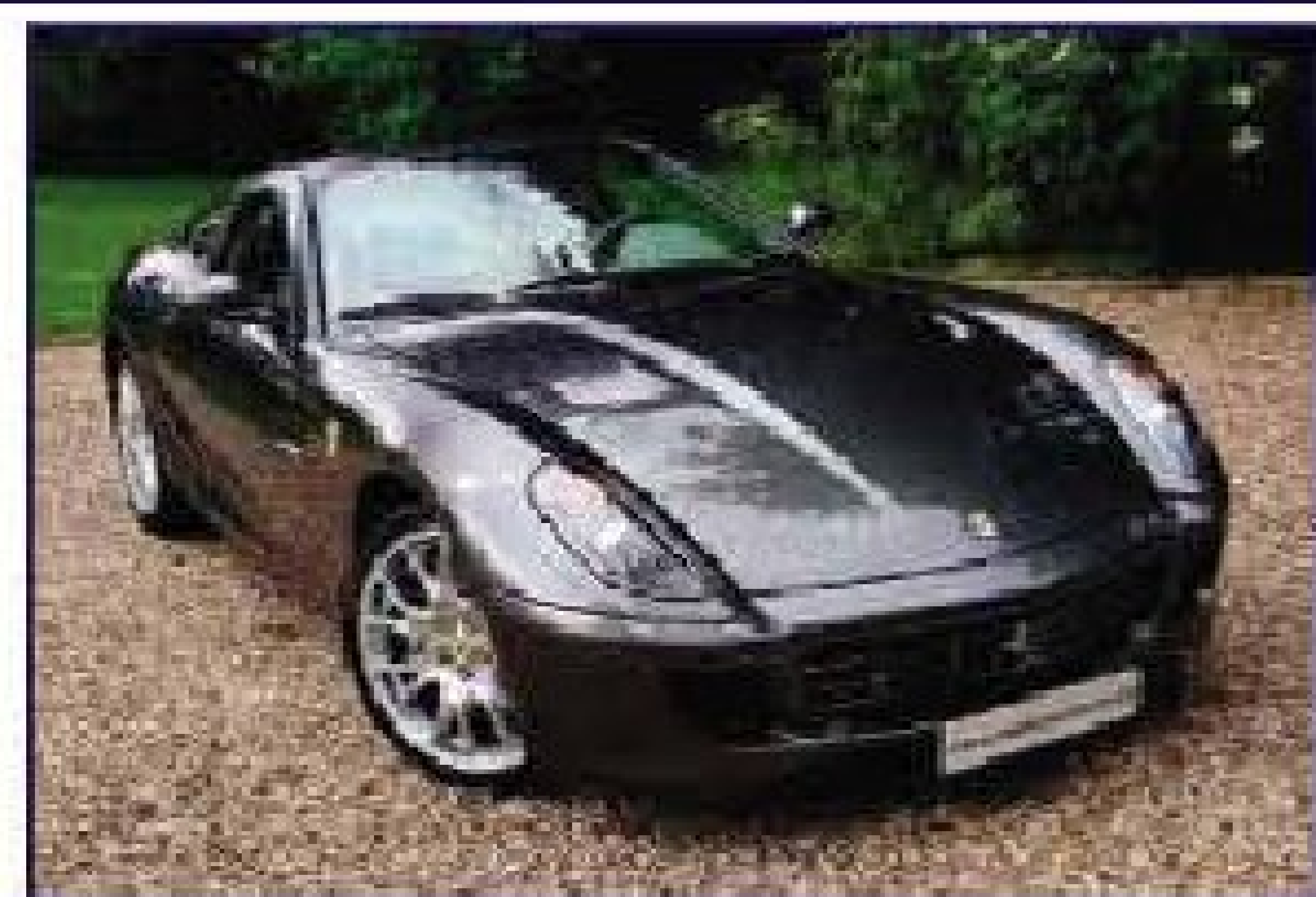
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## CHECKPOINTS

There are plenty of STs around, so if you have any doubts about a car, find another. Gary Lendon of Stockport-based ST service and tuning specialist Profile Auto Evolution warns that a standard-seeming car could well have been modified in the past. 'Various original clips and fixings might be missing if an induction kit has been fitted, for example, and they can't be replaced.' Gary is our guide here.

### ■ Engine

The big one is split cylinder liners in cars made up to April 2008. 'If there's mayonnaise in the oil filler and a misfire on start-up, that will be the problem. It's more likely in a modified car because of the extra stress, and was cured in later cars. The symptoms might seem like head gasket failure, but we've only ever had one of those compared with about 30 split liners. If it's happened, you need a whole new engine because Ford doesn't supply the block alone.

'If the car sings like a kettle at idle,

the diaphragm in the oil filter housing has split. It's part of the breather system, open at idle and closed on boost. The whistle is air being pulled through the oil filler cap. Also check what the boost gauge is doing when you drive. The boost should go just over halfway, then back to half – or more if it has been 'mapped'. If it won't go beyond a quarter, it needs a new solenoid boost valve at £85.'

### ■ Transmission

'The early clutch is weak and can slip under mid-range torque, especially if the engine is tuned. The RS clutch is stronger so we fit that. It's cheaper too, but you also need the RS dual-mass flywheel, thrust bearing and slave cylinder the first time it's changed – £900 fitted for the whole job. If the driveshafts are clicking, the car might have missed the Ford recall which glued the mismatched driveshaft and CV joint splines together. We use a Loctite product to fix it. The offside driveshaft's inner boot is prone to

splitting – we fix one a week. Neglect it and you'll need a new shaft at £380.'

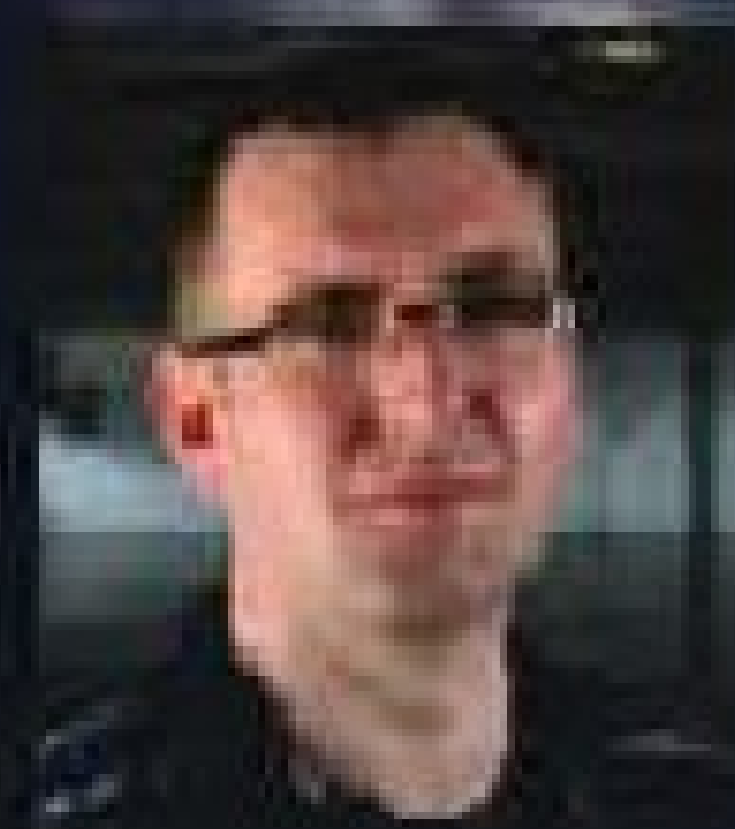
### ■ Suspension, brakes

'The brakes are usually fine. The front anti-roll bar drop-links can wear quickly; listen for a clonk over bumps. The main problem is the fluid-filled rear bushes for the front wishbones, which can split and leak in as little as 12,000 miles. Wear on the tyres' inside edges and torque steer are the giveaways. You can't get the bushes except by buying the whole wishbone, so we fit polyurethane bushes which don't spoil the ride.'

### ■ Bodywork, interior, electrics

Check the boot is dry – some cars have missing sealant in the seam by the tailgate hinges. Gary also advises checking the washer bottle for leaks: 'Replacing the bottle means removing the front wing to get at it. The driver's seat base can break at the back, so make sure the seat doesn't rock. It can be welded up again if necessary.'

## I BOUGHT ONE



### MARK BAKER

'I bought the ST in April 2009 for £11K to replace my VW Corrado, which had

done 186,000 miles. I was looking for something large enough to go away for the weekend, comfortable on the motorway for a few hundred miles but still fun to throw down the odd B-road. The ST fits the bill perfectly.

'The car had 21K miles on it when I bought it, is now on 48K and has been totally reliable. The only costs have been regular servicing and a set of tyres, though another set of fronts will be needed soon. I have had the car

**'It's been totally reliable'**

re-mapped by Dreamscience, which ups the 225bhp to around 270, with much improved responsiveness at the expense of some increased torque-steer. I also fitted a Milltek exhaust, which sounds great and fills the cut-outs in the rear bumper much better.

'I've no plans to sell the ST. The only downside is fuel economy, which averages about 24mpg but can go as low as 14mpg around town.'

## USEFUL CONTACTS

- [www.focusstoc.com](http://www.focusstoc.com) (owners' forum which helped greatly with this feature)
- [www.profile-automotive.co.uk](http://www.profile-automotive.co.uk) (very helpful specialist)
- [www.mountunepreformance.co.uk](http://www.mountunepreformance.co.uk)
- [www.dreamscience-automotive.co.uk](http://www.dreamscience-automotive.co.uk)



Left: interior seems to be generally hard-wearing. Seats (right) are as comfy as they are body-hugging. Five-cylinder turbo engine (top) can suffer with split cylinder liners



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## Just looking...

## FERRARI 360 MODENA

■ Price £52,995 ■ Year 2003 ■ Mileage 16,250

■ Vendor Stratton Motor Company, Norfolk (strattonmotorcompany.com, 01508 530491)

■ Engine V8, 3586cc ■ Max power 400bhp @ 8500rpm

■ Max torque 275lb ft @ 4750rpm ■ 0-60mph 4.5sec ■ Top speed 180mph+

This isn't a cheap 360 Modena. It's possible to get into one for £15K less than the £52,995 being asked by the Stratton Motor Company for this 2003 example, but you'd be hard pushed to find one in better condition. Particularly one with a manual gearbox. Over 70 per cent of Modenas sold in the UK had the F1 paddle system, which was a real shame, for the *shlack-dack* open-gate manual in the 360 is a thing of joy and the clutch usefully lasts around 10,000 miles longer too.

The average lifespan of the clutch in a manual is around 25,000 miles, so the one in this 16,250-mile car should still have plenty of life left. The car's history is impeccable, too, with a service having been carried out every February by an official Ferrari dealer.

The V8 engine likes to be used on a regular basis and this one has covered around 2000 miles so far this year, which is the minimum it should be doing. On the road the car feels fresh and sharp – as good as it did the first time I drove a 360 way back in 1999, in fact. While it may not have the ramped-up gnarly aggression of the F430 or the sublime all-round useability of the 458, it still has the ability to prickle the nape every time the V8 sweeps boisterously past 4000rpm.

The 360 Modena was the first Ferrari with an all-aluminium construction, so it also has historical importance, and this is one of the very best of the breed that I've seen for a long time. As a first step into junior supercar ownership you could do a lot worse than looking here. **RG**



## SUMMARY

## ● EXTERIOR

Perfect. The 'Tour de France Blue' paintwork is unmarked, even on the nose

## ● INTERIOR

The cream leather has been equally well cared for, looking much younger than the mileage

## ● MECHANICALS

That service history is as exacting as you're going to get. It hasn't wanted for anything

## ● SHOULD I BUY IT?

If you want a 360 in outstanding condition and are prepared to pay for it, absolutely

● **FOR:** You'll have to look hard to find a better 360

● **AGAINST:** You'll have to pay a little over the average if you want it

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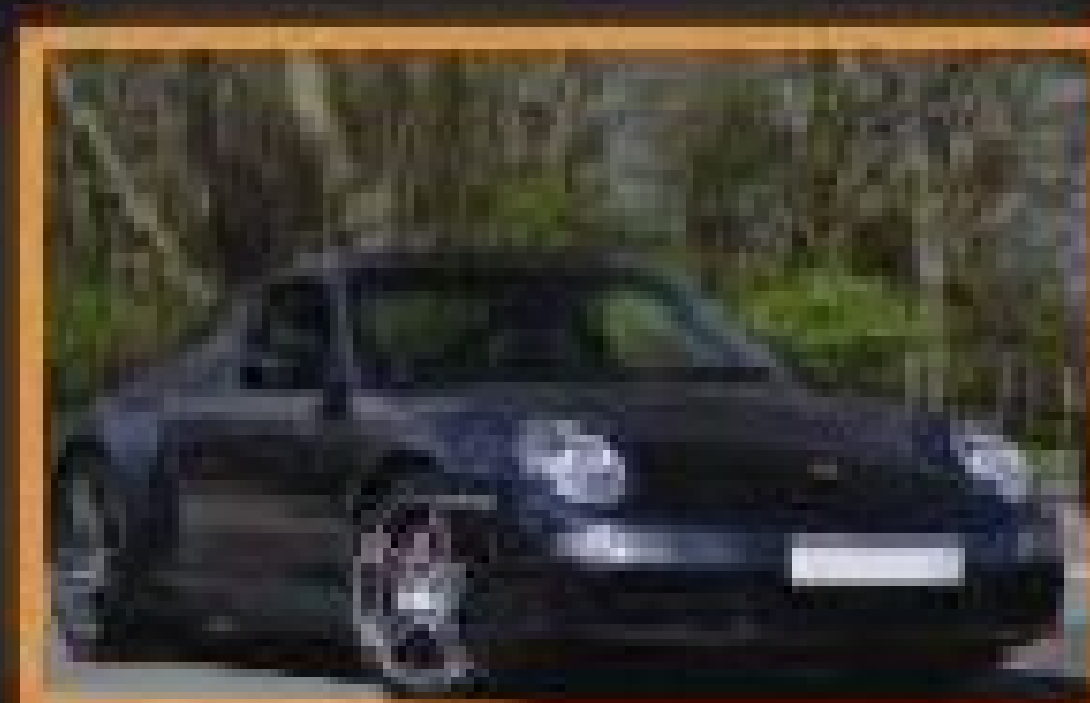
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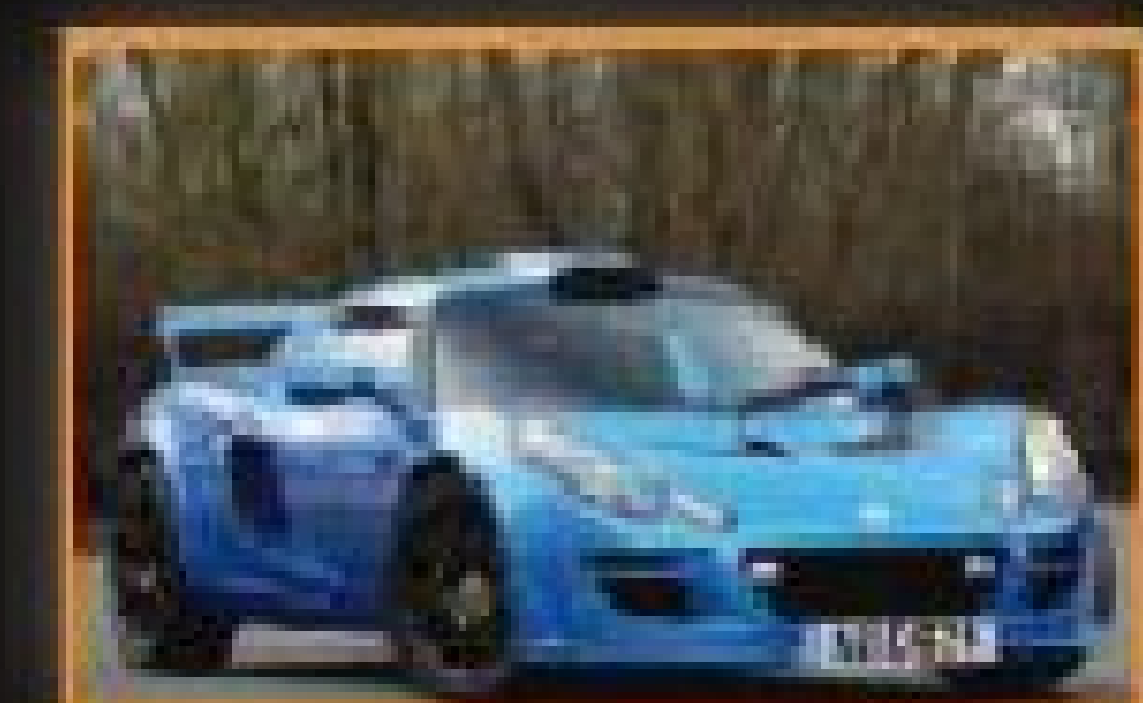
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# SUBARU WRX STI v IMPREZA RB5

*Turbo cars don't get much more iconic than the Impreza RB5, but how does it compare with the current WRX STI around the West Circuit? Roger Green finds out*

Over the past six months we've hailed the new WRX STI as something of a return to form for Subaru. In fact, prising the keys of our long-termer from its guardian, Henry Catchpole, isn't the work of a moment. Try to do so and he will harp on about how the suspension is significantly revised from its predecessor's and is all the better for it, and he's not wrong. The spring rates, anti-roll bars and subframe bushes have all been altered, the ride height lowered by 5mm and the wheels have grown an inch in diameter while simultaneously becoming two kilos apiece lighter. Together, their effect on the STI's dynamic capabilities has restored our faith in a brand built on cross-country fireworks.

We can't call this car an Impreza, though. To distinguish it from the rest

of the range, the iconic name that summons up images of heroic rallying escapades has, bizarrely, been dropped. It doesn't fool us, though, and to discover just how well the new car measures up, we've brought in one of our all-time favourite Imprezas, the RB5 from 1999.

Built to celebrate the WRC skills of Richard Burns, the RB5 with the Prodrive Performance Pack was a worthy tribute to the late world champion's prodigious talent. Its blend of interaction, adjustability and extraordinary ground-covering ability made it a hit 12 years ago, and today it enjoys a cult following. If the current car has flaws, the RB5 will expose them.

## SPECIFICATIONS

SUBARU WRX STI	SUBARU IMPREZA RB5
Engine Flat-four, 2457cc, turbo	Engine Flat-four, 1994cc, turbo
Power 296bhp @ 6000rpm	Power 237bhp @ 6000rpm
Torque 300lb ft @ 4000rpm	Torque 258lb ft @ 3500rpm
Weight 1505kg	Weight 1235kg
0-62mph 5.2sec (claimed)	0-60mph 5.0sec (claimed)
Top speed 158mph (limited)	Top speed 143mph (claimed)
Price £32,995	Price £27,545 (1999)



RB5 (above) runs a 2-litre turbo flat-four with 237bhp; STI's engine (below) has 2.5 litres and another 59bhp. The newer car's extra mass means power-to-weight ratios are similar, though: 195bhp/ton for the RB5, 200 for the STI

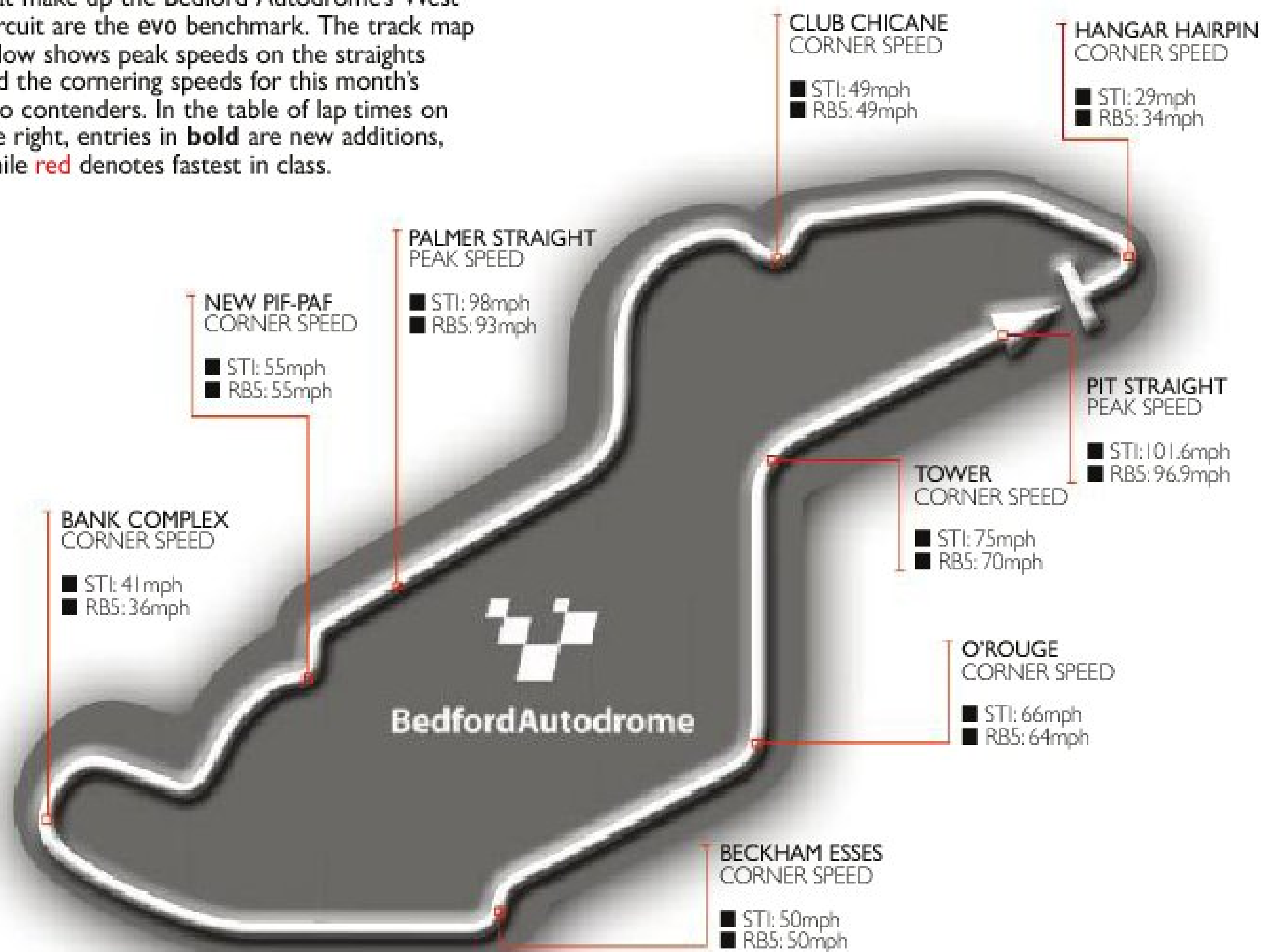


It's the STI that's up first for our Bedford Autodrome shootout. The lap begins with heavy braking into Hangar Hairpin, and here you feel an almost overwhelming sense of weight transfer onto the vented nose. The 330mm Brembo front brakes are meaty, and they need to be, as they are tasked with hauling up 1505kg. That's some 270 more than the RB5, or to put it another way, about the same as three average-sized passengers. And their luggage. We're not sure why the STI weighs quite so much more – there are the inevitable extra safety systems, and a larger engine (2.5 litres v 2.0), but the car occupies a similar area of tarmac.

There's a brief pause as you turn in and wait for the front Dunlop SP Sport 600s to hook up, but the moment they bite, aggressive re-application of power is possible as the traction level is typically savage. You can almost

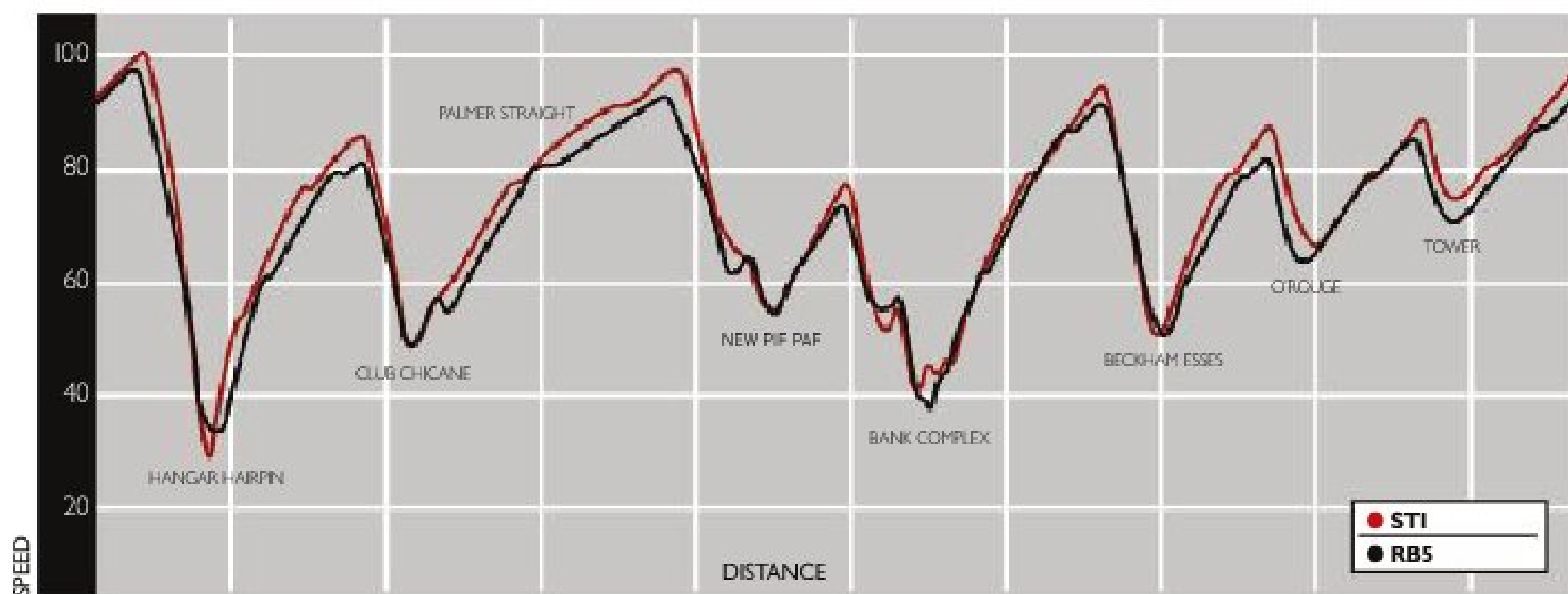
### HOW FAST?

■ 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 **bold** are new additions, while **red** denotes fastest in class.



### WHICH WAS FASTER?

WRX STI lmin 28.3sec (peak 101.6mph) IMPREZA RB5 lmin 31.4sec (peak 96.9mph)



▲ Red trace shows the superior in-gear acceleration abilities of the WRX STI, and this isn't the only factor contributing to its higher peak speeds at the end of the straights – its stronger brakes mean you can hit the middle pedal later. RB5 is still a match for the newer car in the slower and mid-speed corners, though

### THE LEADERBOARD

Car	LAP TIME	PEAK
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
Mitsubishi Evo X RS 360	1.26.1	106.6
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
<b>Subaru WRX STI</b>	<b>1.28.3</b>	<b>101.6</b>
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
Renaultsport Mégane 250 Cup	1.29.9	101.4
Nissan 350Z	1.30.0	101.4
Honda NSX	1.30.1	101.3
VW Scirocco 2.0 TSI	1.30.4	98.9
Ford Focus RS (Mk2)	1.30.8	101.8
Peugeot RCZ 1.6 THP 200	1.30.9	98.9
Renaultsport Clio V6 255	1.31.1	101.7
<b>Subaru Impreza RB5</b>	<b>1.31.4</b>	<b>96.9</b>
Honda Civic Type-R Championship White	1.31.8	97.9
Renaultsport Clio 200 Cup	1.31.9	97.2
Audi TT 2.0 TFSI	1.32.0	100.3





sense the rubber ripping into the surface of the tarmac. Release the steering lock as soon as possible and you'll avoid the build up of understeer and instead experience the squat and slingshot in full effect, especially with the C.Diff (centre differential) set to give a rearward bias.

The powerband is short: the full 300lb ft of torque arrives at 4000rpm, peak power (296bhp) 2000 revs later, so you get through the gears quickly. The run to the Palmer Curves is over in no time, and here the STI does a good job of disguising its weight through the tricky third-to-fourth gear, right-left-right transition, allowing you to accelerate hard and cleanly all the way to the exit and on towards Pif-Paf. The STI demands that things are kept smooth on the way into this tricky little complex. Trail-braking through the fast left loosens the tail, which would be fine if you then didn't have to slow the

car further for the tighter right that follows.

In the final two fast turns you crave a touch more accuracy. The nose needs a little weight to get the front tyres turning, then as the rear begins to swing you pick up the throttle to balance it out and grip four-square to the apex. Understeer builds as you run out to the edge of the track but you can readjust the balance with another lift, or allow the initial swing to run wider and gas it up for a larger drift. Both of these techniques cost time, though, so entry judgement is absolutely crucial. The cleanest lap nets a 1min 28.3sec.

You notice two things within the first few yards of travel in the RB5: the reduction in power – it has only 237bhp at its disposal – and the increased speed of its reactions. Everything you do has a more immediate effect on the car's behaviour. It's more intimate and the sensation

of mass moving fore and aft, port and starboard has all but gone. The accuracy you crave in the WRX STI is all here, too. You can place this old-school machine exactly where you want it, and that means you can be more liberal with your driving style too – small mistakes can be corrected at any point during the corner.

It takes a little longer to get to each turn, but the RB5's powerband is usefully larger, which again makes it a far easier and more rewarding package from which to extract a lap time. It doesn't win the race – the extra grunt of the STI, combined with its higher level of grip in the faster corners and stronger brakes, ultimately proves impossible to overcome, and leaves the older car 3.1sec in its wake – but if I was choosing one of these as a trackday companion where lap times are not the be all and end all, I'd still take the RB5.



'You can place the RB5 exactly where you want it, and that means you can be more liberal with your driving style'



Above left: newer car may not be called an Impreza, but the lineage is clear to see. Middle and right: RB5 wears 17in Prodrive wheels, WRX STI's 18in alloys sport STI badges

# THE KNOWLEDGE

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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	£16,667	4/1368	161/5500	184/2250	1155kg	142	7.9	-	132	142	-	+ Attractive and fun - Needs the upcoming Esseeesse power upgrade	★★★★
Abarth 500 Esseeesse	129 R	£16,100	4/1368	158/5750	170/3000	1035kg	155	<b>7.2</b>	<b>20.4</b>	131	155	-	+ A properly fun, old-school hot hatch - Limited numbers being imported	★★★★
Alfa Romeo Mito 1.4 TB	132 D	£16,745	4/1368	135/5250	152/1750	1145kg	120	8.2	-	129	-	51.4	+ So close to being a modern-day Alfasud - But not close enough...	★★★★
Alfa Romeo Mito Cloverleaf	149 F	£18,365	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	£20,000	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	£24,995	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	134/3800	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	<b>6.0</b>	<b>15.5</b>	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	£15,670	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	£21,200	4/1984	197/5100	206/1700	1295kg	155	7.0	-	148	164	39.8	+ Usual Audi strengths - Usual Audi weaknesses	★★★	
Audi S3	106 R	£31,045	4/1984	261/6000	258/2500	1455kg	183	<b>5.6</b>	<b>13.6</b>	155	-	33.2	+ Very fast, very effective, very... err, quality - A little too clinical	★★★★
* Audi RS3 Sportback	156 F	£39,900	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1575kg	261	4.5	-	155	-	-	+ Above, with added five-pot character - Again, see above...	★★★★
BMW 118i SE	£21,280	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 123d M Sport (5dr)	122 R	£27,170	4/1995	201/4400	295/2000	1495kg	137	<b>6.5</b>	<b>17.4</b>	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	<b>6.1</b>	<b>15.3</b>	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	£8485+	3/998	68/6000	68/3600	790kg	87	4.2	-	98	103	61.4	+ Full of character and insurance-friendly - Insurance friendly power	★★★★
Citroën C2 GT	064 R	'04-'05	4/1587	108/5750	108/4000	1027kg	107	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	<b>9.3</b>	-	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	<b>7.6</b>	<b>22.6</b>	127	-	34.9	+ Chunky, chuckable charger - Can catch out the unwary	★★★★
Citroën DS3 1.6 THP	142 F	£16,300	4/1598	154/6000	177/1400	1240kg	126	7.2	-	133	155	42.2	+ A proper French hot hatch - Petrolheads might find it too 'designed'	★★★★
Citroën DS3 Racing	153 D	£23,100	4/1598	204/6000	203/2000	1240kg	167	6.5	-	146	149	-	+ Faster, feistier version of above - It's six grand more than a Clio Cup	★★★★
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	£14,095	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	£19,300	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	£8545	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	£14,395	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	<b>10.2</b>	-	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 RS500	152 F	'10-'11	5/2522	345/6000	339/2500	1467kg	239	<b>5.6</b>	<b>12.7</b>	165	225	-	+ More power and presence than above - Pricey (and all sold!)	★★★★
Ford Focus RS (Mk2)	139 R	'09-'11	5/2522	300/6500	324/2300	1467kg	208	<b>5.9</b>	<b>14.2</b>	163	225	30.5	+ Huge performance, highly capable fwd chassis - It could be the last RS...	★★★★
Ford Focus ST Mountune	137 R	'08-'11	5/2522	256/5500	295/2500	1392kg	187	<b>5.8</b>	<b>14.3</b>	155	224	-	+ ST takes extra power in its stride - You probably still want an RS	★★★★
Ford Focus ST	119 R	'05-'11	5/2522	222/6000	236/1600	1392kg	162	<b>6.7</b>	<b>16.8</b>	150	224	30.4	+ Value, performance, integrity - Big engine compromises handling	★★★★
Ford Focus RS (Mk1)	053 R	'02-'03	4/1998	212/5500	229/3500	1278kg	169	<b>5.9</b>	<b>14.9</b>	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	<b>8.6</b>	<b>27.6</b>	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	<b>7.8</b>	<b>23.2</b>	137	-	34.7	+ Exclusivity - Expense. Standard Puma does it so well	★★★★
Honda Civic Type-R Mugen	144 F	'09-'11	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	102 R	'07-'11	4/1998	198/7800	142/5600	1267kg	158	<b>6.8</b>	<b>17.5</b>	146	215	31.0	+ Looks great, VTEC more accessible - Steering lacks feel, inert balance	★★★★
Honda Civic Type-R	075 R	'01-'05	4/1998	197/7400	145/5900	1204kg	166	<b>6.8</b>	<b>16.9</b>	146	-	31.7	+ Potent and great value - Looks divide opinion, duff 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	£13,290	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	£23,155	4/2261	256/5500	280/3000	1385kg	188	<b>6.3</b>	<b>14.5</b>	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	<b>6.1</b>	<b>14.3</b>	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	£13,400	4/1598	97/6000	113/3000	1135kg	87	10.5	-	116	127	52.3	+ Perfect power-to-grip ratio - HUGE speedo, slow car	★★★★	
Mini Cooper	099 D	£14,780	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	£18,010	4/1598	181/5500	177/1600	1205kg	153	<b>7.0</b>	-	142	136	48.7	+ New engine, Mini quality - Lacks old car's direct front end	★★★★

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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 <sub>2</sub> g/km	EC mpg	evo rating	
Mini John Cooper Works	154 R	£22,320	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	£19,050	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	£23,290	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	<b>7.6</b>	<b>18.0</b>	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	<b>7.8</b>	<b>19.9</b>	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	£13,949	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 308 GT THP 200	155 D	£22,445	4/1598	197/5500	202/1700	1412kg	142	7.6	-	140	159	-	+ RCZ engine in a practical body - Definitely a GT rather than a GTi, though	★★★★
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	<b>7.4</b>	<b>22.2</b>	127	-	34.9	+ Fine handling supermini - Looks its age	★★★★★
Peugeot 207 GTi THP 175	105 F	'06-'09	4/1598	172/6000	195/1600	1325kg	132	7.1	-	137	-	39.2	+ Great engine - Sloppy controls and huge body smother the chassis	★★★
Peugeot 205 GTi 1.9	095 F	'88-'91	4/1905	130/6000	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	<b>7.2</b>	<b>20.1</b>	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	<b>6.9</b>	<b>19.2</b>	137	-	30.1	+ Essentially a GTi-6 for less dosh - 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?	★★★★	
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	154 R	£16,810	4/1998	197/7100	159/5400	1204kg	166	<b>6.6</b>	<b>16.7</b>	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	<b>6.6</b>	<b>17.5</b>	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	<b>6.6</b>	<b>17.3</b>	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	<b>6.5</b>	<b>17.7</b>	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	<b>5.8</b>	<b>17.0</b>	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	<b>7.6</b>	<b>20.8</b>	121	-	26.0	+ One of the best hot hatches ever - Can be fragile like an Integrale	★★★★★
Renault Mégane GT TCe 180	154 D	£20,825	4/1998	178/5500	222/2250	1320kg	137	7.7	-	139	178	36.7	+ Rides & steers well - Not much cheaper than car below, lacks its sparkle	★★★★
Renaultsport Mégane 250 Cup	139 R	£23,650	4/1998	247/5500	251/3000	1387kg	181	<b>6.1</b>	<b>14.6</b>	156	195	33.6	+ Fantastic chassis... - ...partially obscured by new-found maturity	★★★★★
Renaultsport Mégane R26.R	125 F	'08-'09	4/1998	227/5500	229/3000	1220kg	189	<b>5.8</b>	<b>15.1</b>	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	<b>6.2</b>	<b>16.0</b>	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	<b>8.3</b>	<b>23.5</b>	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	<b>6.7</b>	<b>17.3</b>	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	£17,540	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	<b>6.9</b>	-	140	148	44.1	+ Funky (especially in Bocanegra trim), economical - The FR's a better drive	★★★★
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	£20,520	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	£22,160	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	£25,985	4/1984	261/6000	258/2500	1375kg	193	<b>6.1</b>	<b>14.0</b>	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	£16,260	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	£20,145	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	£14,825	3/999	97/5500	104/3500	780kg	126	9.9	-	96	119	54.3	+ 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	<b>4.6</b>	<b>10.7</b>	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 wanted	★★★★
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	£12,995	4/1586	123/6800	109/4800	1105kg	113	8.9	-	124	165	39.8	+ Entertaining handling, well built - Lacking in steering feedback	★★★★
Vauxhall Corsa VXR	154 R	£18,625	4/1598	189/5850	192/1980	1166kg	165	6.8	-	140	172	38.7	+ Looks snazzy, punchy engine - Lacks feel, uncouth compared to rivals	★★★★
Vauxhall Astra 1.6T SRI	138 D	£21,570	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	<b>6.7</b>	<b>16.7</b>	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 Polo GTi	154 R	£18,790	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1184kg	153	6.8	-	142	139	47.9	+ Modern-day mk1 Golf GTi gets twin-clutch DSG - It's a little bit bland	★★★★
VW Golf GTD (Mk6)	133 D	£24,395	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	£25,045	4/1984	207/5300	207/1700	1318kg	160	<b>6.4</b>	<b>16.5</b>	149	170	38.7	+ Still a very accomplished hot hatch - 207bhp isn't a lot any more	★★★★
VW Golf R (Mk6)	140 D	£31,095	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	<b>6.7</b>	<b>17.9</b>	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	<b>5.8</b>	<b>15.2</b>	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	<b>6.4</b>	<b>16.3</b>	154	-	24.6	+ Charismatic - Boomy engine can be tiresome	★★★★

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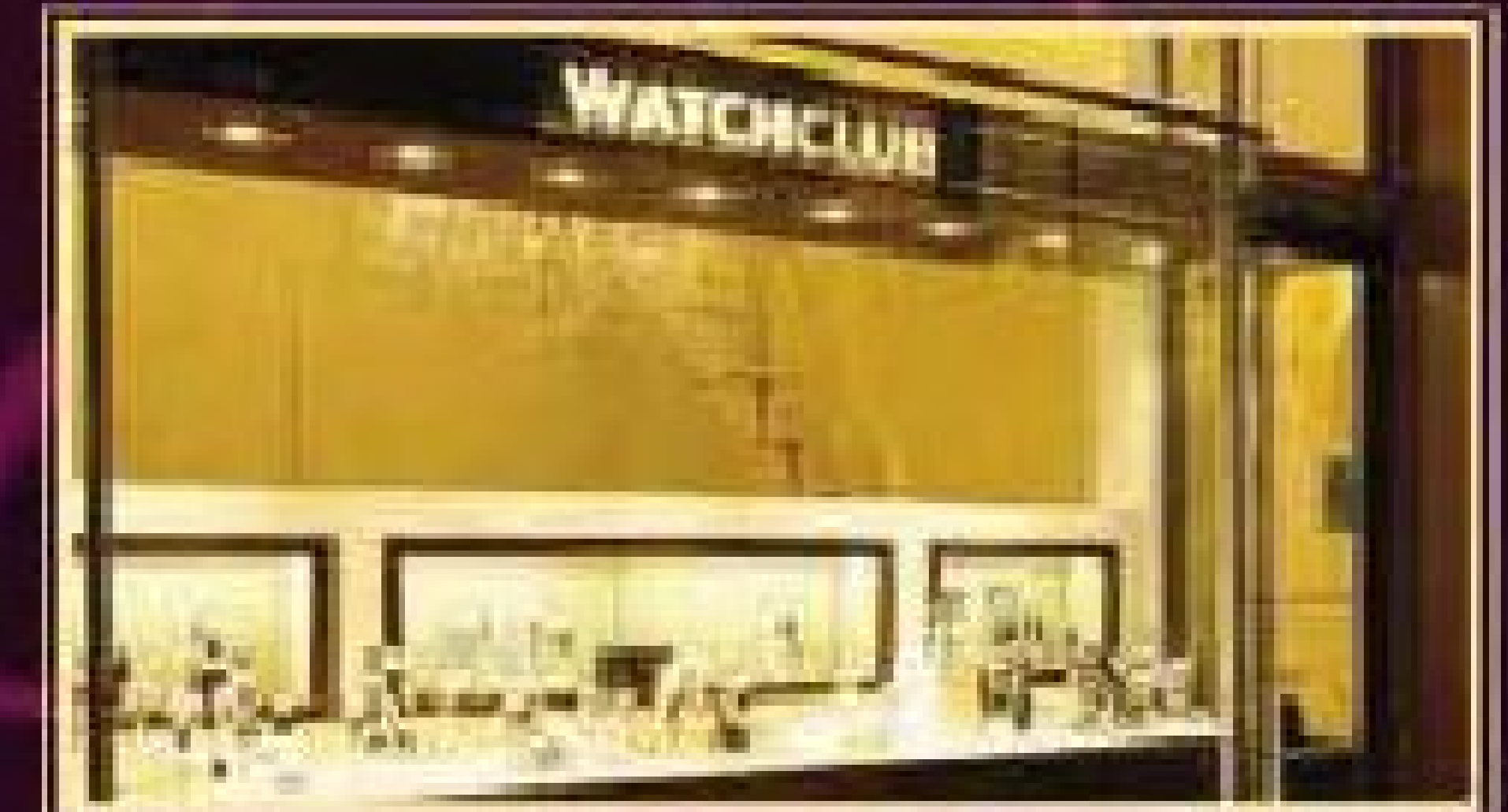
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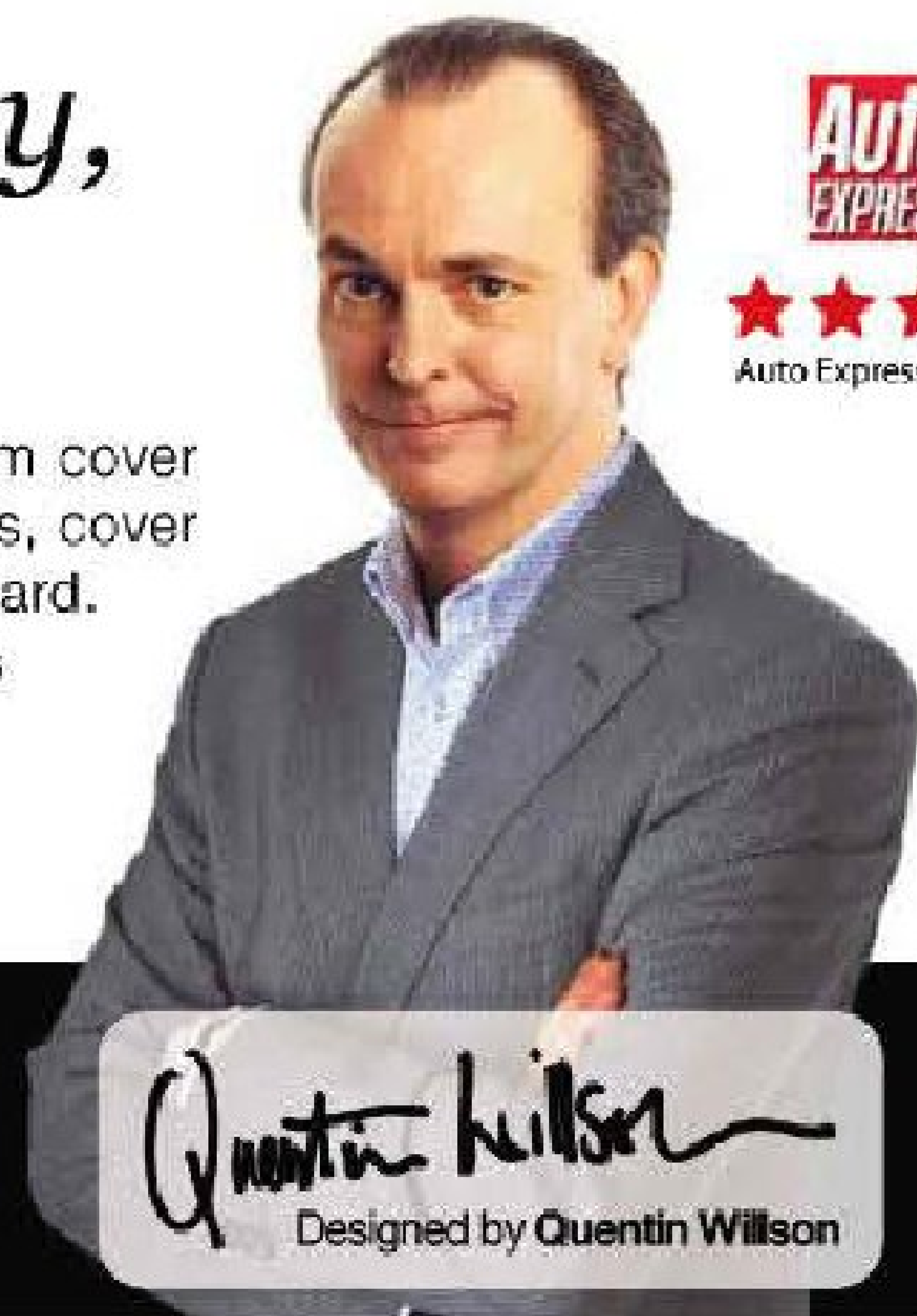
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SALOONS/ESTATES/4X4s



**OUR CHOICE BMW M3.** It's got two more doors than the coupe version but the M3 saloon costs around £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 rival 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	CO <sub>2</sub> 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	£149,995	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	£35,230	6/3197	261/6000	243/3000	1610kg	165	6.1	-	155	214	31.7	+ A good match for its German foes - An extra £2K 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	£37,290	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	+ 414bhp at 7800rpm! - 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	£60,290	10/5204	429/6800	398/3000	1910kg	228	5.2	-	155	299	22.4	+ Even faster, and discreet with it - Very muted V10	★★★★
Audi S6	124 D	'08-'10	10/4991	572/6250	479/1500	1985kg	293	4.5	-	155	331	20.3	+ Looks and drives better than estate version - M5 still looks tempting	★★★★
Audi S6 Avant	116 F	'08-'10	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 S6	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 S6 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	5.1	-	155	-	21.4	+ V10 engine, ceramic brakes, fantastic gearbox - Light steering	★★★★
Audi Q7 V12 TDI	124 D	£100,320	12/5934	493/3750	737/1750	2635kg	190	5.1	12.2	155	298	25.0	+ Undeniably quick, relatively economical - A tad ostentatious	★★★★
Bentley Flying Spur	080 D	£133,200	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	£150,900	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	£27,900	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	£32,540	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		£31,265	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	£36,900	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	£53,075	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	£38,895	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 - SMG 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		£47,420	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	£57,380	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	£82,140	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		£70,590	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	c£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	'06-'11	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		£24,945	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 repmobile 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		£35,186	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	£40,490	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	£39,900	6/2993	271/4000	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		£52,900	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	£64,400	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	5.1	-	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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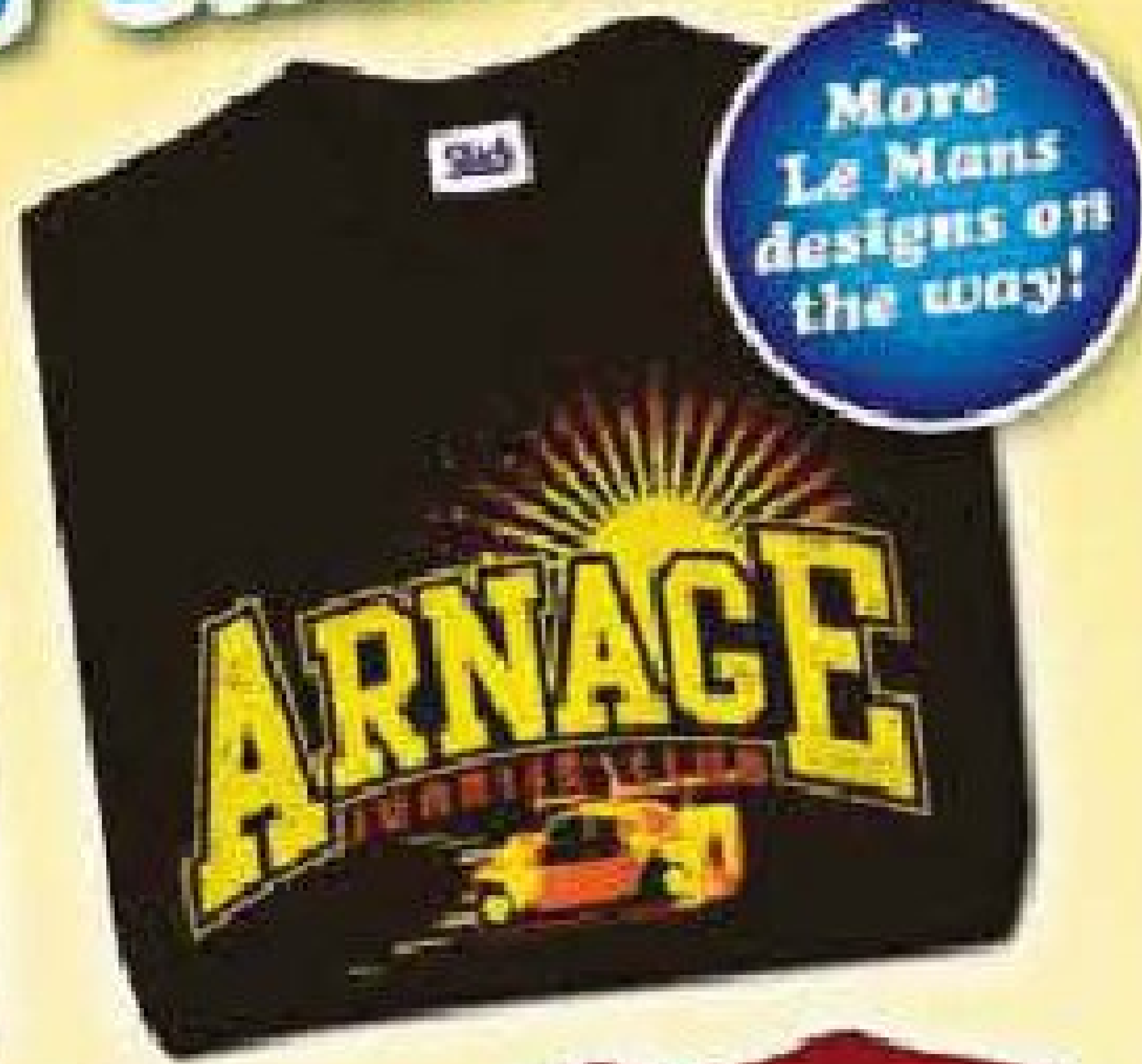
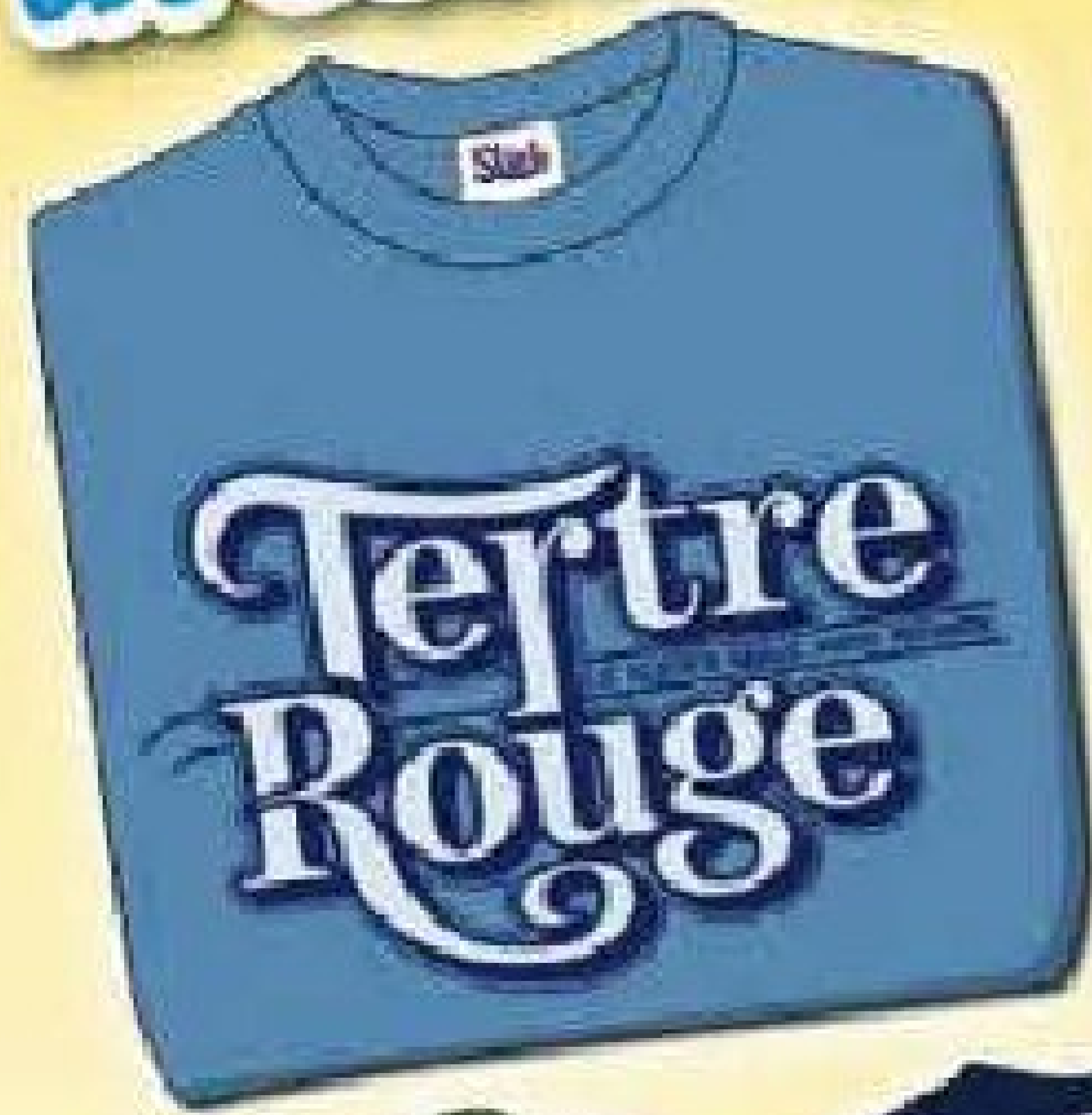
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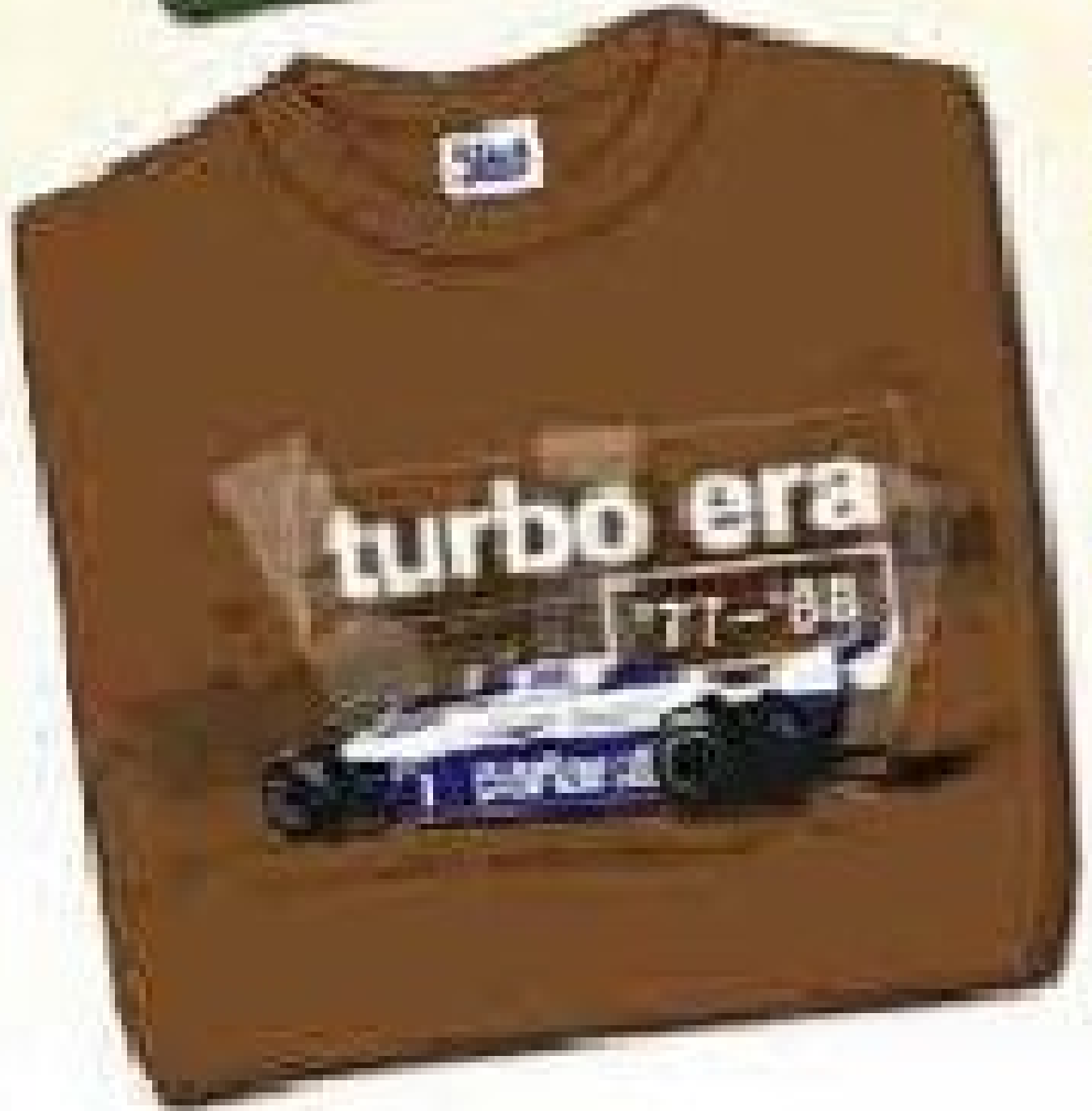
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	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	Bhp/rpm	Lb ft/rpm	Weight	Bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO <sub>2</sub> g/km	EC mpg	evo rating	
Jaguar XJ 3.0 V6 diesel	148 D	£55,500	6/2993	271/4000	442/2000	1796kg	153	6.0	-	155	184	40.1	+ A great Jaguar - But not as great as the Supersport...	★★★★
Jaguar XJ Supersport	144 D	£91,000	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	£58,300	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	£87,350	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	£94,300	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	£54,600	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	£62,920	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	£73,415	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	£112,250	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	£163,580	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 CLS63 AMG (Mk2)	154 D	£77,960	8/5461	549/5750	590/2000	1870kg	270	4.3	-	155	231	28.5	+ More power, less weight, more mpg - Pricy options	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG	099 F	'06-'11	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 ML63 AMG	104 F	'07-'10	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	£117,410	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		£29,699	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	£32,699	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	£33,799	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	£36,799	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	'09-'10	4/1998	403/6500	387/3500	1560kg	262	3.8	-	155	328	-	+ The best Evo X so far... - ...about X grand too much when new	★★★★
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	-	-	+ Extra pace, extra attitude - Extra money	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo VII	031 F	'02-'03	4/1997	276/6500	282/3500	1360kg	206	5.0	13.0	140	-	20.5	+ 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	£77,453	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	£102,909	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	£84,972	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	£66,395	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	£85,695	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	£200,500	12/6592	563/5250	575/1500	2435kg	235	4.7	-	155	317	20.8	+ More sporting, more affordable Rolls-Royce - But it still costs £196,300	★★★★
Rolls-Royce Phantom	054 F	£285,200	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	£38,585	6/2792	296/5500	295/2000	2065kg	146	6.9	-	155	244	26.6	+ Fine 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'za 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 - 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	£32,990	6/2792	321/5250	321/5250	1810kg	180	5.6	-	155	249	24.7	+ Highly able and very likeable - It's a £32K 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 GTS	156 D	£49,500	8/6162	425/6000	406/4600	1831kg	236	4.9	-	155	324	18.6	+ Oversteery and characterful - It's very nearly M3 saloon money	★★★★
Vauxhall VXR8 Supercharged	113 R	'07-'11	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	'09	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	£81,235	12/5998	444/6050	413/2750	2240kg	201	6.1	-	155	348	19.5	+ Techno masterpiece that works - Seventy-eight grand for	

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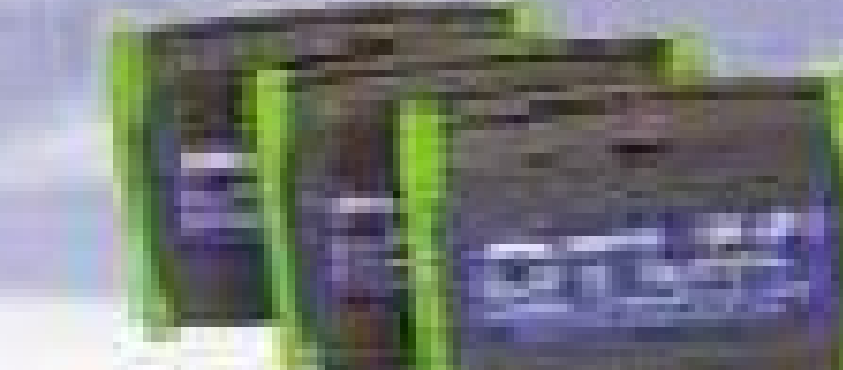


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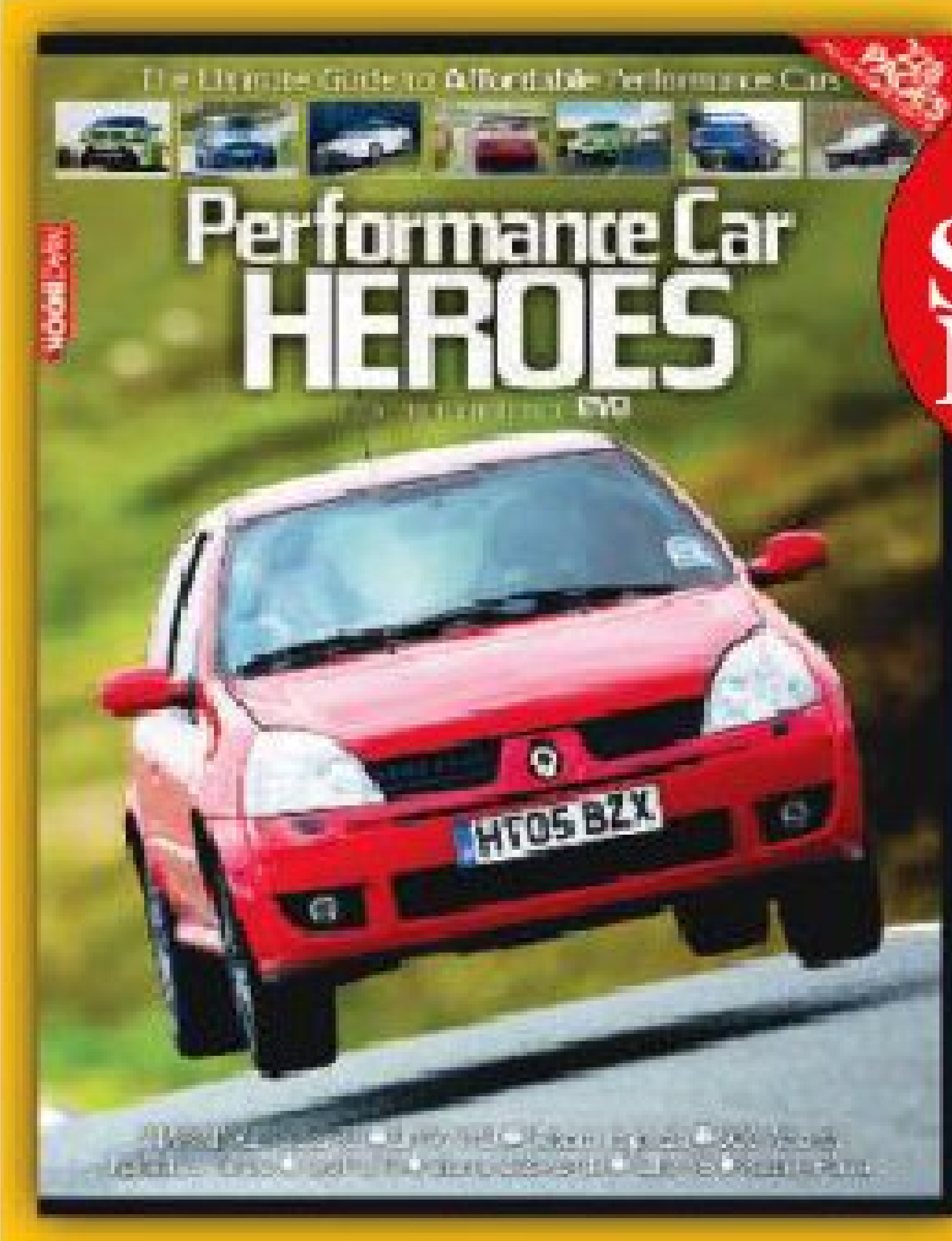


**OUR CHOICE** Porsche Boxster. OK, it's become a bit of a cliché and it's got all the visual tension of a bar of soap, but the Boxster's still a great drive and the latest version boasts fresher, more powerful engines. New Spyder iteration (left) is even more driver-focused.

**Best of the Rest:** The Elise is a joy, with just enough power, while the revamped MX-5 handles like it should again. If you're rich, buy an Audi R8 Spyder. For the ultimate road and track thrills, though, treat yourself to 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 <sub>2</sub> g/km	EC mpg	evo rating		
AC MkVI GT	135 D	£93,500	8/6162	437/4800	431/4800	1000kg	444	3.9	-	162	-	-	+	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	273	4.5	-	181	-	-	+	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	498	3.2	-	150	-	33.0	+	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	554	3.3	-	155	-	-	+	It's brilliant - It's mental	★★★★★
Ariel Atom V8 500	150 R	£146,699	8/3000	475/10,500	284/7750	550kg	877	<b>3.0</b>	<b>5.8</b>	170	-	-	+	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	554	<b>3.3</b>	-	155	-	28.0	+	Makes your face ripple - ...like Clarkson's	★★★★★
Ariel Atom 2 275	068 D	'03-'08	4/1998	275/8400	192/7650	500kg	559	3.4	-	150	-	-	+	Supercharged engine is a scream - One for the brave	★★★★★
Ariel Atom 1	015 F	'99-'03	4/1796	125/5500	122/3000	496kg	256	5.6	18.0	115	-	-	+	Amazing styling, huge fun - As practical as a chocolate teapot	★★★★★
Aston V8 Vantage Roadster	130 F	£98,995	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1710kg	250	4.7	-	180	328	20.4	+	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	250	4.7	-	180	328	20.4	+	Drives and sounds as good as it looks - Not as quick as its price suggests	★★★★★
Aston Martin DB9 Volante	150 D	£134,240	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1815kg	263	4.6	-	190	389	17.2	+	Consummate cruiser and capable when pushed - Roof-up wind noise	★★★★★
Aston Martin DBS Volante	133 D	£185,152	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1810kg	286	4.3	-	191	388	17.3	+	A feelgood car par excellence - It's a bit of a heavyweight	★★★★★
Audi TT Roadster 1.8 TFSI		£25,310	4/1798	158/4500	184/1500	1285kg	125	7.4	-	139	152	43.5	+	Cheap entry into TT Roadster ownership - Lacks some of the coupe's rigidity	★★★★
Audi TTS Roadster	122 D	£37,695	4/1984	268/6000	258/2500	1455kg	187	5.6	-	155	189	34.4	+	Effortlessly quick - Long-term appeal open to question; not cheap either	★★★★
Audi TT RS Roadster	133 D	£47,790	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1510kg	225	4.7	-	155	221	29.7	+	Terrific engine... - ...is the best thing about it	★★★★
Audi TT Roadster (Mk1 225bhp)	016 R	'00-'06	4/1781	225/5900	206/2200	1395kg	164	<b>6.9</b>	<b>20.0</b>	150	-	30.4	+	Winner on the King's Road - Trails Boxster on the open road	★★★★
Audi S5 Cabriolet	130 D	£45,120	6/2995	328/5500	325/2900	1875kg	178	5.6	-	155	224	29.1	+	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	228	4.9	-	155	-	-	+	That engine - Wobble wobble, wobble wobble, jelly on a plate	★★★★
Audi R8 Spyder V8	156 D	£95,545	8/4163	424/7900	317/6000	1660kg	259	4.8	-	186	337	-	+	Dynamically outstanding, sounds terrific - V10 sounds even better	★★★★★
Audi R8 Spyder V10	152 F	£116,660	10/5204	518/8000	391/6500	1720kg	306	<b>4.1</b>	-	194	356	19.0	+	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	245	4.5	-	200	396	17.0	+	A great convertible just got better - Optional carbon brakes a necessity	★★★★★
Bentley Conti Supersports	147 D	£182,100	12/5998	621/6000	590/2000	2395kg	263	3.9	-	202	388	-	+	Fast, capable and refined - Coupe does the Supersports thing better	★★★★★
Bentley Azure T	140 D	£250,400	8/6761	500/4200	738/1800	2695kg	188	5.2	-	179	465	14.5	+	Two-and-a-half-ton sunbed - Cheaper Conti GTC a much better drive	★★★★
BMW Z4 sDrive 23i (Mk2)	139 D	£30,405	6/2497	201/6400	184/2750	1480kg	138	6.6	-	151	199	33.2	+	The Z4 has grown up... - ...and got fat	★★★★
BMW Z4 sDrive 35i (Mk2)	130 D	£39,400	6/2979	302/5800	295/1300	1600kg	213	5.2	-	155	219	30.1	+	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	194	5.7	-	155	-	32.9	+	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	231	4.8	-	155	-	23.3	+	Exhilarating and characterful, that engine - Stiff suspension	★★★★★
BMW M Roadster	002 F	'98-'02	6/3246	325/7400	258/4900	1450kg	228	5.3	-	155	-	25.4	+	Fresh-air M3, that motor, hunky looks - M Coupe drives better	★★★★
BMW 335i SE Convertible	102 D	£41,680	6/2979	302/5800	295/1300	1810kg	169	5.8	-	155	205	29.7	+	Looks good, great to drive, fantastic engine - A bit shakey	★★★★
BMW M3 Convertible (E93)	119 D	£58,640	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1885kg	223	5.3	-	155	269	21.9	+	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	207	5.3	-	155	-	23.3	+	That engine - Gets the wobbles on British B-roads	★★★★
BMW M6 Convertible	098 D	'06-'10	10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1930kg	264	4.8	-	155	352	19.2	+	Composure, grip, power, comfort - Steering lacks feel at low speed	★★★★★
BMW Z8	026 R	'00-'03	8/4941	400/6600	369/3800	1585kg	256	<b>4.8</b>	<b>11.1</b>	155	-	14.4	+	M5-powered super-sportster - M5's more fun to drive	★★★★
Brooke 260 Double R	094 F	£34,995	4/2261	260/7500	200/6100	550kg	480	<b>3.9</b>	-	155+	-	-	+	Fast, dynamic, well built - No roof, looks not for everyone	★★★★
Caterham 7 Classic	068 F	£16,650	4/1397	105/6000	95/5000	540kg	198	6.5	-	110	-	-	+	The Caterham experience starts here - It's pretty raw	★★★★
Caterham 7 Roadsport 125	105 F	£21,650	4/1595	125/6100	120/5350	539kg	235	5.9	-	112	-	-	+	New Ford-engined model is just great - Bigger drivers need SV model	★★★★★
Caterham 7 Roadsport SV 175	140 D	£28,850	4/1999	175/7000	139/6000	555kg	321	4.8	-	138	-	-	+	The Caterham for everyday use, R300 engine - Loses intensity of R300	★★★★★
Caterham 7 Superlight R300	150 F	£30,000	4/1999	175/7000	139/6000	515kg	345	4.5	-	140	-	-	+	Possibly all the Caterham you need - Factory-built cars top £30K	★★★★★
Caterham 7 Superlight R400	105 F	£34,300	4/1999	210/7800	152/5750	525kg	406	3.8	-	140	-	-	+	R400 reborn with (lots of) Ford power - Slightly hesitant low-rev pick-up	★★★★
Caterham 7 Superlight R500	123 R	£41,000	4/1999	263/8500	177/7200	506kg	528	2.9	-	150	-	-	+	Better power-to-weight ratio than a Veyron - Until you add the driver	★★★★★
Caterham CSR 260 Superlight	094 F	£43,800	4/2261	266/7500	200/6200	565kg	460	<b>3.8</b>	-	155	-	-	+	Brilliant for high days, holidays and trackdays - Wet Wednesdays	★★★★★
Caterham Levante	131 F	£115,000	8/2398	550/10000	300/8500	520kg	1074	<b>4.8</b>	<b>8.2</b>	150	-	-	+	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	325	4.7	-	130	-	-	+	Our 2002 Trackday Car of the Year - Not for wimps	★★★★★
Caterham 7 R400	068 F	'03-'06	4/1796	200/7500	150/5750	490kg	415	3.9	-	140	-	-	+	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	510	<b>3.6</b>	<b>8.8</b>	146	-	-	+	Fine for the Nürburgring - Hard work around the Bullring	★★★★★
Caterham 7 R500 Evolution	069 F	'04	4/1998	250/8000	190/4000	460kg	552	<b>3.9</b>	<b>8.1</b>	150	-	-	+	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	300	4.3	-	186	-	21.2	+	Corvette performance - Convertible dynamics, electronics	★★★★
Elfin Clubman	108 F	£42,000	8/5665	329/5200	343/4400	900kg	371	4.1	-	160	-	-	+	Aussie V8-engined bathtub - Needs refining to release potential	★★★★
Fiat Barchetta	061 D	'95-'05	4/1747	130/6300	117/4300	1060kg	125	<b>8.7</b>	-	124	-	33.2	+	Out-chics the MX-5, great fun and terrific value, too - LHD only	★★★★
Ginetta G20		£15,995	4/1796	140/5800	101/3500	660kg	341	6.3	-	126	-	-	+	Classic looks, old-fashioned value - Vintage driving experience	★★★★
Honda S2000	118 D	'99-'09	4/1997	237/8300	153/7500	1260kg	191	6.2	-	150	-	28.2	+	An alternative and rev-happy roadster - The Boxster's better	★★★★
IFR Aspid	126 D	£90,000	4/1997	398/8600	240/7800	740kg	451	2.8	-	155	-	-	+	Imagine a Caterham crossed with a Zonda - It's a bit pricey	★★★★★
Jaguar XK 5.0		£69,900	8/5000	380/6500	380/3500	1696kg	227	5.3	-	155	264	25.2	+	Basic XK gets extra power... - ...but loses some of its GT refinement	★★★★
Jaguar XKR	130 F	£83,900	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1800kg	284	4.8	-	155	292	23.0	+	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	183	6.6	-	155	-	25.0	+	Every bit as good as the XK coupe - 294bhp still only just enough	★★★★★
Jaguar XKR		'06-'09	8/4196	414/6250	413/4000	1705kg	247	5.0	-	155	-	-	+	First Jag sports car for years - Overwrought detailing	★★★★★
Jaguar XKR	004 F	'97-'06	8/3996	370/6150	387/3600	1750kg	215	<b>5.4</b>	<b>12.8</b>	155	-	15.6	+	Hurricane-in-the-hair motoring - A danger to toupes everywhere	★★★★
Jetstream SC250	125 D	£29,450	4/1998	247/5600	236/2400	700kg	358	4.0	-	160	-	38.0	+	The way it drives - The way it looks	★★★★
KTM X-Bow	138 F	£49,482	4/1984	237/5500	229/2000	790kg	305	3.8	-	137	-	-	+	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	358	4.4	-	145	-	35.0	+	Single-seater style, speed - Old Formula Fords cost £5K	★★★★
Lotus Elise S 1.6	144 D	£28,100	4/1598	134/6800	118/4400	876kg	155	6.0	-	127	149	45.0	+	New 1.6 Elise is light and fantastic - Smaller engine could put some off	★★★★★



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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 <sub>2</sub> g/km	EC mpg	evo rating	
Lotus Elise R	068 F	£31,450	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	860kg	223	<b>5.6</b>	<b>13.9</b>	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	<b>4.5</b>	<b>11.4</b>	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	<b>6.3</b>	<b>18.7</b>	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	<b>4.7</b>	<b>12.1</b>	135	-	-	+ Fabulous trackday tool - Pricy	★★★★★
Lotus Elise S1	126 F	'96-'00	4/1796	118/5500	122/3000	731kg	164	<b>6.1</b>	<b>18.5</b>	126	-	39.4	+ A modern classic - A tad impractical?	★★★★★
Lotus 340R	126 F	'00	4/1796	190/7800	146/5000	658kg	293	<b>4.5</b>	<b>12.5</b>	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	£98,200	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	091 F	£17,975	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	£21,120	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 some 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	£39,065	6/3498	301/6500	266/4900	1485kg	206	<b>5.5</b>	<b>13.5</b>	155	227	29.1	+ Best non-AMG SLK yet - Still no Boxster-beater	★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLK55 AMG	087 F	'05-'09	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	<b>4.9</b>	<b>11.2</b>	174	-	-	+ AMG gets serious - Dull-witted 7G-Tronic auto box, uneven dynamics	★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SL500		£81,655	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	£106,770	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 SL55 AMG	070 F	'02-'07	8/5439	493/6100	516/2650	1955kg	256	<b>4.6</b>	<b>10.2</b>	155	-	-	+ As fast as a Murciélago - Not as much fun	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG		'08-'10	12/5980	604/4800	737/2000	2045kg	300	4.2	-	155	-	18.7	+ Humongous torque - Humongously expensive	★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG	071 D	'04-'07	12/5980	604/4800	737/2000	2035kg	302	4.1	-	155	-	-	+ Gob-smacking performance - Gob-smackingly pricy	★★★★★
Mini Cooper S Convertible		£20,390	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	£24,765	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	£31,250	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		£36,572	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	£43,800	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	£47,843	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	201/4600	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	1355kg	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	£83,861	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	£79,572	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	£118,014	6/3800	493/6000	479/1950	1645kg	305	3.8	-	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	£332,400	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	£87,945	AC motor	248/4500	273/0-4500	1283kg	196	<b>5.0</b>	<b>14.3</b>	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	<b>7.2</b>	<b>21.2</b>	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 Tamora	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 Chimaera 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	<b>4.8</b>	<b>11.2</b>	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	<b>4.8</b>	<b>11.2</b>	167	-	22.1	+ Gruff diamond - A few rough edges	★★★★★
Ultima GTR	017 R	£45,500	8/6300	534/5800	528/4800	990kg	548	<b>3.9</b>	<b>8.2</b>	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 Megabusa	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	£24,999	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	'04-'10	4/1275	65/6000	72/3000	498kg	132	8.5	-	120	-	-	+ Old-school charm - Old-school power	★★★★★
Westfield XTR4	068 D	'01-'10	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	<b>4.4</b>	<b>9.4</b>	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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**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	CO <sub>2</sub> g/km	EC mpg	eVO rating		
Alfa Romeo Brera 3.2 V6	120 F	£30,065	6/3195	256/6300	237/4500	1532kg	170	6.9	-	155	260	-	+	Brera made better 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	<b>6.3</b>	<b>15.5</b>	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	£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	£90,895	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	1630kg	262	4.7	-	180	-	20.4	+	Aston's best V8 Vantage yet... - ...is one of the most expensive	★★★★
* Aston Martin V8 Vantage S	156 D	£102,500	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1610kg	271	4.5	-	189	299	-	+	Keener engine, V12 Vantage looks - Slightly sluggish auto only	★★★★
Aston Martin V8 Vantage 4.3	109 F	'05-'08	8/4281	380/7300	302/5000	1630kg	237	<b>5.2</b>	<b>12.0</b>	175	-	-	+	Gorgeous, awesome soundtrack - Can't quite match 911 dynamically	★★★★
Aston Martin DB9	146 D	£125,050	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	010 R	'00-'05	12/5935	420/6000	400/5000	1770kg	241	<b>4.9</b>	<b>11.2</b>	185	-	18.6	+	DB7 with near-supercar pace - Handling lacks edge	★★★★
* Aston Martin Virage	156 D	£150,000	12/5935	490/6500	420/5750	1785kg	279	4.6	-	186	-	-	+	DB9 gets DBS assertiveness - Slightly dated feel, seems heavy	★★★★
Aston Martin DBS	142 F	£175,891	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	155 R	£27,130	4/1984	208/4300	258/1600	1295kg	163	<b>6.3</b>	<b>15.7</b>	152	154	42.8	+	Front-driver loses nothing to quattro TTs - Steers like a computer game	★★★★
Audi TTS	119 D	£35,590	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	£45,810	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1450kg	235	<b>4.4</b>	<b>11.1</b>	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	£42,915	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	£58,685	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1725kg	261	<b>4.3</b>	<b>10.6</b>	155	-	-	+	Brilliant engine and accomplished chassis... - ...don't gel together	★★★
Audi R8 4.2 V8 quattro	106 R	£86,885	8/4163	414/7800	317/4500	1560kg	270	<b>4.1</b>	<b>9.9</b>	187	332	20.3	+	Finally, a true 911 alternative - Exclusivity comes at a price	★★★★
Audi R8 5.2 V10 quattro	146 R	£108,040	10/5204	518/8000	391/6500	1620kg	325	<b>3.9</b>	<b>8.4</b>	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	<b>6.2</b>	<b>18.2</b>	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	£170,100	12/5998	621/6000	590/2000	2240kg	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	<b>6.4</b>	<b>16.6</b>	155	-	31.0	+	Not much slower than a contemporary M3 - Coupés should be bolder	★★★★
BMW 335i M Sport	095 D	£39,125	6/2979	302/5800	295/1300	1600kg	192	<b>5.2</b>	<b>12.2</b>	155	196	31.0	+	Eager engine, exploitable chassis - Slightly unadventurous styling	★★★★
BMW M3 [E92]	151 R	£54,545	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1655kg	254	<b>4.3</b>	<b>10.3</b>	155	290	22.8	+	Fends off all of its talented new rivals - Priced very close to 911 territory	★★★★
BMW M3 GTS [E92]	156 F	£117,630	8/4361	444/8300	324/3750	1530kg	295	4.3	-	193	295	-	+	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	<b>5.1</b>	<b>12.3</b>	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	<b>5.3</b>	<b>12.0</b>	155	-	-	+	Stripped-down road-race M3 - Standard brakes barely adequate	★★★★
BMW M3 [E36]		'93-'98	6/3201	321/7400	258/3250	1515kg	215	<b>5.4</b>	<b>12.8</b>	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	<b>6.7</b>	<b>17.8</b>	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	'05-'10	10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1785kg	285	<b>4.8</b>	<b>10.0</b>	155	342	19.8	+	Awesome GT, awesome sports car - SMG gearbox now off the pace	★★★★
Chevrolet Camaro SS	148 F	£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	<b>3.9</b>	<b>8.5</b>	198	-	19.2	+	8.5 to 100, brakes, price - Not quite the road-racer we expected	★★★★
Dodge Challenger *	122 D	£40,000	8/6059	425/6200	420/4800	1877kg	230	5.2	-	160+	-	-	+	Effortlessly cool... - ...if you live in Hazzard County	★★★★
Farbio GTS350	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	£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	£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	£20,425	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	<b>6.2</b>	<b>17.9</b>	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	£36,636	6/3696	316/7000	265/5200	1706kg	188	<b>5.8</b>	<b>13.8</b>	155	248	26.7	+	Softer 370Z delivers sharp-driving swing at the Germans - Bland looks	★★★★
Jaguar XK 5.0	130 D	£63,900	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	£77,900	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	★★★★
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	★★★★

evo TRIED & TESTED

TURTLE WAX ENDURACOAT

Price: £49.99  
From: Halfords & other retailers

Turtle Wax describes this as an 'advanced paintwork shield system for year-round protection'. Basically it's a lazy way of giving your car a high-gloss protective finish, which means you can spend less time polishing and more time driving. Your fifty quid buys you everything you need - liquid wax, shampoo, wax applicator sponge, microfibre polishing cloth and microfibre wash mitt - all contained in a rather cool-looking metal box.

The idea is that you apply the wax shield to clean paintwork, then every week or so you wash the car

using the 'regenerative' shampoo to maintain the EnduraCoat finish, which is claimed to protect the paint from acid rain, extremes of temperature and harmful UV rays, as well as good old-fashioned grime.

The wax is a very thin, almost watery liquid, which goes on easily, dries to a haze and buffs off quickly with little effort. It's worth noting that this is not a polish as such, so you may want to use a good quality polish first if your paintwork is anything less than pristine. Once you've buffed off the wax shield, the car has a really nice, glassy shine which brings the best out of the paintwork. Can't comment yet on how it stands up after 12 months, but so far we're impressed.



Wax shield, shampoo, mitt, cloth and a snazzy metal box, too

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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 <sub>2</sub> g/km	EC mpg	evo rating	
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	£49,600	6/3456	276/6400	258/4700	1382kg	203	<b>5.6</b>	<b>13.6</b>	162	205	32.5	+ Sublime ride and handling. Our 2009 car of the year - Pricy options	★★★★★
Lotus Evora S	152 F	£58,800	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	<b>4.3</b>	<b>9.9</b>	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	<b>5.5</b>	<b>12.7</b>	177	330	19.7	+ Striking, accomplished GT - Doesn't spike the pulse like an Aston or 911	★★★★★
Maserati GranTurismo S	120 F	£92,360	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 GT MC Stradale	155 D	£110,000	8/4691	444/7100	376/4750	1770kg	255	4.6	-	187	-	-	+ Brilliant blend of road racer and GT - No rear seats	★★★★★
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	£26,065	2R/1308	228/8200	156/5500	1429kg	162	<b>6.5</b>	<b>16.4</b>	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	<b>7.0</b>	<b>19.0</b>	146	-	25.2	+ Never mind the quirks, it's a great drive - Dull-sounding engine	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz E500 Coupe	132 D	£52,625	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	£115,620	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	£161,545	12/5980	603/4800	737/2000	2240kg	273	4.4	-	155	334	19.1	+ Unsurprisingly rapid on non-wiggly bits - Lacks charm, involvement	★★★★★
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	£29,150	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	<b>5.5</b>	<b>13.0</b>	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 - Slightly low-rent interior	★★★★★
Nissan 350Z (276bhp)	059 D	'03-'06	6/3498	276/6200	268/4800	1525kg	184	<b>6.1</b>	<b>14.8</b>	155	-	24.8	+ Original 350Z makes a great used buy - As above	★★★★★
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	<b>4.7</b>	<b>12.5</b>	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	<b>5.4</b>	<b>14.3</b>	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	1060kg	407	3.5	-	185	-	-	+ Devilishly fast - Demon Tweaks interior	★★★★★
Noble M12 GTO-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 GTO	023 R	'00-'03	6/2544	310/6000	320/3500	980kg	321	<b>4.1</b>	<b>10.2</b>	165	-	-	+ Gives GT3 drivers a fright - Styling could be more cohesive	★★★★★
Peugeot RCZ 1.6 THP 200	155 R	£23,245	4/1598	197/5500	202/1700	1421kg	141	<b>7.3</b>	<b>18.1</b>	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 the desirability of other Porsches	★★★★★
Porsche Cayman S	132 F	£47,604	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 R	156 D	£51,728	6/3436	325/7400	273/4750	1295kg	255	4.7	-	175	218	-	+ Total handling excellence - Styling additions not to all tastes	★★★★★
Porsche Cayman S	097 F	'06-'09	6/3387	291/6250	251/4400	1350kg	219	<b>5.3</b>	<b>12.2</b>	171	-	26.6	+ Pure and rewarding - If they'd just move the engine back a bit...	★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera [997.2]		£67,270	6/3614	341/6500	288/4400	1415kg	245	4.9	-	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	£76,172	6/3800	380/6500	310/4400	1425kg	271	4.7	-	188	242	27.4	+ Poise, precision, blinding pace - Feels a bit clinical	★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera GTS [997.2]	152 D	£78,371	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]		£80,785	6/3800	380/6500	310/4400	1480kg	261	4.7	-	185	247	26.9	+ Huge grip, power and composure - The Carrera S is £4K cheaper	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 [997.2]	138 F	£89,785	6/3797	429/7600	317/6250	1395kg	312	<b>4.2</b>	<b>9.2</b>	194	303	22.1	+ Even better than the car it replaces - Give us a minute...	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS [997.2]	152 F	£109,123	6/3797	444/7900	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	<b>4.3</b>	<b>9.4</b>	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 - A chunk more money than the brilliant GT3	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 [996.2]	066 F	'03-'05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1380kg	272	<b>4.3</b>	<b>9.2</b>	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	262/5400	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	<b>4.5</b>	<b>10.3</b>	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	<b>4.6</b>	<b>10.9</b>	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	<b>6.1</b>	<b>15.7</b>	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 A610		'92-'96	6/2975	250/5750	258/2900	1420kg	179	<b>5.4</b>	<b>13.8</b>	160	-	21.0	+ Overlooked, bargain-price French 911. Try one - R5 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	<b>4.7</b>	<b>10.0</b>	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	'06	6/3996	400/7000	330/5250	1060kg	383	3.9	-	180+	-	-	+ Carbon body, exclusivity - Interesting damping, no supercharger	★★★★★
TVR Cerbera Speed Six	004 R	'98-'04	6/3966	350/6800	330/5000	1130kg	315	<b>5.0</b>	<b>11.4</b>	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	155 R	£24,450	4/1984	207/5300	207/1700	1373kg	153	<b>6.1</b>	<b>15.8</b>	149	172	38.2	+ Golf GTI price and performance - Interior lacks flair	★★★★★
VW Scirocco R	138 F	£29,485	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 awesome, though you'd have as much sheer fun in a Ferrari 458. We also love Porsche's GT2 RS and the Lexus LFA, while the new McLaren MP4-12C (right) is staggeringly quick and capable.



	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	Bhp/rpm	Lb ft/rpm	Weight	Bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO <sub>2</sub> 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	€146,910	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	€173,132	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	€212,016	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	155 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	€222,387	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	+	Berlinetta 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
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 LP560-4 Spyder	130 F	€162,240	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	€178,560	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
Lambo LP570-4 Performante	153 D	€186,000	10/5204	562/8000	398/6500	1485kg	384	3.9	-	201	-	-	+	It's a Superleggera Spyder - ...that's not really super-light
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
Lambo M'ago LP670-4 SV	138 F	'09-'11	12/6946	661/8000	487/6500	1565kg	429	3.2	7.3	212	-	-	+	A supercar in its truest, wildest sense - Be prepared for stares
Lambo M'ago LP640 Roadster	101 D	'07-'11	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
Lamborghini Murciélago LP640	093 F	'06-'11	12/6496	631/8000	487/6000	1665kg	385	3.3	-	211	-	21.3	+	Compelling old-school supercar - You'd better be on your toes
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	154 F	'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 MP4-12C	155 R	€168,500	8/3799	592/7000	442/3000	1434kg	419	3.1	-	205	-	-	+	Staggering performance, incredible dynamics - Conservative styling
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	€168,345	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	€110,232	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	€125,864	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	€171,468	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	-	1				

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01.06.11 Snetterton 300	26.07.11 Spa
08.06.11 Silverstone Int. (40 spaces)	04.10.11 Silverstone Arena GP (40 spaces)
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# Ask the experts

Every issue we put your questions to our panel of experts

## TUNING & ENGINEERING

**Q** I was enjoying a trackday when there was a loud bang and the engine of my Lotus Exige S exploded. The car was just over three years old, had covered 14,000 miles and had been scrupulously maintained at a reputable main dealer. Lotus doesn't want to know and has suggested I over-revved it. So how can an engine 'grenade' when it is fitted with a rev-limiter? What would cause a crankshaft failure

at such a low mileage? Is this a common problem with Exiges? – Steve Hemp

**A** Just to complete the story, you were powering out of a second-gear left-hander when there was a loud bang and total loss of power. You looked back to see oil all over the tarmac, and glinting in the slick were small bits of engine – molten lumps of metal that were until very recently the piston and con-rod from the number

4 cylinder. This is what we in the car industry call 'a very bad thing'.

The dealer found a hole in the sump where bits of engine made their escape. So what started this exodus of high-grade metal? The remains of the big end were blue where they were overheating due to lack of oil, and a look at the ECU memory showed the revs went over the limit very briefly, probably on a downchange before the corner.

Chances are that you wouldn't even have seen the red line exceeded

because it would have been for a fraction of a second and the rev-counter wouldn't have moved fast enough to register it. But at this speed the engine is doing 150 revolutions every second so it would still have swung round many times before dropping below the limit.

Most car engines are designed to cope with such excursions for a fraction of a second, so why did this one let go so spectacularly? Well, it takes a combination of heat and speed to cause this sort of damage. Your engine had an approved sports exhaust and induction kit, so in being driven flat-out on a track the engine's internals would have been experiencing the maximum temperatures that they were designed for. In itself this is fine, but add a brief over-rev and the combination of higher rotating forces plus already high operating temperatures can prove just too much. There is also a known weakness in that engine's oil pump, which can shatter if over-revved.

In short, the racing downchange took the engine outside its designed limits and so the damage falls outside any sort of manufacturer warranty.

This should be a wake-up call to all of us who take to the track. Pushing a car to the limits is fine, but step over that line, even if just for a fraction of a second, and you risk expensive damage that the manufacturer can quite simply just walk away from – RH



Over-revving a highly tuned engine like the one in the Exige S can have serious consequences

## THE EXPERTS



### JOHN BARKER

– our editor-at-large 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



### ROGER GREEN

– experienced racer and trackday specialist Green answers all your

questions related to circuit driving. He's also our used car expert, so can tell you exactly what to look for when buying second-hand



### COLIN HOAD

– having mastered his craft as a motor industry driver trainer, Hoad is now

chief instructor at CAT Driver Training ([catdrivertraining.co.uk](http://catdrivertraining.co.uk)) and is ready to help you improve your performance driving skills

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# Ask the experts

We answer your motoring questions

## BUYING CARS

**Q** I currently drive a V8 Audi S4 Avant, but it is getting too small in the back for the kids (aged 13, 11 and 6). I don't want to totally abandon life and buy an MPV, so I'm looking for something bigger that is still fun.

I think a BMW 535d or Audi RS6 would still be too small in the back, so I find myself pushed (unwillingly) towards SUVs. My budget is about £20K and I have narrowed the choice down to a 2004 Range Rover V8 or diesel, a leggy Range Rover Sport, an X5 (maybe a 4.6) or a Cayenne S (again an '04 reg).

The car will be used mainly for long drives, not city stop-start, so I can live with appalling fuel consumption, but I am a bit worried about servicing costs. What should I do? – Nick Johnson

room in the rear than in the S4. Boot space it has lots of, but that doesn't help. The BMW 535d ticks quite a few boxes and goes and sounds good for a diesel (it's easy to forget it's not petrol) but space will be merely adequate.

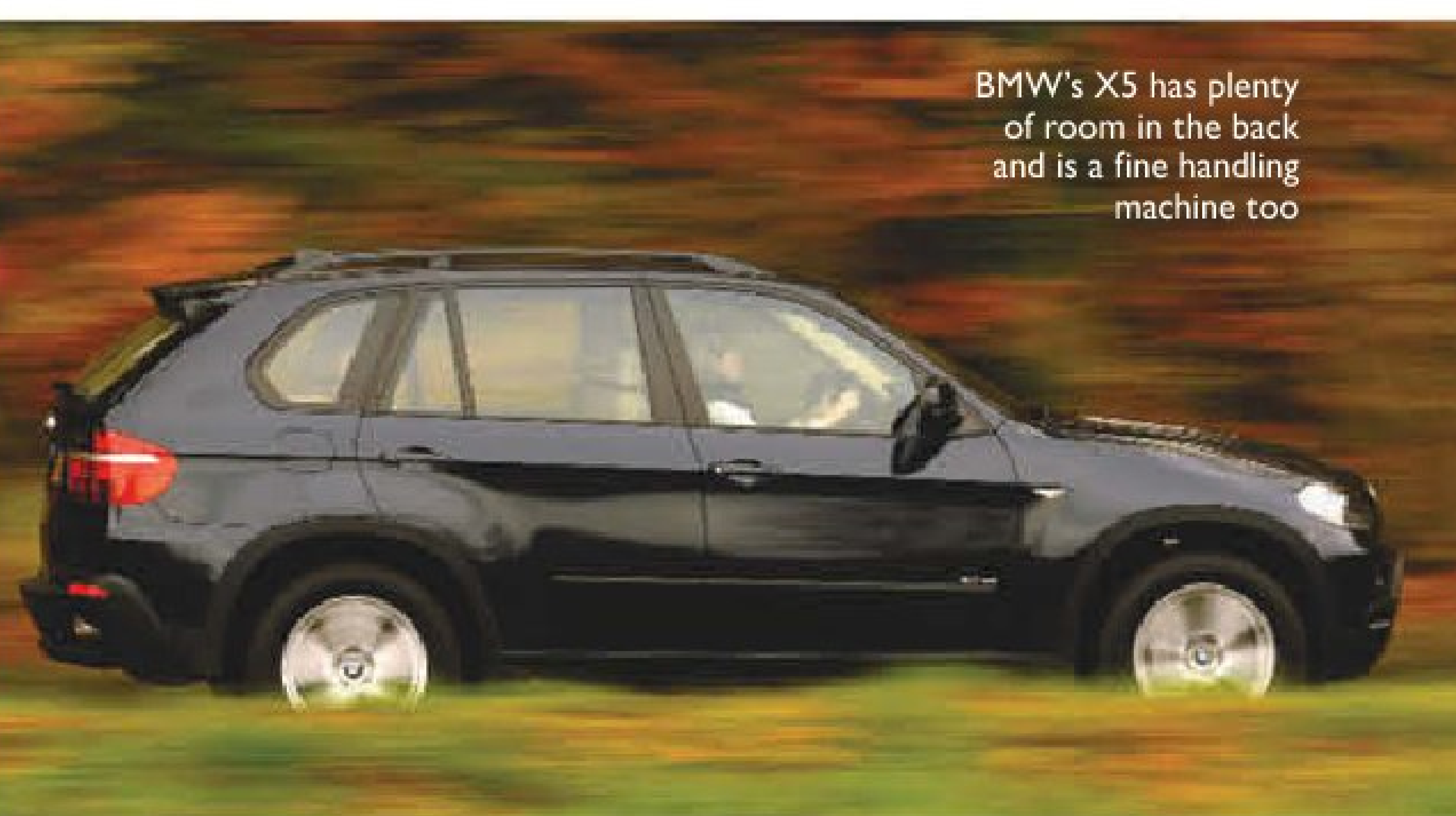
So, the SUVs. Forget the Range Rover Sport – it's about as roomy as the S4. The Cayenne S offers more width, which is good, but is a little short, which limits its overall practicality. It's cracking to drive, though – much better than a high-rise two-ton-plus SUV ought to be.

The second-generation BMW X5, which is a much bigger car than the first, should be within your budget, and according to our SUV-savvy Harry Metcalfe it's an underrated car. Not only is it surprisingly roomy (there are seven-seat versions) but it's pretty impressive dynamically and comes with a range of fantastic engines.

But if it's generous room you're after, the Range Rover is the thing. The TD6 version isn't great, so it's the very popular TDV8 or, for less initial outlay, the 4.4 petrol V8. It'll cost more to run than the X5, though, and the BMW has a better reputation for reliability and is a bit sportier. Try them both – **JB**

**A** You're right about the RS6. An early model looks tempting, what with that sonorous and astonishingly muscular twin-turbo V8, and the four-wheel-drive chassis to keep it all hooked up, but your kids won't thank you because there's not much more

BMW's X5 has plenty of room in the back and is a fine handling machine too



## THE EXPERT



### JOHN BARKER

– our editor-at-large started out with *Motor* in the late '80s and has driven every performance car since

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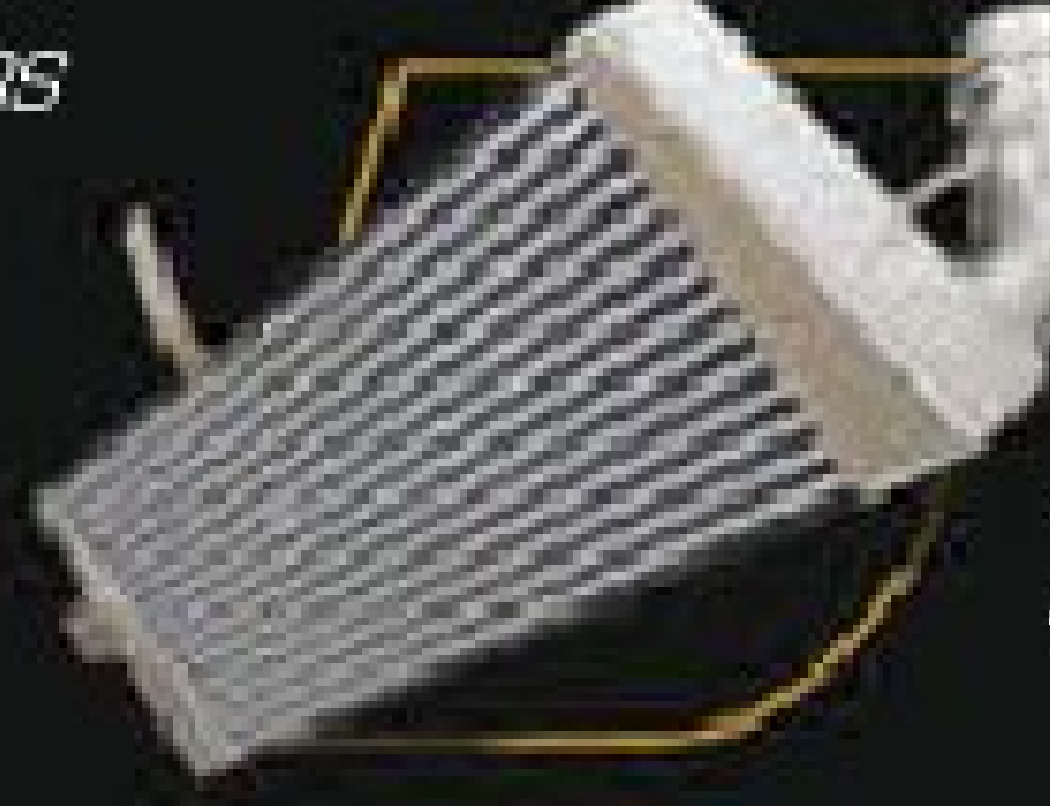


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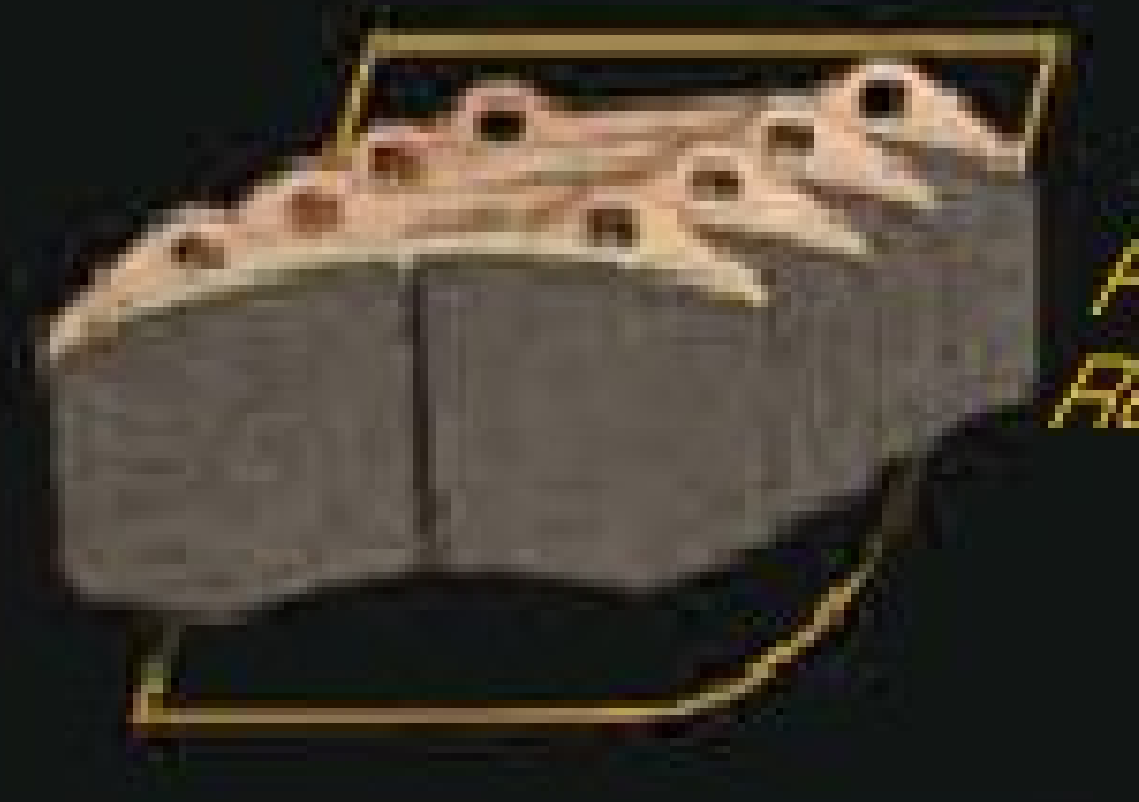
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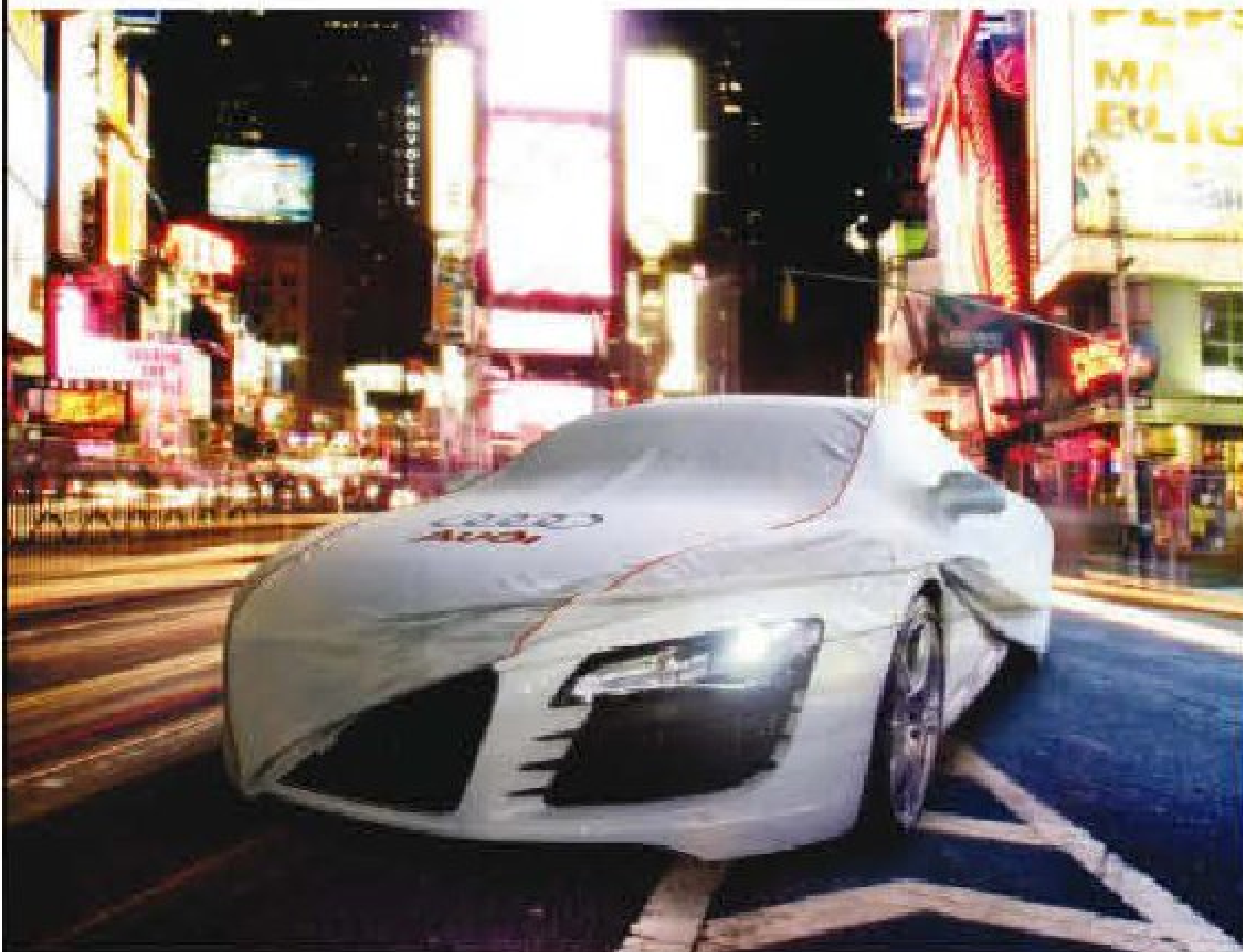
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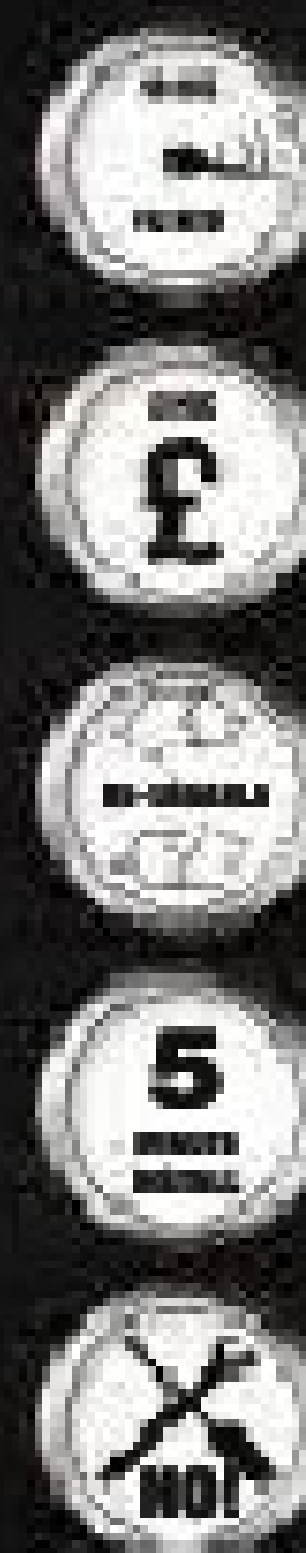
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# Ask the experts

We answer your motoring questions

## TUNING & ENGINEERING

**Q** My Honda Integra Type-R is now over ten years old and has 100,000 miles on the clock. Tampering with the engine or handling is a risky business, so what advice would you offer to owners of older performance cars who wish to retain the integrity of the original package yet breathe new life into their pride and joy? – Tom Hodge

**A** To maintain that original sweet handling and performance you need to check everything thoroughly and replace ageing parts before they fail, but obviously don't go replacing things if not needed.

Firstly, suspension bushes wear. Now you might be tempted to fit polyurethane replacements to firm things up, which is fine, but good quality rubber items work perfectly well. Just remember that performance models like your Type-R can have rubber bushes that are over five times harder than those on the base model, so make sure you get the right ones.

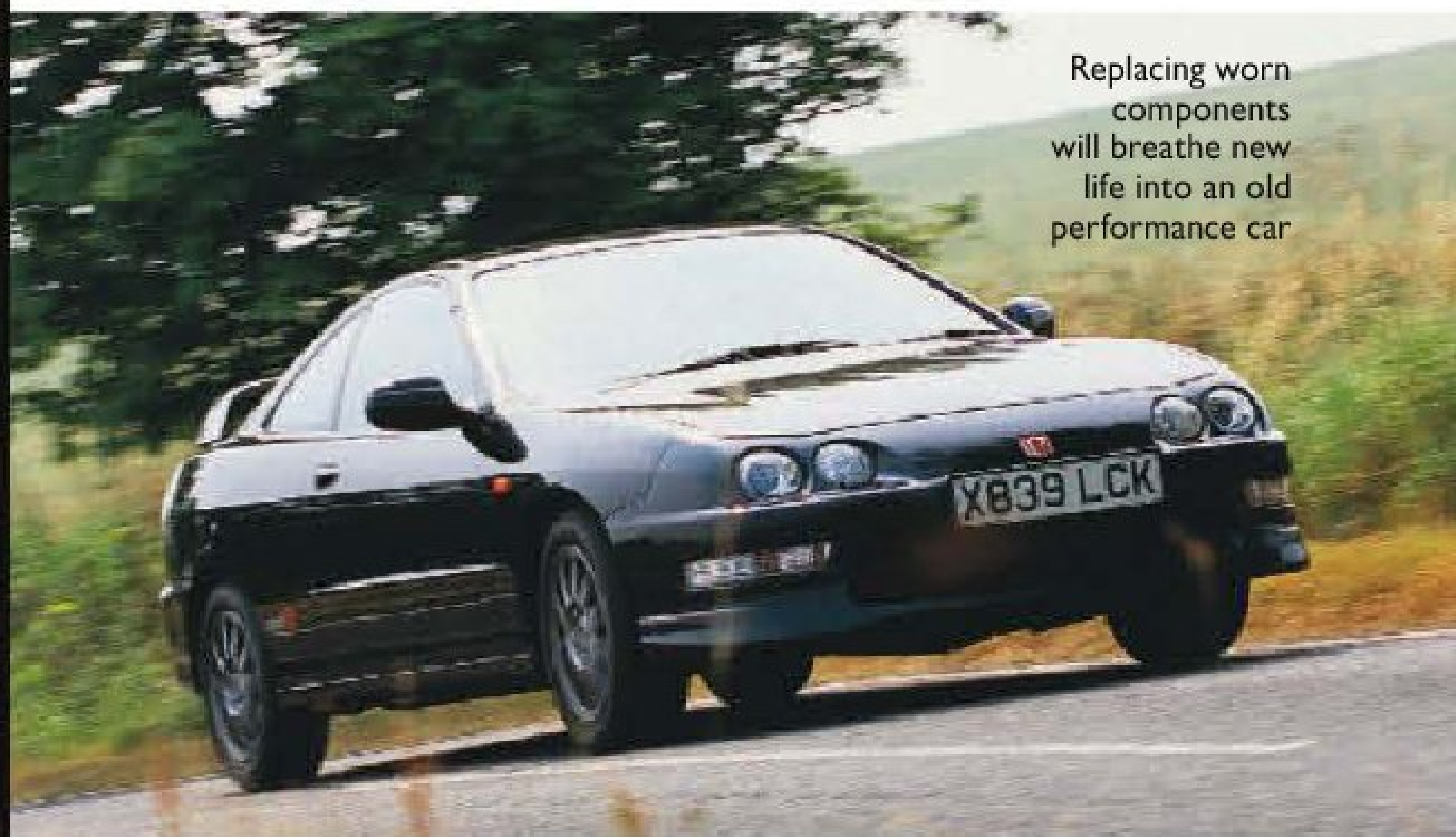
Springs and dampers can become weaker with age. Again, there are

upgraded items that can drastically change the handling, but to maintain the original feel, quality standard items fit the bill nicely. It may also be worth just checking that all the bolts are still tight underneath, particularly on the cross brace and suspension.

Most influential is the tyres. You can tune the handling hugely with your tyre choice, and even if the tread on your existing tyres is OK, old tyres will not work as well as fresh ones.

As for the engine, the first step is to give it a full service and then see if anything needs replacing, such as oxygen sensors and air flow meters (which degrade slowly over time), fuel injectors (which gradually foul up) and coils (which weaken). To find out, you'll need a full diagnostic check. You could even do a chemical test on the old oil and coolant. To go a step further you could dyno-test your car; reputable rolling road companies can identify any problems and offer useful advice.

With sensible maintenance the original performance should spring back without breaking the bank, and a well engineered car like yours could keep on delighting for another decade – RH



Replacing worn components will breathe new life into an old performance car

## 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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## David Brown & his JAGUAR E-TYPE

THE JAGUAR ENTHUSIAST WHO USES HIS E-TYPE FOR TRACKDAYS AND SPEED TRIALS

I bought my Jaguar E-type in 1976. I was 32 and living in Belfast at the time, but was over in London for a business trip and saw this car, a 1971 Series 2 convertible, for sale. I'd always wanted one. I had a look, bought it there and then, and drove it back to Belfast that same day. In retrospect that was pretty brave, but I didn't think anything of it at the time.

I paid £2750, which was a lot back then, and more than it cost new. But it was sound and looked great in jet black. I used it for a year or two for business trips. Some of my colleagues were quite surprised to see it, especially as it wasn't as waterproof as they might've imagined – I'd turn up to meetings with the turn-ups of my trousers wet!

My son appeared the next year so the E-type got laid up as we needed something family-friendly, and I ended up getting company cars. When we moved to England in the early '80s the car got a big restoration job, where it was returned to Old English White, its original colour.

The engine needed some work, too, and I was quoted over £1000. I said no

and the garage returned the engine to me stripped down and in four cardboard boxes. I eventually rebuilt it in the back bedroom! I got the whole engine balanced and it's the same unit in the car today, 25 years and around 50,000 miles later. It still runs smoothly and reliably, so it really paid off doing the job properly.

I'm in the Jaguar E-type Register, and we organise events including hillclimbs at Prescott and trackdays at

Goodwood and Brands Hatch, as well as a tour to Geneva every five years.

I do two or three trackdays a year. I still remember my first one, which I had organised myself. I didn't realise Lavant at Goodwood was a double-apex corner until I lifted off between the two of them! I did a very neat 360-degree spin and ended up on the centre field. That was the first lap of my first ever foray on track.

I've also been to a speed trial at Woodbridge Airfield near Ipswich. The run is a mile or so long with a standing start and a speed trap at the end. We hit 127.98mph. It was quickest with the roof up, and if I changed gear early because of all the low-down torque.

The only time I've bent it is when I went round a local roundabout a little too quickly when conditions were slippery. I lost the rear end and, in avoiding a lamppost, the tail flicked

the other way and I ended up in some Armco, shortening the car by a few inches! The police who came along were quite sympathetic and amused.

It took over six months to get another bonnet. I smartened up the interior and got a new soft-top too. The result is the car you see now, looking as good as it ever has.

I like my Jaguars and I own two others, a 1967 Mk2 and a 1997 XJ.

I found the Mk2 while on holiday in France in 1996. It was three shades of blue and there'd been an engine fire. It was looking a little sad but it was mechanically solid, and I ended up buying it, trailering it back to the UK and fully restoring it. It gets used quite a lot, as it's my only car with a tow bar, so it's great for taking stuff to the tip!

Like the E-type, it's been modernised a little. I've replaced the wing mirrors with proper door mirrors, fitted retractable seat belts and modern headrests, that sort of thing. I want these cars to be useable.

I've had the E-type 35 years now and I don't intend to get rid of it as long as I keep enjoying it. They were made to be driven and you have to drive them – silly little things went wrong with it after it hadn't turned a wheel for a year.

I get far more fun out of working on a car and driving it than sitting in a field all day showing it off. That's boring!

■ To see more pictures of David's E-type, visit [www.evo.co.uk](http://www.evo.co.uk). And if you would like to be featured here with your car, e-mail [rogerg@evo.co.uk](mailto:rogerg@evo.co.uk)

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