

ON-ROAD EXCLUSIVE: PAGANI HUAYRA + ALL-NEW 911

# evo

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## McLAREN EXCLUSIVE

How they fixed the flawed MP4-12C - with a little help from evo

# ULTIMATE BATTLES

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LAMBORGHINI v  
8.9-LITRE STUNT PLANE

» SUBARU WRX  
v ISLE OF MAN  
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# evoContents

ISSUE 160 » SEPTEMBER 2011



p102



p012



p136



p072



p082



## evoDriven

042 RANGE ROVER EVOQUE  
045 VW GOLF GTI 35 047  
BMW 640i 048 MINI COUPE  
048 MG6 MAGNETTE 051  
AUDI Q3 051 JEEP GRAND  
CHEROKEE 052 WESTFIELD  
SPORT-E 052 INFINITI M35H



p060



p090



p078



p096

## 012 NEWS

The McLaren MP4-12C suffered at the hands of its supercar rivals in just about every magazine test. Find out how its flaws are being put right in this evo exclusive

## 055 LETTERS

Plenty of McLaren debate, plus a discussion on guilty pleasures. If you lust after the likes of an Isuzu Piazza or Vauxhall Senator on the sly, you're not alone

## 059 ULTIMATE BATTLES

Everyone loves a good fight. First up, the Porsche 911 GT3 RS 4.0 faces stiff competition from the Maserati MC Stradale, an equally hardcore but potentially more emotive rival, **p60**. Continuing the Porsche theme, Chris Harris battles 99 other racers in a 911 Cup car at the Nürburgring on **p69**, and we're back at the Ring to see Renault's Mégane 265 Trophy go for the front-drive lap record, **p90**. Subaru guns for the four-wheeled record for the Isle of Man TT course, **p102**, with dramatic consequences, while we pick the best rwd, manual V8 saloon from an eclectic bunch: Panamera v BMW M5 v VXR8, **p110**. And our headline battle sees Top Gun take on Top Ginge, RAF pilot v Roger Green, stunt plane v supercar, **p82**.

## 072 NEW 911: FIRST RIDE

The third all-new 911 in 47 years has been racking up the test miles in African heat. Richard Meaden joins the development team to unravel the secrets of 2012's eCoty

## 078 PORSCHE 961 RACER

Le Mans' only four-wheel-drive entry hasn't turned a wheel in anger since it was engulfed by flames in 1987. Now restored, the first person to drive it in public is Roger 'Fireball' Green. Could be interesting...

## 096 PAGANI HUAYRA: FIRST RIDE EXCLUSIVE

Pagani's number one fan (he has a certificate and everything) Harry Metcalfe experiences the all-new Huayra

## 118 LONG-TERM TESTS

End-of-term reports on the Insignia VXR and Mazda 3 MPS; hello to an Aston Rapide and BMW 1M Coupe

## 135 EVO SHOWROOM

Our packed, new-look Showroom section kicks off with an Integrale buying guide

## 178 ME AND MY CAR

Derek Bell and his Porsche 924 GTS





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It wouldn't have been possible without  
 Darren Brown, Ben Dillon, Myles Garland,  
 James Grant, Adam Maxwell, John Maxwell,  
 and all at the Bedford Autodrome. Plus the  
 biggest thanks ever to Chris Rutter

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# 'I can't bear not being able to drive'

**F**orgive me for a slightly wistful Ed Speak this month, I've got a bad back. Not the 'oh I've got a little twinge, fetch me the remote dear' kind, but a prolapsed disc – which, for the benefit of those who've had the good fortune not to experience one, restricts the following: sitting, standing, walking. And that's the least hardest part to deal with.

The pain is the next hardest part to deal with (but still not the worst). For nearly three weeks now I've had a pain in my sciatic nerve that is so acute my body has on a few occasions gone 'screw this, I'm out of here'. Yes, every day I've fought the temptation to have a girly faint. Or two.

I thought I knew a thing or two about pain after a bike accident a few years ago. Sum result: about 11 broken bones, including two legs, an arm (that needed reattaching) and six months in a wheelchair. The nerve pain from my disc is in another league. The painkillers that worked on my broken bones don't touch my sciatic nerve.

I know I'll be lucky and get better, and my time in hospital with people who didn't has given me a tiny insight into this, but it's the mental pain that's worst of all. Whichever way you look at it, we're defined by what we do. If we can't do those things, well, where does that leave us?

I can't bear not having the freedom to drive. Driving is what I do. Despite the traffic, the roadworks, the poor driving standards and the costs, on the rare occasions when the maladies of modern motoring magically vanish, you have an opportunity, no, a *responsibility*, to exercise the catharsis that driving can deliver.

Sometimes it takes a while for the frustrations to disappear; you're driving, the car is dancing, you're feet and hands in harmony, but it's just not happening. This isn't the time to finish your journey. Even if you are approaching your house. Drive past. Continue. It comes. And when it does... is there anything like it? The Thrill of Driving. I'm missing it.

Not the best month to give evo a good valet then! But the team have cracked on with it brilliantly (thank you all) while I've been laid-up. The heart of evo remains – the best reviews, features and photography in the motoring media – but we've added some new elements.

Firstly, there's Trips & Travel (p150), edited by our own steely adventurer Henry Catchpole, then Track & Racing (p154) with Roger Green. Harry Metcalfe lends his extensive car market knowledge to the refreshed Showroom section (p135), while elsewhere evo Speedshop (p145) and evo Workshop (p147) deliver a good look at professional modifying and garage gear respectively. Finally, the revised Essentials (p149) brings you all the latest scale models, clothing and DVDs, and every month offers you the chance to download a free chapter from our Book of the Month via [evo.co.uk/download](http://evo.co.uk/download)

Hope you like the new content. As ever, I'd love to hear your thoughts.

**Nick Trott**  
 Editor



## EVO ONLINE



## EVO VIDEOS

» Watch a Lamborghini Gallardo Performante and a 250mph aerobatic plane go head-to-head at the Bedford Autodrome – not to be missed! Also online: Chris Harris on two wheels and the McLaren MP4-12C versus its key rivals on track. Head to [www.evo.co.uk/videos](http://www.evo.co.uk/videos)

## EVO TRACKDAYS

» evo's last track evening of the year is at Bedford Autodrome on Friday September 2. It'll be another top event, especially for the lucky bugger who'll be driving my 1-series M Coupe in the competition we've set up with Michelin. See [evo.co.uk](http://evo.co.uk) for more.

## COMPETITION

» This is the best competition we've ever offered! A full year in a Lotus Evora S, plus trips to Lotus-themed events and the chance to write reports on your 12 months in a new feature in evo titled 'The Lotus Diaries'. Find out more at [lotusdiaries.evo.co.uk](http://lotusdiaries.evo.co.uk)

## HERO OF THE MONTH: MYLES GARLAND BLADES STUNT PILOT



» You've got to give it to the Blades, and to their number one pilot Myles Garland. The UK's only full-time civilian aerobatic display team, they perform at small events like, oh, the Queen's 80th birthday celebrations, the Beckham's Ball, the Bahrain Formula 1 Grand Prix and, erm, evo's Ultimate Battles issue.

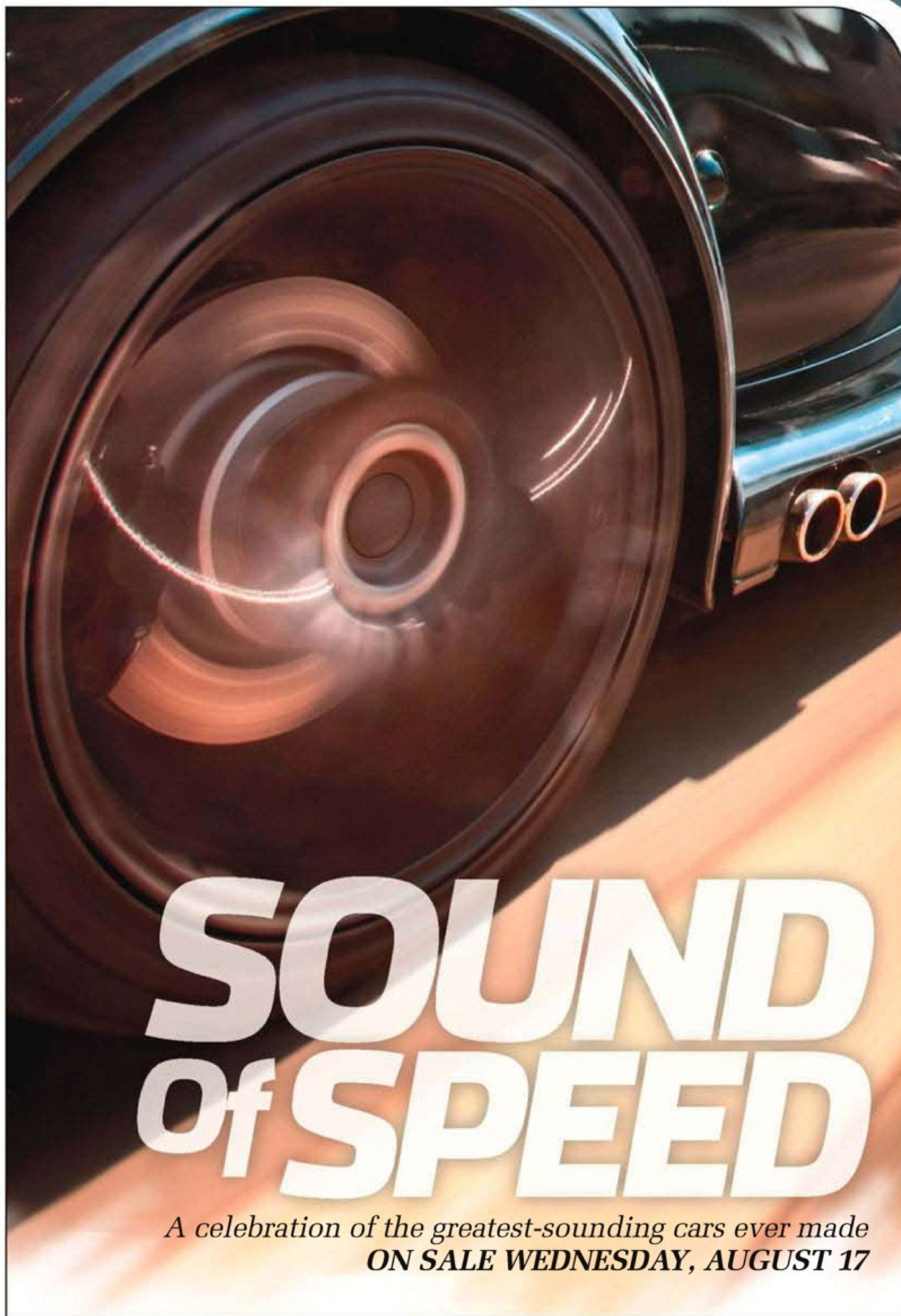
Interestingly, their business also extends to test and development work on advanced aeronautical

systems. And, rather hilariously, they are the world's only globally accredited aerobatic airline. So, if you need to get to Paris, upside down, you know who to call.

» The Blades are proud to support the RAF's Wings Appeal, and so are we. Enjoy the feature on p82 and find out more by visiting [www.theblades.biz](http://www.theblades.biz) and [www.rafa.org.uk](http://www.rafa.org.uk)



# evo Next Month



## SOUND of SPEED

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Photographic repro by Gildenburgh Ltd, 30 Stapledon Road, Orton Southgate, Peterborough, PE2 6TD. Tel 01733 391181 Printed in the UK by BGP, Bicester, Oxfordshire OX26 4QZ Printed in China by C&C Offset Printing Distributed by Seymour, 2nd Floor, 2 East Poultry Avenue, London EC1A 9PT Tel: 020 7429 4000. Fax: 020 7429 3625 e-mail: seymour.co.uk ISSN 1464-2786 USPS 024-183



The Editors and Publishers of this magazine give no warranties, guarantees or assurances and make no representations regarding any goods or services advertised in this edition.

Evo (USPS 024-183) is published monthly by Dennis Publishing Ltd, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 4JD, United Kingdom. For subscriptions in the USA and Canada, visit [www.imsnews.com](http://www.imsnews.com), phone 1-888-428-6676, fax 1-757-428-6253, or email [cs@imsnews.com](mailto:cs@imsnews.com). Airfreight and mailing in the USA by Agent named Air Business, C/O Worldnet Shipping USA Inc., 149-35 177th Street, Jamaica, New York, NY 11434. Periodical postage paid at Jamaica NY 11434. US Postmaster: Send address changes to Evo, Air Business Ltd, C/O Worldnet Shipping USA Inc., 149-35 177th Street, Jamaica, New York, NY 11434. Periodical postage pending at Jamaica NY 11434. Subscription records are maintained by Dennis Publishing Ltd, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 4JD, United Kingdom. Subscription prices: UK £47.99, Europe £58.20, Rest of World £88.40, USA \$115. All for 12 issues.

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WORLD EXCLUSIVE

# 8

# DAYS LATER



EIGHT DAYS AFTER ITS NEW SUPERCAR  
LOST TO FERRARI IN **EVO'S** GROUP TEST,  
A REVISED MP4-12C ROLLS OUT OF THE  
McLAREN FACTORY – WITH OUR MAN  
**HARRY METCALFE** AT THE WHEEL.  
THE BRITISH COMPANY HAS ACTED  
WITH ASTONISHING SPEED TO ANSWER  
CRITICISMS OF THE MP4-12C. THIS IS  
THE EXCLUSIVE, BEHIND-THE-SCENES  
STORY OF HOW IT HAPPENED

**I** was first shown around the MP4-12C way  
back in April 2009. Even then it was clear  
that this car had the potential to be pretty  
damn special. The amount of new technology  
it heralded would see to that. And when **evo**  
drove it for the first time in April 2011, that  
early promise seemed to have been carried  
through, as we experienced the car's incredible  
performance, amazing ride and remarkable  
handling. It all pointed to a new McLaren  
superstar being born. But then, last month, we  
tested it against its sternest rival, the Ferrari  
458, and the verdict was not what McLaren  
had expected. The team who had spent years  
working on the project were gutted.





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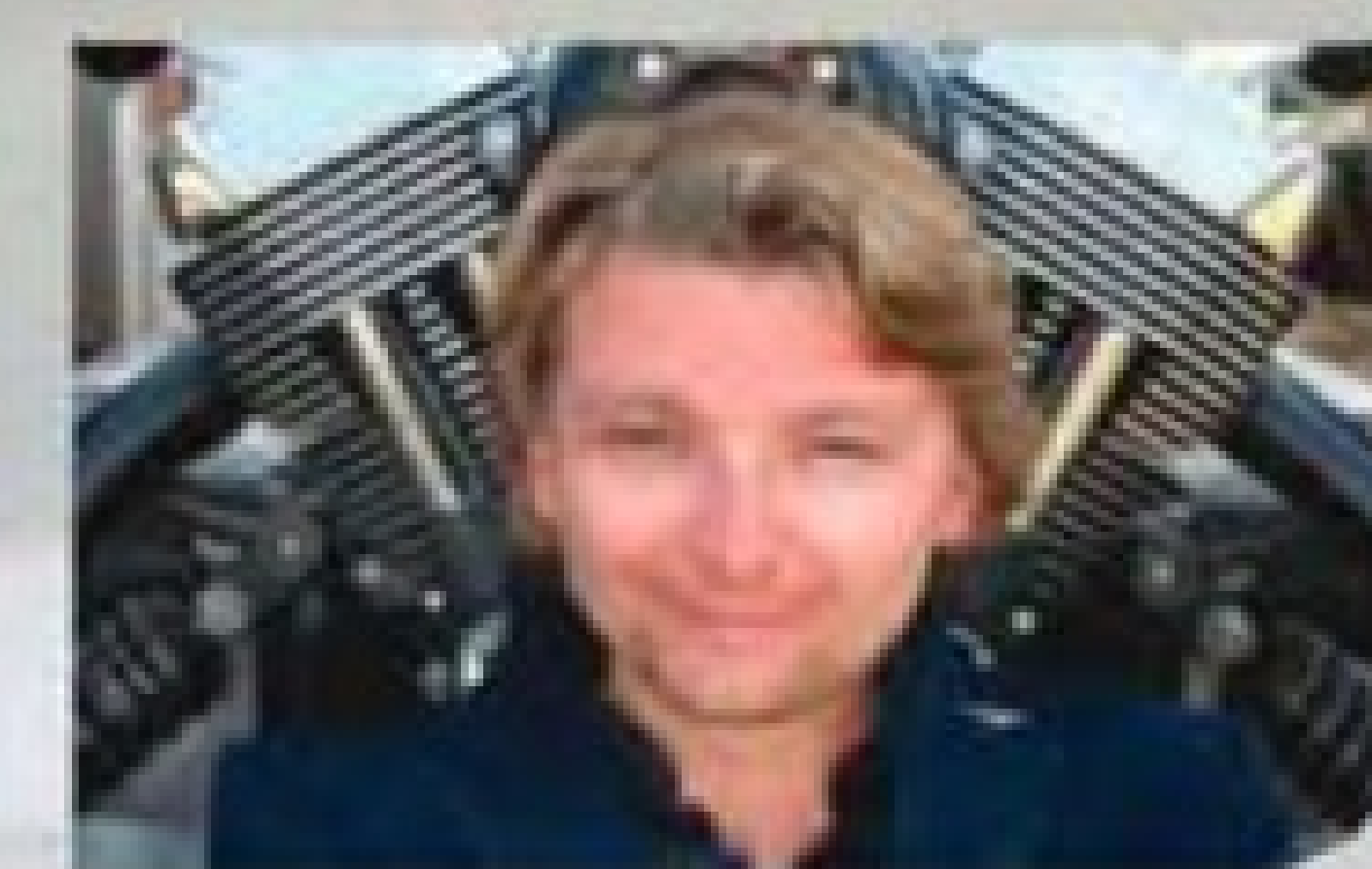
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supercar. Yours for one  
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## INTERVIEW: MORGAN MAN

Matt Humphries on the  
Eva GT and the new  
three-wheeler P25



*'WE REFLECTED ON THE COMMENTS MADE  
AND LOOKED AT ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS'*

*ANTONY SHERIFF, MD, McLAREN AUTOMOTIVE*

In a way, I was too. Who wouldn't relish the idea of a super-successful British F1 constructor turning its hand to creating a range of Ferrari-rivalling super-sports cars? We all love a good news story and if McLaren could pull this off, well, good news stories don't come much bigger.

After we had concluded our McLaren group test last month, I penned an email to Antony Sheriff, managing director of McLaren Automotive, to explain my feelings towards the car, before adding (rather cheekily) some suggested tweaks, which I reckoned would help improve the MP4-12C no end.

My three main gripes were these:

**1** The sound of the MP4-12C at full chat; here was a car that could sprint to 100mph in just 6.4 seconds, yet it sounded almost anodyne whilst doing it. That's almost unacceptable. Anyone who's been lucky enough to sprint a McLaren F1 will know it's that car's induction bark that will live with them forever. Surely McLaren could do something similar for the MP4-12C?

**2** The weighting of the rocker mechanism controlling the gear changes was set way too high. Changing gear should have been a tactile delight but, on the press car at least, it was almost a chore to use.







Top: Sheriff and Metcalfe leave the McLaren factory in PP-19, the last pre-production car, now being used to trial the various tweaks that McLaren is implementing. Above: switching the Powertrain dial from Normal to Sport now introduces extra intake noise. Above right: weighting of the steering-wheel-mounted rocker paddleshift has also come in for criticism. McLaren now trying lighter weightings. Metcalfe approves

**3** The steering feel at the moment you committed to a corner wasn't as precise as I was expecting. Perhaps by altering the initial roll stiffness or changing the bushing on the front suspension, I suggested, this could be improved.

I'd no idea how my comments would go down, so when an invitation to visit McLaren HQ to discuss my email arrived, I wasn't sure if a bulletproof vest or polo shirt would be the more appropriate apparel. Tantalisingly, tagged to the bottom of the email was a comment saying, 'make it Friday and we might have a couple of things to show you...'

That's how I find myself inside McLaren's HQ in Woking on Friday July 1. As I wait in reception, a beaming Antony Sheriff bounds in and insists I drive the development car he's just jumped out of before we go for lunch. Outside sits a brand new, steel-braked MP4-12C, covered in protective tape. 'We've made a couple of changes along the lines you were suggesting,' he says.

As we hit the road, it is immediately obvious they have altered the weighting of the paddles on the steering wheel, making changing gear a dramatically better experience than on the press car. Pulling a paddle towards the steering wheel is no longer a fag, plus there is a more satisfying 'click' as it reaches the end of its travel. It doesn't feel quite perfect – it still takes more effort than is comfortable to push the paddles away from the steering wheel – but it is so much better to use than it was before.

'The McLaren engineering team were keen

on the heavier paddle weighting, as they felt it was closer to the feel of our F1 car,' Sheriff explains. 'They felt making it lighter would give it too much of a "PlayStation" feel. In the end, we had 15 different weightings to choose from and the one you're driving today was from the lighter end of the spectrum.'

It isn't long before we arrive at some decent cross-country roads where we can start to use some of the MP4-12C's epic performance. Flicking the facia-mounted Powertrain dial into 'Sport' seems to release a much deeper induction sound into the cabin. As a decent straight appears, I give it the beans, and suddenly the car erupts in a new symphony of sound, reaching a howling climax as the red line appears.

Wow. This is what it should have sounded like all along! A proper, spine-tingling induction roar as each gear pops through. It's almost impossible not to laugh out loud, it sounds so good now; no wonder Antony was beaming when he stepped out of the car earlier.

What's great about this new-found voice is that it remains very throttle-dependent, so when trickling through town or cruising up the motorway there's no irritating exhaust bark resonating through the cabin. It's all been achieved by careful channelling of the induction sound into the cabin. All very clever stuff and, to my ears, very McLaren. Interestingly, the car I'm driving doesn't have the sports exhaust option fitted and nor did our original test car either.

As we make our way back to Woking, the steel discs on this car feel much more natural to use than the ceramic discs on the road



test car too, with none of the grabbing we complained about in last month's comparison, while progression is as near-perfect as you could wish it to be. Once we're back, Sheriff announces to the team that the new induction kit is to be fitted to all customer cars, and agrees that the weighting of the paddles still needs to go a couple of steps lighter.

There are more tweaks to come too, including changes to the steering pick-up points and the support of the rack to make the steering feel 'more fluid'. Both of these changes will be on all customer cars but weren't on the press cars.

I'm amazed at just how much they've achieved in the last few days, but Sheriff says that's the great thing about working at McLaren. The engineers are used to pushing





*'McLAREN WILL NOT  
BE HAPPY UNTIL  
THE MP4-12C IS  
DEEMED THE BEST  
SUPER-SPORTS CAR  
IN THE WORLD'*

tweaks through quickly; after all, that's what the race team do every day of the week.

'In F1 there is no time to mull things over,' he says. 'You look at a situation, you make a decision and you get the solution on the car for the next race. In the car division, we reflected on the comments made, looked at alternative solutions and had them on cars within a day or two and now they will be going into production. At McLaren, we have the mentality to react to things very quickly.'

What this visit has taught me is that the bosses at McLaren will not be happy until the MP4-12C is deemed to be the best super-sports car in the world. It's the only way they know how to operate. Just like in F1, they're out there to win. I can sense that a re-match with Ferrari is very much on the cards.



Above: working on the bulkhead diaphragm that channels intake noise into the cockpit.  
Left: customer cars coming down the line, awaiting the updates





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# M DIVISION'S CARBON FUTURE

LIMITED-EDITION M3 CRT PREVIEWS NEW LIGHTWEIGHT DIRECTION FOR BMW'S M-CARS. **STEPHEN DOBIE** REPORTS



**M**eeet the BMW M3 CRT, both a special-edition sports saloon and our first taste of the direction for future M-cars. The CRT is the production realisation of the 'CSL saloon' we revealed in *evo* 157, though the reality is even more specialised than the rumour. Just 67 will be made, costing a slightly frightening €130,000 apiece. All have been sold, but none to the UK.

A four-door M3 GTS in all but name, it borrows that car's 4.4-litre V8 engine, good for 444bhp and 324lb ft. Top speed is 180mph, while 0-62mph takes a supercar-quick 4.4sec. But this car is about more than pure numbers. CRT stands for carbon racing technology, and that latter performance figure is yielded in part by extensive use of the car industry's buzz-material. And the exciting news? The CRT is just a preview of the carbon use that's set to become de rigueur in the M Division. As a statement of intent by new M boss Friedrich Nitschke, it's a tremendously appealing one.

'Light cars with low fuel consumption and very extraordinary performance is what I will bring to M,' Nitschke told *evo*. 'M already has this thinking but we need to accelerate it further in the right direction.'

The M3 CRT is the first big hint at that direction. The casings of its bonnet and front sports seats are made of carbonfibre, and the benefits are significant. The bonnet, for example, has the strength of a steel version but 75 per cent less weight. It's half the weight of the regular M3's aluminium bonnet.

With a carbon rear spoiler and front apron, total weight saving is 45kg over a standard M3 saloon with DCT (the dual-clutch system is the only transmission offered on the CRT),



**'WE WANT A SUPER HIGH-END CAR... A SUCCESSOR TO THE LEGENDARY M1'**

and because much of that weight is lost from over the front axle, a higher proportion of the CRT's 1580kg weight is over the driven wheels at the back (now 48.4 per cent), to the benefit of dynamics.

What the M Division has lined up to follow the CRT looks equally promising, with Nitschke wanting to book-end the M range with two brand new models. 'At the moment

Above: M3 CRT has carbon parts aplenty. New M boss Friedrich Nitschke (below left) wants lighter M-cars – and a follow-up to the iconic M1 (bottom)

we have our biggest opportunity with an M starter car, maybe an M2. At the other end we want a super high-end car. Our thinking is a successor to the legendary M1.'

This suggests full series production of an M-version of the next 1-series Coupe, expected to be called the 2-series, as well as a rival to the Audi R8, a car whose success both in sales and image is simply too hard to ignore. A successor to the Z4 M looks probable, too. This will most likely happen after the current Z4 receives its mid-life facelift, sometime in the next couple of years.

Not long ago, the arrival of turbocharging at M Division had us worried about future M-cars. Now, though, it seems there's more than enough to get excited about.







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**TO FIND OUT MORE OR TO ARRANGE A TEST DRIVE, VISIT [LOTUSCARS.COM](http://LOTUSCARS.COM)**



**LOTUSCARS.COM**

Fuel consumption in mpg (l/100km): Urban 19.4 (14.6), Extra Urban 37.2 (7.6), Combined 27.7 (10.2). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 239g/km.





## JAGUAR XE IN TESTING

XK-BASED DEVELOPMENT MULE OF NEW 270BHP+, £50K SPORTS CAR SPOTTED NEAR JAGUAR HQ

**W**e don't normally get too excited by spy shots, but we'll happily make an exception for these snaps of one of the most exciting forthcoming models.

Granted, you'll need a bit of imagination to see the Jaguar XE roadster that lurks beneath this test mule, which was photographed leaving Jaguar Land Rover's HQ in Gaydon, but this hacked-about XK gives the clearest indication yet of the proportions and wheelbase the XE will take into production.

Right and below: the face is familiar, but the wheelbase and truncated tail aren't; shortened XK body hides the drivetrain of the upcoming XE



Pictures: SB - Medien

*'THE XE WILL BE POWERED BY V6 ENGINES, WITH BETWEEN 270BHP AND 350BHP'*

Jaguar insiders have already confirmed that the XE will be priced 'between the Boxster and the 911' in what the company is convinced is an under-served part of the sports-car market. Both roadster and coupe versions will be offered, as Jaguar is intending to stick with a conventional fabric soft-top rather than incur the weight penalty that would come from fitting the car with a retractable hard-top.

The test mule is also welcome confirmation that Jaguar's product development programme – briefly frozen during the company's funding issues last year – has been

brought back to life. Jaguar insiders indicate that the new car will be closely related to the next XK – which will become bigger and more expensive – with the two cars sharing aluminium construction.

Power for the XE will come from petrol V6 engines, with both naturally aspirated and supercharged versions likely to offer between 270bhp and 350bhp in standard tune, leaving the way clear for more powerful 'R' versions.

If Jaguar manages to deliver on its pricing position, the XE should cost between £50K and £55K when it goes on sale in 2013.



## LOTUS CREATING NEW V8 LIGHTWEIGHT 562BHP ENGINE TO POWER NEW MODELS

**E**vo has gleaned some more information about Lotus's future model plans, including details of the development partner that is helping to create its new V8 engine.

Lotus used a press conference at the official opening of its new test track at Hethel to confirm several stories that evo has already reported – including the revelation that the new Elan has been pushed to the bottom of the company's plans for five new models. In the meantime, development of the Evora will continue, and there has been confirmation that more powerful versions will follow.

Lotus also admitted that it shelved plans to use the Lexus LFA's engine in the Esprit late last year when it realised the 4.8-litre V10 would compromise the car's weight and packaging targets. Instead the decision was taken to build an all-new V8 to be shared by

the mid-engined Esprit, front-engined Elite four-seat GT and Eterne supersaloon.

Although Lotus won't officially confirm it, evo has learned from a separate source that the new engine is being developed by Stuttgart-based HWA – the part of AMG that wasn't bought by Daimler-Benz in 1999 and which has previously only developed race engines. The new motor is a naturally aspirated 4.8 V8 with a flat-plane crank and



Above: Esprit one of three models to benefit from the new powerplant. Below left: lightweight automated transmission also in development



*'LOTUS SHELVED PLANS TO USE THE LEXUS LFA'S V10 WHEN IT REALISED IT WAS TOO HEAVY'*

dry-sump lubrication. It will produce 562bhp, rev to 9000rpm and weigh just 170kg.

Company insiders say Lotus is also working on a new automated manual transmission that will offer the shift speed of a twin-clutch system but weigh far less and also incorporate 'mild hybrid' technology. Watch this space for updates.

Mike Duff



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Official government fuel consumption figures in MPG (Litres per 100km) for the C-Class Coupé range: Urban: 18.1 (16.1)-44.8 (6.3), Extra Urban: 33.2 (8.5)-65.7 (4.3), Combined: 23.5 (12.0)-55.4 (5.1). CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions: 280-133 g/km. \*The new Mercedes-Benz C-Class Coupé range starts from £30,220.00 on-the-road. Model featured is the new Mercedes-Benz C 180 BlueEFFICIENCY AMG Sport (Automatic) at £36,005.00 on-the-road including optional metallic paint at £645.00, optional panoramic sunroof at £1,350.00, optional Driving Assistance Package at £1,895.00 and optional Becker® Map Pilot navigation system at £495.00 (price includes VAT, delivery, 12 months Road Fund Licence, number plates, new vehicle registration fee and fuel). Prices correct at time of going to print.





# TAKING THE CERAMIC?

BUGATTI UNVEILS ONE-OFF, £1.5MILLION VERSION OF GRAND SPORT WITH PORCELAIN DETAILS AND MATCHING PAINT JOB

**B**ugatti has unveiled what has to be the strangest special edition Veyron yet. The Grand Sport L'Or Blanc eschews the carbonfibre, chrome and Hermes leather of previous limited Veyrons and instead majors on the use of – wait for it – porcelain. So rather than matching your suitcase set, this Grand Sport will go nicely with your teapot, or your toilet cistern.

'It seems an unusual idea to use porcelain in a car, especially in the world's fastest convertible,' acknowledges Stefan Brungs, Bugatti's sales and marketing boss. 'But this is what Bugatti stands for: the realisation of exceptional ideas whilst striving for the utmost in quality and aesthetics.'

Logos and filler caps are made of porcelain, as are parts of the blindingly white interior, while those white swirls on the exterior use special paint to mimic the material.

The Grand Sport's 1000bhp quad-turbo

W16 engine remains, still good for the headline 253mph top speed. The L'Or Blanc is a one-off but it hasn't been sold yet, so if you've got a spare €1.65million – close to £1.5million – then you can put your name on the registration document.

The L'Or Blanc arrives as production of the Veyron coupe comes to a close, the last of the 300-strong, six-year production run going to an unnamed European buyer. Production of the open-top Grand Sport continues.



L'Or Blanc (left and below) is a one-off, but Bugatti's partnership with porcelain firm Königliche Porzellan-Manufaktur is set to continue beyond this car



# NEW SMALL MERC AMGs

300BHP B-CLASS COMING; HOT A-CLASS TO FOLLOW



Above and bottom: you wouldn't guess to look at it, but new B-class will spawn an AMG model

**M**ercedes may have only just shown a disguised prototype version of its all-new B-class mid-sized hatchback, but we've already got details of the more powerful AMG version that is set to follow.

Based around the bodyshell of a yet-to-be-seen four-door saloon version of the new 'B', the AMG model is due to make its debut at next year's Paris motor show and is set to go into battle with a stonking 300bhp 2-litre engine and four-wheel drive.

AMG insiders indicate that the transversely installed engine will employ a twin-scroll turbocharger and direct injection, helping the car hit 62mph from rest in just 5.2sec on its way to a limited 155mph top speed.

The new engine's meaty torque peak – with 295lb ft available from under 2000rpm – will certainly make it easy to drive, but it has also forced Mercedes' engineers to redesign the B-class's forthcoming twin-clutch transmission to cope with the extra stresses. 'Every gear in the 'box needs to be strengthened for AMG,' an insider admitted, 'plus the clutches go from four plates to five.'

AMG's downsizing won't stop at the B-class, either. Company sources have admitted there will be a hot hatch AMG version of the next A-class, aimed at the gap between the VW Golf R and Audi RS3. If it uses the same powertrain as the AMG B-class, its lighter weight should ensure it is even quicker than its bigger saloon sibling.

Michael Taylor







## British GT Championship

On track for another epic season

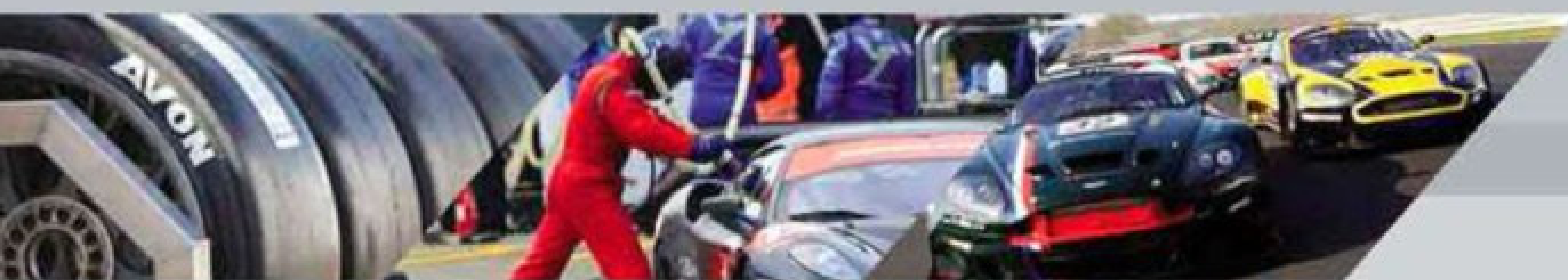


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IS Series fuel consumption figures: urban 16.3-44.8 mpg (17.3-6.3 L/100km), extra urban 33.6-64.2 mpg (8.4-4.4 L/100km), combined 24.4-55.4 mpg (11.6-5.1 L/100km). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions combined 270-134 g/km





# INTERVIEW:

## MATT HUMPHRIES

MORGAN'S 28-YEAR-OLD CHIEF DESIGNER ON THE BRAND'S NEW MODEL PLANS

**Q** It's been nearly a year since Morgan showed pictures of the Eva GT four-seat coupe. How's development going?

**A** We're well down the process of getting the car ready for launch in 2013. We've got prototype panels going onto prototype chassis, and we're running a mule car around. We're jointly testing the straight-six turbo with BMW at the moment, and we've got a team of about ten engineers working on the car's development. We're also working very closely with other companies, like Siemens for airbag testing. It's a very real car – I think it's the most ambitious thing we've done.

**Q** Morgan has just launched the 3 Wheeler. How different a challenge was that to develop?

Below: Eva GT is on target for a 2013 launch; designer Matt Humphries (above) reckons it's Morgan's most ambitious car yet

**A** It was easier than a car because legally it's a tricycle – that's what it's homologated as in the UK. It's been a really interesting project. I was working alongside our head engineer, Mark Reeves, and we had to be very close – everything that's engineered had to be styled and everything that's styled had to be engineered. It's not like a normal saloon, everything's on show. It had to be both functional and – I'd say – also beautiful.

**Q** Does Morgan have any plans to go racing with the 3 Wheeler?

**A** I definitely want to see that – can you imagine what a pack of 3 Wheelers would look like scrapping? – and I'm dying to have a go myself. We're not planning to do it this year; we want to get some cars out on the road and the public happy with them. But then, who knows?

**Q** Why did Morgan have a 'better' recession than the other British premium car makers?

**A** I think lots of companies made too many cars too fast, but we stuck to what we do best, we focused on our main points and stayed authentic. I really do think that we're the leading bespoke British carmaker these days... This year we'll only build 1100 cars. That's quite big in Morgan terms, but I don't

think we'll ever go over 2000, even including 3 Wheelers. Morgans have to be exclusive, they have to be thought of as individual.

**Q** Will we see another 'Aero' model after the Aero SuperSports?

**A** There will be a bit of a gap. I can tell you there's something coming next year at Geneva, but I can't say anything more at the moment. We're still doing individual one-off cars for very special customers – that bespoke side is very important to us. Once we've got Eva GT up and running there will definitely be other future products on that platform that will go down the same line as the AeroMax and Aero SuperSports.

**Q** How are Morgan's traditional buyers reacting to the arrival of the new models?

**A** We were slightly worried, to be honest. We thought we might launch a new product and the existing customer base would say, 'What have you done?' – especially with something as radical as the Eva GT. But almost all of them understand it and appreciate it, because it's got the same qualities as the rest of the range. They can appreciate where the company's going – they want to see the company have a secure future. We want to be around for another 102 years.





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FUEL CONSUMPTION FOR JAGUAR XJ RANGE: MPG (L/100KM): URBAN 15.4 (18.3) – 29.6 (9.6). EXTRA URBAN 32.5 (8.7) – 50.0 (5.6). COMBINED 23.4 (12.1) – 40.1 (7.0). CO<sub>2</sub> EMISSIONS 289 – 184 G/KM. ©2011 JAGUAR CARS LTD.

» [JAGUAR.CO.UK](http://JAGUAR.CO.UK)





JAGUAR | XJ



# MAGNETORHEOLOGICAL DAMPERS EXPLAINED

MAGNETORHEOLOGICAL (MR) DAMPERS ARE FITTED TO SOME OF OUR FAVOURITE PERFORMANCE CARS, INCLUDING THE AUDI R8, BUT WHAT EXACTLY ARE THEY? **JOHN BARKER** EXPLAINS

## Are Magnetorheological (MR) dampers a new idea?

» They have been fitted to road cars for less than ten years, but the idea of the 'smart' MR fluid within them was first patented back in the 1940s by a Russian inventor. While an excellent idea in principle, the practicalities of using MR fluid – an oil with iron particles in suspension – were prohibitive. It took the determination of GM to have MR dampers on the 50th Anniversary Corvette in 2002 for many of the practical obstacles to be overcome. One of these was simply filling the dampers – the abrasive fluid destroys regular fluid pumps in minutes, so membrane pumps are used.

*'IN MILLISECONDS IT CAN DELIVER THE IDEAL DAMPING FORCE FOR A GIVEN WHEEL LOAD'*

## How does it work?

» When a magnetic current is passed through an MR fluid, the miniscule 'soft' iron particles in it form strings and the shear-strength of the fluid is increased, effectively increasing its viscosity. The shear-strength can be very finely set via the electric current and the response time is very fast – just a few milliseconds – so MR can provide the ideal damping force many times per second.

## What is the job of a damper?

» A damper's job in a suspension system is to dissipate energy and help keep the tyre in touch with the road for the best grip and the most predictable handling. The spring takes the impact and the damper's job is to get rid of the energy and control the natural tendency of the spring to oscillate. A conventional, oil-filled damper will be

designed to cope with a range of wheel-rates and strikes a compromise, using valving to achieve low-speed ride comfort and high-speed wheel control.

## Why is an MR damper better?

» It's much less compromised because in a few milliseconds it can deliver the ideal damping force for a given wheel load. It can do this individually for each corner and with reference to the low-frequency movement of the body and the high-frequency movement of the wheel. The damping force selected is based on information from a variety of sensors around the car monitoring parameters such as vertical wheel speed, yaw rate and steering rate.

## What's inside an MR damper?

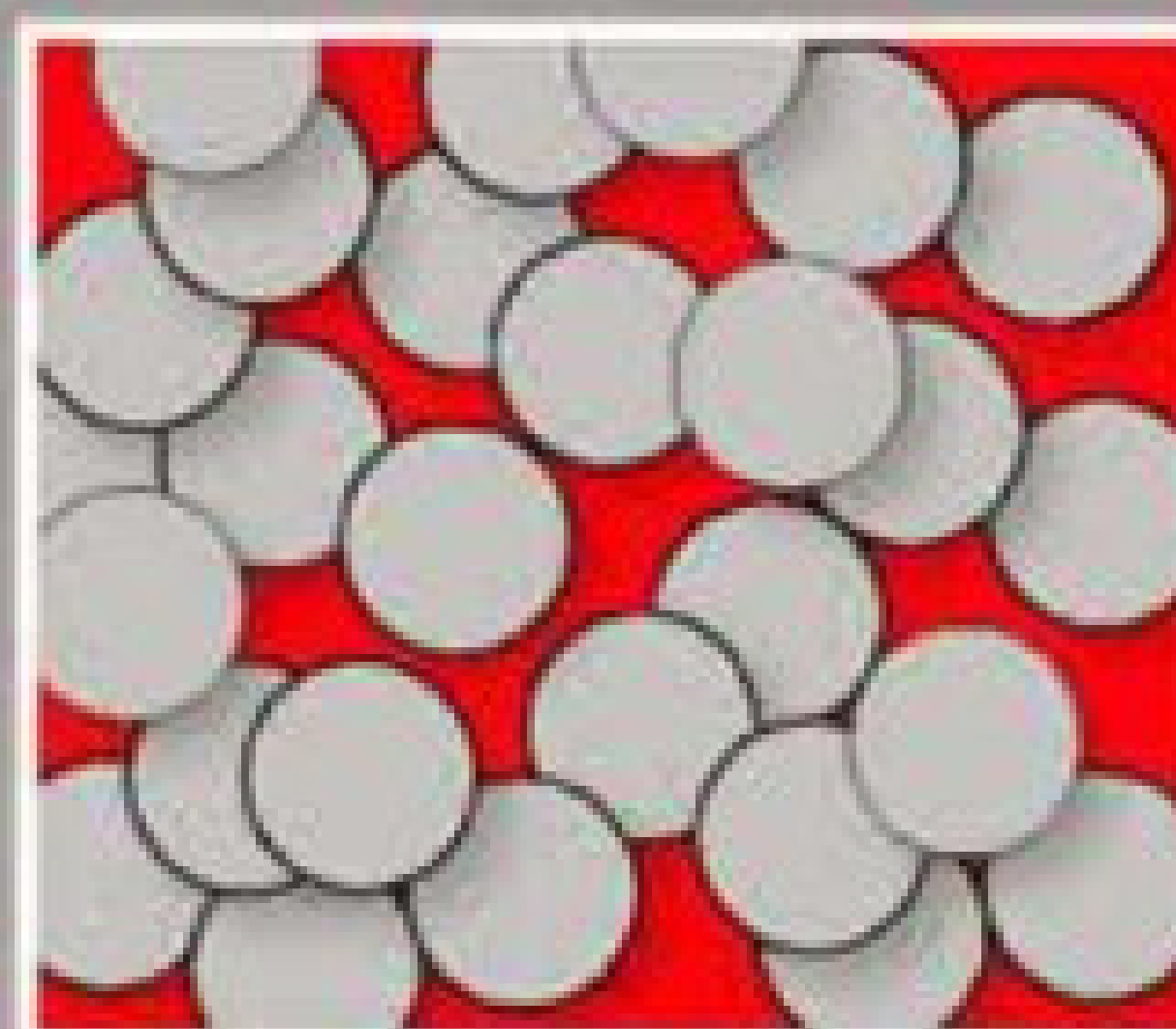
» The MR fluid is thick and dark and looks like grinding paste. It's around 30 per cent iron by weight and so abrasive that the insides of BWI's MagneRide dampers – as used by Audi, Ferrari, GM and others – have to be chrome-plated. The fluid flows through a constriction across which the electromagnetic current is applied. This gap, or flux ring, is the only physical tuning part of the MR damper.

## Are there other advantages to the MR damper?

» It can cut suspension fine-tuning by weeks. To change the valving of a conventional damper it needs to be removed from the car, dismantled and reassembled, rig-tested and re-fitted. This can restrict development work to perhaps six settings per day. MagneRide is changed with a few taps of a computer keyboard, so many more iterations can be tried.

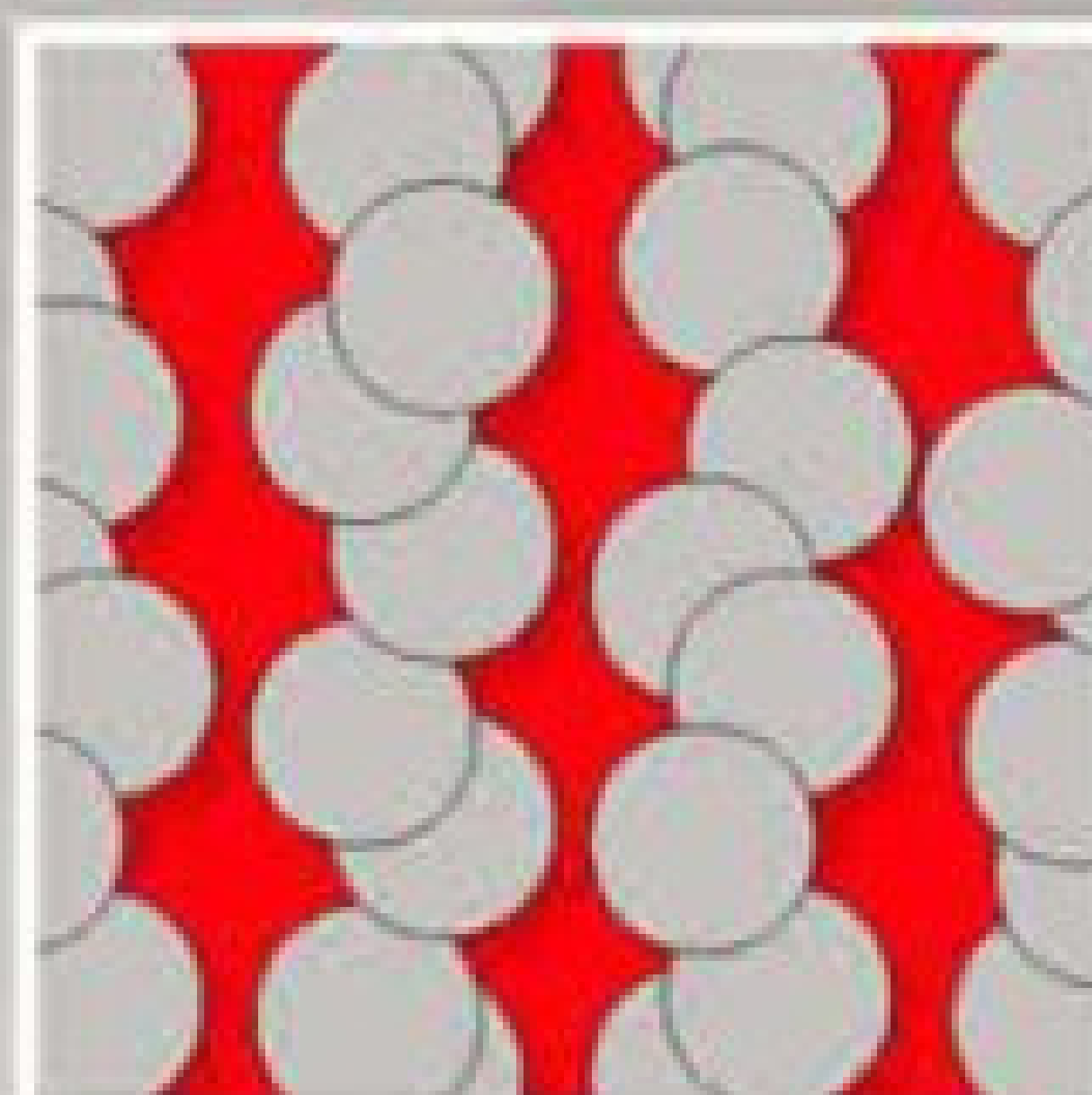
## What are the disadvantages?

» Cost, weight and added complexity. As an option, MR adds £1175 to the price of an Audi TT and around 20kg in weight. Also, MR fails in the 'off' state, which means that the damping force with no current flowing needs to be sufficient to control the car, so the theoretical range offered by



With little or no current applied, the iron particles are 'relaxed' (above) and the fluid flows easily

Current applied at the flux ring causes particles to form strings (below), making the fluid passing through more viscous



MR is not so great in practice. The problem of sedimentation, where the metal particles drop out of suspension, has been largely eliminated with additives, but these tend to reduce the maximum shear-strength available.

## Are there other uses for MR dampers?

» Many things that go through transients or shake can use MR dampers, including wind turbines, buildings in earthquake zones and even prosthetic limbs. Within the automotive field, there are already MR engine-mounts and there is also scope for MR mounts controlling other heavy drivetrain components. Expect to see MagneRide on more cars in the near future – BWI is talking to five carmakers who don't currently use it.





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See a full picture gallery of the Aston Martin V12 Zagato at [www.evo.co.uk](http://www.evo.co.uk)

# AUDI A5 GETS NEW LOOKS AND ENGINES

MID-LIFE FACELIFT AND REVISED ENGINE LINE-UP BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO COUPE, CABRIOLET AND SPORTBACK

**F**our years after its launch, Audi is updating the A5 range with a mild facelift and cleaner engines. Looks have been tweaked with restyled lights and new wheel designs. Meanwhile, every engine in the range now features both forced induction and direction injection.

Diesel options range from a 175bhp 2-litre four-cylinder to a 241bhp 3-litre V6, the former boasting 60mpg and 122g/km. The coupe class's first Euro 6 compliant oil-burner will be fitted to the A5 later.

The petrol range comprises 168bhp 1.8-litre and 208bhp 2-litre turbocharged fours, a new 268bhp 3-litre turbo V6, and a 328bhp 3-litre supercharged V6 for the S5. The latter will make the S5 coupe 20 per cent more fuel efficient than the outgoing 4.2-litre V8 version, offering a combined 35mpg and also a 4.9sec 0-62mph time. As before, the S5 will



come with four-wheel drive and a choice of six-speed manual or seven-speed twin-clutch S-tronic transmissions.

UK prices have not yet been confirmed, but with rises of around €200 on the Continent, expect very slight increases here. That means paying between £25,500 and £44,000. Deliveries will start in December.

Entire A5 range (including the five-door Sportback, pictured) will benefit from the styling and engine updates

## Briefs



### AUDI R8 LIMITED EDITION

» Audi is selling a UK-only limited edition of the V8 R8 coupe. Dubbed, imaginatively enough, the 'Limited Edition', this special R8 gets 19in titanium-look alloys, satnav, the premium Bang & Olufsen speaker upgrade, and the extra-cost option of unique titanium-effect paint. Only 100 will be made, costing £93,935 for the manual version – £6000 more than the standard V8.

### MURRAY'S T25 GOES ELECTRIC

» Gordon Murray Design has shown an electric version of its T25 city car proposal. Dubbed the T27, the tiny city car is being pitched as the most efficient electric car in the world. As with the petrol-powered T25, Murray's company isn't trying to sell the car directly, rather interest another company in licensing its innovative 'iStream' production process.



### SPECIAL EDITION RENAULTSPORTS

» Renault has announced 'Silverstone GP' versions of the Renaultsport Twingo and Clio, both with most of the options list thrown at them. Just 50 of each will be made, with silver paint, black alloys and a Renault trackday at Silverstone included in the price. The Clio also gains Recaro seats. The Twingo is £14,995 and the Clio is £19,995 – a supplement of around £3000 over their standard sisters.



### V12 ZAGATO PRICE ANNOUNCED

» Aston Martin has confirmed that the V12 Zagato will go into limited production, with the first deliveries set to be made at the end of 2012. The car will cost £330,000 plus local taxes – translating to a price of £396,000 in the UK. Aston has confirmed that the Zagato will weigh around 100kg less than the V12 Vantage it's based on. Despite the connection to the Italian styling house, the Zagato will be built entirely in the UK at Aston's Gaydon factory.

## TONY'S FIRST RACE IN SIGHT

MSV COMPETITION WINNER BUYS FIAT BRAVO RACER

**T**ony Hurcombe's first race is fast approaching now. After winning our MSV Trackday Trophy competition, he received enough track driving tuition to see him sail through his ARDS race licence exam last month; now he's bought himself a car.

The aim of this race series is to bridge the gap for drivers who have outgrown trackdays but find the thought of leaping headlong into a race championship a touch too daunting. The regulations are written to encourage novice racers rather than old hands, and the eligible cars are cost-effective – basically the type of lightly tweaked hot hatch you'll find on a regular trackday.

A Fiat Bravo might not be the obvious choice, but when you can pick one up fully stripped, prepped and caged for £700, who's



Above: Tony Hurcombe (left) with his Fiat Bravo, new teammate Adam Bates (right) and evo's Roger Green

complaining? Certainly not Tony, for that's exactly what he's bought. He's also got a team-mate. Adam Bates happened to be doing his ARDS test on the same day as Tony, with the intention of racing in the same series, so by joining forces costs are halved and they can benefit from each other's experiences.

Their first outing in the new steed was at a recent evo trackday and the signs look promising. The clutch needs to be replaced, but otherwise the Bravo is in fine fettle.

Their first race will be at Donington in August. We'll keep you posted.

» For more information about the championship and how to go racing, visit [trackdaytrophy.co.uk](http://trackdaytrophy.co.uk)



# FANTASTIC VOYAGEZ

*Louis Vuitton chronograph kicks off this month's round-up of fabulous timepieces*

**LOUIS VUITTON TAMBOUR 'VOYAGEZ' CHRONOGRAPH**  
**PRICE:** £4350 (OR £18,000 IN PINK GOLD) **FROM:** WWW.LOUISVUITTON.COM

Legendary luggage-maker Louis Vuitton entered the watch game in 2002 with its round-cased 'Tambour' line that has since spawned numerous variants, including a yachting version and a tourbillon costing more than £100,000. This year the luxury mega brand (985million euros profit in 2010) is stepping up its horological game with new movements and new designs, starting with the travel-inspired 'Voyagez' chronograph. Louis Vuitton made his first car trunk in 1897, so the firm has a long-standing link with the automobile world – hence the tachymetre scale around the edge of the new driver's watch, which also features subdials loosely based on old-fashioned dashboard instruments. Under the skin of the 44mm case you'll find a decent Dubois-Depraz automatic movement with 42-hour power reserve, while a carbonfibre strap lends a nod to automotive modernity. That tachymetre scale, by the way, is handy for regularity trials – it enables quick calculation of average speed over a given distance.



**CHOPARD ENGINE ONE**  
**PRICE:** FOR SALE TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER  
**FROM:** WWW.ANTIQUORUM.COM/ONLYWATCH

If this reminds you of something you saw on issue 147's watch page, you'd be right – but this version of the Chopard Engine One is a one-off that's being sold for charity. Just to re-cap, the Engine One is an imposing 35.4mm by 44.4mm titanium-cased tourbillon with a reamed dial designed to look like a pair of rocker covers, a power reserve indicator inspired by a fuel gauge and movement base plates that resemble mini race circuits. 'Standard' versions of the Engine One are limited to 150 examples costing around £45,000 apiece, but Chopard has created this unique piece with a black DLC finish for this year's Only Watch auction, a biennial charity event held during the Monaco yacht show. Around 40 other top watch brands will take part in the event, with each one donating either a unique watch or the first of a limited edition. The auction happens on September 22. See [www.antiqorum.com](http://www.antiqorum.com) for details.



**CUERVO Y SOBRINOS HISTORIADOR**  
**PRICE:** £4490 **FROM:** WWW.CUERVOYSOBRINOS.COM

Armando Rio y Cuervo opened his jewellery shop in Havana in 1882, selling own-brand watches made at a factory in Switzerland. Original high profile 'Cuervo' wearers included Ernest Hemingway and Winston Churchill, but the name faded into obscurity during the mid 20th century before being revived in 1997 by a couple of Italian entrepreneurs. One of the partners, Mario Villa, is a keen classic car collector and the brand sponsors the Sicilian Etna Raid rally. The Historiador chronograph has been designed to appeal to drivers with its tachymetre scale and retro-look dial in either black or ivory. Oh, and it comes in a cedar wood box that doubles as a cigar humidor.



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Team Principal Jota Sport



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A new book by Bob Lutz exposes the bizarre working practices that almost did for GM. It's a riveting read

If you're looking for some holiday reading and you're not sold on the latest Ian McEwan or those Stieg Larsson books in which everyone appears obsessed with coffee and sandwiches, can I recommend the ripping new blockbuster from Bob Lutz. You might know Lutz as the silver-haired, cigar-chomping former US Marine Corps pilot who brought his unique brand of no-nonsense leadership to Ford, BMW and Chrysler before fetching up at GM to kick their product development department a new bumhole. You will therefore be unsurprised to learn that his new book is not a tale of forbidden romance set against the backdrop of the War of Independence. No, it's called *Car Guys vs Bean Counters – The Battle For The Soul Of The American Business*, it covers the author's experiences inside a beleaguered General Motors during the first decade of this century, and it is, quite simply, riveting.

The vast corporation that Lutz joined in September 2001 was a bloated behemoth in danger of tripping on its own ineptitude – or collapsing under the weight of its vast responsibilities to a current and former workforce represented by some of the most powerful unions in America. Even GM's attempts to thin out its head-count had been comically misguided as the company rushed headlong into extreme automation which left its factories so stuffed full of badly programmed machines that the tightly packed robots in the paint shop were merrily spraying each other rather than the cars.

It's against this backdrop of astonishingly crass committee-thinking that Lutz fetched up with the explicit intention of cutting the crap. He soon discovered he was going to need a bigger pair of scissors. Throughout the book, Lutz tells extraordinary stories of a company so obsessed with its own internal procedures and standards that it had totally lost touch with the outside world. When, for example, Chrysler launched the successful and bravely styled 2000-model-year 300M, you might think a rival car-maker would wonder what lessons it could learn from the newcomer's crowd-pleasing looks. What GM's design department actually did was buy a 300 and park it in the middle of the studio covered in over 90 Post-It notes, each highlighting a place where the looks did not conform to GM's own rigorously laid-out styling criteria.

Lutz lifts the lid on other bizarre, self-imposed standards that compromised the showroom appeal of GM's cars. Appearance-enhancing 18- or 19-inch alloys and low-profile rubber were forbidden because they couldn't pass needlessly punishing high-speed kerb-strike requirements that hadn't been changed since the 1930s. Sprung-loaded ashtrays fired from dashboards with the ferocity of bear-traps and then required wrist-cracking pressure to push closed, all because an established GM directive stated that all interior openings must work after a night at -40deg. So because of an inexplicable desire to appease keen smokers in the depth of an Alaskan winter, GM made every other Caddy customer put up with a lousy, obstructive ashtray mechanism all year round.

The way Lutz tells it, the only thing worse than the bizarre engineering standards

were the ludicrously constricting cost and timing targets that saw ugly, cheap-looking cars pushed through to the showroom by model line managers who dare not ask for extra chrome trim or better interior finish, never mind an entire design re-think, before committing to mass production because to do so would jeopardise the only thing the GM machine cared about – bringing a car to market on time and on budget. Never mind that these mutts often sold poorly because they looked so mean-spirited and awful.

Lutz's book is full of barely concealed self-aggrandisement as he details the way in which he overturned these ludicrous strictures, but you can't deny that he made a difference. What's most remarkable isn't that this was difficult; it's that sometimes it was laughably easy. So when he demanded to know why GM's panel pressings weren't as crisp as Korean and Japanese rivals, to the detriment of shutline quality and overall appearance, the fix took just a couple of months and very

*'THE TIGHTLY PACKED ROBOTS IN THE PAINT SHOP WERE MERRILY SPRAYING EACH OTHER RATHER THAN THE CARS'*

little investment because the truth is that the manufacturing guys knew how to make crisper panels, it's just that no one had actually asked them to do it.

Lutz's zero-BS style makes for easy reading as he relays story after story of hair-raising ineptitude and, though he can sometimes barely contain his self-satisfaction at how he 'fixed' GM, above everything you get a real sense that he loves cars and the car industry. If you do too, I heartily recommend *Car Guys vs Bean Counters* for your beach reading pleasure.





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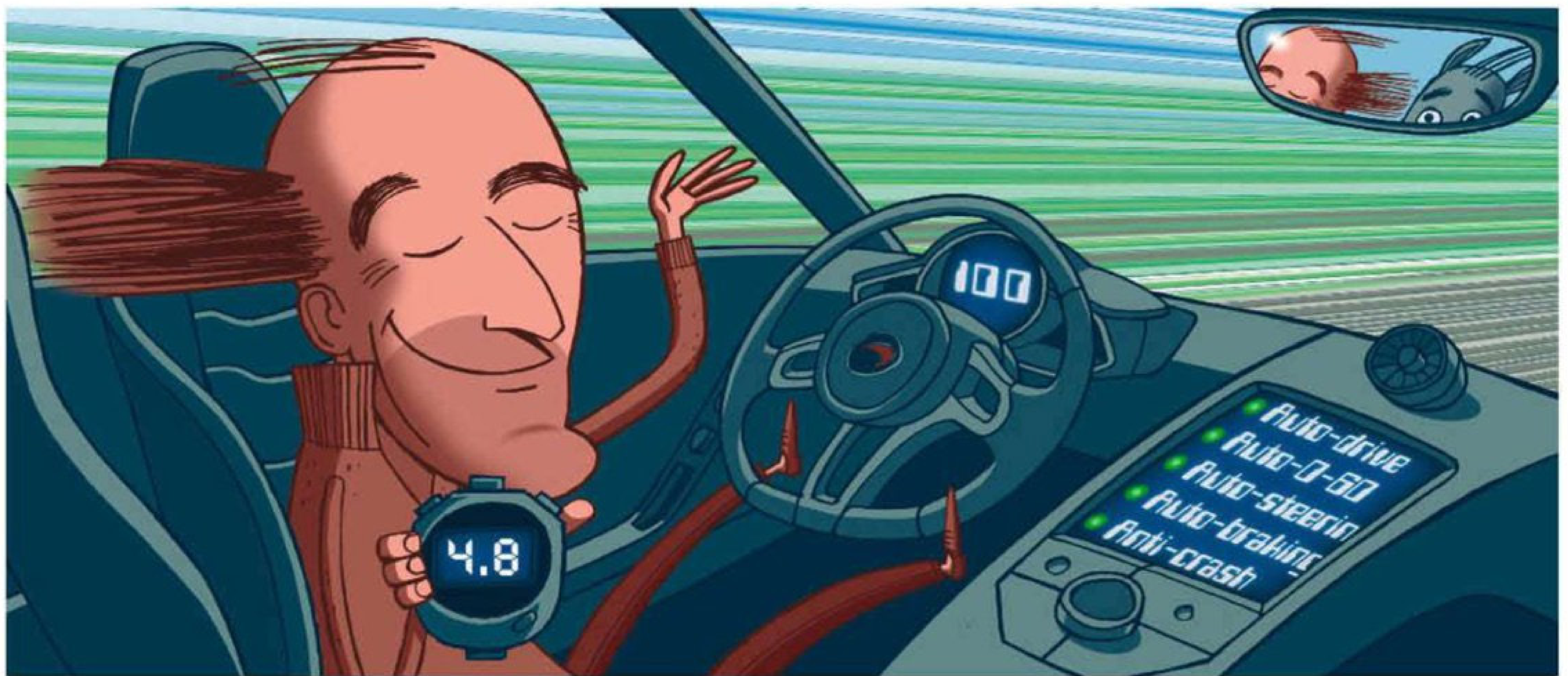
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## The extraordinary acceleration figures of the latest supercars aren't necessarily a cause for celebration

I was stunned when the computer spat out the 0-100mph times achieved by last month's cover stars, the Ferrari 458 and McLaren MP4-12C. If you're as obsessive over such details as I am, then

I'm sure you won't need reminding that the Ferrari 458 reached 100mph from a standing start in 6.8sec, while the MP4-12C (that's such a crap name) took just 6.4. Both are astonishing times, being barely a blink slower than the 6.3sec set by the mighty McLaren F1 and eclipsing many of evo's current supercar heroes, including the Ferrari Enzo and Pagani Zonda. The fact is, any car that can do this sprint in 'six point something' is properly fast. In fact, it wasn't long ago that I thought anything under ten seconds was a sign of greatness, but such is the pace of change, that's a lifetime in 0-100mph terms now.

What has brought about this massive improvement is the advent of launch control systems and new, automated gearbox technology. In other words, taking responsibility away from the human operator and leaving it to the clever electronics instead. I can't decide whether this is a good thing or not, but having spent many hours trying to extract the best acceleration times out of manual transmission cars in years gone by, I can tell you that achieving the ultimate time used to be almost an art form.

Wind the clock back to 1999, to when we did

the first road test on the new Aston Martin Vanquish. Aston claimed 4.5sec for the 0-60mph dash, but even after many hours torturing a Vanquish at Millbrook, the best we could achieve was 5.1sec. A quick phone around rival magazines revealed we were not alone, so a challenge was laid down to Aston to prove they really could make a Vanquish reach 60mph in less than five seconds.

A couple of weeks later, we gathered at Millbrook to be met by a Vanquish press car and several Aston Martin engineers with a point to prove. We went first and, after a couple of runs, got the time down to 5.05sec, so quicker than before but still nowhere near Aston's claim. We couldn't see how the car was ever going to go any quicker. Little did we know that the Aston engineers had a trick up their sleeve. Using the same car and our test equipment, they went off to do a couple of runs and came back beaming. They'd bagged a 4.6.

How did they do it? Instead of running through the gears as we'd done, the engineers never went beyond second, even though they knew the maximum speed in second was 59.5mph. By hitting the limiter in second under full acceleration, there was enough 'elasticity' to allow the car to break through 60mph briefly and record a time without the need to change into third. Cheating? Perhaps, but such was the importance of 0-60 when it came to selling cars, they needed to get close to the Ferrari 550's 4.2sec, even if it was unachievable by owners in the real world.

Today, though, acceleration times are getting so damn quick, it makes me wonder if they still have the relevance they once did. When something as (relatively) mundane as an Audi RS3 can dip below four seconds to sixty, stunning performance is no longer an exclusive speciality of the supercar class. Take a look at the 'Knowledge' in the back of this magazine and you'll discover plenty of examples of acceleration figures that almost defy belief. And that, I believe, is a shame.

Because launch control systems are getting increasingly common, acceleration times have tumbled almost too quickly to comprehend, meaning all our reference points have been scrambled. We no longer really know what 'quick' really stands for. Those times set by the 458 and MP4-12C are stunning, yet they barely got a mention in the copy. A few years ago, they would have been the main selling

### *'LAUNCH CONTROL AND AUTOMATED GEARBOXES ARE TAKING RESPONSIBILITY AWAY FROM THE HUMAN OPERATOR'*

line on the cover. It also makes you wonder where Ferrari and McLaren can go from here. Both of these cars are right at the start of their development, so there are bound to be even quicker versions in the pipeline. At this rate, with the FIA getting more zealous in its quest to restrict speed by demanding engine downsizing and disallowing electronic aids such as launch control, ultimate road cars will end up being even quicker than their race car equivalents. Does make you wonder if it'll be our turn next to feel the heat of the regulators.





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MODEL SHOWN: MG6 MAGNETTE S £15,995. MG6 MAGNETTE TSE £19,995. OFFICIAL FUEL CONSUMPTION FIGURES: MPG (L/100KM): URBAN: 26.1 (10.8), EXTRA URBAN: 45.2 (6.2), COMBINED: 35.6 (7.9). CO<sub>2</sub> MASS EMISSION (COMBINED) 184G/KM.





Never mind the marketing strategies, when the racing starts it's still all about the blokes behind the wheel

**I**nternational, big-budget motorsport is a marketing exercise for car manufacturers. Post 2008, there is no car company whose financial director or shareholders will allow hundreds of millions of dollars to be spent at the whim of a racing-obsessed CEO. Everything must be justifiable – there has to be a promotional plan.

I was pondering this as I watched the closing stages of this year's Le Mans 24hrs; wondering precisely what the promotional strategy of the Peugeot Motorsport Team was as its cars – both of them from positions several laps behind – twice blocked the lead Audi. Right there, in those few exchanges, the fascinating conundrum at the core of high-profile motorsport was demonstrated to perfection. Both Anthony Davidson and Marc Gené chose to push the boundaries of sportsmanship to their known limits – and some might suggest beyond them – but few would deny that in doing so they gave us a spectacle: something to talk about.

Meantime, the social networks erupted with indignation. All major car brands now track the tone of online conversation about themselves, so it must have been manna from heaven for those Peugeot bean-counters looking for ways to avoid dropping another lump of cash on Le Mans 2012 to discover that, in the midst of this huge promotional spend, the company was being savaged by the Twitterati.

And this is what I love about motorsport: for all the super-safe circuits and the character emasculation of the drivers, none of it matters when the lights turn green. Because when they do, that PR-savvy, grinning whippet of a driver regresses back into being a 13-year-old karter. He wants to win. Nothing else matters.

Herein lies the conundrum: motorsport is considered a team sport when in reality it is nothing of the sort. Potential success relies heavily on a large team of people but the eventual outcome is determined by the actions of the person behind the wheel. When Jenson was pushing his slicks wider and wider onto those sodden kerbs in Canada, do you imagine he was thinking to himself: 'Best not drop the old girl into the wall because it'll upset the chaps at Woking'? Correct, it didn't even enter his mind. He wanted to earn the right



to publically lampoon the Vettel number-one-baby-crooked-finger-salute on the podium. For himself alone. A noble cause, it must be said.

This is a unique situation. At a point in time, a manufacturer decides to enter F1. Let's take Mercedes-Benz at the end of 2009 as an example. It bungs Ross Brawn enough beer tokens to keep him in carbon fishing rods for eternity and then defines its strategic goals. First, exposure of the brand, and second: win some races. Why do we assume this was the order of priority? Because it then hires M Schumacher, who everyone knows isn't going to be able to match the new kids, but who will provide vast publicity for Mercedes GP. With Rosberg onside for raw speed, to me this looked like sound thinking.

But how did it look come the 2010 Hungarian GP as Michael squeezed Barrichello to within inches of a concrete wall at 200mph? In that instant, Mercedes' multi-million-euro investment had been distilled down to an act that the majority of viewers found deplorable. It was the Cantona flying-kick, only with added downforce. Most brands would pay zillions to be nowhere near such activity, but at that moment the paymasters had absolutely no control over what happened.

Because at that moment it wasn't a team sport. It was Michael reminding Rubens that he was, for several years, his bitch.

Mercedes is unlikely to link these actions with improved sales of the B-class in central Europe, but then it fully understands the rules of engagement in the sport: when a driver is pressing flesh, they live for the brand that pays them. When they're driving the racing car on Sunday, they probably couldn't even tell

*'THIS LACK OF CONTROL IS WHAT MAKES MOTORSPORT COMPELLING. SCIENCE NEEDS TO FIND A WAY OF CLONING KOBAYASHI'*

you who built it. They just wish it went faster.

This lack of control in an otherwise rigid marketing process is what makes motorsport so compelling. When you entrust a recent infant with a superbrand in front of a few billion viewers, there's a potential Gerald Ratner moment round every corner. And there is also scope for heroes to emerge from the pack. Which is why science needs to find a way of cloning Kamui Kobayashi. That drift in Canada: what a boy! And yet the Sauber carries virtually no advertising. Go figure.



# WIN A LOTUS\*

...and your own dedicated section in evo to write about it!



*Champion*  
UK





**Y**es, you read the headline correctly. *evo* has joined forces with Lotus to bring you the most incredible competition we've ever offered: the chance to win a Lotus Evora S for a whole 12 months.

But that's not all. The winner will become the Lotus Champion, and participate in a series of Lotus-themed events throughout the year, including trips to race tracks, trackdays and driver training. What's more, they will get to report on their adventures in a special new regular feature in *evo* magazine, titled '*The Lotus Diaries*'. So not only do you get a car for a year, you also get to have your words published in your favourite magazine.

The competition takes place in three stages. First is to sign up at [lotusdiaries.evo.co.uk](http://lotusdiaries.evo.co.uk) by following the procedure in the panel. This acts as your entry form. Then, if you are one of the lucky ones, you will be contacted to arrange a test drive in a brand-new Lotus at your nearest dealership. If you are, you will need to return to the competition site [lotusdiaries.evo.co.uk](http://lotusdiaries.evo.co.uk) and complete your own written review of the car that you drove. You will also be able to upload accompanying material you may have produced from the road test, such as photos and video.

The *evo* team will then evaluate your review, together with any additional material. This will be available for others to see and comment on at the [lotusdiaries.evo.co.uk](http://lotusdiaries.evo.co.uk) website – so tell your mates to log on and give their support!

Then, 20 successful candidates will be invited to the Lotus factory in Norfolk for a winner-takes-all shoot-out. There you'll get a tour of the car plant, meet Lotus legends and enjoy a full Lotus driving day at the famous Hethel test track.

From this, five finalists will be invited to *evo* headquarters for an interview with editor Nick Trott and representatives from Lotus. The winner will then be announced.

So what are you waiting for? Sign up today!

#### HOW TO ENTER

- GO TO [LOTUSDIARIES.EVO.CO.UK](http://LOTUSDIARIES.EVO.CO.UK) BEFORE 5 AUGUST 2011
- FILL IN YOUR DETAILS IN THE BOXES INCLUDING YOUR PHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL ADDRESS
- IN UP TO 200 WORDS SAY WHY YOU WOULD MAKE A GREAT LOTUS CORRESPONDENT
- AGREE TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS
- CLICK "SIGN UP"

#### THE EVORA AND EVO

As regular readers of *evo*, you'll be aware of our fondness for Lotus. We have tested almost every model, raced a few and forked out our own cash to buy our own. That's because as driving experiences go, Lotus offers a purity few can match. And for enthusiasts like us, this matters. A lot.

In 2009, we awarded the Lotus Evora the *evo* Car of the Year title after it fended off stiff competition from, among others, Lamborghini, Porsche and Aston Martin. In terms of steering, feel and overall chassis balance, the Evora is a benchmark performer – and the new supercharged S model enhances the overall performance even further. Whoever wins our competition is in for a treat!

#### SPECIFICATIONS

##### LOTUS EVORA S

**Engine** V6 supercharged  
**Location** Mid rear, transverse  
**Displacement** 3456cc  
**Bore x stroke** 94 x 83mm  
**Max power** 345bhp @ 7000rpm  
**Max torque** 295lb ft @ 4500rpm  
**Transmission** Six-speed manual, rear wheel drive with electronic differential lock  
**Front suspension** Forged aluminium double wishbones, coil springs, gas dampers, anti-roll bar  
**Rear suspension** Forged aluminium double wishbones, coil springs, gas dampers, anti-roll bar  
**Brakes** Cross-drilled ventilated discs, 350mm front/322mm rear  
**Wheels** 18 inch front, 19 inch rear, alloy  
**Tyres** Pirelli P-Zero; front 225/40 ZR18, rear 255/35 ZR19  
**Weight (kerb)** 1437kg  
**Power-to-weight** 240bhp/tonne  
**0-60mph** 4.6 seconds  
**Top speed** 172mph  
**Price from** £61,250



# evoDriven

THE EVO VERDICT ON THIS MONTH'S NEW LAUNCHES





## TESTED THIS MONTH

**RANGE ROVER** EVOQUE Si4

P42

**MINI** COUPE

P48

**JEEP** GRAND CHEROKEE

P51

**VW** GOLF GTI EDITION 35

P45

**MG6** MAGNETTE

P48

**WESTFIELD** SPORT-E

P52

**BMW** 640i COUPE

P47

**AUDI** Q3

P51

**INFINITI** M35H

P52

# RANGE ROVER EVOQUE Si4

» SMALL, SPORTY RANGIE » CONCEPT-CAR STYLING  
» 237BHP ENGINE » DRIVER-FOCUSED HANDLING

## SPECIFICATION

**Engine** In-line 4-cyl, 1999cc, turbocharged  
**CO2** 199g/km **Power** 237bhp @ 6000rpm  
**Torque** 251lb ft @ 1900-3500rpm **0-60mph**  
7.1sec (claimed) **Top speed** 135mph (claimed)  
**Price** £39,995 **On sale** September

**L**ooks alone make the Evoque one of the more significant new cars of 2011. The high waist, those slash-cut lights and that turret top are all concept-car crisp, and while the idea of a small, sporting Range Rover coupe seemed strange when Land Rover unveiled the LRX show car back in 2009, it makes perfect sense when you see an Evoque on the road.

What makes the Evoque special, and why we're keen to drive it, is the fact that Land Rover has worked so hard to make this bold new breed of Rangie so much more than a fashion statement for moneyed urbanites. With input from Jaguar Land Rover's talented and hugely experienced engineering team – including Mike Cross – it attempts to bridge the gap between small 4x4s like the Freelander (on which the Evoque is loosely based) and cars like the Audi TT and Mini.

After an enjoyable morning hooning around some familiar Cotswold routes

in this 237bhp, four-wheel-drive 'Si4' model, it's quickly apparent that the Evoque makes an impressively quick and competent partner on fast, flowing roads. It responds sweetly to your initial steering input and scribes clean, accurate lines with a reassuring sense of connection with the road. It's taut, composed and feels pleasingly light on its feet. Mid-corner bumps don't really faze it, and the control of its 19in wheels is tight yet pliant.

Things stay entertaining when the roads get tighter and twistier. The Evoque is keen to change direction and generates decent levels of grip from the ContiCrossContact soft-roader tyres. There is a slight stickiness to the steering as you make your first input away from or back to the straight-ahead, but the treacly sensation only lasts a split second. Crucially, the steering (electric, not hydraulic) is well matched to the pace and style with which the Evoque likes to make progress, and is in tune with the tyres' and chassis' ideal rate of response.

Drive it like a hot hatch and you soon find the limit of the front tyres, thanks mainly to the chunky 55-profile sidewalls. The ESP system won't fully disengage – you can feel it nipping







Right: 237bhp engine is a turbocharged 2-litre Ford Duratec unit; also offered are diesels with 148 and 187bhp. Far right: interior has a suitably premium feel

individual brakes if you pitch the car into a corner too aggressively – but you can still neutralise any turn-in understeer with a well-timed throttle lift without upsetting the stability system too much. Driven smoothly, the Evoque feels poised and willing to entertain, but there's no doubt it feels most impressive at eight-tenths. Beyond this, its weight, centre of gravity and multi-purpose tyres remind you that this is a rakish SUV, not a hot hatch.

Our test car wasn't equipped with the optional MagneRide adaptive dampers, but from what John Barker experienced in a brief development drive (see *evo* 158), they make the Evoque a more convincing and entertaining on-limit drive. Likewise more performance-biased rubber (we saw an Evoque on 245/45 20 Michelin tyres when we returned out test car to Gaydon) would also give it the bite to revel in fast A- and B-road driving.

The 2-litre turbocharged petrol engine (one of Ford's new Ecoboost motors) is refined and willing, with a useful spread of torque. It's not the most characterful thing I've ever heard, but it's certainly smooth and effective. It's also pretty clean at 199g/km. Outright performance is

respectably swift, with 0-62mph reached in 7.1sec and a top speed of 135mph. It certainly feels brisk enough to make a nuisance of yourself against more overtly sporting cars. This top-spec 237bhp petrol engine only comes mated to an automatic transmission, but the combination works well. In D it delivers smooth, well-timed shifts. Select S and the Evoque is more enthusiastic, but can feel a bit busy, so it's best to use the stubby gearshift paddles on the steering wheel when you want to drive with more commitment.

Shortcomings? Given the Evoque's target audience, very few actually. That sloping roofline and letterbox rear window mean rearward visibility is less than ideal, especially when reverse parking, but the optional Park Assist combination of sensors and a reversing camera more than compensates, although perhaps should be standard rather than a £460 option. There's a decent boot and reasonable space in the back for adult passengers, but negotiating the folded front seats is a bit awkward. Then again, if you regularly need to use the rear seats, the five-door Evoque is probably a better bet.

Quality-wise it feels like a premium

product. That said, I'm struggling with the price – £45,610 for this Prestige-spec Coupé, as tested – not because it doesn't look or feel like it's worth the money, but because you can buy some exceptional high-performance metal for that money. Then again, I'm probably not in the Evoque marketing team's crosshairs.

It might not be an *evo* hero car, but that's not to say Land Rover shouldn't be praised for what it has achieved with the Evoque. It's a stylish and original car that challenges convention in both the way it looks and the way it drives. Significantly, even if the Evoque isn't for you, the clever execution and thoroughness with which it has been designed and engineered means the notion of a small, quick and sporting Range Rover is acceptable, perhaps even appealing. All of which opens up a whole new world of possibilities for Land Rover as a brand. Am I the only one who thinks an Evoque would make a spectacular-looking WRC car? **Richard Meaden**

Below: bonnet vents count amongst the Evoque's many great details; auto gearbox is the only option with the Si4 engine; lesser models get mix of manuals and autos



## evo RATING ★★★★★

- Striking looks, sporting dynamics
- Hefty price for its pace, auto-only



*'THE EVOQUE CHALLENGES CONVENTION IN BOTH THE WAY IT LOOKS AND THE WAY IT DRIVES'*





# VW GOLF GTI EDITION 35

» 35TH ANNIVERSARY GOLF GTI  
» 25BHP AND 14LB FT INCREASES

## SPECIFICATION

**Engine** In-line 4-cyl, 1984cc, turbocharged  
**CO2** 185g/km **Power** 232bhp @ 5500-6300rpm  
**Torque** 221lb ft @ 2200-5500rpm **0-62mph**  
6.6sec (claimed) **Top speed** 154mph (claimed)  
**Price** c£27,000 (est) **On sale** Late 2011

If you were blindfolded, there would be only one giveaway that you were sitting in the new Edition 35 version of the Golf GTI – the golf-ball dimples are back on the gearknob. Even with the blindfold removed you'd be hard-pushed to suss that this was a birthday GTI. There are subtle '35' monikers on the headrests, kick-plates and front wings, but that's about it. If you're keen of eye then you might note the black wing mirrors, tweaked front grille and new wheel design, but otherwise it's a muted celebration, which is quite nice.

Under the bonnet is a de-tuned version of the Golf R's four-cylinder rather than a tweaked-up version of the standard GTI's. Power is up by 25bhp to 232bhp (a numerically pleasing 235 PS – although 350 PS would have been even more pleasing). That makes this the most powerful production GTI ever. Torque is also up by 14lb ft but everything else is standard mk6 GTI mechanicals.

Any added oomph is certainly welcome in the GTI, as it's always felt a little



lacking compared with the competition. Its 0-62mph time is 0.3sec quicker at 6.6sec; what's also noticeable is that the new engine really likes to be revved. Whereas most turbos start flagging in the loftier regions of the rev-range, the 35 feels strong and relishes being held to its red line just above 6500rpm.

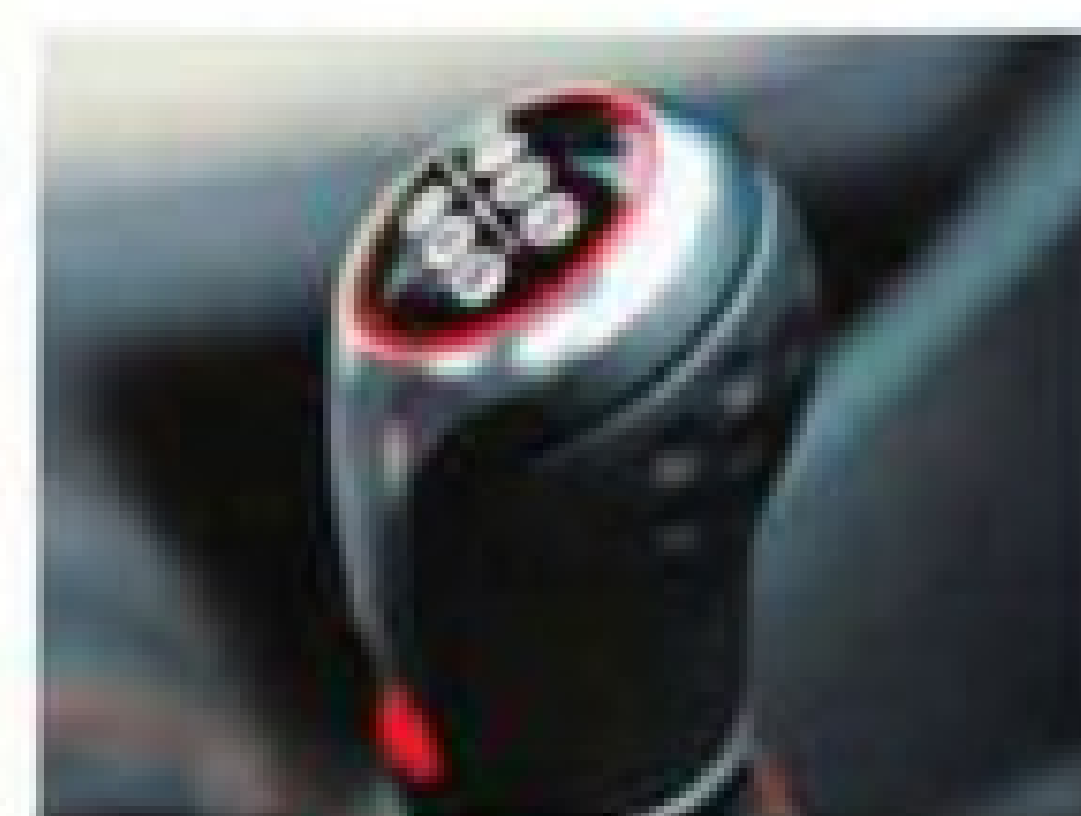
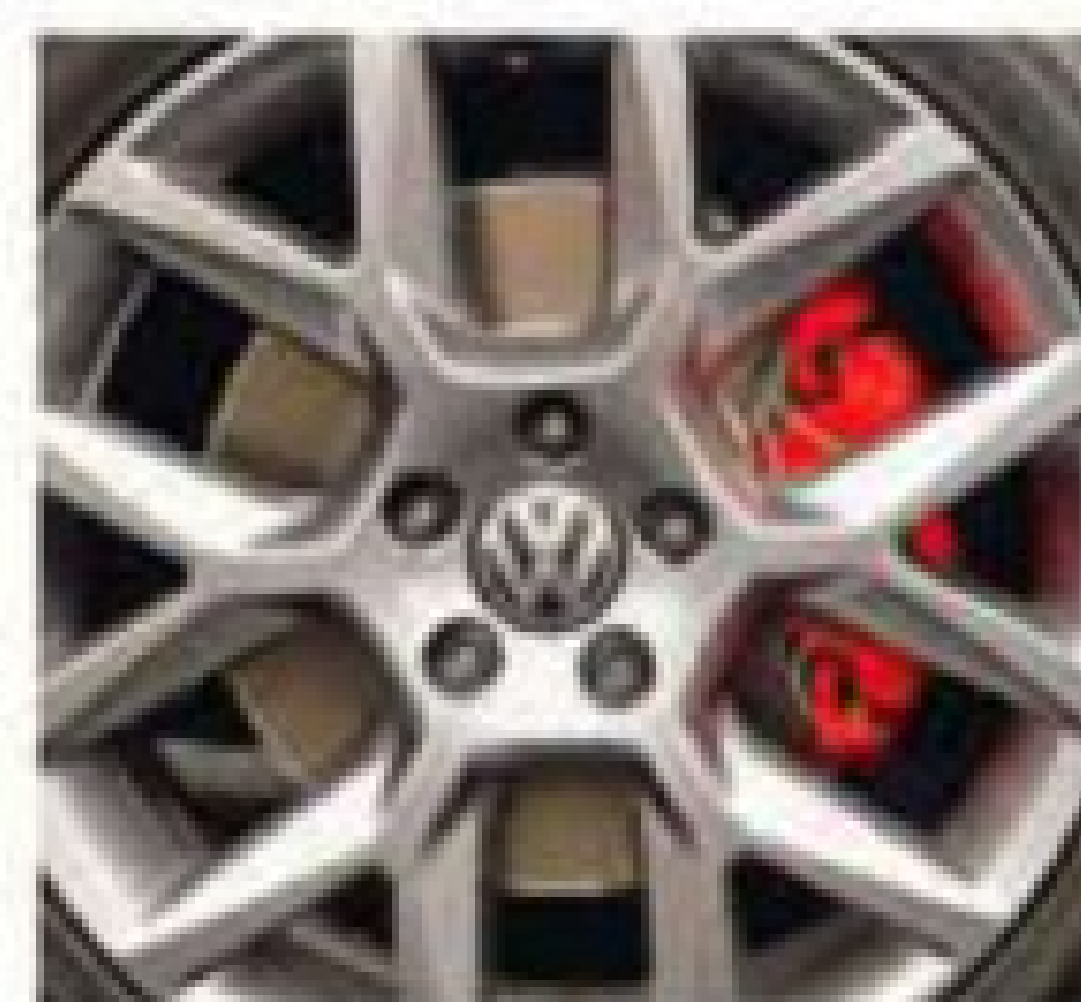
The 35 will be offered in both three- and five-door bodies and it was nice to have the chance to try both on the



## 'IT'S A FANTASTIC CAR FOR PICKING THE FASTEST LINE'

launch in Wales, because the three-door is noticeably stiffer and slightly sharper to drive. In fact it's very reminiscent of our old mk5 long-termer, which is a good thing. Six-speed manual and DSG 'boxes will both be available and it's really a personal choice as both are excellent. It's nice to be able to keep both hands on the wheel and brake really late and deep while changing down, but I still enjoy having the option to make a Horlicks of things in the manual.

If you're driving the Ed 35 hard, then the (optional) Adaptive Chassis Control is best in Sport mode, but if you just want to drive briskly and smoothly then it's better left in Normal. There is a



Above: 18in 'Watkins Glen' alloys new for the 35; dimples are back on the gearknob, but otherwise interior is largely unchanged

wonderful polish to the manners of the GTI; sometimes you wish it had a few more teeth, but overall it's a fantastic car for cleanly picking the fastest line down a road. And the slight lack of bite compared with, say, a Clio or Focus RS means it's a car that you could more happily live with every day.

It may not be a full-on streamers-and-party-poppers celebration for the GTI's 35th birthday then (it's probably too grown-up for that these days, preferring just a quiet drink with a couple of friends instead), but the Edition 35, in three-door guise, is certainly the best mk6 Golf GTI to date.

Henry Catchpole

**EVO RATING** ★★★★★

➤ Extra punch welcome

➤ Still too smooth for some



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# BMW 640i COUPE

» £60K HARD-TOP 6-SERIES  
» 316BHP TURBO IN-LINE SIX

## SPECIFICATION

**Engine** In-line 6-cyl, 2979cc, twin-turbo  
**CO2** 179g/km **Power** 316bhp @ 5800-6000rpm  
**Torque** 332lb ft @ 1300-4500rpm **0-62mph**  
5.4sec (claimed) **Top speed** 155mph (limited)  
**Price** £59,565 **On sale** October

**L**onger, wider and lower than the model it replaces, the new 6-series Coupe retains the look of a traditional two-door GT at a time when the 'coupe' tag seems to be liberally attached to anything with a vaguely sloping roofline, and it combines said looks with two rear seats that are more generous than those of rival cars, if still rather short on legroom.

Assembled from a broad selection of steels and aluminium, efforts to reduce the weight have been reversed by the increase in size, and the – otherwise beneficial – much stiffer structure. The cabin features a return for the driver-orientated dashboard, with a mix of mainly high-quality materials and a tech-fest headed by the latest iDrive system.

This is the 640i, whose turbocharged, 316bhp, 3-litre straight six, although less potent than the 4.4-litre V8 in the 650i, made for a more rewarding car in the Convertible (evo 155). It emits a quiet



but pleasingly gruff straight-six gargle at low revs, but otherwise has a character as mute as the absence of squeaks and rattles in the exactly assembled cabin.

Rev the engine hard and it becomes slightly coarse, but you can short-shift through the gears in the excellent eight-speed auto gearbox, and in Sport mode you'll get a rapid change and a satisfying thump as the next gear engages.

At 1660kg, the 640i is no lightweight, and occasionally you sense this via the engine's response. The brakes feel well up to the task of slowing it down, though the first few millimetres of travel are annoyingly abrupt.

Unfortunately, BMW has switched to fully electric power steering for the new car and it majors on accuracy and substantial weighting without providing any feedback. Our test car is fitted with the optional active steering, which varies the ratio. Oddly, this inadvertently masks the lack of communication somewhat, purely because you're hardly turning the wheel when rounding a corner.

The test car also has the options of Dynamic dampers and the Adaptive Drive system, so there's a choice of a sleepy Eco mode, plus two Comfort and two Sport modes, although Munich's ripple-free road network means guessing at the ride quality is futile.

Still, the more you drive it quickly, the more you realise that hidden somewhere



## 'IT'S A CAR FOR BIG, CROSS-CONTINENTAL JOURNEYS'

Above: dash is driver-centric; cabin has a quality feel. Below left: new 6-series looks happier as a coupe than a soft-top, especially at the rear

deep inside, behind the tonnage of wiring and circuit boards, is a big car with a heart. There's plenty of poise when you drive it hard, and it's a car imbued with a feeling of integrity ideal for the big, cross-continental journey. Whether that's enough appeal for a 60-grand coupe, though, is debatable.

BMW's engineers are particularly pleased with the forthcoming 640d, a 309bhp, 465lb ft, 51.4mpg oil-burner. Ninety per cent of buyers opted for the diesel last time around. If you're looking to measure the evoness of the Six, that should tell you a lot... **Adam Towler**

## evo RATING ★★☆☆☆

- Improved looks, effortless performance
- Not hugely exciting, little feedback





**SPECIFICATION**

**Engine** In-line 4-cyl, 1598cc, turbocharged  
**CO2** 165g/km **Power** 208bhp @ 6000rpm  
**Torque** 192lb ft @ 1850-5600rpm **0-62mph**  
 6.4sec (claimed) **Top speed** 170mph (claimed)  
**Price** £23,795 **On sale** October

# MINI COUPE

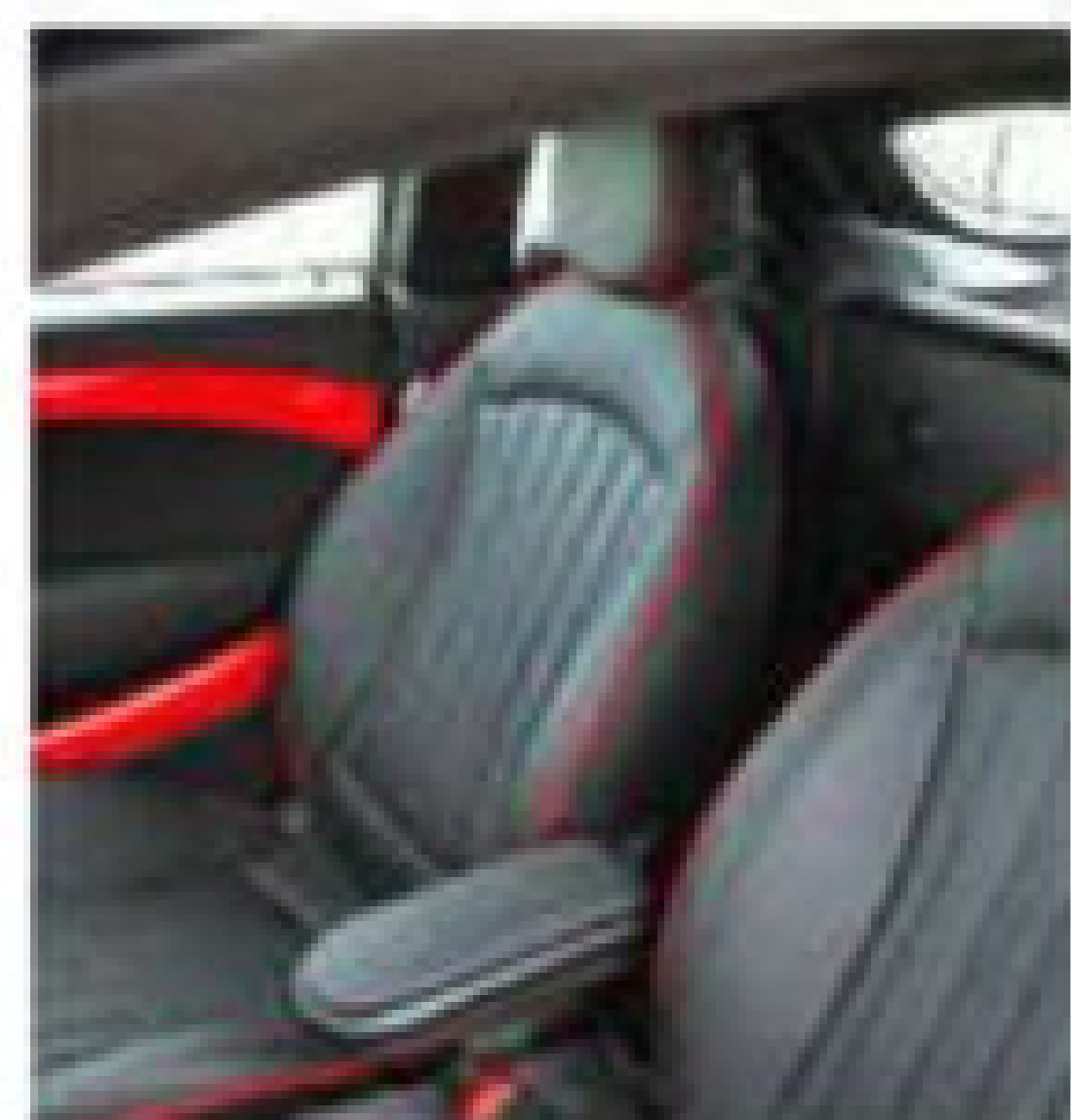
» ANOTHER MINI DERIVATIVE  
 » 208BHP JCW TOPS RANGE

As a brand-stretching exercise, the Countryman crossover seemed about as big a leap as the Mini franchise could make without falling over. By comparison, this latest Mini iteration seems eminently sensible.

The Mini Coupe is a cut-price alternative to the Audi TT and Peugeot RCZ, albeit one that will only suit those willing to accept the limitation of two seats. Prices will start at £16,640 for the entry-level 1.6 Cooper, rising to £23,795 for the full-on John Cooper Works, as tested here in late prototype form.

Mini describes the Coupe's domed roof as 'helmet style' – a bit risky, that one. It's 29mm lower than the roof on the regular hatch, while the windscreen is raked back by a further 13 degrees.

The Coupe is based on the Mini



Above: interior has two seats only; rear spoiler rises at 50mph. Below: dashboard is same as the Mini hatchback's

Convertible and retains its underbody chassis strengthening – which will help expedite the Roadster version that comes next year. It also means the Coupe has better torsional rigidity than the hatchback, but it's 25kg heavier too.

Despite that, the Coupe is fractionally (0.1sec) quicker to the 62mph benchmark than the lighter hatch because the weight distribution has been shifted forwards, meaning traction off the line is better. Otherwise the driving experience is all but indistinguishable from the JCW hatchback's. That means urgent, fizzing response in the lower gears and a beagle-like eagerness to change direction.

In the cabin, the dashboard is familiar Mini fare, being lifted straight from the hatchback. The tiny rear quarter-lights and shallow back window give the interior what might be politely described as a snug feel, which is not necessarily a bad thing until you have to see what's behind you. Without the standard-fit parking sensors you'd have no chance of judging where

*'THE DRIVING EXPERIENCE IS ALL BUT INDISTINGUISHABLE'*



the back of the car is.

The Coupe will go on sale with three petrol engines (Cooper, Cooper S, JCW) and one diesel (Cooper SD), each costing up to £1760 more than the equivalent hatchback. Fine, as long as you accept you're paying for style and not a dynamic step-change.

**Gavin Conway**

**evo RATING** ★★★★★

- It's like a cut-price TT
- Only room for two

# MG6 MAGNETTE

» MG6 WITH A BOOT  
 » SUPPLE RIDE REMAINS



**SPECIFICATION**

**Engine** In-line 4-cyl, 1796cc, turbocharged  
**CO2** 184g/km **Power** 158bhp @ 5500rpm  
**Torque** 158lb ft @ 1750-4500rpm **0-60mph**  
 8.6sec (claimed) **Top speed** 120mph (limited)  
**Price** £15,995 **On sale** Now

We've already tried the MG6 in five-door hatchback form (evo 156) and found it to be unexpectedly entertaining, with feelsome steering, keen handling and the sort of ride that breathes over Britain's crumbling roads while still being engagingly precise.

That hatchback is now named MG6 GT and is joined by a four-door saloon version, called MG6 Magnette, the name badge resurrected from MG's distant past.

As with the MG6 hatchback, the Magnette is assembled in a renovated section of Austin Rover's old Longbridge factory from kits sent from China by MG Motor's parent company, Shanghai Automotive. The underpinnings are loosely related to those of the old Rover 75, while power is from a 158bhp, 1.8-litre N-series engine (a development of the K-series). Sadly, those 158 horses still feel undernourished. Top speed is limited to 120mph, incidentally, because it reduces insurance premiums.

As before, the hydraulically assisted steering has delightful feel, weight, precision and transparency. The suspension mixes supple springing with taut damping, all of which makes this bulky-looking saloon feel very agile and pointable on a twisting road.

Prices are £500 more than the GT's, ranging from £15,995 for the Magnette S to £19,995 for the TSE. **John Simister**



Top and left: Magnette trades the GT's high hatchback tail for a longer one containing a vast boot

**evo RATING** ★★★★★

- Drives better than you'd expect
- Cheap interior, thrashy engine



# 1

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Jenson Button 2009 Formula 1™ World Champion

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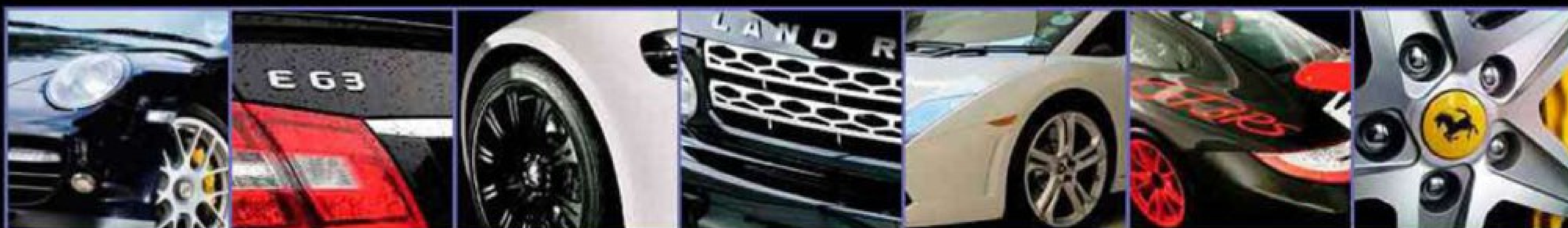
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320D E90 » 209 BHP  
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AUDI R8 V10 » 592+ BHP  
AUDI B7 RS4/ R8 » 439 BHP & DE-LIMIT  
AUDI Q7/A8 4.2 TDI » 387 BHP  
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RANGE ROVER 4.4 TDV8 » 385BHP  
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SPECIFICATION

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1984cc, turbo CO2 179g/km  
 Power 208bhp @ 5000-6200rpm  
 Torque 221lb ft @ 1800-4900rpm 0-62mph  
 6.9sec (claimed) Top speed 143mph (claimed)  
 Price £28,610 On sale November

# AUDI Q3

- » NEW COMPACT SUV
- » RS ENGINE POSSIBLE

Fancy Wi-Fi in your compact SUV? Well, here is the answer. Audi's new Q3 can be specified with a built-in internet hotspot with Bluetooth connection to your latest choice of iThing. There are also various flavours of satnav and a choice of five different levels of parking assistance, plus auto-main-beam, lane-departure steering nudges, blind-spot warnings and various other features now deemed important by carmakers who assume that we'd really rather not be driving when we could be on Facebook.

So far, so clever. But how does the Q3 feel to drive? It's the smallest of the Audi Q-cars and the only one with a transverse engine. Its Haldex clutch brings the back axle into play only when the front wheels are overwhelmed by their task, whereas



Above centre: Drive Select system (which alters accelerator, steering, gearbox and, optionally, dampers) has gained an Efficiency mode. Below: cabin can be packed with tech

Qs 5 and 7 are genuine full-fat four-wheel drive in original quattro fashion. Not that it matters much, frankly, because the Q3 is a tidy handler whose electric power steering feels unusually natural of its type.

It rolls little, and it achieves this flatness without making the anti-roll bars so stiff that you're forever being rocked from side to side on a bumpy road. The ride is supple and nicely damped, too, suggesting that this is an Audi that should work well on UK roads in non-S-line guise, and the two versions we drove were lively enough to be a more engaging drive than you might expect. Both had seven-speed DSG transmissions with an Efficiency mode within the optional Drive Select system to add to the Comfort, Auto and Sport settings.

'Efficiency' causes the clutches to disengage when you lift off the accelerator, so you're freewheeling and saving fuel. Sounds precarious, but it works quite well. And the engines? The 174bhp TDI is crisp, gutsy and surprisingly smooth, the 208bhp TFSI petrol is revvier, ultimately faster and its lower weight improves the ride. Their gearboxes shift more smoothly in manual paddle-mode, helping you to avoid the odd clonks that occur in automatic. Other engines, both with six-speed manuals, are a 167bhp TFSI and a 138bhp TDI, the latter with front-wheel drive only.

We also tried a prototype Q3 2.5, with a 301bhp version of the TT RS's five-pot. This quattro GmbH creation sounded and felt predictably potent but is not definite for UK sale. **John Simister**

evo RATING ★★★★★

- A very good compact SUV
- No manual 'box with the best engines



# JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE

- » MERCEDES PLATFORM
- » BETTER ROAD MANNERS



SPECIFICATION

Engine V6, 2987cc, turbodiesel CO2 218g/km  
 Power 237bhp @ 3600rpm Torque 406lb ft @ 1800rpm 0-62mph 8.2sec (claimed) Top speed 126mph (claimed) Price £36,795 On sale August

The previous Grand Cherokee was an automotive dinosaur, but this new one has been designed to offer a far more road-biased driving experience. And, despite Daimler and Chrysler's corporate divorce, it shares the same platform that will underpin the forthcoming Mercedes ML-class and GL-class.

Only one engine will be available in the UK from launch, a new 3-litre turbodiesel (an 'SRT' V8 version is likely to follow next year). The new motor is pretty decent and is claimed to be good for 237bhp and 406lb ft, with drive distributed by a standard five-speed slushmatic and permanent four-wheel drive.

It's no sports car – but it's vastly better on tarmac than its dynamically woeful predecessor. Body control is decent with either air or steel suspension and the steering is now precise enough to allow the driver to thread the Jeep down a narrow road with reasonable confidence.

And off-road? This is the real deal – it'll scramble over obstacles that would leave road-biased rivals helplessly beached. But, despite that, the Grand Cherokee still feels like the answer to a question fewer and fewer people are asking. **Mike Duff**



Left: interior lacks the design flair of some rivals. Top: range-topping 'Overland' spec adds 20in alloys and air suspension

evo RATING ★★★★★

- Feels invincible off-road
- Lacks on-road ability of rivals



# WESTFIELD SPORT-E

» WESTY GOES ELECTRIC  
» PROTOTYPE ONLY

There's something unsettling about taking the bonnet off Westfield's Sport-E prototype. Where you would expect to find a bundle of four cylinders with the attendant jumble of wires, exhausts and pipes, there is just a big, shiny metal box. I imagine a surgeon might be equally shocked to look inside a ribcage and find a small desktop computer in place of any organs.

The silver under-bonnet box contains half of the Sport-E's eight lithium ion phosphate batteries. The other four are slung underneath the car. This distribution helps keep the centre of gravity low to the ground, although the car's overall weight is up to 750kg, some 300kg heavier than a normal petrol-driven Westfield.

There's a single Evo140 permanent magnet brushless motor driving the rear wheels through the medium of a modified Land Rover Freelander diff(!).



## SPECIFICATION

**Engine** Brushless DC electric motor  
**CO2** 0g/km **Power** 224bhp  
**Torque** 295lb ft **0-60mph** 7.0sec (claimed)  
**Top speed** 100mph (claimed)  
**Price** c£75,000 **On sale** Not yet

Top: car weighs in at 750kg. Below: interior is as basic as ever. Bottom: box contains half the car's batteries



The power of this motor is rated at 140kw continuous with a peak of 167kw, which translates to 188 and 224bhp in old money, and the all-important torque weighs in at 295lb ft. However, Westfield is currently running the motor at 65kw (87bhp) to maintain an acceptable range. The wick can obviously be turned up as battery technology improves...

There is still something odd about turning a key and switching a car 'on' and yet hearing... nothing. Despite electric vehicles being known for their instant torque from zero revs, the Westfield doesn't exactly snap off the line – it initially gives the impression of struggling to turn a slightly bigger gear than it wants to. However, once it's over about 20mph it really picks up and whistles towards its top speed.

As you'd expect with a prototype, it

has had very little set-up work done on it. However, while the extra weight inevitably dulls the responses a little, there is still that unmistakable Seven-esque balance. The economy/ditchfinder tyres have an amusing lack of grip, which makes it very adjustable, particularly with the instant throttle response.

At the moment Westfield would have to sell this car for around £75,000. However, as technology marches on and costs come down, there are hopes this price will drop. To some, the idea of an electric Westfield might seem too curious a mixture of classic and futuristic, but if Westfield's iRacer project (cars now on sale at £90,000) is the success that it looks like being, then you can be sure some people will be very keen to buy the equivalent type of experience for the road.

Henry Catchpole

## evo RATING ★★★★★

- Intriguing concept
- Weight and price

# INFINITI M35h

» FIRM'S FIRST HYBRID  
» 0-62MPH IN 5.5SEC

## SPECIFICATION

**Engine** V6, 3798cc, plus 50kW electric motor  
**CO2** 162g/km **Power** 359bhp (combined)  
**Torque** 442lb ft (combined) **0-62mph** 5.5sec (claimed) **Top speed** 155mph (limited)  
**Price** £46,840 **On sale** Now

Petrol power could become Infiniti's Trojan horse. It has won the brand a foothold, yet may soon be left redundant, because the new M35h not only goes at a rate of knots other Infinitis can only dream of, it's also the firm's cleanest model.

It achieves this with a novel way of combining petrol and battery power called Direct Response Hybrid. This has two clutches: one either side of the electric

motor, which itself sits between the 3.5-litre petrol engine and the driven rear wheels. Infiniti claims the result is an uncorrupted rear-drive experience and improved efficiency from being able to decouple the V6 when its input isn't needed.

The result is that the M35h appears to spend more time cruising on electricity alone than other hybrids. And you barely notice the switch between power sources.

What you do notice is that for a car weighing close to two tonnes, the Infiniti is very rapid in a straight line. But you're more likely to marvel at the tech than become absorbed in the driving experience due to the hefty saloon's ponderous reactions.



Above: information display shows current activity of the petrol engine and electric motor; the transition between power sources is seamless

The hybrid is expected to take 40 per cent of 'M' orders, the cheaper M30d diesel 50 per cent. You don't have to be Carol Vorderman to work out where that leaves poor old petrol power.

James Foxall

## evo RATING ★★★★★

- It's not a BMW or Audi...
- ...or as much fun to drive





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WHAT'S RATTLED YOUR CAGE THIS MONTH?

LETTER OF THE MONTH

## The trouble with supercars...

'I simply don't see how you could own a 12C for more than a week before you found yourself on a gap year in Wormwood Scrubs.'

Thus, in one short sentence (cover story, *evo* 159), Richard Meaden sums up the modern supercar dilemma. On today's roads and in today's traffic, how much performance is too much?

Don't get me wrong, I love the fact that these cars exist as expressions of a kind of ultimate, but as I turned the pages it dawned on me that if I was lucky enough to own one, the experience would surely be one of frustration and sheer anxiety for the safety of my licence. And that's a thrill of driving I can do without!

I recognise that every journey in a car of this type is an event. A friend runs a 550bhp Ultima and I've never seen a car

attract so much attention. People are genuinely excited to see it (most think it's a Ferrari) and this is an aspect of ownership that no 'ordinary' car can give. But... one burst of throttle and your whole driving-dependent way of life is at risk.

Perhaps I'm just a wimp, but for me cars like the Caterham and Elise, tested in the same issue, provide all the thrills of acceleration, steering purity and handling balance without the same inevitability that one day you will be caught at twice the national limit! The fact that I might actually afford a Caterham is reason enough to smile and in the meantime I'll continue to enjoy the sights and sounds of other people's Ferraris, McLarens, et al, mentally wishing them 'good luck' with the unmarked motorway patrols!

**Bruce Thompson, Maidenhead, Berkshire**

*'ON TODAY'S ROADS AND IN TODAY'S TRAFFIC, HOW MUCH PERFORMANCE IS TOO MUCH?'*



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## Ron's English rose

Your test of the new McLaren against the Ferrari (159) was disappointing for me – I so wanted this car to conquer all – but in many ways each car sums up well the personality and culture of the people and nations who produce it.

The Ferrari is very much like what I imagine a beautiful Italian woman to be like. It provides passion, fiery beauty, instant gratification and a wild and fun ride, but the noise and temperament would perhaps become wearing after the honeymoon period had worn off.

The McLaren, so much the child of Ron Dennis, is a slow burner and perhaps an English rose. Initially it is more conservative to look at and prefers to take things in a more measured manner. Indeed, the longer I look at the Mac, in the right (darker) colour, the prettier it becomes. Day-to-day I suspect this car would be easier to live with and provide a more gratifying long-term relationship.

The McLaren, like the Honda NSX, may be a little ahead of its time. I think one day it will be looked at more favourably than it is now by the motoring press. In the final analysis, of course, both would be fantastic additions to any garage.  
**Steve Berridge**

## No-bull M600

There was a lot to enjoy in your McLaren article (159), however the best thing about it was the Noble M600, and not because it will sprint to

150mph faster than any of them. I'll explain...

The McLaren arrived to much fanfare and an assumption that winners in Formula 1 would deliver a winning car. Everyone seems to be surprised that it has come up short in meeting the demands of a car in its sector.

So what? It is not the first car to suffer such an outcome, and by all accounts it is still a magnificent achievement. I used to work for a business that was a title sponsor of McLaren, and we were often reminded how lucky we were to be associated with a team at the top of its game. It came as a shock then when someone had the temerity to point out that they hadn't won a constructors' championship and only one drivers' title since 1998.

If that seems harsh, the last thing I would want to do is to ridicule the undoubtedly talented engineers at McLaren. However, I can't

Below: last month's supercar shootout. Fastest to 150mph was the car from Leicestershire



help but think that McLaren, like others ('new' Lotus comes to mind, too), are more concerned by perception, PR and sponsors, and this has meant that they have ultimately fallen short with the product.

This, for me, is what makes the Noble so great. Noble has no F1 team, space age HQ, polished corporate image meticulously maintained by a rigorous PR team, or multinational sponsors, yet they can make a car that teaches the rest a few tricks. Oh, and it's quicker than them all to 150mph. Fan-bloody-tastic!

**Hugh Edmondson**

## Big Mac fan

Recently I was told by my firm that I was surplus to requirements. That hit hard and the process of getting back to work is hard work in itself.

However, I stumbled across a massive bright spot today – the arrival in the post of *evo*. Usually I have to wait until returning home from a hard day's slog before settling down to read it, but today as soon as it hit the mat I could open it and start reading.

What an issue too – the one we have all been waiting for – McLaren MP4 12C v Ferrari 458 Italia. I normally skim through the magazine, reading the letters and Fast Fleet first, but not today! Straight to the McLaren pages, lapping up every word, every photo and every caption.

I had the privilege of seeing the new McLaren at a Goodwood Breakfast Club recently and I





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# evoMail

loved it. I have always been a McLaren fan – I love their attention to detail and their philosophy of perfection.

The articles were stupendous in content, excitement and feel, with great photos (as always) to match. Being a bit biased, I would have preferred the Macca to win, but the 458 is a fantastic machine.

Oh, and I see in Fast Fleet that you have taken delivery of a 458 – the next few months are going to be interesting!

Ian McWilliams

## Showdown of the year

As I'm sure were many other readers, I was pleased and excited to see that you'd managed to organise the much-anticipated showdown in issue 159. I turned straight to it of course, to read about the grip, the performance and the sheer joy these great new sports cars can bring. Not just a clash of rival models, but of F1-linked companies with a different approach but also so much common ground. So, if I had the money which one would I have?

Well, for me and after much careful consideration, it would have to be the Elise, much as I admire Caterhams. Great cars both, and just a shame that the McLaren vs Ferrari stuff took up more space, but I guess some folks like their cars a bit heavier.

Al Arthur, Bristol

## Chris in a Agera

It's not often I feel the need to write in and have a moan, mainly because in my head I can hear the daft voice from *Points of View* reading the letter back to me. On this occasion I'll attempt to blank out the voices. I wanted to put on the record how much I disagree with Jez Jerome (Chris in a Agera, *evo-mail* 159).

If I was ever in the fortunate position to be in the market for an 'Egg, I'd want to be reading a review by someone who had shown disdain for it in the past, not the type of person who gets all weepy-eyed and poetic at the first whiff of a supercar. That way we can do without the plethora of similies that are usually bandied about, and get a proper, down-to-earth account of the driving experience. Which we did.

It's the reason we buy *evo*, isn't it? A proper review, not bought and paid for by the manufacturer, and the car in question not being driven by a 12-year-old boy who will mess his pants as soon as he looks at a piece of carbonfibre.

Dean Roscoe, Adlington, Lancashire

## Focusing on the car

Alexander Firmin's raw enthusiasm for the thrill of driving (*evo-mail*, 158) is contagious but I'm afraid he's quite mistaken as to the reason he had such a great drive in the first place.

He thinks his 'truly memorable drive' in Scotland was entirely due to the 'clear stretch of satisfying asphalt' and quite in spite of the 'rattly old nail' of a Mk1 Focus he was driving. In reality, both a great road and an engaging car are needed for the very best of memorable drives and, if anything, the car is more important than the road.

If he'd been reading his *evos* well, he'd know that a worthy car doesn't have to be 'an expensive luxury' but can be found at any price point. He'd also know that *evo* still regards Mk1 Focuses (Foci?) very highly for their steering purity and chassis balance. I'd wager that his drive wouldn't have been nearly as 'oversteery' and memorable if it were in a new and unrattly but understeery Audi A3.

Five years ago, family needs and career choice limited me to buying a secondhand '03 Focus diesel estate, which I chose purely on what I'd read in *evo*. It was, and still is, our only car and continues to deliver thrills, albeit rattly ones, to this day.

Ralph Whitten, Aussie in Spain

## Timely buying guide

It's a sign! So there I was, considering the madness that is a 5.0 V10 whilst you still can. Should I, shouldn't I? I searched my collection of *evo*, but alas no buying guide for the M6. Imagine my surprise when the grey packet arrived and contained an M6 buying guide! I took this as a sign and the next day test-drove and bought one with my wife. Thanks *evo*!

Ed Owen, Haslemere



The controversy over Chris Harris's review of the Koenigsegg Agera R rumbles on...



## FROM THE FORUMS: WHAT'S YOUR GUILTY SECRET?



Andybond owns up to a secret craving for a Phaeton 3.0 V6

**NotoriousREV:** Which car do you secretly yearn for even though it's not a recognised classic or is just something petrolheads aren't supposed to like? For me it's the Citroen CX Familiale DTR Turbo 2.

**Wilspeeds:** MGB GT V8 and Citroën Visa Mille Pistes.

**Djchoice:** I would love an old Peugeot 605 SV6 in blue like my dad used to have, it was such an awesome car and it made a lovely noise as well. I also still secretly want a Vauxhall Cavalier turbo very much.

**Mick\_N:** A proper Mini would be nice minus the rust. Also quite fancy a Lotus Sunbeam.

**ShockDiamonds:** SD1 Vitesse and the V8 MG they made a few years ago.

**Andybond:** VW Phaeton 3.0 V6. There. I said it.

**Dannyw100:** 2 CV (rhubarb and custard paintjob) even though the tyres are probably about as wide as my mountain bike's.

**Drophead:** To drive around in, a mid-90s CL600 and just cruise around with all the windows down.

**Marv:** Rev's real guilty secret is that he wants a watch. I saw a brown Mk1 Fiesta with a brown interior today and thought it looked really good.

**Si?:** There's an Avantage in our car park keeps looking at me funny. I also fancy an Audi A2. In black. Diesel.

**Mark BT52:** I have a soft spot for old British saloons. Rover P5 coupe, or even a Wolseley version of the land crab. Soft spot for the Princess as well. Old cars only work as saloons IMO where the performance is too unimportant to disappoint and the ride is much softer than today's cars.



Renault Avantage is another car that's lusted over on the quiet

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# ULTIMATE BATTLES

*Supercar takes on stunt plane; Porsche and Maserati road-racers fight it out; Subaru and Renaultsport tackle the world's toughest circuits, and more...*



## INCLUDING

» MASERATI MC  
STRADALE v  
911 GT3 RS 4.0

PAGE 60

» LAMBORGHINI  
PERFORMANTE v  
STUNT PLANE

PAGE 82

» RENAULTSPORT  
MÉGANE 265 v  
THE RING

PAGE 90

» SUBARU WRX  
v ISLE OF MAN  
TT COURSE

PAGE 102



ULTIMATE BATTLES  
GT3 RS 4.0 v MC STRADALE







# STREET FIGHTERS

*The new GranTurismo MC Stradale is Maserati's answer to Porsche's hardcore GT3 RS. But is it a match for our favourite 911 in its updated '4.0' form? Henry Catchpole decides*





I

It just goes to show that you shouldn't judge a road by its representative squiggle on a map. The stretch of blacktop that I had assumed would be no more than a transitional stage to convey us between

two lengthy pieces of B-road nirvana actually ended up providing the best drive of the test. In fact it was one of my best drives ever.

The narrow road wrestled its way between dry-stone walls with minimal verges, so the nearside wing mirror always seemed mere centimetres from nicking its delicate paintwork on some jagged edge. Precision was critical and the naturally rising and falling topography meant you needed the car to be completely together underneath you, yet the sightlines were good enough to allow phenomenal speed if you had the confidence to thread your way through the gauntlet. It was one of those drives where you get to the end feeling hyper-alert, with muscles so tense and pumped that you could imagine clearing an eight-foot wall with a single bound. You feel like these cars look.

I suspect that neither the Maserati GranTurismo MC Stradale nor the Porsche 911 GT3 RS 4.0 really needs much introduction, as both are already likely to be near, if not at the very top of your wish list. I will happily admit to being a complete sucker for this sort of car. I don't mind a bit – or even quite a

lot – of deprivation if it means the end result is a fabulous driving tool. Inspired by their respective one-make race series, these two are pared-back, supremely honed and sadly much more expensive versions of the cars on which they're based.

It's a mouthwatering comparison. The Porsche is an even faster version of our current Car of the Year and, as Roger Green discovered last month, even more involving. But then John Barker gave the Maserati the full five stars when he drove it on the launch in Italy earlier this year (*evo* 155) and I have to say that the idea of a front-engined, rear-drive car with the same pared-back ethos as a GT3 RS sounds to me like it could be even more fun. It's got to get an awful lot of things like steering and damping absolutely bob-on, but if it does then it could go straight in as one of the all-time greats.

What's not in any doubt is that the Maserati is every bit as good looking as the Porsche. Menacingly robed all in black, it is a tremendously imposing car, and if motorsport is not your preferred design leitmotif then it will undoubtedly appeal more than the GT3's wings-and-slicks appearance. Even if you do have a penchant for downforce-inspired styling and find that dive planes flick your switch, the 4.0's ghastly sticker-set surely won't make it onto most customer cars. The only sticker that should stay is the one in place of the heavier metal badge on the bonnet – that's still very cool.

We've been to Wales quite a bit recently and

New GT3 RS 4.0 (right) made a good impression on our first encounter with it last month. MC Stradale (above) is Maserati's answer to the RS, and it's already earned a five-star rating too. Now we find out which car is better



911 has a six-speed manual gearbox (right). Sport button (above) reduces exhaust back pressure, increasing mid-range torque by up to 26lbft (peak torque is unchanged)







*‘INSPIRED BY THEIR RESPECTIVE ONE-MAKE RACE SERIES, THESE TWO ARE PARED-BACK, SUPREMELY HONED VERSIONS OF THE CARS THEY ARE BASED ON’*

likewise the North York Moors, so I decide to plumb the rich network of roads in the Yorkshire Dales for fresh tarmac. Plenty of others from *evo* have been here before me, but amazingly I’ve never visited, so I’m enjoying the opportunity to miss a whole new collection of apices.

A few hours before the fun begins, however, we find ourselves making the slog around Birmingham and up the M6. It actually passes amazingly quickly and, despite their pitlane-refugee status, both the Maser and Porsche seem remarkably adept at munching the miles. The radios in both struggle a little more than usual to make their tweeters heard, thanks to the lack of sound-deadening between you and the pounding and spinning mechanicals, but

neither car is an uncomfortable companion. The only real trouble is reining them in – even on the motorway, both feel like they want to be on one continual rush to some imaginary first corner in a race. Give either a stab of acceleration past slower traffic and they seem to beg you to keep the rapidly flaring revs, gears and G-forces coming until they all run out at around 190mph.

We pass the stunning, angular headquarters of BAE Systems in Samlesbury and continue on towards Clitheroe before heading north into the Forest of Bowland. Before long we arrive at the market town of Settle. The Maserati has three settings – Auto, Sport and Race – which give progressively more brutal gearshifts and also open



MC Stradale has an automated manual gearbox (left). Shifts in normal mode are smooth, those in Race mode (above) are less so, but hit home in under half the time



the bypass valves in the exhaust ever earlier and wider. Leave it in Race as you trickle through town and everyone will turn and stare as a large piece of Italian flamboyance crackles down the high street. Although you'll be out of sight, the shoppers will know when you've reached the national speed limit sign on the outskirts too, as the 444bhp 4.7-litre V8 crescendos into a magnificently air-rending yowl.

Despite being designated a B, the road out of Settle is as wide and smooth as any A and sweeps on towards the splendidly named village of Horton-in-Ribblesdale. It seems sensible to knock the Stradale back into Sport for this section as the 60 millisecond upshifts in Race send a huge jolt through the car

with every flick of the paddle – something which only seems appropriate for full-on attacking driving.

The springs and dampers are a one-size-fits-all passive set-up and although grip is plentiful and there is a lovely secure feeling about how the car's nose hooks into a corner, there is a surprising amount of pitch and roll. This is great for the ride comfort and at a cruise the Stradale soaks up the worst Dales bumps brilliantly. Turn hard into a medium-fast third-gear corner though and you'll feel a fair bit of lean as the car settles into the bend. This initially makes you think that you're approaching the limit of the Maser's tenacity, but once the chassis is settled you realise there is still a

*'THE PORSCHE'S THROTTLE SEEMS TO SEND THE REVS SOARING IN A LIGHTENED-FLYWHEEL FRENZY AT THE MEREST TOUCH'*





shed-load more grip to come from the P Zero Corsa tyres before anything lets go. Curious.

The road shrinks considerably the other side of H-in-R, and although it still feels like a big car, the MC Stradale seems to find greater composure in the more rapid direction and acceleration changes. No matter how hard I try, however, there is still a white snout filling the rear-view mirror and it stays resolutely there until we pull over in a lay-by near the spectacular Ribbleshead Viaduct. Time to try the RS Four-Point-Oh.

Both cars' interiors seem to be trying to outdo each other in terms of lashings of grey Alcantara trim, which is suitably motorsport, but the Porsche's shiny-spoked steering wheel strikes a peculiarly bling note in an otherwise sparse and functional space. Idling in neutral, the transmission rattles noisily like a toolbox on a tumble dryer. You don't so much dip the clutch as heave it to the floor, while the throttle seems to send the revs soaring in a lightened-flywheel frenzy at the merest touch. The combination of the two differing weights under left and right feet can make pulling away smoothly a tricky balancing act. Very race-car.

Once up and running, however, all the wonderful GT3 RS messages that we know and love start flooding through the seat and wheel rim. The steering is weighty but somehow perfectly, consistently matched to the level of grip. The effort required from your arms waxes and wanes minutely

Below: GT3 RS is the more overtly racerish of the two cars, thanks in no small part to its huge fixed rear wing; MC Stradale doesn't exactly struggle to turn heads, though



GT3 RS 4.0's flat-six (top) has 493bhp; MC Stradale's 4.7-litre V8 (above) has 49bhp less at 444bhp – the same figure as the old 3.8 GT3 RS. 911 has the weight advantage too, 1360kg playing 1770. Both Porsche (below) and Maser (bottom) have a half roll-cage and four-point harnesses on their options lists







according to how much purchase the Pilot Sport Cups are finding. This in turn allows you to more minutely judge and regulate the amount of that magnificent naturally aspirated engine you want to deploy, or the level of bite you want the pads to inflict on the big (optional) carbon discs. And because there seems to be no slack in the chassis, no delay between your inputs and the G-forces that result, you feel like part of the car. It involves and absorbs you totally in what it's doing.

At first, it's hard to tell if there's much difference between the 4.0 and the 3.8 RS. There is certainly a little more punch in the mid-range and a splash more zing at the top from the howling flat-six engine (up to 493bhp from the 3.8's 444), but the chassis takes a few more minutes and a bit more confidence before you start to understand the subtle changes to springs, dampers, cambers and bushes. A few runs through a quick left-hander are the perfect test and you soon realise that the car is behaving not in an overtly rear-engined fashion, instead reacting all-of-a-piece. There is even less slack to the turn-in than in the 3.8 and the precision with which you can pick a line seems to be almost telepathic. Accelerate through third gear on the approach, a dab of brakes, turn hard, choose how much of the tyres you want to hang off the road on the inside of the corner, then feed the power back in aggressively, working the legendary traction and firing yourself up the road and towards 8500rpm. Through all this, the car is



Below: Porsche's audio system can be deleted at no cost to save weight, or upgraded to a satnav unit for £1987. Bottom right: Maser gets a multimedia system with satnav and a 30GB hard-disk for music as standard



*'FOR WHAT FEELS LIKE A BIG CAR, THE MASERATI IS GREAT FUN. IT*



moving around, changing attitude fractionally – not sliding, just working the rubber across the surface of the road. It's awesome.

To get the best out of the Maserati through the same corner you keep the chassis loaded up as much as possible. You brake, turn in and then get back on the throttle more aggressively to get the car through that initial roll and leaning on the tyres' sidewalls. It actually helps to left-foot brake as you keep the inputs and loading as continuous as possible. For what feels like a big car, it's great fun, and it makes a compellingly fast and terrifically engaging GT. However, to get that true racer-for-the-road feel that the MC Stradale name implies, it would need to be stiffer and lighter still, with more ruthless body control. Even as it is, the rebound damping could still do with being turned up a few notches to give it more control over bigger bumps and undulations.

None of this makes the MC Stradale a bad car –





## *MAKES A COMPELLINGLY FAST AND TERRIFICALLY ENGAGING GT'*

far from it – but for all the wonderful soundtrack and the sometimes brutal gearchanges, it's more of a GT with added edge – think Jaguar XKR-S or Aston V12 Vantage – than out-and-out road-racer. As a result it would be easier to live with, better at devouring distance, but the truth is it can't match the Porsche for raw thrills.

Ironically, the (optional) harnesses and half-cage that are in this Maserati would fit more aptly into the 911, which came with no cage and just ordinary three-point seatbelts (although it too can be ordered with the race car-like accoutrements). If I have a criticism of the 4.0 RS, it is that I think it might not be quite as all-road capable as the 3.8. It's sharper and pointier and closer to a Carrera Cup car for the road than ever – as ex-Carrera Cup racer Rob West, who was helping out on this test, affirmed! – but the tolerances are now so fine (look at how closely those rear tyres fill their arches) that on some roads





I found the car just scuffing the tarmac at both the front and rear through dips and compressions in a way I never remember a 3.8 doing.

Nevertheless, on the right road, on that unexpectedly brilliant road, the 4.0 was breathtaking. The front end seemed so instantaneously inch-perfect in its responses between the dry-stone walls that you'd swear you could feel those dive planes magically pushing it into the road.

When the road seemed to narrow uncomfortably, you still had the confidence to keep accelerating, snatch another gearchange and thread the car even more accurately. At times it seemed to defy physics because you would rail into a corner carrying all the speed you thought possible, and yet if halfway through you needed more grip to turn slightly tighter, there it was. I honestly wouldn't have believed it was possible to travel that mesmerisingly fast down that piece of road. What a car.

Find out which was faster on track: turn to p156.

## SPECIFICATIONS

PORSCHE 911 GT3 RS 4.0	MASERATI GRANTURISMO MC STRADALE
<b>Engine</b> Flat-six, 3996cc	<b>Engine</b> V8, 4691cc
<b>Location</b> Rear, longitudinal	<b>Location</b> Front, longitudinal
<b>CO2</b> 326g/km	<b>CO2</b> 337g/km
<b>Power</b> 493bhp @ 8250rpm	<b>Power</b> 444bhp @ 7100rpm
<b>Torque</b> 339lb ft @ 5750rpm	<b>Torque</b> 376lb ft @ 4750rpm
<b>Transmission</b> Six-speed manual gearbox, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip differential, PSM	<b>Transmission</b> Six-speed automated manual gearbox, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip diff, ESP
<b>Front suspension</b> MacPherson struts, coil springs, PASM dampers, anti-roll bar	<b>Front suspension</b> Double wishbones, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar
<b>Rear suspension</b> Five-link, coil springs, PASM dampers, anti-roll bar	<b>Rear suspension</b> Double wishbones, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar
<b>Brakes</b> Vented and cross-drilled carbon-ceramic discs (optional), 380mm fr, 350mm rr, ABS, EBD	<b>Brakes</b> Ventilated and cross-drilled carbon-ceramic discs, 380mm front, 360mm rear, ABS, EBD
<b>Wheels</b> 9 x 19in front, 12 x 19in rear	<b>Wheels</b> 8.5 x 20in front, 10.5 x 20in rear
<b>Tyres</b> 245/35 ZR19 front, 325/30 ZR19 rear	<b>Tyres</b> 255/35 ZR20 front, 295/35 ZR20 rear
<b>Weight (kerb)</b> 1360kg	<b>Weight (kerb)</b> 1770kg
<b>Power-to-weight</b> 368bhp/ton	<b>Power-to-weight</b> 255bhp/ton
<b>0-62mph</b> 3.9sec (claimed)	<b>0-62mph</b> 4.6mph (claimed)
<b>Top speed</b> 193mph (claimed)	<b>Top speed</b> 187mph (claimed)
<b>Basic price</b> £128,466	<b>Basic price</b> £110,000

★★★★★ EVO RATING ★★★★★

*'WHEN THE ROAD SEEMED TO NARROW UNCOMFORTABLY, YOU STILL HAD THE CONFIDENCE TO KEEP ACCELERATING AND THREAD THE CAR EVEN MORE ACCURATELY'*





# 100 CARS, 3 GRIDS, THE RING... WE'RE ABOUT TO START THE BIGGEST PORSCHE RACE EVER

...AND IT'S CHUCKING IT DOWN

*It's the first Porsche Carrera World Cup race, and the conditions couldn't be worse. In the thick of it is **Chris Harris**, and a podium position could be his – if he makes it to the finish*

**R**ecall is not an easy thing after a motor race. I'm sitting here now, attempting to remember what was going through my mind during those agonising few seconds before the start of the Porsche Carrera World Cup, but the brain-pot is empty. Apart from some noise, the odd smell and buckets of spray, my mind's a blank.

But this time I have a secret weapon. This time I was wired for audio. Quite why I thought it would be possible to talk *and* control a racing car during a six-lap sprint race, against 99 of the world's handiest Porsche pilots, at the Nürburgring in the rain, will always remain a mystery to me. But this fuzzy audio clip does

lend some insight into what was going through my mind just before the start of the largest Porsche race ever, and in front of a few hundred thousand spectators. As the cars exited the Tiergarten chicane and accelerated onto the pit straight, I say the following: 'Crikey, I think I want my mummy.'

Real gladiatorial stuff that. The Colosseum of racing, the gnarliest one-make race car on the planet and a sodden track. Here I am, hunched over the MacBook, trying to paint a picture of derring-do, and the indelible proof is there in MP3 format: I called out for my mother.

This was not a normal race, though. Last autumn, rumours started circulating that Porsche was considering a one-off extravaganza during







Right: Harris focuses before the race. Above right: special livery. Above: chasing a car from the Scandinavian Carrera Cup series



the Nürburgring 24-hour race weekend, and they were quietly confirmed before Christmas. It was going to be a huge logistical effort to bring together the Carrera Cup grids from the larger European markets and also to persuade other continents to attend the event. But I suppose anything seems possible to the company that continues to make a sports car with the engine in the wrong place.

The race format was simple enough: six laps of the 15-mile Nordschleife plus GP circuit combination. But the result would be based on total time to allow three grids of over 30 cars to leave at five-minute intervals. I would be entered in an older, 3.6-litre 997 Cup, which would race in class 2.

Sprint racing effectively ended at the Nordschleife in 1993. That was the last year DTM came here, and since then the circuit has been used for longer endurance events. So six laps, with a bunch of young hooligans intent on proving that they are the God of the Ring – now that could be interesting.

THE MEETING STARTS with free practice on Thursday afternoon. It's a one-hour session and a chance for me to get to grips with driving a standard 997 Cup at the Nordschleife. The Porsche I'll be racing in the 24-hour race at the same meeting looks very similar on paper, but it has a host of modifications to make it easier to drive around here, most notably a mechanical throttle

blipper for downshifts, fantastic ABS brakes and demon suspension. I'm shocked at how difficult this basic car is to drive. The unassisted brakes take an almighty shove. Porsche may have developed a new spring and damper package for the circuit's lumps 'n' bumps, but it still feels way too stiff and gets deflected by imperfections that don't even register in the N24 car.

I'm not actually interested in my best time from the session (I think it was a 9.08) because up front Euan Hankey has just posted a sizzling 8.44 lap, which is just 2sec slower than acknowledged Ring legend Uwe Alzen's best effort. Five weeks ago, Hankey hadn't even seen the circuit. It's one of the most impressive drives I've seen.

Sadly it goes badly wrong in Friday's qualifying session and Euan has a monumental shunt at Adenau Forst that destroys his car. I end up on a disappointing 9.09 after a slightly shambolic change from wets to slicks. It was always going to be a case of posting a lap early in the session, before the yellow flags began waving for the inevitable shunts.

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*'ALL I HAVE TO DO IS STAY OUT OF TROUBLE.  
NO METAL BARRIERS. NO SILLINESS. NO SPINS'*

---



And wave they did, before I could do anything noteworthy. Still, it left me 66th on the grid, 2nd in class and in with a decent chance of silverware.

THE RACE START procedure goes on forever. By the time the lights turn green, I've been bolted in the seat for nearly an hour and a half, and the rain has been falling harder and harder. But of far greater concern is my grid position: at the very back of the second group of cars, leaving me peering through the mist of 32 roosters of fine spray. Moments after muttering 'mummy' I literally can't see a thing. At 140mph down into turn one I get past a few cars – no idea how many – then try to guess where the braking zone is, with reasonable accuracy.

There's no real chance to make a move because visibility is zero. At least the modern Grand Prix track offers some grip even in these conditions, but the Nordschleife is treacherous and for some reason I have zero rear-axle grip – far less than I'd expected in the conditions. It feels like the rear roll-bar is still connected and the oversteer is not only gusset-harming, but plain slow.

This is clearly going to be about survival. I just keep telling myself to stay away from the guard rails, avoid doing anything silly and, most importantly, resist the temptation to go and mess with the 3.8-litre cars. Do all of this, and I get a shiny pot.

Three laps in and I'm beginning to lose touch with the pack. I just haven't got the traction and I'm using inadvisable amounts of opposite lock almost everywhere. As the spray clears, the yellow flags show carnage in most areas of the track. Sometimes you lose concentration because you end up guessing how a car ended up in the position it did.

A recovering 3.8 begins to reel me in, then he's on my bumper and the speed difference means resistance is futile. I'm beginning to not enjoy this: the oversteer is tragic and the Cup car's dramatically reduced steering lock means you don't have much angle to play with. The 3.8 disappears into the



Above: wet track means lots of spray and atrocious visibility at the back of the pack. Bottom: Harris's car is struggling with the conditions too. Left: Harris enjoys his moment on the podium

distance, but I still reckon I've got enough pace to compete in the 3.6-litre class, even though they're all in the group behind me on the circuit. All I have to do is stay out of trouble. No metal barriers. No silliness. No spins.

That's what I say to myself as I enter Steilstrecke on the last lap. No spins. It's what I say as the car steps way out of line, and it's what I say as I try to avoid a pirouette. As the car rotates and then stops – in the middle of the track – the audio recording goes silent, then: 'Yep, that was a spin.'

Within seconds, and grinning at my good fortune, I'm on my way again in the drift-mobile. Three minutes later I cross the line and am ushered past parc fermé to the podium enclosure, out of the car, up some steps, handed some fizzy wine and told I'm 2nd in class 2. Elation.

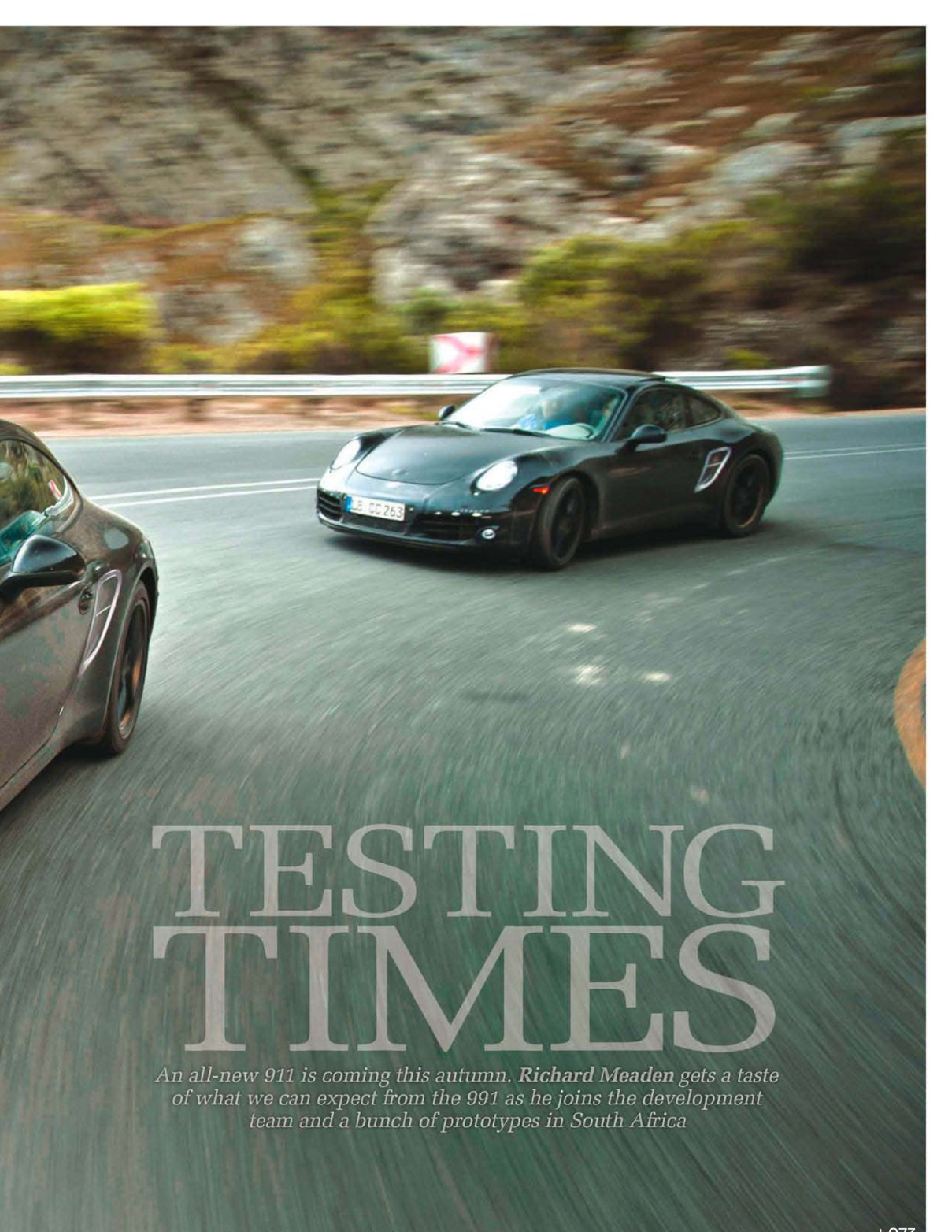
Then, an hour later, Porsche phones to say the results are wrong, I am actually 3rd in class by a single second and 59th overall. That moment cost me 2000 euros in prize money. The most expensive spin of my life. Bloody good fun, though.







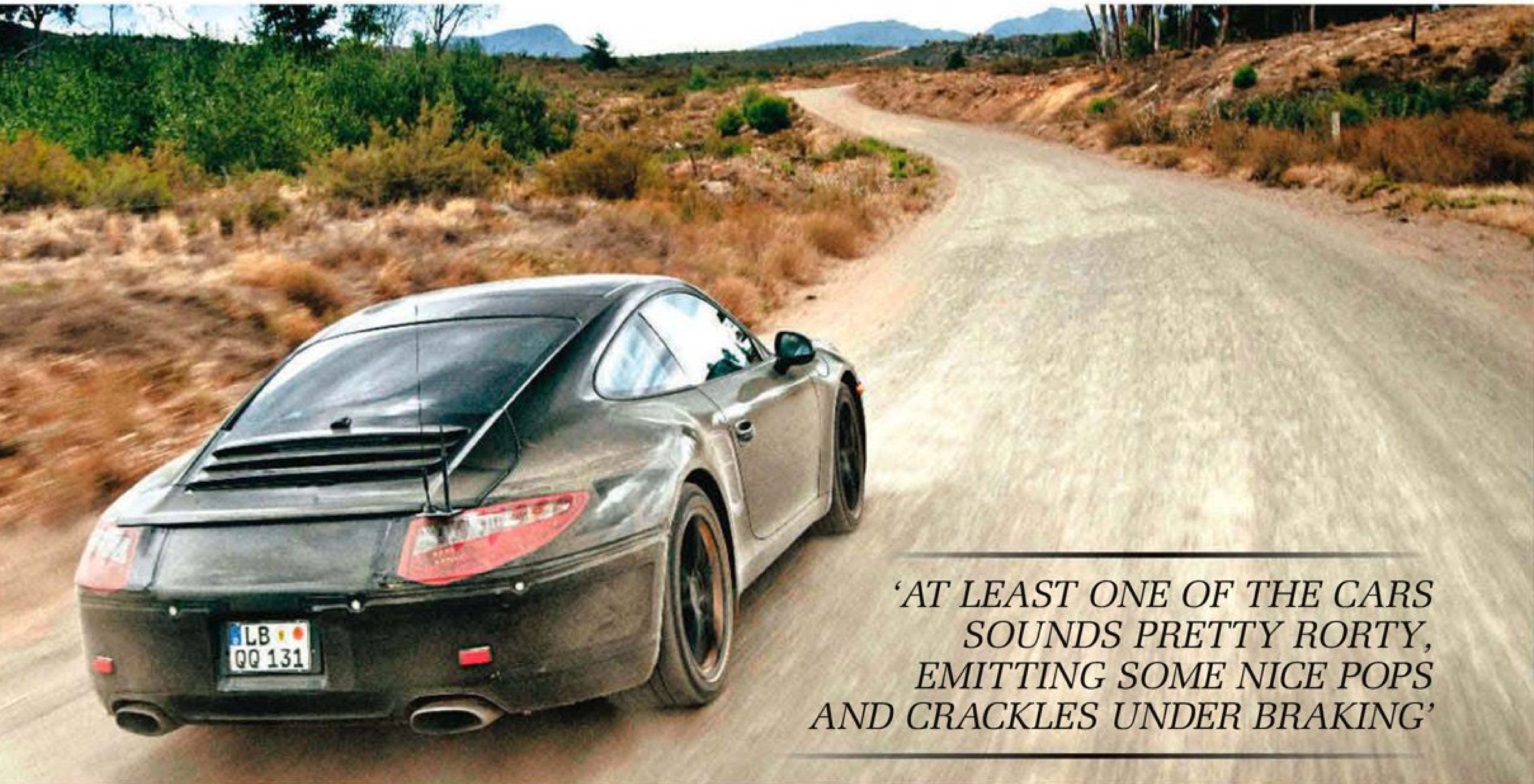




# TESTING TIMES

*An all-new 911 is coming this autumn. Richard Meaden gets a taste of what we can expect from the 991 as he joins the development team and a bunch of prototypes in South Africa*





*'AT LEAST ONE OF THE CARS SOUNDS PRETTY RORTY, EMITTING SOME NICE POPS AND CRACKLES UNDER BRAKING'*



Above: Meaden jots down every detail he can glean from the Porsche team. Right: high-end Burmester stereo looks set to join the options list. Below right: this test car sports 20in alloys



Cape Town is a long way to travel for a ride in a car and a chat with the engineers responsible for creating it, but all-new 911s are a bit like comets, in that you might wait half a lifetime to see another. That may sound like an exaggeration, but since the 911 was first introduced in 1964 there have been only three completely new platforms: the original car, the 996 (which arrived in 1998) and now the 991. Therefore any access to the 991 is officially A Big Deal, an overnight commute to the southernmost tip of Africa a small price to pay.

Porsche uses this far-flung location because it's hot, dry and has a fabulously diverse array of road conditions, from busy inner-city commuter traffic to fast, flowing mountain climbs and punishing, desolate dirt roads. It's also on virtually the same time-zone as mainland Europe, so communication between the development team and the engineering department back home in Stuttgart is much easier.

We collect a VW Amarok pick-up from Cape Town airport with the intention of making a rendezvous with the development team as they work through their programme. Two hours later, we're still heading away from Cape Town into the wide-open space in the mountains that loom over the Stellenbosch wine region. Just when we begin to abandon all hope of finding the elusive 991s, we

round a switchback to find a lay-by filled with black prototypes clad in heavy disguise. It's quite a sight.

The plan is for us to be flies on the wall, grabbing passenger rides where we can and using the seat time to extract as much information as possible from the head of 911 development, August Achleitner, and his team of engineers. Sounds simple, but when you don't speak German and the engineers in question are well schooled in telling you as little as possible, there's plenty of opportunity for the language barrier – real or feigned – to get in the way. It's all part of the game I guess.

We spend a good while stalking around the 991s, getting a sense of size and proportion. The disguise is clever, for it mixes clunky cladding with misleading stick-on vents and lights in the hope of rendering spy photographers' shots less than saleable. With the opportunity to get up close and have a squint, it's clear the 991 is a little lower and wider, but most obviously longer – especially in the wheelbase. But my sense is that it will also be a prettier, more curvaceous shape than the current 997. Think in terms of the step from 964 to 993 and that should give you a feel for how I think the fresh bodywork will look.

The interior also wears extensive disguise, but what remains visible is so clearly derived from the Panamera that I don't think I'm sticking my neck out too far in saying the 991 will boast a higher-quality look and feel, with improved ergonomics and greater tactility. Space-wise i





shoulder room, and possibly a tiny bit more space in the rear, but it remains a compact car.

The 'Gen 2' 997 was a big step for Porsche in drivetrain terms, for it ushered in the new direct-injection motors and PDK transmission. It's therefore no surprise to learn that the 991's engines and transmissions are evolutions of those seen in the 997. At least one of the test cars sounds pretty rorty, emitting some nice pops, crackles and gargles under heavy braking, so it's also safe to assume Porsche will offer a sports exhaust, though whether this will be available from launch remains to be seen.

The biggest news engine-wise is that the Carrera has been downsized from 3.6 litres to 3.4. That doesn't mean it's a Cayman S motor, for although it shares bore and stroke, little else is common between the two. The cylinder heads and intake and exhaust systems are bespoke to the 991, as are special hollow cams and pressed-on lobes, which allow the engine to rev harder, developing a peak of 345bhp, some 4bhp more than the old engine. The Carrera S retains the 3.8-litre displacement of the 997, but thanks to a new exhaust system it now pushes out 394bhp, up from 380. Torque figures for both Carrera and Carrera S will be revealed closer to the launch this autumn, as will acceleration, emissions and fuel economy figures, although it's likely both models will be quicker, cleaner and more frugal than their predecessors.

At its core, the 991 has an all-new platform. That's to say the monocoque



Above: new 911 will offer both manual and PDK seven-speed transmissions. Below: interior uses components seen in the Panamera. Far right: fuel stop. Bottom: Meaden gets a ride with the development team







*'THERE WERE RUMOURS THAT THE 991 IS PDK-ONLY, BUT THERE WILL BE A MANUAL TRANSMISSION TOO'*

Above: Meaden gets beaten to a turn in the 991's driver's seat. Far right: heading into Cape Town to test the cars in an urban environment. Below: beneath the active aerofoil, engines will be a new 3.4 in the Carrera and a 3.8 in the Carrera S

structure beneath the bodywork shares nothing with the 997. Made from a mix of aluminium and high-strength steel, the 991 will be lighter than the 997, despite the increase in size.

The new platform has been designed around the PDK gearbox casing – doubtless the root of numerous internet rumours that the 991 is 'paddleshift only' – but in fact there will be the option of a manual transmission too. The potential to make a seven-speed stick-shift was presumably just too great to resist.

Development chief Achleitner has been at Porsche for decades, as have most of the hands-on 911 development team. That level of continuity is invaluable, and accounts for Porsche's ability to

constantly evolve the 911 while never forgetting the essence of what makes it great. However, when he tells me that the 991's power steering is electro-mechanical rather than hydraulic, my face betrays an instant feeling of unease, for how a 911 steers is a fundamental part of its character and brilliance. Perhaps that's why Achleitner does his best to allay my concerns.

'I understand your worries about the steering,' he says. 'It's a critical change, but we are very sensitive to this fact. We believe the ZF system works perfectly. It's also easier to create distinctive character for each model. It brings fuel savings too, so the new system makes sense on many levels.' We'll have to hope he's right.

This new steering set-up is a major element of what's possibly the most radical dynamic re-think in the 911's history. A longer wheelbase will lessen the effects of the rear-biased weight distribution and there's also been a change in suspension philosophy with a shift to stiffer springs and softer dampers, all of which should make the 991 more stable and less prone to pitch and



corkscrewing through corners. While this is all good news in outright performance terms, if it comes at the expense of the 911's unique handling characteristics then the 991 is set to take a controversial new direction in the eyes of Porsche diehards. Same as it ever was, then.

It's always dangerous to base too many assumptions from a spell in the passenger seat but, from what I've experienced, the 991 sounds and goes like a 911. From watching the engineers attack corners in the cars, it also appears to handle like one too. Whether it retains the tactility, requires the same distinctive driving technique and delivers the same level of reward is something we'll have to wait a few months to find out. Until then we're left with the tantalising prospect of a quicker, cleaner, lighter, prettier 911. Doesn't sound too bad to me.







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# Phoenix Rising



Porsche's fearsome, one-off 961 racer, arguably the ultimate 911, hasn't been used in anger since it caught fire at Le Mans in 1987. Now it's about to run again, with **Roger Green** behind the wheel





**A**t around 10am on June 14, 1987, the short career of the only all-wheel-drive car ever to compete at Le Mans came to a sudden, fiery end. For the 199th time in the race, the 959-based 961 had ripped its way towards Indianapolis corner at over 200mph with its pair of monstrous KKK turbos spinning hard to squeeze 1.2bar of boost into the Group C-spec, 2847cc, water-cooled, flat-six motor and fire 680bhp at four massive Dunlop slicks.

Its driver, Dutch-Canadian Kees Nierop, hit the brakes at exactly the same point as he had throughout his previous seven stints during the first 18 hours of the race, only this time as he dropped from sixth gear to fourth he pulled the lever a fraction too far across the gate, slotting second at 180mph. Nierop registered his mistake the instant he began to release the clutch and in his peripheral vision saw the tacho needle flick around the dial.

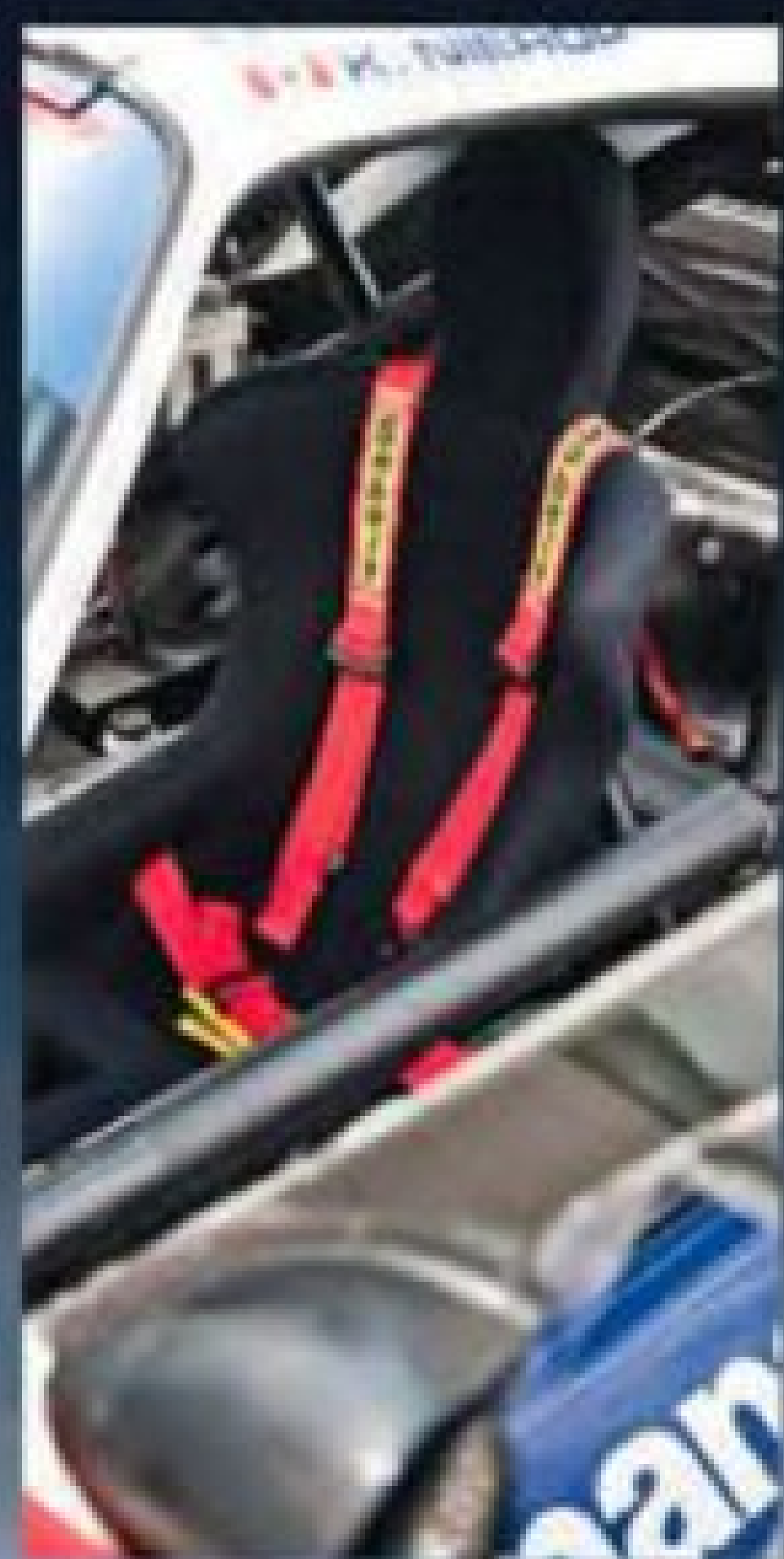
He dipped the clutch pedal back in with reactions so fast he avoided blowing the motor to smithereens, but it wasn't enough to avoid locking the rear tyres. The 961 swerved hard left into the guard-rail, smashing composite panels at the car's front and rear as it spun down the grass. When it finally came

to a halt, the engine was still running and, other than the obvious bodywork damage, the chassis was surprisingly still in good shape, so Nierop wasted no time and headed for the pits.

What happened next was captured on TV (look it up on YouTube) and watched in dismay by team manager Peter Falk from the pitlane. He immediately got on the radio. 'Stop the car and get out!' was his urgent instruction, for, like the rest of the worldwide television audience, Falk could see something the driver couldn't. Flames. At the back of the car, broken bodywork had been crushed onto the red-hot turbos and it was already alight. Nierop pulled over and clambered out, but he was between two marshal posts. By the time the extinguishers arrived, the million-dollar machine was fully ablaze.

Neither Nierop nor another four-wheel-drive car would race at Le Mans again, but that wasn't the end of the road for the one and only 961, a car that had so impressively demonstrated its potential by finishing seventh overall the year before. The charred remains were returned to the factory and over two years the car was rebuilt to exactly the same condition as it had been for the start of the race. Since then it has been stored and displayed





Far left: KKK turbos (complete with huge air intakes) sit right at the back of the car. Left: inside of the composite body is unpainted. Above: cabin is pure race car, with the fuses and relays positioned for easy access. Right: front suspension employs two springs and dampers per side for maximum front-end traction. Far left: driver's view; note rotated rev-counter





in the Zuffenhausen museum, but it hasn't been seen running in public – or been driven by anyone outside the employment of Porsche AG.

Until now. In the run-up to the 2011 Goodwood Festival of Speed, I hear from Porsche that seven-times Bathurst 1000 winner Jim Richards will drive the 961 up the hill. But as he won't be there on Friday morning, there's a slot for someone less garlanded to have a go...

This is clearly not the time to remind the guys at Porsche of my own history of jumping out of burning race cars (see the 2010 edition of the Nürburgring 24 race, *evo* 146), so instead I hot-foot it over to the Porsche test track at Weissach for an acclimatisation run.

And there it is, sitting in the middle of the steering pad, looking utterly, brilliantly, fabulously nuts, in the exaggerated way that only cars from the '80s can. Like a 911/962 lovechild, it has a wide-stance chassis but a narrow body that sits comically upright and tall with huge overhangs, while massively wide sills connect those formidably mushroomed arches. It should look awkward, but boy does it work.

Removing the elongated tail reveals why the 961 was stretched and why it caught fire. Stuck right out the back are two massive turbos connected to fat, stubby tailpipes and monumental air scoops. This is one of the least subtle machines I've ever seen. It's fantastic.

To get aboard, you clamber carefully over the Rothmans-Porsche-logo'd sill and drop into the comfortably padded bucket seat behind a thick-rimmed three-spoke Momo wheel. The driving position is not unlike that of the 959, only here the dash is covered haphazardly in dials, switches and warning lights. Right ahead of you is that large tach dial, twisted in its housing so that peak revs are at the top. To the right, in yellow, is a boost gauge. On the floor there's a huge adjustable dial to wind up the boost for qualifying, and there's also a 'push-to-pass' button on the wheel, but it's unlikely that I'll be needing that on the Earl of March's driveway.

It starts first time, bellowing into life with a stab of the small starter button. It's the deep, gruff sound of raw, unsilenced, intimidating power and it reverberates around the cabin with such intensity you feel it. The clutch has weight but it's not overly heavy and the gearbox is easy on the arm. First is on a dog-leg but it has a synchro and slots in effortlessly, and after a couple of gratuitous blips of the throttle I ease out the clutch and we're moving.



## 'I'VE ONLY GOT ONE RUN SO I'M DETERMINED TO OPEN THE TAPS AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY'



Top: getting familiar with the 961 at Porsche's test facility. Above: Green waits for his turn to drive up the Goodwood hill. Above centre: building boost away from the start line



SEE THE VIDEO AT [WWW.EVO.CO.UK](http://WWW.EVO.CO.UK)

Slowly at first, even with the throttle fully open. The 961 still has its Le Mans cogs inside the gearbox casing and this car ran before the Mulsanne straight was interrupted by chicanes (it went through the speed trap at 201mph in qualifying back in 1987). Combine that with heroic levels of turbo lag and it takes its time building things up.

And then as it hits 4500rpm the power arrives. All of it. The 961 leaps forwards, like we've gone from 40 to 60mph with no incremental speed in between. Into second, the power keeps coming, but I soon have to back off to stay within the tight circle of the pad.

ONE WEEK LATER, I experience the same extraordinary launch, this time from the Goodwood start line. The engine bogs down almost to the point of stalling as I drop the clutch at 4000rpm, but then the incredible spooling begins.

*Wham!* By the time I've got to the top of second gear I'm already at the first corner. A dab of brakes, turn-in, get back

on the power early to stay on boost and the 961 hooks it all up.

As soon as I alter the throttle angle, the car reacts, taking a new, slightly tighter line. This is the four-wheel-drive system doing its thing. The 961 may have had a short competitive life, but it was a technology test-bed both for four-wheel drive and water-cooled cylinder heads. The current 911 Turbo S owes a lot to this machine.

In front of the house, I get up into the top echelons of third gear and it feels really fast and properly hairy. It's almost too imposing a thing to hustle along such a narrow, twisting, bumpy hill climb, but I've only got the one run so I'm determined to open the taps at every opportunity.

Blasting out of the tricky Molecomb corner, I wonder if Lord March has ever thought about selling up and moving to Mulsanne. Yet while he may not have a flat-out 200mph kink, he does have an intimidating flint wall and it passes in a blur of grey on my left. Back on the gas for one last burst between the hay bales, then I grab fourth as I run under the finish gantry. It's taken about a minute, but it's a minute I'll never forget.

### SPECIFICATION

#### PORSCHE 961

**Engine** Flat-six, 2847cc, twin-turbo  
**Location** Rear, longitudinal  
**Power** 680bhp @ 7800rpm  
**Torque** 484lb ft @ n/a rpm  
**Transmission** Six-speed manual gearbox, four-wheel drive  
**Front suspension** Double wishbones, dual coil springs and dampers, anti-roll bar  
**Rear suspension** Double wishbones, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar  
**Weight (dry)** 1150kg  
**Power-to-weight** 601bhp/ton  
**0-60mph** sub-3.0sec (est)  
**Top speed** 211mph (claimed)



# PLANE CRAZY

*Which is faster around the Bedford Autodrome, the 562bhp, 201mph Lamborghini Gallardo Performante, or an aerobatic plane with a mere 296bhp? **Roger Green** finds out. Place your bets*







he Gallardo LP570-4 Performante is the hard man of soft-tops. From its uncompromisingly chiselled jaw to its carbon rear wing, it simply bristles with steely attitude. Stowing the rag roof emphasises its muscle like the Hulk ripping through a shirt, and with no filtration between you and a fully lit 5.2-litre V10, the war cry is more potent and blaringly strident than ever before.

The snarling, angry, almost animalistic bark isn't just for show either: there's added snap and bite too. This Spyder boasts more power than any previous version, and its weight and tone show the benefits of a high carbonfibre diet. Unquestionably, then, this roofless Superleggera is spoiling for a scrap.

It's got one. At the exit of the final corner of the Bedford Autodrome, the tortured Pirelli P Zero Corsa tyres howl in protest at the workload I'm subjecting them to, and as the engine hits its wailing third-gear crescendo I pull back on the right-hand e-gear paddle and fourth hits home with all the delicacy of a smack in the chops. Perfect. Today there's no time for subtlety. I need speed; I need everything the Performante's got.

As I charge towards the start line, the ear-splitting howl of 562bhp behind my back is overlaid by another equally demonic soundtrack – that of an 8.9-litre Lycoming AE10-540 flat-six at full power, travelling at close to 190mph. And it's just a few feet above my head. In fact the wheels of the Extra EA-300 LP aircraft that it's fitted to pass so close I have to fight the urge to duck.

This is no ordinary track test, and, despite a 201mph top speed, the Lambo's got its work cut out. The lead pilot of the Blades aerobatic display team turns on the smoke and heads for the first turn. The race is most definitely on!

I couldn't have picked a tougher opponent. Myles Garland was formerly a Harrier pilot in the RAF and he spent three years with the Red Arrows, where he was 'syncro leader', or in other words one of the lunatics who make you wince

## THE TOP GUNS



### » ROGER GREEN

**Job** Full-time features writer, part-time racer  
**Career** Races anything with four wheels, from F1 Stock Cars to an SLS in the FIA European GT3 Championship

**Highlights** Three seasons with the works Radical team yielded a roomful of trophies, but he's perhaps best known for diving out of a burning Lotus Exige in last year's Nürburgring 24-hour race – while it was still moving



### » MYLES GARLAND

**Job** Blades team leader  
**Career** A former RAF Harrier pilot.

Flew in operations over Afghanistan, Iraq and the Balkans and was 'Mentioned in Dispatches' for his bravery over Kosovo.

**Highlights** During his three years in the Red Arrows he was 'syncro leader', in charge of performing their most dynamic manoeuvres and leading the back four aircraft in displays

as two planes head towards each other at a closing speed of over 800mph and pass just feet apart. For today's activities he has been cleared by the Civil Aviation Authority to fly as low as 20 feet, and it looks like he's exploiting that to the full.

The rules are simple: Myles has to remain above the tarmac and can't cut any corners. This becomes complicated at really tight turns, such as Hangar Hairpin that we're screaming towards, as he can't nail the carbon-ceramic brakes, stand the thing on its nose and turn back on himself like I can in the Lambo. So as I stamp on the middle pedal, he disappears straight up. 'The only way to attack turn one is to use the vertical,' he calmly tells me later when we talk through our respective laps. 'As I reach the turn-in point at 190mph, I pull 7G into a three-quarter loop. I look up into the canopy and see the track upside down and the Performante already through the turn. I continue to pull the

*'DESPITE A 201MPH TOP SPEED,  
THE LAMBO'S GOT ITS WORK CUT OUT'*

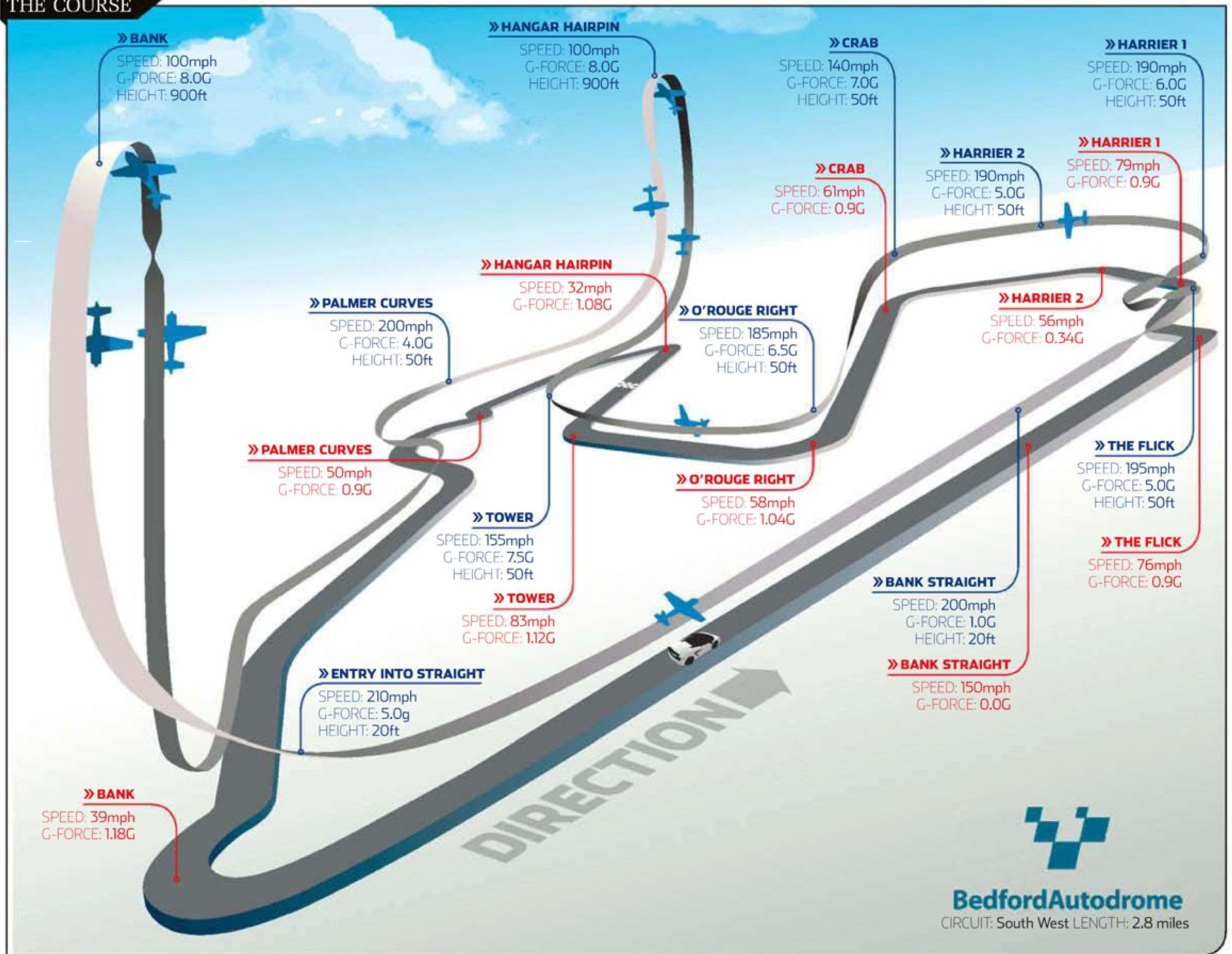


Right: the Blades plane has permission to fly as low as 20ft, but will climb as high as 900ft to slow for the tighter corners





## THE COURSE



nose down to the exit, roll the right way up and accelerate hard back up to 190mph while descending fast.'

It's pretty heroic stuff. In the car, I pull a little over 1G during braking and have to slow to 32mph to negotiate the turn. Doesn't sound much, but this is impressive stuff for a chopped junior supercar, and the four-wheel-drive system allows a very early re-application of throttle. The bias is most definitely to the rear and the tail will slide a little, but you can feel some of the workload being transferred to the front to claw the Lambo out of the turn. The numbers may be a lot lower than those scored by the Extra, but by the top of its turn the plane had climbed to 900 feet, adding over a third of a mile to the distance it will travel. I have the lead.

It doesn't last long. Myles is back overhead through the Palmer Curves.



Left: plane and car pass through Tower together on their way to a flying start. Above: map shows how the laps compare, including max speeds on the straights, min speeds in the corners and peak G readings





Comparing LP570-4 with EA300-LP, from left to right: plane's cockpit wins the dial-count contest; Gallardo's exhaust better suited to close inspection; three-point seatbelt suffices in the car, but the Extra's pilot needs to be more firmly held in place; Performante needs big brakes for a fast lap, plane doesn't

*'HE TRIES TO DISTURB MY CONCENTRATION BY BUZZING OVERHEAD...'*

This is always a very tricky combination for high-powered cars. You want to use full throttle as you accelerate through the long left and right, but the rear tyres can't quite take it and, with the rear squatting under load, the front axle is less responsive to steering commands too. It's a fine-line balancing act that requires smoothness and patience, but the Performante feels good, hanging on tenaciously and communicating its position. It will let go quickly if you get greedy, though, and getting it wrong here is not something you want to contemplate as at the exit point you're already travelling at 102mph. Myles tries his best to disturb my concentration by buzzing overhead, with wing tips at 90 degrees from the horizontal. But apparently this section isn't easy for him either.

'The flick left and right through there is taken at very high speed,' he tells me. 'And such is the roll-rate of the Extra,

each change of direction generates 6G, so I have to put in a huge effort to stop my head hitting the canopy. It's over quickly, and although I briefly see you underneath the wing tips, I pay little attention because I'm already thinking about the approaching hairpin.'

We're not tackling the Pif-Paf chicane today because we've chosen to use the longer South West circuit for this unconventional shootout. It's the layout commonly used for trackdays and has the advantage of adding a long back straight into the mix, where both machines will be able to stretch their legs. But first we have to negotiate the tight Bank complex.

Myles gets there in no time, gaining a big lead. He's already pulled back on the stick and firing straight up into the sun before I reach the flat-out left kink. The Performante accelerates hard – it can complete the 0-62mph sprint in under four seconds – but the speed at which the

Extra comes past makes it feel pedestrian. I reckon I need twice the power.

The Lycoming engine has only 296bhp, which sounds very low considering the truck-like cubic capacity, but it all arrives at just 2700rpm. It's an air-cooled unit with fuel injection, aluminium-alloy heads, forged-steel camshafts and deep, integral cooling fins in the cylinder barrels. It has to be immensely strong to cope with all the G loadings and inversions, and a negative-G oil system permits normal lubrication with minimal oil loss during inverted flight.

The Extra also has a significant weight advantage. The Performante has shed 65kg through the extensive use of carbonfibre both inside and out and by fitting the lighter Superleggera wheels. The result is a total weight of 1485kg, which is impressive for its class. Unfortunately the Extra isn't in its class, and if you thought the Lambo's carbon









wing was cool, it's completely humbled here. The Extra's wings are of a carbon/glassfibre construction with a carbonfibre strengthening spar running through the middle. With aerobatic aircraft every gram counts, and without fuel the 300LP barely troubles the scales, coming in at 667kg. Even with a pilot and brimmed tanks, this rises to just 952kg. It's extraordinary, and my only hope is that I can claw back a whole bunch of time as Blade One navigates his 3D version of the Bedford Autodrome.

'There is no way I could make it round Bank without pulling monstrous amounts

of G and losing all my speed,' says Myles. 'The difference when flying a plane hard is that if you overdo it in a corner and pull too sharply, you wash off valuable speed, which takes an age to regain. With a tight circuit like this it's vital not to overcook the G, so instead I use the vertical again, changing direction by going up rather than around the corner.

'With the engine at full power and the propeller working hard to keep the plane fast, I pull sharply to 8G, tensing my muscles tightly to keep my blood in the right places, and as I pass through the horizon upside down, I again look down

through the top of the canopy in order to pull the aircraft nose down to the start of the straight, at which point the stick comes forward to check the descent. I roll the right way up and then aggressively fly towards the hairpin exit.'

'Aggressive' doesn't come close to covering it. It looks suicidal as he dives straight at the ground, pulling out at the very last second to avoid a plane/tarmac interface and to keep him right on his 20ft limit. And my hopes that all this would give me a run on the Blade down the long back straight is dashed by the time I reach the exit of the corner. Such is the pace



SEE THE VIDEO  
AT [WWW.EVO.CO.UK](http://WWW.EVO.CO.UK)

Below: Roger (in white) and Myles discuss their laps. For more info on the Blades aerobatic display team, visit [www.theblades.biz](http://www.theblades.biz)



*'I KNOW I'VE BEEN BEATEN. THE PLANE WOULD LAP THE PERFORMANTE WITHIN FOUR LAPS'*

#### SPECIFICATIONS

##### EXTRA EA-300LP

**Engine** Flat-six, 8874cc  
**Power** 296bhp @ 2700rpm  
**Torque** n/a  
**Transmission** Single gear, three-blade propeller

**Maximum take-off weight** 952kg  
**Power-to-weight** 316bhp/ton  
**Fuel capacity** 171 litres  
**Maximum G-force** 10G (claimed)  
**0-62mph** n/a  
**Top speed** 253mph (claimed)  
**Basic price** £250,000

##### LAMBORGHINI LP570-4 PERFORMANTE

**Engine** V10, 5204cc  
**Power** 562bhp @ 8000rpm  
**Torque** 398lb ft @ 6500rpm  
**Transmission** Six-speed automated manual gearbox, four-wheel drive, rear limited-slip differential, ESP

**Weight (kerb)** 1485kg  
**Power-to-weight** 384bhp/ton  
**Fuel capacity** 80 litres  
**Maximum G-force** 2G (est)  
**0-62mph** 3.9sec (claimed)  
**Top speed** 201mph (claimed)  
**Basic price** £186,000

★★★★★ EVO RATING ★★★★★



## BLADE ONE IN THE LAMBO

» 'I've only ever driven on track once before, and that was a long time ago,' says Myles as we head out of the pitlane with him now in the Performante's driving seat. You wouldn't know it; he instantly has the racing line sorted.

I guess he was flying so low that the track doesn't look any different through the Lambo's windscreen, but it's apparent that Myles has an instant handle on what the car is doing too. He reacts perfectly to its messages, adjusting throttle application and trimming the line like he's been doing it for years.

Mind you, adapting to a Gallardo must be child's play after flying Harriers over Afganistan, Iraq, the Balkans and Kosovo. With just a day of testing I reckon Myles Garland would be a very competitive race driver. Annoying, isn't it?

generated by the dive, he's already at the other end of the half-mile straight!

'As I level out at 20ft at the start of the straight I see over 200mph on the air-speed indicator,' says Myles smugly. 'This feels really fast; there's a real ground-rush as the grass flashes past. It reminded me of the days when I was flying Harriers at 600mph and 100ft.' I can't imagine what that must be like, but I do now know what it's like to drive blind at 160mph – I've been smoked in more ways than one.

There are no slow corners on the rest of the lap, and consequently no way I can make up the lost ground. I already

know I've been beaten. Comprehensively. Myles crosses the line some *36 seconds* before me, or to put it another way he would lap me within four laps.

So what have we learnt? There's certainly life left in the Gallardo. It may have been with us for a decade now, but it still has a lot to offer. It is dynamically solid, with very high grip levels and plenty of punch, and there's real poise to match the aural and visual theatre. However, if you're going to use one for a track battle, don't pick on an aerobatic plane flown by one of the very best pilots in the country. You will lose.





ULTIMATE BATTLES  
MÉGANE 265 v THE RING







8.088

*The new Renaultsport Mégane 265 Trophy was created to set a new front-drive road-car lap record at the Nürburgring. When it did just that, with a time of 8min 8sec, **John Barker** was there to see it happen – and to drive the 261bhp Renault himself*

**STATE**



# T

he Mégane is dancing, flicking balletically through the turns at the start of the lap, on the limit, carrying speed, preserving momentum. We swing into the awkward right-hander at Hocheichen and the inside

wheels climb the kerb outrageously so that the car is almost two-wheeling, the throttle still pinned. I can't help but giggle at the audacity of some of the lines Laurent Hurgon is carving. He hears my chuckle above the sound of tortured front tyres and on the next straight glances across. 'OK?' he asks. I give him the thumbs up.

Hurgon has the Trophy responding in just the way he wants at every turn: maybe a quick jab of steering off the throttle to get the tail loose in quicker corners, or trail-braking deep into tighter turns to get to the apex with the car pointing out so that he can pick up the throttle hard and early. Will the brakes and tyres last the 14 miles? At times the anchors go on so late and hard into downhill turns that I'm hanging off my belt as the Mégane gets all squirrely. I know it sounds absurd but it's like we're still accelerating on the brakes, not losing speed (or time). We climb kerbs, clatter over brick-paved rumble strips, consistently on the limit, hitting every apex and never once snagging the rev-limiter. It's a lap I won't forget.

They say that the Nürburgring Nordschleife is not a circuit to take liberties with. Hurgon, development driver for Renaultsport, knows this well. Now the sun is out, ambient and track temperatures are high and the roar of the air-conditioning at full chat competes with the howl of tyres. Hurgon is having fun, showboating a bit, but it was quite different at 7.15am when he hustled the Mégane around to a new front-wheel-drive road-car lap record. The a/c was silent, the driving much less flamboyant and only a tiny GoPro video camera witnessed the 'little moment' that he had under the trees where a hint of dampness still lurked...

Once again, though, the Nürburg weather gods have smiled kindly upon Renaultsport. Yesterday afternoon it was chucking it down and a foggy dawn was promised, but flinging back the curtains at 6am revealed a crisp, bright and dry morning. Perfect – just as it was almost exactly three years ago when Renaultsport was here trying to break the record with the Mégane R26.R.

Back on June 28, 2008, the R26.R stopped the clock at 8min 16.9sec and smashed the front-drive record, lopping a massive 18sec off the previous best, set by the Ford Focus ST. And so it bloody well should have; the R26.R was a car stripped of weight and luxuries (such as rear seats), fitted with plastic rear windows and a half-cage, and shod with barely treaded Toyo R888s. Oh, and it had arguably



## 'WE CLIMB KERBS, CLATTER OVER RUMBLE

the best hot hatch chassis of all time. Still has, come to think of it.

Against this backdrop, you'd think the prospects of the most potent new Mégane beating it were far from certain. As the 227bhp R26.R demonstrates, a good lap time here is more about handling than power. Then again, representatives of Europe's

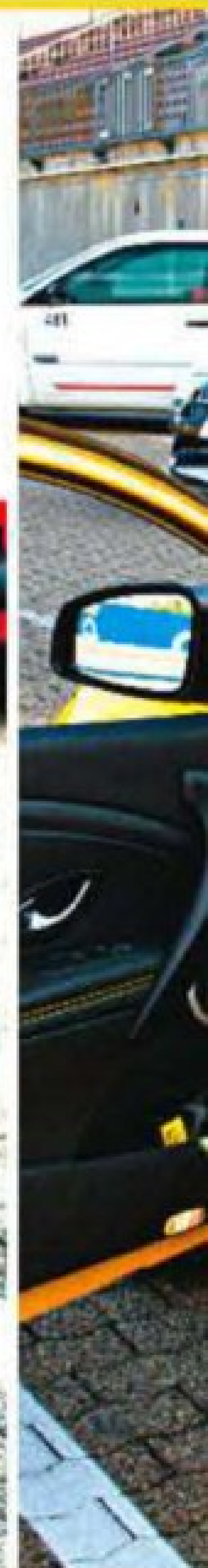
Above: final checks before the record run; helping the 265 Trophy set the time are its extra 14bhp and 14lb ft over the Mégane 250, plus new Bridgestone tyres (below). Far right: doing the driving is Renaultsport's Laurent Hurgon

### SPECIFICATION

#### RENAULTSPORT MÉGANE 265 TROPHY

**Engine** In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc, turbo  
**CO2** 190g/km  
**Power** 261bhp @ 5500rpm  
**Torque** 265lb ft @ 3000-5000rpm  
**Transmission** Six-speed manual gearbox, front-wheel drive, limited-slip differential, ESP  
**Front suspension** MacPherson struts, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar  
**Rear suspension** Torsion beam, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar  
**Brakes** Ventilated and grooved discs, 340mm front, 190mm rear, ABS, EBD  
**Wheels** 8.25 x 19in front and rear  
**Tyres** 235/35 R19 front and rear  
**Weight (kerb)** 1387kg  
**Power-to-weight** 191bhp/ton  
**0-62mph** 6.0sec (claimed)  
**Top speed** 158mph (claimed)  
**Basic price** £27,820

**EVO RATING** ★★★★★







*'GRIPS, CONSISTENTLY ON THE LIMIT, HITTING EVERY APEX'*



media wouldn't be here if a record-breaking run wasn't on the cards; it's a long way to come to drive a Mégane with a bit more power.

That's essentially what the limited-edition, 500-off Mégane 265 Trophy is. There is no cage, there are no weight-saving measures – all the regular car's fixtures and fittings are retained. There aren't even any chassis modifications, unless you count the tyres, and they're still regular road tyres, just a different make to the ones that normally come with the 19in rims that are part of the Cup chassis option. Yet this Mégane is, in its way, an homologation special. Not to the extent of an E30 BMW M3 or a Mercedes 190E Evolution but with the prize of the front-drive Ring record in mind.

The Mégane 250 was already close to beating the

R26.R's time. In mid-2009, just ahead of its launch, a small group of journalists was invited to technical briefings and rides in prototypes at and around the Nürburgring. It was explained how the new car was dynamically improved and there was also a strong hint that it might set a new lap record. It didn't happen, but I did get a lap with a chap called Laurent Hurgon and was impressed with how neatly and speedily he piloted the Mégane.

Everything that has been changed on the Trophy has been changed with the intent of shaving time off the 250's time around the 13-mile lap. The extra 14bhp, liberated by raising the boost a couple of points to 2.5bar with remapping to suit, gives the Trophy an edge, and so too do the tyres. These are fairly common Bridgestone RE050As, which Renaultsport's tests have shown deliver the best dry-road grip and decent road comfort, too.

As you might expect with such subtle changes, the Trophy feels pretty much like the regular 250 Cup on the road. No bad thing, that. It's firm-riding but with a supple edge, helped by the suspension being attached to what feels like a solid shell. Traction is very impressive and you'd never guess that there was a mechanical limited-slip diff influencing the drive because the front end simply feels brilliantly, cleanly hooked up – it doesn't tug or weave even throttling hard out of tight, low-gear turns.





It doesn't really put a wheel wrong, but having said that, it's not the most engaging of chassis; it feels more effective and efficient than involving and engaging. There's a strong self-centring effect to the steering, so it feels like you have to put more effort in than you might expect through a meandering section of road, and you hanker for a little more detail through the wheel at times. It's not a very vocal engine either (the R26.R was just the same), with a fairly plain note at both the induction and tailpipe ends. I'm sure the extra power and torque are there but it's an incremental improvement and so hard to spot. It will probably be a part of the mid-term Mégane range revisions due next year.

You don't really rely on subtle chassis detail when you're driving on a track, though – you want a car to turn the moment you make an input, accelerate in an instant and stop tirelessly. And if the chassis can get you onto the desired line and keep you there at the limit, a good lap time is in the offing. The Trophy delivers.

DRESSED IN BLACK overalls, the diminutive Hurgon looked unassuming when we gathered in the old Nürburgring pits at a little past 7am for the record attempt. There was little preamble to his first run, and just a chirrup of the front tyres as he sped out onto the track, crossing the industry pool start line, followed by a greater howl as he pitched



Above: Hurgon, sans helmet. Standard equipment on the 265 Trophy includes Cup chassis, Recaro seats, Renaultsport Monitor (above left) and 19in Speedline alloys with red detailing. Just 50 Trophys will come to the UK. Owners get free access to all UK Renaultsport trackdays in 2012



## THE FRONT-DRIVE NÜRBURGRING LAP RECORD



» It was probably GM that ignited the interest in the front-drive Ring record. In 2007 it announced the Nürburgring limited-edition Astra VXR, a run of 835 white hatchbacks, the number alluding to the lap time. Strictly it should have been 836 because Manuel Reuter managed 8.35.94 in an Opel Astra OPC back in 2005. That record had already been beaten by the Ford Focus ST on 8.35 dead, and that's the record that the R26.R (above left) smashed in mid-2008. Incidentally, despite its big power and a public statement of intent, the Focus RS has 'only' managed 8.26.



*'AT ONE POINT IT GETS OUT OF SHAPE ON THE BRAKES FROM BIG SPEED, ITS TAIL GENTLY KICKED OUT, BUT IT FEELS COMFORTABLE'*

the Mégane into the first left-hander. When the large, digital-style display positioned at the finish line showed just after eight minutes, there was another howl of tyres and moments later the bright yellow Trophy re-appeared and stopped the clock at 8.09.64, prompting a ripple of applause.

Turns out that this was better than Renaultsport had hoped for; testing having shown that an 8.12 was probable. Hurgon wasn't done, though. Knowing the track would get faster as it dried, about half an hour later he set off for another run. All eyes were on the digital display as the digits flicked over to 8.00 once more. We heard the sound of the Mégane's tyres yowling through the final corners and then it burst into view again, tyres screeching, and this time the clock stopped at 8.07.97. Amazing. This time there was a proper, hearty round of applause and much back-slapping. A job well and truly done.

My turn to drive the Ring comes late in the afternoon, and the Trophy is a very impressive car from the off. The speed it will carry without feeling flustered and the grip it finds, especially under power, are quite something for a road car. I don't have it swinging around to the degree that Hurgon did but I'm confident enough to turn the ESP off for my second lap. At one point it gets out of shape on the brakes from big speed, its tail gently kicked out a few degrees, like a MotoGP bike, but it feels comfortable with it, and so do you. It's accurate



and responsive but there's a gentle edge to its handling, a lot of useful smudge, that makes it comfortable to drive quickly.

The irony is that Hurgon's fast lap was much less extravagant than the demo lap, with more understeer than oversteer and much less kerb-taking. It's the result of 'at least 500 laps' in Renaultsport Méganes, reflects Hurgon later. It's a record that will stand for some time, I suspect. Or until Renaultsport gets round to making an R26.R-style version of the current Mégane. A front-drive production car lapping the Nordschleife in under eight minutes? It will happen.

Above: the team from Renaultsport pose beside the Trophy and the timing display showing the new front-drive record







# GATHERING STORM

*When one of the first examples of the new Pagani Huayra made an appearance at an exclusive annual meet for Pagani owners, **Harry Metcalfe** was there to experience this remarkable new supercar first-hand*



O kay, I admit that getting an invite to 'The Gathering' was a bit of a worry at first, conjuring up images of attending some beardy folk festival. A quick Google did little to reassure me.

The first 'Gathering' it turned up was an event organised by the Christian Vision for Men in a field near Swindon. Not exactly my idea of fun, traipsing between tepees in the mud, singing hymns to each other...

Fortunately, the gathering I'd been invited to was not in Swindon but Sardinia, so it was immediately off to a good start. The Pagani Gathering, to give it its full title, is in its seventh year and is organised by the factory to bring the Pagani *tifosi* together for a bit of a knees-up and a thrash around some decent roads. The only snag is that the cost of entry is rather high, and I don't just mean the €2400 entry fee. Basically, you have to own a Pagani (or be on the waiting list for one) to get invited.

This year's event promised to be even more exciting than usual because Horacio Pagani had decided to bring along his Huayra and, better still, had promised some of us a ride in his new supercar. Best count me in, then. The only slight fly in the ointment was that my Zonda badly needed a service, so it was trucked down to the factory in Modena a few weeks earlier to get all the work done. I wanted it to be at its best for the Gathering...

I'm desperately trying to suppress my excitement as I arrive outside the factory to collect my car. The chunky service invoice soon sobers me up, and after I've

had a poke around the workshop (filled with three Zonda Rs, a Huayra, five 'regular' Zondas and one very special Zonda that I'm not allowed to talk about), it's time to leave for Sardinia – a trip that will involve boarding a ferry, something I've never attempted in a Zonda before.

It's an easy run down to Livorno (on the west coast of Italy) but the fun starts as soon as I nose through the entry gates at the port. Hiding just inside are the fearsome *Guardia di Finanza*, who reckon they're onto a winner when they spot my car and direct me to pull over. I have to admit they do have a point – driving a front numberplate-less Zonda onto an overnight ferry to Sardinia might initially appear a little dodgy. Waving my British passport around seems to help, though, and eventually I'm waved through. I can tell they're pretty gutted.

There's more commotion when I line up with the other cars waiting for the ferry, with much gesticulating between the marshals directing traffic. 'I need to zee the car's manuel, pleez,' pipes up one. I'm not going to argue but I really cannot see what the problem is. A few moments later he seems happy. 'It okay. This izz not a car, izz a truck!' he beams. Turns out if your vehicle is wider than 2 metres (a Zonda is 2.04m) it's no longer classed as a car, so I need to join the queue with the motorhomes instead. Oh, the glamour...



WITH THE HUAYRA, PAGANI WANTED TO CAPTURE THAT MOMENT WHEN A JET PLANE IS TAKING OFF

AT PRECISELY 8 o'clock the next morning, the ramps are released onto the quayside and we get kicked off into the blindingly bright Sardinian sunshine. Even at this hour it's 25°C, which is probably why the roads are already filled with Italian holidaymakers, but as I catch glimpses of the turquoise sea to my right, I soon understand the appeal of this magical island.

The hotel that Pagani has booked is pretty damn special too, but as I pull up outside the gates it's the car park that really takes my breath away. Scattered between the Ferraris (599 GTO, 458 and 575 Superamerica) and various AMGs (including three SLSs) are eight Zondas and the star of show itself: the silvery-gold Pagani Huayra. Now this is what I've really come to see.

There's just time to down a coffee before we assemble in the car park, ready for today's trip around some of the island's best roads. I manage to muscle my way behind the Huayra and spend the next hour or so glued to its rear along the twisting coastal roads. I'm completely mesmerised by the car's active aerodynamic flaps, which seem to

Right: Harry's Zonda, about to be joined by some motorhomes on the overnight ferry to Sardinia. Below: the highlight of the 2011 Pagani Gathering – the chance to see one of the first Huayras out on the road







have a life of their own. It's impossible to predict what they'll do next. Even as the Huayra gently accelerates, they lift a couple of inches, then relax, before rising again at higher speeds. Approaching a corner, the flaps go almost vertical during braking then, as the car settles, the outside flap relaxes more than the inside one (presumably to add a little more downforce to the inside wheel). As the apex passes, both flaps get back in sync as the car powers out of the corner.

I've never seen anything like it on a car before, especially as the flaps are constantly moving (both at the front and the rear) and never simply rise to a set position and then fall back again. Do they work? I suppose we'll find out when we drive the car ourselves later this year, but in terms of street theatre, there's nothing to touch them.

It's not long before some decent straights appear. I can't tell how hard Horacio is pushing the Huayra but my Zonda seems to be hanging on well. Then a longer straight appears and, for the first time, I hear the Huayra's 720bhp twin-turbo 6-litre V12 really dig in. It sounds nothing like the howl of a Zonda's naturally



Above, from top: Harry gets a ride in the Huayra; just some of the cars on the Gathering; rare Zonda Cinque. Left: Harry (on the left) and Horacio discuss Huayra's active aero



aspirated V12 being wrung out, it's more of a deep, multi-layered boom, without a rasp to speak of. I'm a little disappointed to be honest, but the acceleration clearly makes up for it as I'm soon left helpless, watching the Huayra thunder into the distance. There's no doubting the performance now; the new Pagani is obviously a blisteringly quick car.

That evening I get chatting with some of the people who have put down a deposit for a Huayra. It seems it's the incredible attention to detail you get with Pagani that attracted them initially, plus the fact the Huayra is a fair bit cheaper than today's special-edition Zondas (close to £500K cheaper in round terms).

One buyer from Hong Kong explains that he went for the Huayra simply because he fell in love with the interior. 'All supercars have incredible performance today but when I'm sitting in traffic in my Enzo, I look at the interior and think it's rubbish,' he says. 'In the Huayra, every time I see it, the more I love it. There's nothing else like it in the world. The outside is for others to enjoy; as an owner, it's the inside that I want to make me feel like I'm in a special car.'

THE NEXT DAY I meet up with Horacio at 9am. He's promised to give me a ride in the Huayra before everyone else is up. As I walk over to the car, its doors reaching for the skies, it's already got me under its spell. Horacio is sitting in the driver's seat and ready to go, so I hop straight in. As he twists the 'key' – which looks more like a model car that's crashed into the dashboard – the twin-turbo V12 spins into life. It's more civilised than I was expecting, especially compared with a Zonda, whose engine would already be making itself heard, even at tickover.

Horacio slips the car into reverse and immediately gives the automated single-clutch gearbox a serious test by reversing uphill some 30 metres and out of the car park onto the road beyond. There isn't a hint of judder or the clutch struggling to engage or disengage at any point. Frankly, I'm staggered it's this good, yet Horacio tells me he is still working on its refinement.

As we hit the road for the first time, Horacio is taking it easy while the fluids warm up. Inside, the Huayra feels almost as airy as a Zonda. Visibility is good; in fact the view out of the front screen

seems the same thanks to the wraparound windscreen and those distinctive central periscope air-vents. I'm surprised to see Horacio changing gear via the central gearlever and not the paddles on the steering wheel. 'I'm a little old-fashioned,' he tells me later. The ride seems well resolved, particularly in the way it deals with sudden jolts. In the Zonda these can cause the suspension to crash noisily, sending a shock through the cabin, but that's not the case with the Huayra, which seems several notches higher in terms of overall refinement.

At last, the engine has reached working temperature and Horacio pulls in at the start of a short straight. He begins to tell me how the inspiration for the Zonda was a Group C endurance racer, but for the Huayra he wanted to capture that moment when a jet plane is taking off. As I listen, Horacio turns, focuses on the road ahead and guns it. I'm not sure what's more shocking: the sudden, all-engulfing bombardment of sound from the highly turbo'd engine getting properly into its stride, or the sheer disdain with which the Huayra is hoovering up the fast-disappearing tarmac in front of us.



SEE THE VIDEO  
AT WWW.EVO.CO.UK

Below: Huayra has active aerodynamic flaps on its nose too. Like those at the rear, they operate independently of each other to alter the amount of downforce on either side of the car as required

*'IT'S CLEAR THAT THE HUAYRA IS A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT CAR TO THE ZONDA'*







If you'd told me before I got into this car that it was jet-powered, I'd now believe you completely, as that's the sensation it delivers to its occupants. The noise reaching the passenger seat is the sound I imagine a storm-chaser might experience if caught at the epicentre of a hurricane. The feeling of sheer, unbridled and relentless power is overwhelming, and just when you think the engine has delivered its all, it hits again. This thing feels Veyron-quick, yet it's so much more exciting, thanks mainly to the surreal, jet-like soundtrack.

I'm so relieved; my one fear has now been put to rest. It might not have the bark of the Zonda from the outside but, inside, this car sounds incredible. What's also abundantly clear is that the Huayra is a completely different car to the Zonda. More than ever, I dearly hope Pagani continues making the Zonda for a little longer; nothing else – not even the Huayra, I suspect – delivers that intense, interactive driving experience the Zonda does so well.

The Huayra delivers something equally clever, though. It strikes me that this car is where the latest technology meets old-school craftsmanship, resulting in a new kind of supercar. I can see how some might complain that the automated gearbox and turbo engine take something

away from the driving experience, but that's missing the point. In the Huayra there's even more performance than the Zonda and the comfort levels are in a different league, but it's the overwhelming sensory experience you get when the engine erupts and that wall of noise hits that you'll remember forever.

Horacio Pagani knows better than anyone what people want from a new

supercar, and during the planning stage for the Huayra he realised that it is no longer sheer performance that sells a supercar, it's more to do with enhancing the experience. By offering something completely different to anything else, I reckon he's onto a winner. I can hardly wait until we finally drive the Huayra for real in September; I already know it's going to be something very special.

Clockwise from top left: Zonda chases Huayra; Huayra's car-shaped key looks like it's crashed into the dash; Huayra cabin; Horacio and Harry in the Huayra; as if the Zonda wasn't striking enough already... Below left: how Zonda and Huayra compare

#### ZONDA v HUAYRA

##### PAGANI ZONDA C12S

**Engine** V12, 7291cc

**Layout** Mid, longitudinal

**Power** 555bhp @ 5900rpm

**Torque** 553lb ft @ 4050rpm

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

**Suspension** Double wishbones, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar (front and rear)

**Brakes** Ventilated discs, 355mm front, 335mm rear, ABS

**Wheels** 18in front and rear

**Tyres** 255/40 ZR18 front, 345/35 ZR18 and rear

**Weight (kerb)** 1250kg

**Power-to-weight** 451bhp/ton

**0-62mph** 3.7sec (claimed)

**Top speed** 197mph (claimed)

**Basic price** £329,758 (2002)

**On sale** 2001-2005

##### PAGANI HUAYRA

**Engine** V12, 5980cc, twin-turbo

**Layout** Mid, longitudinal

**Power** 720bhp @ 5000rpm

**Torque** 811lb ft @ 3500rpm

**Transmission** Seven-speed automated manual gearbox, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip diff, ESP

**Suspension** Double wishbones, coil springs, active dampers, anti-roll bar (front and rear)

**Brakes** Ventilated and cross-drilled carbon-ceramic discs, 380mm front and rear, ABS

**Wheels** 19in front, 20in rear

**Tyres** 255/35 ZR19 front, 335/30 ZR20 rear

**Weight (dry)** 1350kg

**Power-to-weight** 542bhp/ton

**0-62mph** c3.2sec (est)

**Top speed** 235mph+ (est)

**Basic price** c£900,000 (est)

**On sale** Now





'IT WAS NEARLY ALL





# OVER...

*British Rally Champion Mark Higgins sets off on a record-breaking lap of the Isle of Man TT course. A few seconds later, he has arguably the scariest moment ever seen in a motor car. **Henry Catchpole** was there*





# 'TT'

his is the scariest thing I have ever done.' These are the words with which Mark Higgins greets me when we first meet in the TT paddock. The 40-year-old is as cheery as ever, but when a rally driver as good as Mark looks you in the eyes and says something like that, you sit up and take notice. He goes on to tell me that the scariest part of the scariest thing he's ever done is the corner at the bottom of Bray Hill. 'Everyone said beforehand that it was flat, and I did take it flat but it was such a relief to get it out the way.' What Mark doesn't know at this point is that Bray Hill is going to get a whole lot scarier later this very afternoon...

*'WHAT HE DOESN'T KNOW IS THAT BRAY HILL IS GOING TO GET A WHOLE LOT SCARIER THIS AFTERNOON'*



Above: Catchpole meets Higgins. Right: Tein springs and dampers are the main modification for the record attempts. Brakes are standard. Below: TT fanatics are a breed apart



It's the second Thursday of the TT fortnight. In between bike races, Higgins and the team from Subaru America are attempting to set a new four-wheeled lap record. The record they're here to beat – an average lap speed of 102mph – was set by legendary moustachioed rally driver Tony Pond in a 'standard' Rover 827 Vitesse in 1990 and recorded for posterity on VHS. But that was over 20 years ago, so why has no-one tried to beat it since? Plenty have tried to organise an attempt (including yours truly) but it's not easy to get permission. In fact that's a massive understatement. To give you an idea, when someone from Subaru America first contacted a government minister on the island, he was apparently stopped mid-pitch and told 'The answer's no. Now f%k off', followed by the phone being put down.

Somehow, though, Subaru eventually managed to persuade the authorities to let them have a crack at it. They'd have

to organise their own clerk of the course for each 'demonstration run' and the roads would have to be meticulously shut down and opened up quite separately to the TT races going on either side. Effectively they would be running a separate event.

'When Pondy had his second attempt in 1990, that was actually the last time I was here for the TT,' Higgins tells me. 'It's been a dream of mine to do the TT course in a car ever since. I've been trying very hard for the last ten years and I've actually had three manufacturers on board and willing, but they just couldn't get the go-ahead. Amazingly Subaru has managed to get it and here we are!'

On Monday, despite it being the first time he'd driven the course in anger, Mark set a new lap record straight out of the box. Even though the brakes started fading badly towards the end of the lap, he still recorded an astonishing average of 113mph for the 37-mile lap.

The Impreza (it's still called that across







the pond) WRX STI that he's using is under an awning in the paddock so I have a poke around. There's a full roll-cage and the standard Recaro front seats have been replaced, but otherwise everything looks remarkably intact – it's certainly no stripped-out special. The brake pads and fluid have been changed, but the discs and calipers are standard. The biggest change is to the suspension, with a set of Tein springs and dampers. They're still off-the-shelf items, though, as are the tyres – a set of Pirelli Trofeo trackday tyres. Oh, and it's got a straight-through exhaust – a special request from the authorities so that people can hear Higgins coming.

And before anyone starts getting slightly huffy about the car's spec, it should be remembered that Tony Pond's Rover was far from the standard car it might have appeared. For a start it was running on slicks, but the changes went further... 'I spoke to Dave Appleby [mechanic for Pond's car] quite a bit,' says Higgins. 'He's

a great guy and he said they were going back and forth tyre-testing at MIRA all the time with the car. The first time they came over they went nowhere near the targeted 100mph average. But the car weighed 1160kg when they'd finished with it and that was the key to making it go fast.'

Before Higgins gets his second attempt, there's the small matter of the Supersport 2 race. Sitting up in the grandstand on the main start/finish straight in Douglas, as the riders line up to be released at ten-second intervals, there's an atmosphere unlike any other sporting event. It's eerily still. The PA system broadcasts the odd interview and some speculation about the coming laps, but other than that there is almost complete silence. There's no chattering amongst the spectators and it's easy to hear a blackbird singing on the other side of the road. I can only think that this tense hush comes from a collective understanding of how serious is the challenge the riders are about to undertake. Without in any way

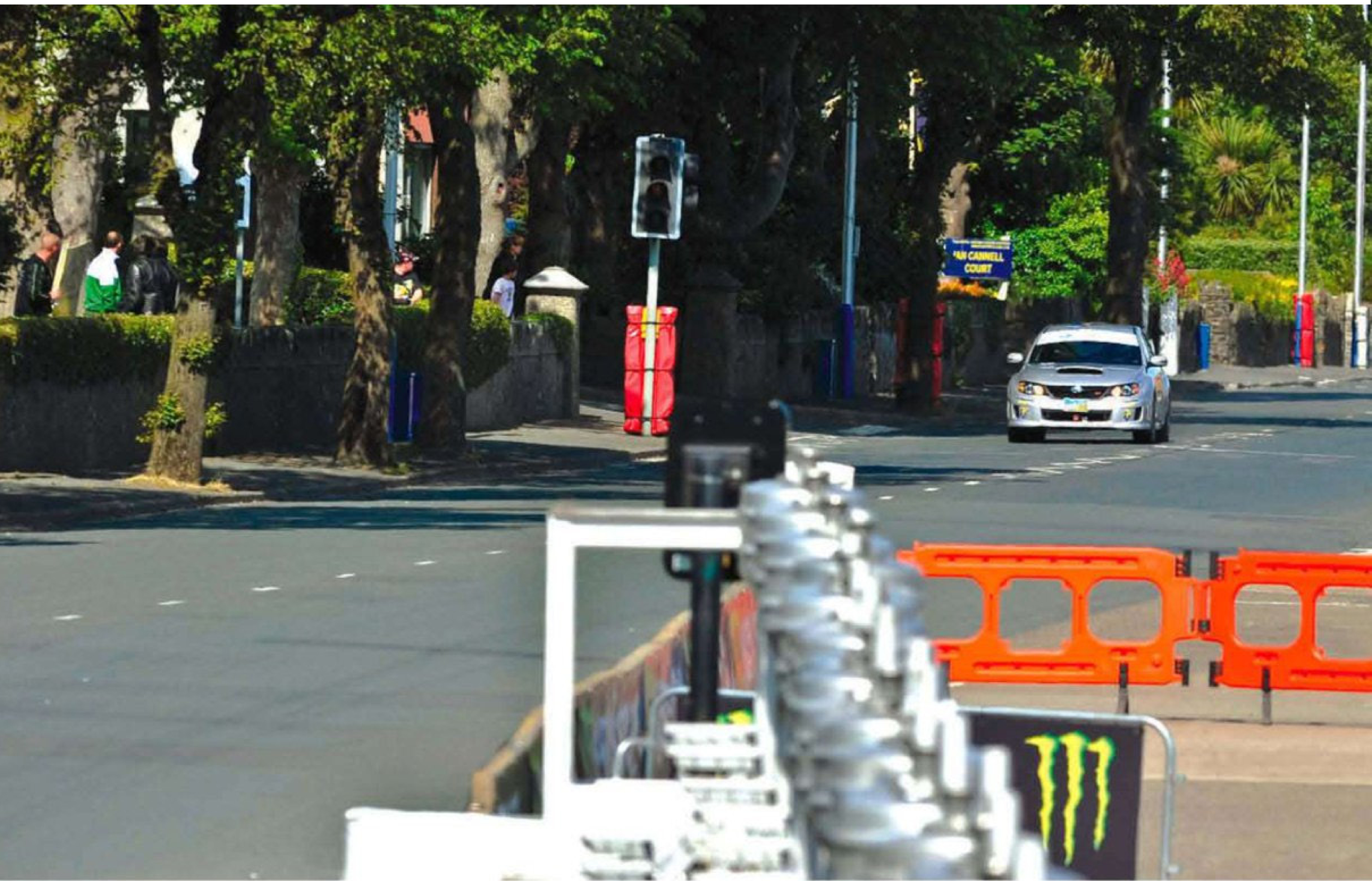
wishing to be sensationalist, there is a very real chance that at least one of them will die today. I can't think of another sporting event where there is such palpable threat, and it shows.

An hour and a half later, everyone is back safely, Gary Johnson having taken a popular maiden TT win. It's time for the Subaru lap.

Higgins starts out of sight, up at the far end of Glencrutchery Road, in order to get a flying start. The first indication that he's on his way is when the drumming sound of the television helicopter's rotor-blades starts moving towards us. The Subaru's flat-four blares loudly through its open pipe as it breaks the speed trap in front of the famous leaderboard at 113mph. That's about 8mph down on Monday's run and the first indication of the effect of the extra weight of a passenger (an American photographer) and a lot of video cameras. The second indication comes just out of sight, down at the bottom of Bray Hill.

Above: getting air at Ballaugh Bridge. It's a US-spec Impreza WRX STI (the record attempt was organised by Subaru America) running a 305bhp version of the 2.5-litre flat-four





*'HIS HAIR IS SOAKED WITH SWEAT AND HE LOOKS LIKE A MAN WHO*

If you're not familiar with Bray Hill, it is almost inconceivably daunting. Think Brands Hatch's Paddock Hill at twice the speed and you're still not close. The run in certainly doesn't look straight from behind the wheel (or handlebars) but that's how you treat it. Then you approach a lip and you can only judge how steeply the road drops away on the other side by the way the roofs of the houses on the right descend. Over the top and you get stomach-lightening gravity-fed acceleration to add to a pinned throttle as you free-fall towards a right-hand corner at the bottom that every fibre of your

being tells you to brake for. The accepted line is close to the kerb on the right. The exit is uphill but run-off only amounts to the width of a pavement while Armco is replaced by a wooden garden fence.

If you haven't seen the video yet, Higgins hits the corner at 150mph and the car promptly goes into the mother and father of all tank-slappers. Inside the car, he then spends the next seven seconds throwing corrective lock at it, literally for all his life is worth. Spectators run into a driveway and it's only after Ago's Leap that he finally has everything back under control and the throttle wide open again with just

36 miles of the lap left... It has to be one of the greatest saves of all time.

'You alright fella?' says the mechanic opening the door as Higgins switches off the ignition back in the paddock. 'We heard about it! Someone was on the phone straight away... [pause] You alright?'

'Yeah, yeah...' says Mark slightly distantly. His hair is soaked with sweat and he looks like a man who is only just realising how close he's walked with death. 'That was 150mph and she just went bang, bang [motions bouncing across the road]. It went one way [miming opposite lock] then she went this way, then it went this way. It

Above: setting out on another run. Below: Higgins talks Catchpole around a more leisurely lap of the TT course in one of the Impreza support vehicles (below left)







## ONLY JUST REALISING HOW CLOSE HE'S WALKED WITH DEATH'

was nearly all over, I nearly gave up.'

His son and daughter both appear and he gives them a big hug before kissing his wife. He does some radio interviews, and the story is repeated several more times. He jokes that he should have had one of those steering wheel knobs you find on a fork-lift. The run clearly wasn't as fast as on Monday, but after a change of fluid the brakes had remained fade-free this time and over the Mountain section he'd actually been faster. And besides, a 110mph average is hardly slow.

Then someone unexpected turns up for a chat – John McGuinness, the man with 17 TT wins to his name and who holds the outright lap record on a bike at an incredible average speed of 131.57mph.

It turns out that the two lap-record-holders did some filming together a few years ago and have been friends since. Just as McGuinness is about to leave, I ask him if he'd given Mark any advice? 'I've told him the line through the bottom of Bray Hill [McGuinness takes a line about 8ft to the left of the kerb, which avoids the

big compression and, he reckons, isn't as stressful on the bike] but I think I'm a bit late,' he says with a toothy grin.

EARLY NEXT MORNING, I'm standing outside the hotel when Higgins pulls up in a black, German-registered WRX STI that's being used as a course car during the week. He's kindly agreed to talk me round a lap of the course while it's quiet, although obviously not at record pace.

As a Manxman, presumably he knew the circuit a certain amount already? 'I knew where it all went, but it wasn't until I kept driving round and round and round that I really started to learn all the corners. I've been watching the Tony Pond video on and off for the last ten years just in case this did happen – when I was in the gym I would just put it on. But you've got to be here to actually see it.'

As we go through Bray Hill at just 30mph it seems to take an eternity to drive from the compression where the slide started to where the last of the skid-marks ends, hundreds of yards later.

'The guys talk to me about the bike lines,' says Higgins, 'but car lines and bike lines are different. I mean, it was interesting what John [McGuinness] was saying about the line at the bottom of Bray Hill, and that's a good tip to have, but I just don't know if there's the width. There's only one way to find out I suppose... but I don't want it to be like yesterday.'

'You ride bikes don't you?'

'Yeah, I borrowed a new Fazer here last week. I did a couple of laps on it just purely so I could get through the traffic and get a decent run around the circuit. I was getting a bit excited going over the mountain, but I didn't get passed by anybody, which was good. I know I'd get a bit lairy on a bike if I owned one, though – I know what a car does if it gets sideways, but if a bike goes sideways I crash.'

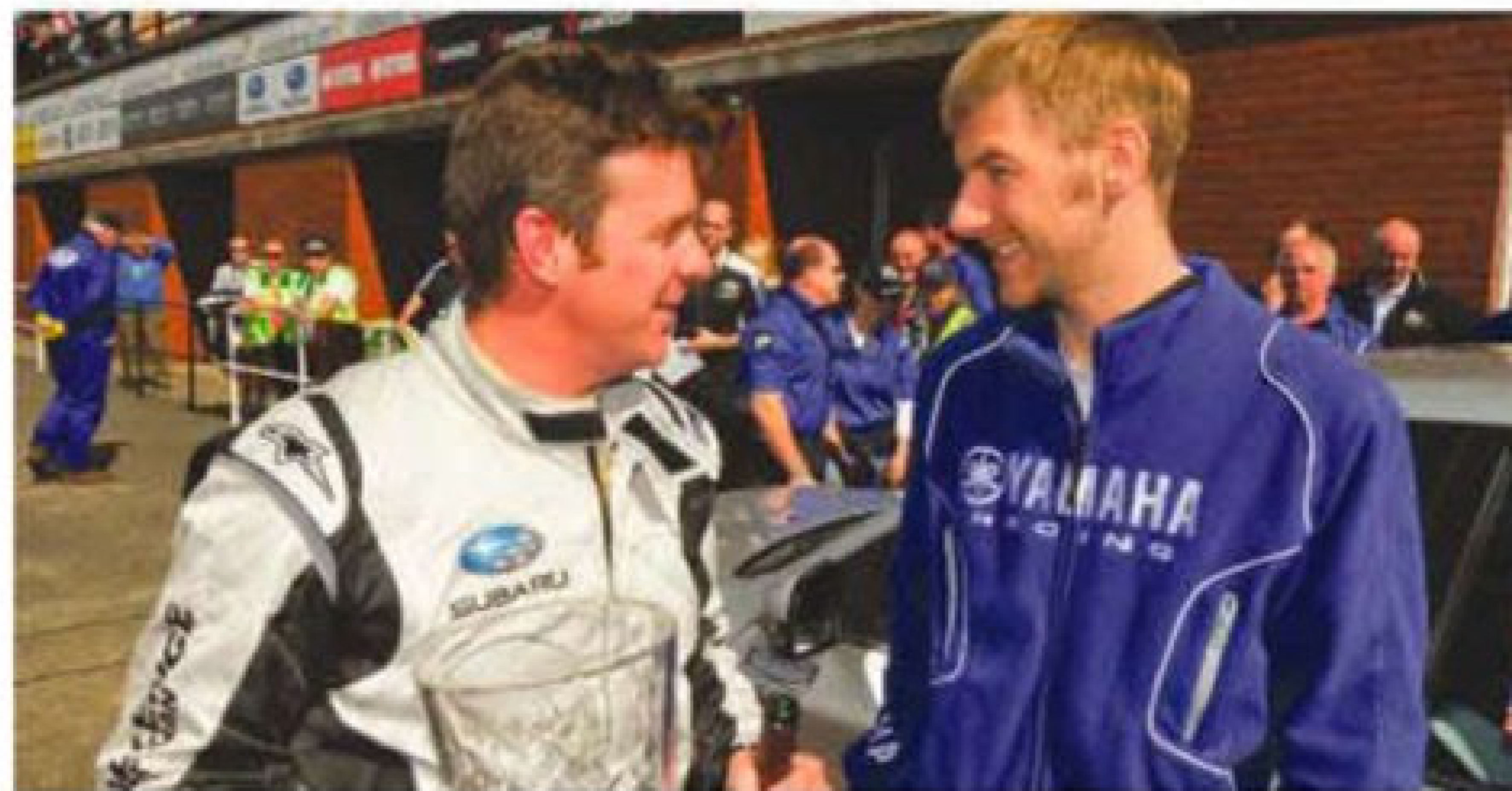
'What road car have you got?'

'I've got a 535d... with a diff... and a little bit of mapping.'

After Union Mills, Mark says, quite calmly, 'It's probably flat-out now for the next three miles without any lifting at all.

Top: Higgins (centre) bumps into TT veteran and good mate John McGuinness. Other TT legends present include Giacomo Agostini (above left) and Chas Mortimer (above)





There's one corner that I'm currently just about lifting for... and that's more because of what happened at the bottom of Bray Hill! I'm building up to taking it flat, but we'll see...' This is a recurring theme for the rest of the lap. I've driven around the course quite a few times but it's never really occurred to me just how much of it is tackled flat-out. It's a truly terrifying thought.

How does it compare with rallying, I wonder. 'Obviously this is a much higher average speed than a rally stage [which has to average less than 80.7mph (130km/h)]. Tarmac rallying when it's dark and it's wet, that's a bit daunting. You don't get scared, you get adrenalised, and it's the same here, but I'm probably more nervous for this. You're out there on a 37-mile stage and it's closed off for you and you alone.

It's a helluva buzz really.'

We're coming up to the corner where Irishman Derek Brien was killed on Monday. 'It was just before our run,' says Higgins, 'which again makes you start to wonder what you're doing. Even Pondy said there are sections where you're flat-out doing 150 and you wonder why you're doing this stunt.

'This is the corner... he came into here... we don't know what happened... but he's ended up in the trees... up there.' It's not the last time Higgins points out the sight of a crash, and every time he does you realise that there's just no room for mistakes. And then you think back to yesterday's incident at Bray Hill and how close it was to having a very different ending.

Listening back to my Dictaphone a few days later, snippets of conversation stand

Mark Higgins with Ian Hutchinson, who won a record five races out of five at last year's TT. Top left: local wildlife doesn't fare too well against bikes or Subarus



SEE THE VIDEO AT [WWW.EVO.CO.UK](http://WWW.EVO.CO.UK)

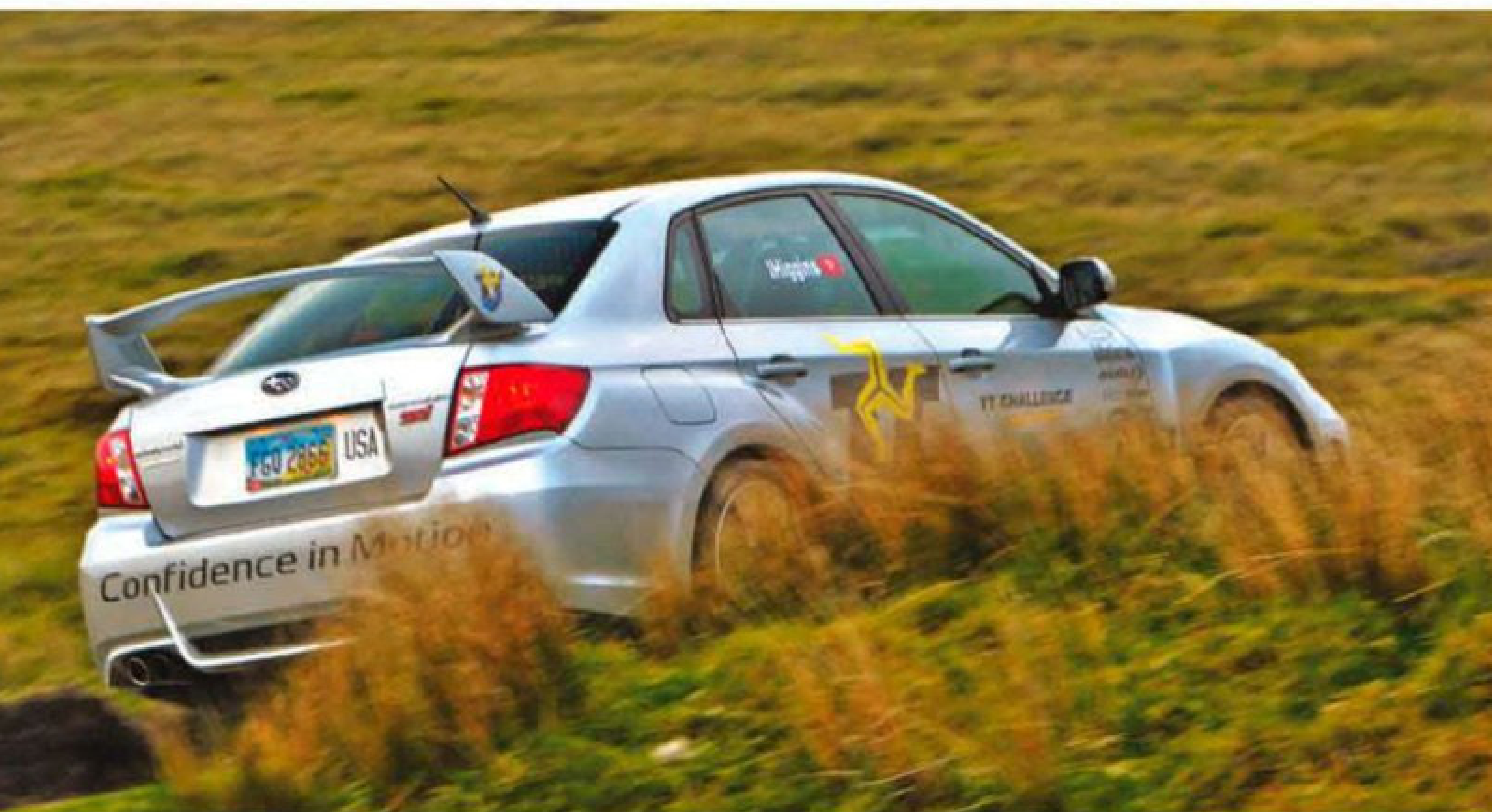
out: 'That's a fifth-gear corner, just about. [Pause, nervous laughter.] That's the trouble, most of them are "just about"... You just lift on the way in there. Often with the four-wheel-drive car you have to lift slightly to get the diff to open to get the car to turn in... Again this is all flat-knacker. There's a couple of brick walls you look for as braking points... This is the bit that always gets the marshals because I come down here into Parliament Square braking on the pavement on the left hand side...

'Already now we're doing about 200kph [on the Mountain] and you can feel the car's a different animal altogether. It's just starting to float around. Every slight movement on the wheel gets quite a reaction...'

The rest of the day is spent waiting anxiously for Mark's final 'demonstration run' in the Impreza. He's going solo again, but there are fears for the engine after he over-revved it a little the day before, so no-one's expecting more than a short-shifting publicity run.

Later I find Yorkshire-born Ian Hutchinson. He's so softly spoken you

## *'IT NEVER OCCURRED TO ME JUST HOW MUCH OF THE COURSE IS*



would never ever pick him out of a crowd as a TT racer, yet he won a record five out of five races at the TT in 2010. He's not racing this year because he's still got external metalwork in his left leg after someone ran over it at Silverstone, although he did manage a 100mph parade lap earlier in the week...

'I saw the footage of Mark sideways yesterday - he did well to catch that' says Hutchinson. 'I've not had a sports car for a few years now, but I had a Mitsubishi Evo and a Carrera 4S. I went to the Nürburgring a few years ago in me Evo with a group of mates, had a bit of a laff round there.' It strikes me that lapping the Nurburgring is not something that most people describe as 'a bit of a laff'. So does Hutchinson himself fancy a crack at the TT lap record in a car?

### HEART-STOPPING SECONDS



0.0sec 150mph. The extra weight of a passenger increases effect of compression



1.0sec Everything is fine until the car is kicked by a second bump on the exit



2.0sec Already loaded suspension can't take any more, firing the car to the right



3.0sec As he heads towards wall, Higgins dabs brakes while piling on opposite lock



'Yeah I'd love to!' he says, chuckling. 'I don't think I'd be safe enough, though. You'd have to get rid of all the crowd!'

As Mark breaks the speed trap on the start line at 122mph and disappears towards Bray Hill, we know that it won't be a parade lap. Reports filter back that he's clocked 162mph on the Sulby straight and, despite damp sections through Ramsey and up onto the Mountain, he's still pushing on. Just 19 minutes and 33.47 seconds later he's back across the line – an average of 115.356mph.

'I knew straight away going off the start-line that the car was working better again,' he says when I manage to grab a word with him. 'I was very careful down Bray Hill [grins] and then just got into a nice rhythm. I just tried to really work on being neat and tidy for the rest of the lap – no sliding, use the road, be careful, but push hard at the same time. The biggest improvement was over the Mountain. I've improved over there all the time, and it's surprising because that's the bit I had more practice on with the roads being closed and one-way.'

'But everything came right. I know we

## CKLED FLAT-OUT'

could have gone quicker again with a slick on, but I'm just really, really happy for everyone. I had in my head a 115mph average, but that was before I realised that's two-and-a-bit minutes faster than Tony Pond. If they'd told me that, I'd have said "no way". So yeah, 115mph is amazing. I think we would have had the fastest lap in the sidecar race!

'And did you try the McGuinness line at Bray Hill?' I ask. 'No, I just braked for it – just knocking 10mph off made a big difference...'. So he was still taking it at 140mph. Scary stuff indeed. And now if you'll excuse me, I'm going to watch that video one more time.

If you haven't seen it – or want to marvel at Higgins' save again – you can still catch the video at [www.evo.co.uk](http://www.evo.co.uk)



4.0sec 'It would be easy to give up, lock the brakes and have a massive accident.'

5.0sec Back on power. Car now heading to the wall on right. Lots more steering...

6.0sec Oscillations finally getting smaller. With car nearly straight, a dab of brakes

7.0sec Finally back on the throttle to pull it out of the biggest tank-slayer we've seen



Take one V8 engine...





# Add rear-wheel drive and a manual gearbox. Heat thoroughly. Serve in a saloon body.

*This, according to **Chris Harris**, is the perfect recipe for sideways driving thrills. But which car does it best of all – BMW E39 M5, Porsche Panamera or Vauxhall VXR8? Time for another battle!*

**I** think it is fair to say that anyone who has driven BMW's sublime E39 M5 will agree that it represents a high point in the development history of the fast saloon car. It lived from 1998 to 2003, and while subsequent M5s and their rivals have become infinitely faster and cleverer, none of them quite delivers the rounded experience of the E39.

Why is that? Because the E39 is an uncomplicated car, borne of a simple recipe. No turbochargers, no multi-clutch transmission, no lift-back – nothing complicated. It has a 4.9-litre V8 up front, a manual gearbox that drives the rear wheels and it all sits within the most practical body shape of them all: the 5-series. The E39 M5 is a Swiss Army knife crossed with some comfort food crossed with an encyclopaedia: it mollifies *and* delivers as a one-stop road destruction device.

Surely a recipe so appealing would live forever? Sadly not. The current penchant for self-shifting transmissions and smaller, turbocharged engines has caused a sudden genre death not seen since British people awoke one morning and realised that the Jive Bunny was actually



crap. But fear not ye normally aspirated, manually geared, fast-saloon devotees. There are still two tiny rays of hope on the horizon – one is from the land of falling test cricket rankings, the other is from Germany. Both have a chance to prove themselves in the presence of The Original.

There are apparently two Porsche Panameras with manual gearboxes on UK soil, and both of them belong to Porsche Great Britain. The one you see here is presented in Dubai Negative Equity White, and to the average



Porsche salesman it represents the single greatest depreciation risk since someone managed to extract a £120,000 Cayman S from the Porsche configurator. People who want large saloon cars do not, the conventional thinking suggests, have any interest in changing gear themselves.

Well, they need to try this particular car, because it is one of motoring's most pleasant surprises. It is a Panamera S, so it has the 4.8-litre V8 engine, while a healthy smattering of options includes air suspension and ceramic brakes. The little gearlever sits slightly apologetically in the vast plinth that usually supports a PDK mechanism, and a third pedal has been squeezed into the footwell. At first it feels completely wrong, like a plug socket from a former Soviet country: it kind of looks like it might work, but it's so unfamiliar.

The clutch has a long travel, and the gearlever isn't what you'd call a short-shifter, but then this does suit the character of the car. The Panamera is a

big old beast and it doesn't need sharp, abrupt inputs from the driver. But how is it possible that a switch from PDK to manual can make the Panamera feel like a much smaller, more responsive car?

It's all about control. There's an immediacy about this machine that is completely missing in every other version I've driven. Just being able to hold a gear and not worry about some strange piece of powertrain calibration causing a fuss is both liberating and enjoyable.

This really is the modern-day E39 M5. It has 394bhp, 369lb ft of torque and



## 'HOW IS IT THAT THE SWITCH FROM PDK TO MANUAL MAKES THE

Clockwise from above: M5, VXR8 and Panamera. Right: all three have naturally aspirated V8s, a 4.8 in the Porsche, a 4.9 in the BMW and a 6.2 in the Vauxhall

weighs 1770kg. The old Bimmer has 394bhp and, wait for it, 369lb ft, and it weighs 1795kg. This isn't fag-paper stuff, it's those silver Rizlas that seem to be made from white air.

Our other modern candidate is less subtle. Antipodean by design and about as conspicuous as Jim Davidson at a mixed-faith wedding, the Vauxhall VXR8 GTS is the antidote to the Q-car. With a 6.2-litre V8 producing 425bhp and 406lb ft, it's the best endowed of the three, and for something that looks and feels so large, its 1831kg kerb weight is something of a surprise.

How you react to driving one of these

re-badged Holden Special Vehicles depends on which camp you fall into: those who love the Aussie V8 race series, and those who couldn't care less. I am emphatically one of the former, and find myself resisting the temptation to change my name to Jason Bargwanza and head into fictional battle with 40 other flame-spewing monsters.

The VXR8 marks the point at which good taste and beautiful trim quality can be forgotten in the name of enjoying yourself. There might not be a more simple driver-machine relationship than the one you enjoy here: the motor shimmies at idle, the steering is accurate,







Below: if you have the skills, cars like these are best enjoyed with the electronic nannies switched off



## 'CAMERA FEEL LIKE A MUCH SMALLER, MORE RESPONSIVE CAR?'



and even though the computer has been let loose on the magnetic dampers, even they don't seem especially sophisticated. In other words there is no car less suited to a modern double-clutch 'n' paddles gearbox than the VXR8. So you change gear by means of a vast leather-topped lever, which, despite improved bushing, still moves around at speed. The pedals are wisely spaced and the clutch is tuned to the thigh muscles of an Aussie Rules animal. Low-speed activity is not this car's forte.

Now that Saab appears to be on life support, HSV might just be the people who best understand how to make a

good seat for fast road driving. These feel like padded sofas that happen to clinch you in just the right places. The dash architecture is better in this latest version, but a million miles away from the Porsche and, interestingly, still inferior to the 12-year-old BMW.

Boy does it drive well, though. The de-tuned Corvette motor works from 2000rpm to 6000rpm, the chassis is completely transparent and enjoyable and the steering is truly excellent. If you can get your head around the fact that the modern German fast four-doors have slightly left the VXR behind for sheer speed, this old bruiser counters very





strongly with a driving experience that fully involves the driver – and it's all down to that basic recipe.

The E39 M5 we've brought along to this test has been to the moon and back, but it still offers the responsiveness that made a generation adore it. The motor feels stronger than the VXR8's and the chassis is dominated by the variable M differential, which offers the driver one of two choices: quite a lot of understeer, or quite a lot of oversteer. The latter

tends to be more fun. And it's such a great package, the E39: subtle, with a gorgeous cabin and, being extremely sad for a moment, the best combination of rear camber and heavily dished rear wheels we have seen in a decade.

The gearshift is a little notchy, but this improves with speed. Try to change gear deliberately slowly in an E39 M5 and you will make a mess of things. Be positive, enjoy yourself.

Do this in the Panamera and you will

be shocked by how competent, how fast and how much fun it is. Forget the Turbo and Turbo S. They may offer even more unfathomable levels of thrust, but this is the one to have if you want those last few miles of your journey home to be fun. The optional sports exhaust makes this the best-sounding production Porsche after the RS 4.0 and the throttle response is electrifying. The gear ratios are spot-on too: third offers the extended *reach* needed by those who like to save time.

Above: VXR8 isn't a pretty car, but that's not a concern behind the wheel. Below: E39 M5 has a real talent for going sideways







*‘THE VXR8 OFFERS A DRIVING EXPERIENCE THAT FULLY INVOLVES THE DRIVER – AND IT’S ALL DOWN TO THAT BASIC RECIPE’*



Above: evo woz ere. Below left: VXR8 can be ordered with a torque-converter auto, but the manual is far more satisfying. Below right: forgoing PDK in the Panamera S saves you £2388; try not to think about resale. Bottom: E39 M5 was only available as a manual; shift needs positive inputs



The only disappointment is the lack of a limited-slip differential, which is sadly not available with the optional air suspension fitted to the test car. I'd love to try a steel-sprung version with the LSD. It would surely offer the perfect balance of motorway refinement and roundabout liberation.

What I hadn't expected was for a manual gearbox to extract more from the Panamera. Yes, it seemed logical that a certain animal charm might be revealed in this more basic format, but then again I thought that after living with it for a few days the charms of a manual would soon evaporate, but they just didn't. The Panamera is definitely better with six on the floor.

This is all part of the de-clevering of the motor car. I don't doubt that the new M5 will be a far superior machine to the E39, and the latest Mercedes MCT transmission is a triumph of engineering for real-world driving. But these are complex things and, even in the world of the fast saloon, it's nice to be reminded that simplicity can be a good thing. A mint, late-model E39 M5 is a total joy.

So enjoy the likes of the VXR and the Man-Pan while you still can: it is unlikely that they will exist for much longer. And if the Porsche salesman tells you to order a PDK on grounds of residual value, tell him to get stuffed. It is the best Panamera, and the best car here.

**SPECIFICATIONS**

	<b>PORSCHE PANAMERA S</b>	<b>VAUXHALL VXR8 GTS</b>	<b>BMW M5 (E39)</b>
Engine	V8, 4806cc	V8, 6162cc	V8, 4941cc
Location	Front, longitudinal	Front, longitudinal	Front, longitudinal
Power	394bhp @ 6500rpm	425bhp @ 6000rpm	394bhp @ 6600rpm
Torque	369lb ft @ 3500-5000rpm	406lb ft @ 4600rpm	369b ft @ 3800rpm
Transmission	Six-speed manual gearbox, rear-wheel drive, PSM	Six-speed manual gearbox, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip diff, ESP	Six-speed manual gearbox, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip diff, ESP
Front suspension	Double wishbones, adaptive air springs (optional)	MacPherson struts, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar	MacPherson struts, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar
Rear suspension	Multi-link, adaptive air springs (optional)	Multi-link, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar	Multi-link, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar
Tyres	245/50 ZR18 front, 275/45 ZR18 rear	245/35 R20 front, 275/30 R20 rear	245/40 ZR18 fr, 275/35 ZR18 rear
Weight (kerb)	1770kg	1831kg	1795kg
Power-to-weight	226bhp/ton	236bhp/ton	223bhp/ton
0-62mph	5.6sec (claimed)	4.9sec (claimed, 0-60mph)	5.3sec (claimed)
Top speed	177mph (claimed)	155mph (limited)	155mph (limited)
Basic price	£78,221	£49,500	£52,000 (2002)

**evo RATING** ★★★★★ ★★★★★ ★★★★★



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# evoFast Fleet

## NEW ARRIVAL BMW 1M COUPE

Date acquired June 2011 Total mileage 2919  
Mileage this month 315 Costs this month £0  
mpg this month 29.4





**This month:** BMW 1-Series M Coupe Vauxhall Insignia VXR Ferrari 458 Italia Peugeot RCZ Aston Martin Rapide Mercedes SLS AMG Porsche 997 GT3 Renault Clio Williams Maserati GranTurismo S Jaguar XJ Supersport Subaru WRX STI Renault Clio V6 Jaguar XJR Mazda 3 MPS Ford Capri V8 SEAT Leon Cupra R Skoda Yeti Mini Countryman Infiniti G37S Coupe



*'IT'S A FABULOUS MACHINE – FULL OF UP-AND-AT-'EM VERVE AND SPIRIT'*



**H**ow long does it take for greatness to make itself known? For some, like Vincent van Gogh, too long. For the 1-series M Coupe, it's after your first half-mile drive. Few cars feel so good, so immediately. It really is a fabulous machine – full of up-and-at-'em verve and spirit, but creamy and compact and perfectly liveable with. Talismanic too – this is the first turbocharged (proper) M-car and it bodes well for Ms to come.

However, this complicates the long-term-test proposition because there's only one way the BMW 1M can go, and that's down. Simply put, this great car can't get any better, can it? What if its spirit is diminished by reliability niggles or its stiff ride becomes unbearable after a couple of months? What if its steroidal aesthetic ages badly?

Well, we're going to find out. Over the coming months *evo's* 1-series M will be subjected to my commute every day – a 70-mile blast on B- and A-roads. It'll be thrashed mercilessly on *evo* track events, take in a few continental cruises and undoubtedly find its way into a few more tests, including *evo* Car of the Year (where I think it will excel).

Our 1M cost £45,340. That's the basic OTR price of £40,020 plus £5320-worth of Bluetooth, BMW Assist (including an 'online portal' giving news and Google local search), DAB radio, Harman/Kardon surround sound, USB audio interface, satnav, voice control, heated seats with adjustable lumbar support, metallic Valencia Orange paint, tinted glass and folding mirrors. Standard equipment includes 19in Y-spoke alloy wheels, two-zone air-con, leather and Alcantara with orange stitching, cruise control, heated washer jets, headlight washers, rear parking sensors, xenon headlights and LED lights at the rear. An auto/twin-clutch gearbox is not an option – it's manual only, and that's fine by me.

As I write this, I've taken the 1M on just one long journey, to the south of England with the family. With my 20-month-old son Isofixed in the rear, and the boot swallowing his buggy and a small suitcase, off we travelled. It wasn't exactly the thrill of driving. The M25 swallowed us for a couple of hours, then I rode up a kerb and knackered a wheel trying to avoid a wandering bus. Saying that, I grabbed a blissful 15 minutes pushing the 1M hard on a fabulous B-road and it was one of the best 15 minutes of my life. In fact, on my return I emailed BMW and asked if we could keep the car for longer than the planned six months. Much longer... **Nick Trott**



Options on our 1M include Valencia Orange paint (£515) and heating for the front seats (£265)



# evo Fast Fleet

## END OF TERM VAUXHALL INSIGNIA VXR

**Date acquired** June 2010 **Duration of test** 12 months **Total test mileage** 23,749  
**Overall mpg** 24.4 **Costs** £124 (service), £1000 (tyres) **Purchase price** £37,860  
**Trade-in value** £22,000 **Depreciation** £15,860

A refreshing splash of colour and character in an increasingly monochrome roadscape – that was our recently departed Insignia VXR Sports Tourer in rather fetching Arden Blue. So why don't you see more of them? Partly because of snobbishness about the Vauxhall badge on the part of Audi and BMW drivers. A nonsense really, considering it's got deeper German roots than the House of Windsor.

And partly because big, petrol-engined cars are a bit of a liability these days, not only at the pumps, but also at the Post Office (£460 road tax!) and back at the dealership come trade-in time. But that applies across the

board, and there's still a healthy market for fast and capable estate cars – we're suckers for them ourselves here at **evo**. So should you consider an Insignia? And how did this one fare over 12 months and almost 24,000 miles? Very well, actually, but with one important proviso, more of which in a bit.

*'IT PUT ITS POWER  
DOWN WITHOUT  
DRAMA IN ALL  
CONDITIONS'*

VN10 OMM came with just 186 miles on the clock and some pretty tasty options including 20in Y-spoke alloys (£1125 and worth every penny for the looks alone) and premium sound (£510), though these helped take the £34,525 basic to a steepish-sounding £37,860. In fact an Audi S4 Avant to a similar spec would have been around ten grand more...

It's an interesting comparison. The Insignia's turbocharged 2.8-litre V6 produces 320bhp (supercharged Audi 328bhp), good for 0-60 in the mid-fives and a limited top speed of 155mph (the Unlimited version runs to 170mph-plus). Both cars have four-wheel drive, too, the Vauxhall system enhanced by an electronic rear limited-slip diff.

There's not much to choose between them on the road either. Once the turbo had filled its cheeks and started blowing, the VXR delivered ample power and put it down without drama, whatever the road and weather conditions. It didn't have quite the low- and mid-range muscle of the S4, nor its soulful blare – though it did produce a smile-inducing 'whap!' between full-bore upshifts. The ride was nicely meaty, the steering well-weighted, accurate and uncorrupted



Four-wheel-drive Insignia worked all four contact patches to good effect. Last winter's snow brought out its playful side



by torque-steer, thanks no doubt in part to the HiPerStrut front suspension. Switching to 'Sport' or 'VXR' mode sharpened up the steering and damping (the latter also made the throttle more responsive, heralded by the instruments gaining a red tinge). In fact 'VXR' made it a bit too jittery for everyday driving, so most days the button went unpressed. Even in regular mode, though, the big blue bus felt commendably agile.

That said, it never felt quite as playful as the S4 that I previously ran (or indeed the 335i I had before that). While it worked all four tyres to good effect, it lacked the S4's eagerness to kick its tail out and the 335i's tiptoe poise. It might also have benefited from a fast-acting paddleshift gearbox – the six-speed manual wasn't bad, just a bit long-winded. The Insignia even matched the Audi's fuel consumption of 23-25mpg (neither could get close to the BMW's frequent 26-28mpg though). And if the interior wasn't quite as classy as that of its (pricier) rivals, it was arguably sportier in ambience, with excellent Recaro front seats, and stood up well to a year of hard use. The kids sometimes complained about feeling car sick – high waist-lines and darkened windows look very



cool, but youngsters like to be able to see out.

There were a few other niggles, too. The hard plastic inserts in the lower quadrants of the steering wheel squeaked when you gripped the rim, while the electric handbrake was a complete fag: I came to dread hill-starts, not knowing whether it was engaging automatically or not. Of more concern when autumn arrived, though, was the Xenon headlights, which seemed to be dazzling

oncoming traffic, even on dipped beam. At first the local dealer, York Ward & Rowlett, tried to fob me off, saying they were fine and there was no adjustment anyway. Wrong on both counts. When I eventually asked Vauxhall to take a look they recalibrated the front and rear axle level sensors and manually reset the beam. Problem solved.

In other respects YW&R were impressive. The first service, requested by the onboard computer at around 12,000 miles, came to a very reasonable £123.59, the Insignia being returned fully valeted. The next was just becoming due when the car was returned.

A rather bigger bill loomed when the original Pirelli P Zeros needed replacing. They'd lasted 15,000 miles though, so I could hardly complain. With no Pirellis available in the 255/35 size, we went for Goodyear Eagle F1s, the other OE tyre. Cost: a grand for a set of four. The Insignia felt great on them – maybe it lost a smidge of precision, but they

Clockwise from left: sporty ambience spoiled slightly by squeaky steering wheel; xenon lights needed resetting; brake discs replaced under warranty; VXR button sharpened handling and throttle





# evoFast Fleet

smoothed the occasionally brittle edges off the ride, were a touch quieter, and seemed to be wearing similarly well, too.

Despite the niggles, I was enjoying the VXR for its combination of pace, practicality and good looks. But then, at around 19,000 miles, I began to notice a vibration through the steering under braking. It felt like a warped disc and so it proved. York Ward & Rowlett informed me it would need two new front discs, and because there was no manufacturing fault but signs of excessive heat (the implication being that the car had been driven excessively hard), it wouldn't be covered under warranty. With a new set of pads as well, the bill would be £1800.

Knowing the car had never been thrashed, I was not a happy bunny. After numerous phone calls, eventually I got Vauxhall UK involved, at which point it transpired that there was a known issue with the calipers. It seems that unless the lateral guides for the



*'THE BILL WOULD BE £1800. I WAS NOT HAPPY...'*

pads are lubricated with a 'special' grease, usually at each service, the pads can stick, causing heat build-up. This seemed to be the case with our car, and because it was (just) under 20,000 miles it would be covered by the manufacturer warranty after all. The pads would also be replaced free of charge.

Which was a mighty relief. But what would happen beyond 20,000 miles if the problem recurred? I reckon if I'd been keeping this car, I'd be getting those guides checked and lubricated on a pretty regular basis...

There's so much to like about the Insignia VXR. Ours went well, was solidly built and, brakes aside, nothing broke or went wrong. Certainly an improvement on the BMW and Audi that preceded it, both of which suffered serious mechanical and electronic maladies. Indeed, those failures presented Vauxhall with an open goal; alas, when the Insignia warped its discs, it skewed the ball just over the crossbar. **Peter Tomalin**

## FERRARI 458 ITALIA

Date acquired April 2011 Total mileage 5731  
Mileage this month 2832 Costs this month £0  
mpg this month 14.5



So the 458 Italia got off to a shaky start last month, leaving me stranded at the roadside, though it later turned out the culprit was a faulty sender unit, which meant the fuel gauge showed the tank was half-full when in fact it was empty. Well, time has moved on and, although the Ferrari is still on probation, things are most definitely looking up.

It's a long time since my rear end has been in a Fezza on a consistent daily basis

– that was my beloved F355 of a decade ago – and I have to say that the 458 is one helluva versatile supercar to run every day. Ensclosed in those comfy racing seats recently, it also occurred to me that the last V8 Ferrari offering such a 'pilot's view of those gorgeous upward-curving front wings must have actually been the 328 over 20 years ago. What a welcome return.

Now, the eagle-eyed amongst you may have noticed that the 458 has already had a bit of a makeover (albeit a temporary one)

458 is getting a thorough workout as a trackday experience car, but it's also serving as Simon's daily driver. He's finally got his head round the wheel-mounted controls (right)

## PEUGEOT RCZ GT THP200

Date acquired Dec 2010 Total mileage 14,411  
Mileage this month 769 Costs this month £0  
mpg this month 33.3

Just before we went to press last month, the gearchange on the RCZ began to balk once the transmission had warmed through. Turns out it was a fractured clutch plate. Peugeot says it has never seen one before, and we've never heard any reports of anyone else suffering this, so it caused a bit of head-scratching. It's arguable

that our car has had a tougher life than most – it's only been on track once in our hands, but in a previous life (the first 6000 miles) it was part of the UK press fleet, so there's a fair chance the clutch has taken a beating in various 0-60mph tests.

Anyway, replacement was carried out in a very efficient manner by Broad Green of Wellingborough. They had the car for almost a week and loaned me a 508 diesel estate while they investigated the problem.

Granted, the big 508 is not the world's most dynamically dramatic machine, but it was inoffensive and comfortable and actually highlighted the main problem with the RCZ – its steering. Okay, the 508 doesn't have any more feel, but it does without the artificial weighting of the RCZ and the set-up felt more appropriate and acceptable in a car without any sporting pretence.

The RCZ has also developed a slow puncture – the left rear drops





Ultra thin-spoked lightweight OZ alloys (right) are a new addition this month. Carbon ceramic discs are standard



### *'THE 458 IS ONE HELLUVA VERSATILE SUPERCAR TO RUN EVERY DAY'*

with a matt black roof, sills and some tasty new rims from Italian specialists OZ racing. A hugely expensive option through Ferrari's personalisation programme, the partial matt look is an acquired taste, but WX11 sports the same effect for the sake of a wrap costing about £350. I also took a call from the chaps at OZ who very kindly offered a set of lightweight Ultra Leggera HLT rims for the 458 to run on for a while. Matthew Auty at OZ dealer Projex Design is offering a discount to *evo* readers for a limited period. Give him a call on 01275 337800 and mention *evo*.

It's taken me a while to get my head around the much-maligned wheel-mounted controls, but after a month or so things sort of fell into place. Jumping back into another supercar with indicator stalks now feels positively antiquated. Pedalling on at night, however, can be a touch, ahem, interesting since Ferrari doesn't provide backlighting for the windscreen wiper or full-beam buttons. Goodness knows why not. Other switches are backlit, including the sport suspension de-

coupling button. Now that's priorities for you!

I'm not going to bang on about how brilliant the 458 is to drive, since this has been more than adequately covered elsewhere (in last month's McLaren group test for one). Suffice it to say it stops on a sixpence, spansk virtually anything that dares come near it and changes cogs so rapidly it sounds like a madman's been let loose with a Kalashnikov. Bloody marvellous. What I will be concentrating on is what WX11 is like to run as a true daily driver – starting with the fully automatic mode, which seems anathema on such a track-orientated machine.

Hit the red start button and, thanks to Euro compliance laws, the box defaults to auto. Keep it there and WX11 takes on the persona of a Jaguar as it rises and falls seamlessly through the cogs. Great for early starts when the brain cells are still struggling. The LP640 also in the garage doesn't get a look-in!

So I'm liking WX11 DBY. A lot. OK, so I feel like I've fallen in love with the best mate's wife. But it's kind of worth it. **Simon George**



a couple of psi in a week – and I just wonder whether the wheels are tough enough for our pock-marked roads. Back in February we needed a new wheel and tyre after pot-hole interaction, while an RCZ being run by our sister magazine, *Auto Express*, has also suffered a couple of punctures. This could of course be an unfortunate coincidence, but if you know of any other wheel- and tyre-related RCZ issues, it'd be good to hear from you. **Roger Green**



Above: slow puncture is latest wheel-related woe. RCZ has also had a new clutch plate





# evoFast Fleet

## RENAULT CLIO WILLIAMS

**Date acquired** Sept 2010 **Total mileage** 87,906  
**Mileage this month** 1145 **Costs this month**  
£893.56 (see text) **mpg this month** 32.4

After its recent 1200-mile road trip, including a punishing trackday at Spa (evo 159), the sensible thing was to give the Williams a bit of a breather. So, just two weeks later, co-owner Stephen Dobie and I decided to take it on another trackday, this time at our 'home' circuit, the Bedford Autodrome. Organiser Renaultsport was offering some track tuition from an MSV instructor, and, as I hadn't had any in a while, I put my name down. That's when the fun started...

Now, I expected the instructor and I to head out in a Renault demonstrator. A lovely Mégane 250, perhaps. And then my name was called and the instructor asked, 'So, which car's yours, buddy?' Ah. 'Erm, the Williams,' I said, to which he replied: 'Wow! We're going out in a real car.' I could feel Dobie's worried look on the back of my neck as I opened the door.

Braking later and harder than ever before, I passed a Clio 182, crawling back to the



**'ON THE WAY HOME THERE WAS AN AWFUL NOISE'**



Williams on track (again). Weird whistling noise from the engine traced to power steering pump

pits trailing smoke, and wondered if we'd be next. With the instructor constantly barking, 'Trust me, don't touch the brake! Don't lift!', I felt like I'd been well and truly kicked out of my comfort zone. I was sweating, and after deciding to stop while I was ahead, I gave the Williams key back to Dobie with slight relief and huge satisfaction. After that, we did the usual six-lap stints with 20-minute rests in between as well as a cooling-down lap, and L97 JUD didn't miss a beat.

On the way home, however, there was an awful shrieking noise from the front arches and a vibration through the steering wheel – had I knackered the brakes? Then I realised the noise was only there on right-hand lock. And when I accelerated, it disappeared. We concluded it must have been 'marbles' from the track that had become stuck to the hot brake disc; once it had cooled down, we reckoned, they must have fallen off. Phew!

Three days after its Bedford outing, the Williams was treated to set of new rear brake discs and pads at a cost of £326.86 fitted (they'd actually been due to be replaced before Spa!). We'd also discovered the power steering pump was on the way out. It's something of a known weakpoint on fast Clios – sub editor Ian Eveleigh's Clio 172 has had similar work done recently – and was the cause of the curious whistling noise whenever the engine was running. A replacement wasn't urgent, but recommended before it became an issue. Wimbledon-based R Sport carried the work out (a further £566.70), and when Dobie completed the 100-mile trip back he looked particularly chuffed. Without the whistle, the Clio's unexpectedly refined motorway manners were better than ever. Not just a trackday toy, then. Adam Shorrock

## HARRY'S GARAGE



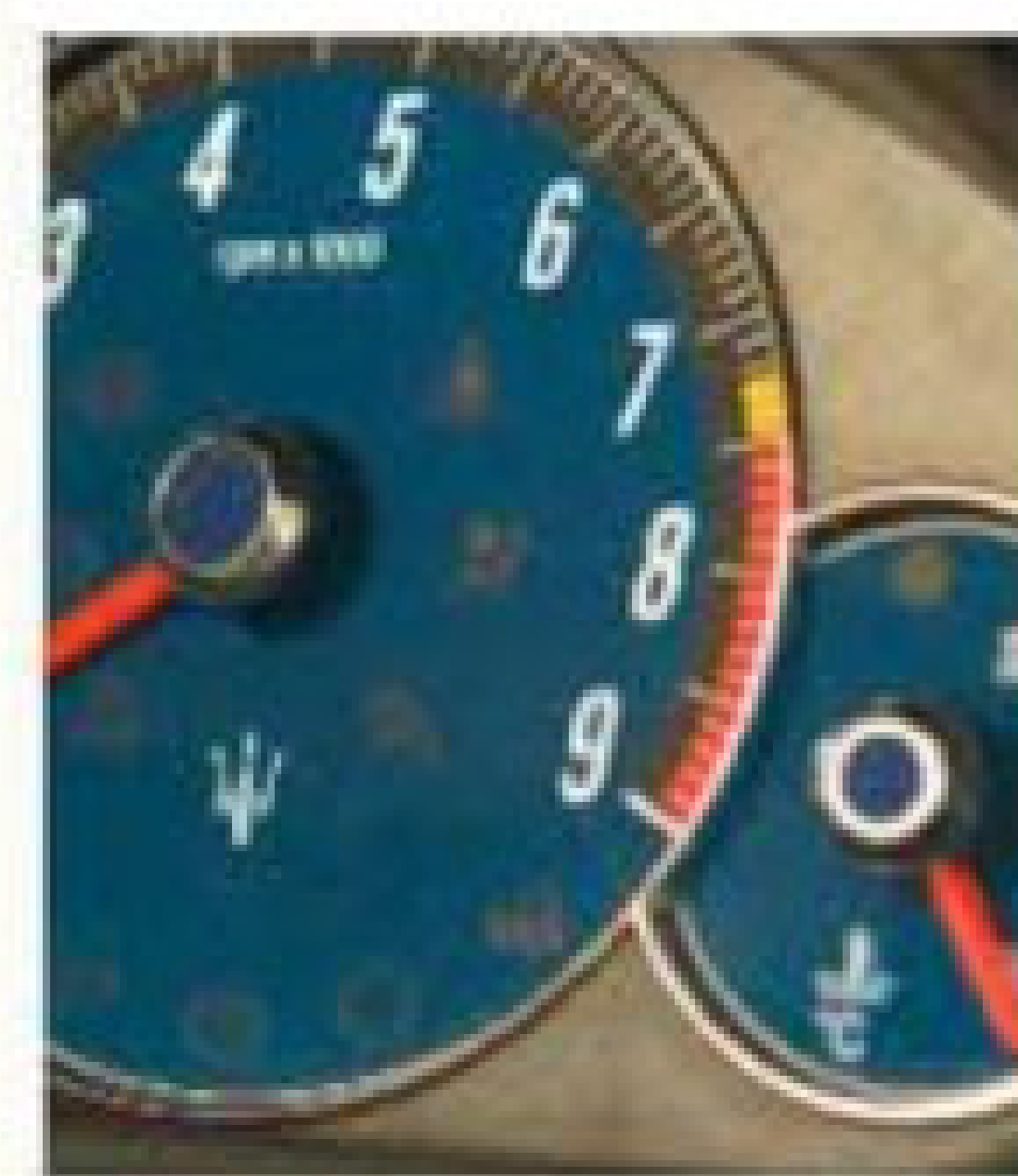
## NEW ARRIVAL MASERATI GRANTURISMO S

**Date acquired** June 2011 **Total mileage** 14,612  
**Mileage this month** 337 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 18.0

A friend emailed me recently and said how surprised he was to hear I'd ordered a Ferrari FF, as he didn't really rate it. I pinged a reply back, saying how I thought the FF was a fascinating

ownership prospect, being a 206mph Ferrari with a proper boot, four seats, 4wd, etc. 'Although,' I concluded, 'it's hard to justify the FF being worth £180,000 more than, say, a Maserati GranTurismo S.'

And then I thought, hang on a minute, it's actually impossible to justify. And that's when I started trawling the classifieds. What I was



## RENAULTSPORT CLIO V6

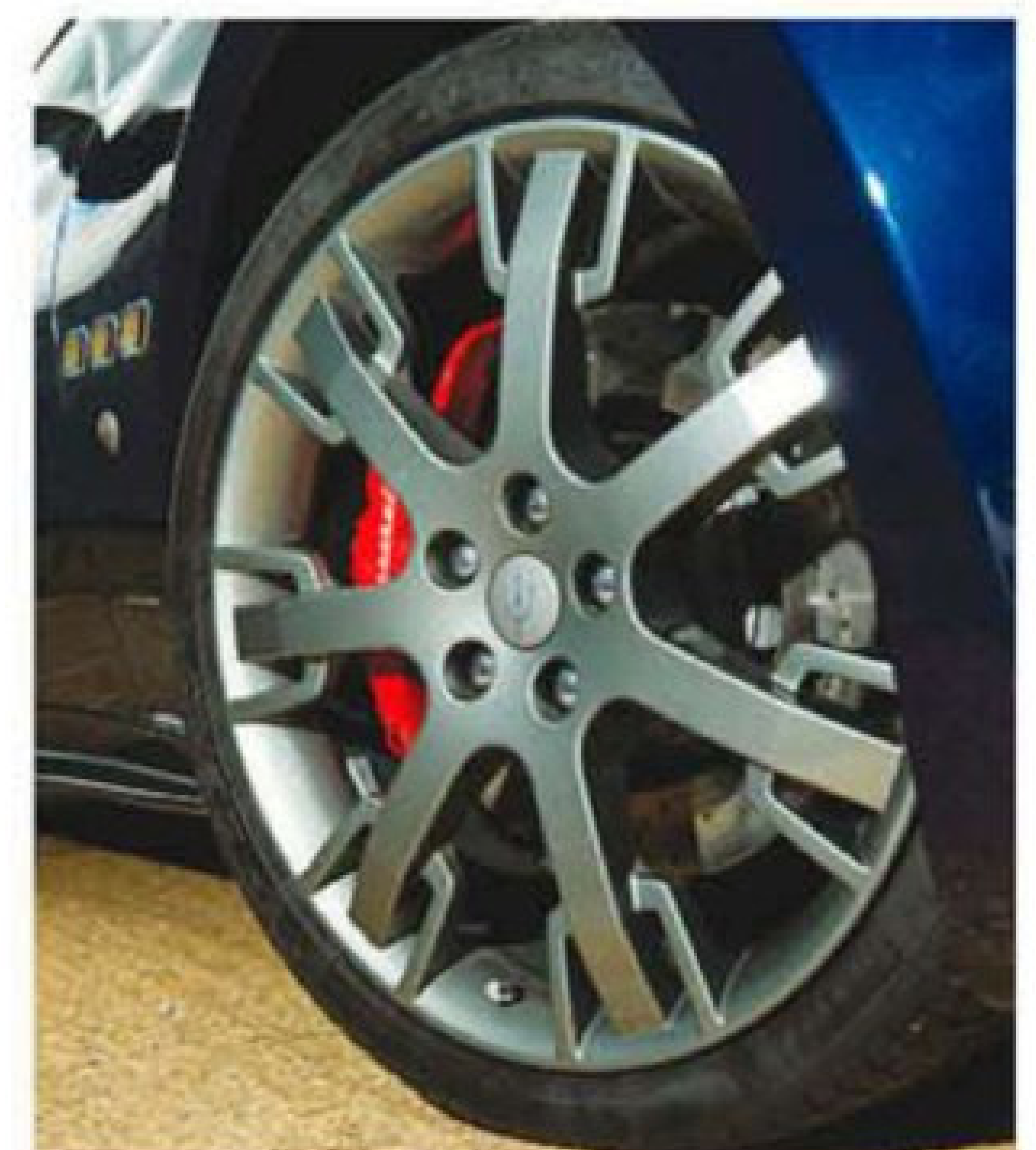
**Date acquired** Jan 2010 **Total mileage** 14,702  
**Mileage this month** 60 **Costs this month** £0  
**mpg this month** 20.4

Got a message from Clio V6 specialist Scott at SG Motorsport recently. He told me that he'd just fitted a Quaife LSD to a Clio V6 with good results and suggested I try it. Then a couple of days later, evo contributor Jonny Smith called and told me of a bloke who lives near me who has just had a... Quaife LSD fitted



Right: Nick's V6 meets rare Lunar Grey model. Above: spoiler on the grey car is from a V6 Trophy race car





looking for was an early 4.7 GranTurismo S (there have been no significant updates since launch) in a similar spec to my much-loved 4.2, so no lairy paint jobs (or black wheels). A sort of Cotswold-spec car, in effect.

I eventually spotted one that passed muster at Meridian Maserati in Lyndhurst and, a few phone calls later, a deal was done to exchange my 2007, 29,000-mile 4.2 (plus £22,500) for their 2008, 14,000-mile 4.7S MC-Shift, with a factory warranty stretching to the end of 2012. The trade-in for my 4.2 was £47,500, or some £7000 less than I'd paid 12 months (and 7000 miles) ago, but when you consider both the buying and selling dealer will want at least a £2500 margin, the

real depreciation figure is probably nearer £2000, which is better than I dared hope.

Even this early in our relationship, I can tell you the 'S' is a very different car to the standard 4.2 and not all in a good way...

Good points first, starting with the noise. Wow, those Modenese engineers know how to turn an enthusiast into a gibbering wreck at the twist of a butterfly valve in the exhaust. Press the 'Sport' button on the centre console and you're treated to the most sonorous howl I've ever heard, complete with delicious pops on the over-run. Then there's the performance lift. Now, I've always defended the 4.2's performance; 12.2sec to 100mph is not exactly hanging about, but the

4.7 adds the muscle you'd expect a car like this to have. The MC-Shift gearbox plays a big part too. That's because the 4.7S is much lower-g geared than the regular auto model, the 4.7 spinning at 3000rpm at 75mph in 6th, compared with just 2250rpm for the 4.2 auto. The unfortunate flip-side is that the constantly higher revs really kill mpg. I'm averaging just 18mpg, rather than the 22-23mpg I regularly got from the 4.2, which came as a big surprise. Meanwhile, the brakes still feel marginal, despite the bigger discs on the 'S'. Still, it's early days, no car is perfect and, with its killer good looks, I can forgive this car anything. Well, almost.

To be continued.

Harry Metcalfe

Above left: Harry collects his latest Maser. Already it's clearly a very different animal to his old 4.2, with substantially more punch from the 4.7-litre V8 (top). Brakes aren't great, however, despite larger diameter discs



to his Clio V6. Turns out it was one and the same guy – Keir Wheadon – and he lives literally five minutes from my house.

Keir popped around and I had a quick blast in his ultra-rare Lunar Grey V6 with leather ID pack interior – thought to have been one of the original press cars. Initial impressions were very good. Keir's V6 felt nicely tied down at the rear, with sharp steering response and good overall balance. Curiously, it was not as prone to bump-steer

as mine, and coped with camber changes and crests better too. Keir advised me to get a full four-wheel alignment – 'the best money I've spent on this car'.

He then said two things that elevate him into the very highest echelon of evoblokeness. Firstly, 'I'm taking my V6 to the Ring this weekend' (something I'm not brave enough to do), and secondly 'I'm also restoring a Renault 5 Turbo 2.' I think I'll stay in touch with Keir...  
Nick Trott



# evo Fast Fleet

*'THE RAPIDE IS AN ELEGANT AND FABULOUSLY IMPOSING CAR'*



## NEW ARRIVAL ASTON MARTIN RAPIDE

Date acquired June 2011 Total mileage 968  
Mileage this month 357 Costs this month £0 mpg this month 18.5



**I**n these financially straitened times I thought it best to replace the Mégane RS 250 Cup with another hatchback. Okay, so it's 20ft long, powered by a 470bhp, 5.9-litre V12 and costs £153,610, but the Aston Martin Rapide is most definitely a hatchback, and a five-door at that. I must be getting old.

Finished in Titanium Silver with Obsidian Black leather, silver contrast stitching and Piano Black high-gloss veneer, KX11 FXH's specification is simple and striking. Its only options are cooled front and rear seats (£1016) and a rear seat entertainment system (£2298), which means a six disc DVD player, LCD screens in the backs of the front seats and two sets of wireless headphones.

I think the Rapide is an elegant and fabulously imposing car. It must have been quite a challenge to stretch the taut lines and perfect proportions of the DB9 and make them work as a four-door, but far from being frumpy compared with its two-door

stablemates the Rapide is perhaps the most rakish in the range.

The interior looks fabulous and has a great blend of luxury, sportiness and tactile warmth that suits the Rapide's character and purpose perfectly. Up front it's typical 21st century Aston, with all the familiar controls, instruments, driving position. It even has the same precise, wieldy feel, to the point where I'm still surprised to see quite so much car behind me in the rear-view mirror.

Ah yes, the rear seats. There's no denying the Rapide's sleek shape comes at a price in terms of outright space and practicality compared with the bulkier (and far uglier) Porsche Panamera or Bentley Flying Spur, but unless you're intending to start a chauffeuring business it's not a calamitous compromise. The rear door aperture is tighter than ideal, but providing you're sub-6ft, the individual rear sports seats are a special and welcoming place to be.

Not as special as the driver's seat however,





### MERCEDES-BENZ SLS AMG

**Date acquired** April 2011 **Total mileage** 2811  
**Mileage this month** 711 **Costs this month** £0  
**mpg this month** 20.3

**T**hey gave us another SLS for the McLaren group test last month – I felt slightly offended on the behalf of ‘my’ blue example on not being chosen to represent Mercedes-Benz in the year’s major grudge-match, but clearly Merc wanted the most dynamic car possible to do battle with its former business partner, and mine doesn’t have the lightweight bucket seats or ceramic brakes.

How would my car have fared? Slightly better than the silver one, actually. The standard seats are more supportive around the mid-section than the skinny Recaros, and ten times more comfortable. As for the brakes: I’m sure the ceramics are better for prolonged track-work, but they’re a touch grabby in everyday driving – which is where the SLS is designed to operate.

The SLS was not created for short-arses like me. My ideal driving position (and it is ideal in this car) makes inserting and extracting myself a tricky exercise: and the one thing you simply have to do when your door goes ‘up’, as opposed to ‘out’, is conduct both parts with some decorum. The other problem is the passenger side mirror, which won’t adjust far enough in to give me much of a view down the near-side flank.

But really I’m looking for stuff to whinge about here. This is a motoring dream-



Standard seats are just as supportive and many times more comfortable than the optional Recaros. Harris also prefers the iron discs (left) to the ceramic alternative

come-true for me, and it’s teaching me that mechanical interest, noise, presence and character are the ingredients of truly great road cars.

**Chris Harris**



Meaden’s finding the Rapide every bit as wild as its siblings, despite the extra inches and extra doors. 5.9-litre V12 (far left) is very special

which is where I intend to spend most of my time. There’s something very, very special about the way a big V12 performs, especially when it’s mated to a sweet-shifting auto. Add perfectly judged damping that feels spot-on in either normal or sport settings and you have an effortless motorway mile-eater that also rewards when you want to enjoy some A and B roads. I wasn’t sure whether the Rapide would be my kind of Aston, but I’ve bonded with it immediately. I can’t wait to get to know it better.

**Richard Meaden**

### PORSCHE 997 GT3

**Date acquired** Dec 2010 **Total mileage** 27,502  
**Mileage this month** 1002 **Costs this month** £2000 (exhaust boxes) **mpg this month** 22.8

**W**e have now found a definitive set-up for the Exe-tc springs and dampers, and I’m confident it helps extract even more performance from the 997 GT3 on the UK’s mostly shocking road surfaces. We’ve gone down the route of removing all the rubber bushes in the name of outright handling ability. We’ve also reduced the noise level as much



‘Sport’ button now acts as loudness control

as possible. At low speed it squeaks a little, but the payback is enormous in terms of ultimate performance. In fact I challenge anyone to identify a better fast car for driving on UK roads: the bump absorption has to be felt to be believed.

Identifying the suspension noise hasn’t been easy. The Akrapovic exhaust is just so loud nothing else can compete, not even a set of chattering uniball joints. But that has now been fixed with the addition of two side-boxes and the re-connection of the Sport button. Driven in ‘normal’ mode, it’s hardly any noisier than the standard system: with the button ‘on’, it will still wake the dead. Total cost is now approaching £10K, but then a replacement OE exhaust from Porsche, with cats, is around £7K. I still love it, and the weight saving is still nearly 20kg, which is enormous.

**Chris Harris**



# Fast Fleet

## SUBARU WRX STI

Date acquired November 2011 Total mileage 16,750  
Mileage this month 1761 Costs this month £0 mpg this month 26.1

It's not every weekday afternoon that you find yourself in your local woods, resting on your handlebars chatting to Mark Webber. But a few weeks ago that's exactly what happened to me. I'd been invited out for a pedal up and down some hills with the Subaru-Trek mountain-bike team, and as Red Bull and Trek share an industrial estate in Milton Keynes, Mark had popped over to join in. Everybody needs good neighbours.

His well-documented cycling accidents in the last few years certainly don't seem to have slowed him down at all. He's lean as you like and could easily have been mistaken for one of the team professionals. Trek lent us both 29er Superflys (that's 29 as in 29-inch wheels) for the afternoon and it was the first time either of us had ridden the bigger-wheeled machines. They certainly give a different feel, and what they lack in flickability they make up for in grip, rolling speed and an uncanny ability to smooth a rooty descent. Despite the 3in bigger wheels I still managed to fit it in the back of the Scooby too.

In terms of cars, Webber is obviously now



Above: familiar face on an unfamiliar number of wheels in Henry's local woods. Right: Catchpole and Webber talk bikes and cars. Below: big-wheeled Superfly fitted in the Scooby



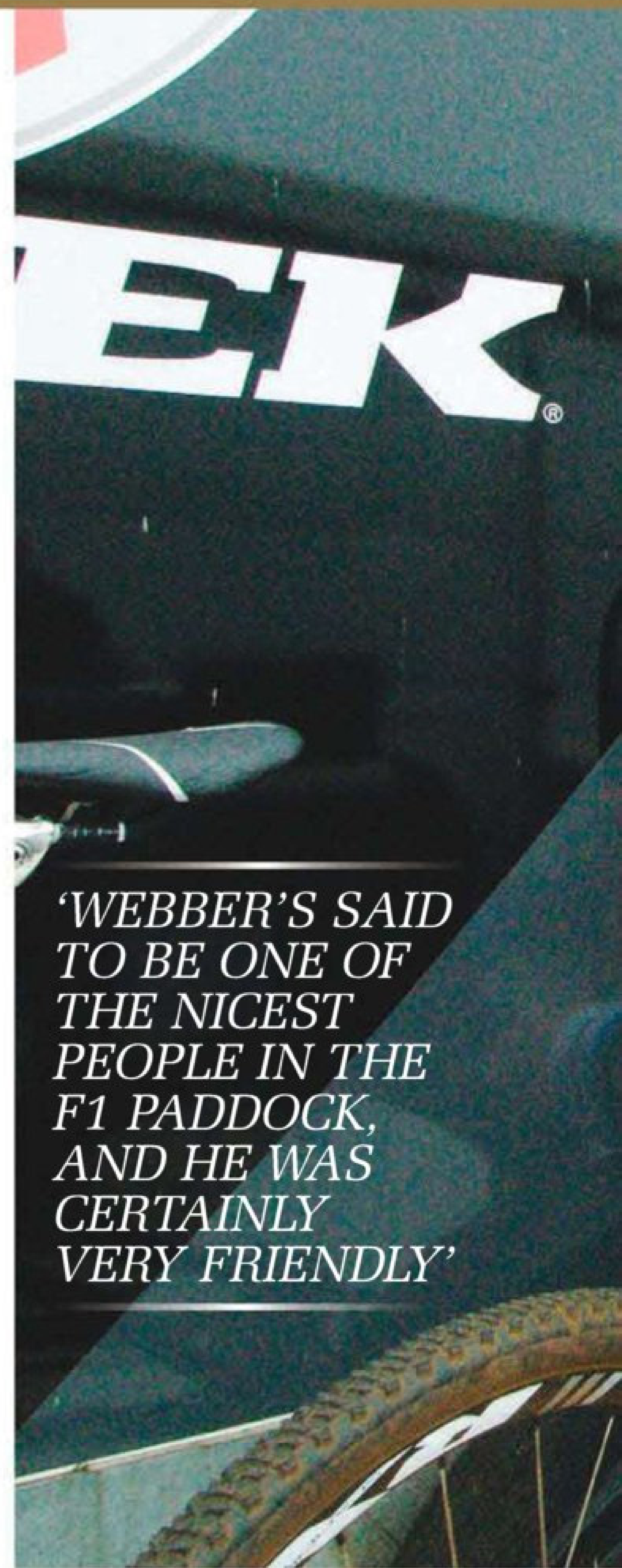
linked with Infiniti (Ian Eveleigh, custodian of our G37S, had sadly succumbed to a niggling injury after landing a monster tail whip in the bike park a week earlier, otherwise he'd have been there). However, Mark had been at Silverstone the day before for the new pit complex unveiling and he'd done quite a few laps in his personal GT2 RS. He'd even taken Valentino Rossi for a few laps in it and proudly showed me photos on his iPhone of the two of them in his car grinning.

Webber's always said to be one of the nicest people in the F1 paddock, and he was certainly very friendly, but there's also an incredible focus to the way he conducts himself. You get the impression that his mind is always busy and I don't think he does idle chit-chat. You can see why his Twitter feed is @AussieGrit – it sums him up quite neatly.

I saw the Subaru-Trek team again a few days later, up in Dalby Forest for the XC world cup (I've blogged about that at [evo.co.uk](http://evo.co.uk)) and from there I drove on up to Edinburgh where I was supporting a friend at the marathon. I had a wonderfully clear run up the A7 early on the Sunday morning. It's a fantastic bit of road anyway, but was particularly enjoyable on this occasion as it was wet and some tanker had also kindly leaked oil down its entire length! Add into the equation the fact that the Subaru's Bridgestones are nearing retirement and grip was scarce.

You have to relax and learn to stay calm when the grip suddenly disappears mid-corner, but I absolutely love the challenge of slippery conditions and balancing a car for long periods on the (relatively low) limit of grip. You get that feeling of really working a chassis on a detail level – something that's particularly apparent in the Subaru, which you can coax into reacting in so many different ways with the diffs opening and closing. It was my best drive to date in BF60 FLZ.

Henry Catchpole



**'WEBBER'S SAID TO BE ONE OF THE NICEST PEOPLE IN THE F1 Paddock, AND HE WAS CERTAINLY VERY FRIENDLY'**

## JAGUAR XJ SUPERSPORT

Date acquired February 2011 Total mileage 10,310 Mileage this month 2910  
Costs this month £0 mpg this month 23.9

Chris Harris has far too many cars, so we've relieved him of the Supersport, with yours truly being given the substantial privilege of running it for the next couple of months. I was already a huge fan. The Supersport was my personal 'Car of the Year' of 2010 and, as Chris and others have reported, it is quite astonishingly

good to drive. Like Chris, the only chinks I've detected so far in its dynamic armour are a slightly sticky throttle that makes it tricky to move off smoothly, and an occasionally jolting low-speed ride. Once it's 'on the plane', as Harris says, it is utterly brilliant, completely belying its vast bulk. I've even come round to its looks, having experienced something of a Damascene conversion...

Remember the Royal wedding? If, like me, you were sucked in by the TV coverage

against your better judgement, you can probably recall being transfixed by one particular sight. Yes, I'm talking about the moment when the black Jaguar swept out of Buckingham Palace and powered away towards the Abbey. It looked magnificent.

I'd struggled with the looks of the XJ until then. It's not exactly beautiful, it doesn't speak the old Jaguar design language. But in that moment it looked bold, ballsy and very much of today. Most of all, it had presence.

Right: Tomalin has recently seen the light when it comes to the looks of the new XJ, which is handy, as he's just taken over the running of ours





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## JAGUAR XJR

Date acquired July 2010 Total mileage 36,704  
Mileage this month 711 Costs this month £516  
(MOT and rear tyres) mpg this month 19.7



XJR has been given a clean bill of health after sailing through its MOT this month

**P**urring across London on a beautiful June morning, I dropped the Jag's windows to let the hot fug of city air swirl around the leathery interior. Unfortunately, being able to hear the outside world revealed a hitherto unnoticed squeaking noise coming from somewhere under the car, not dissimilar to the noise made by Sooty's canine mate Sweep. Clearly something was amiss. Or I'd run over a glove puppet. Either way, I booked the XJR into The Jag Workshop in Shepherd's Bush and asked them to MOT it at the same time.

Predictably, the Corbettish bleating disappeared as soon as the XJ went near a garage and hasn't returned since. Less predictably, given that it's a 13-year-old Jaguar, the R had no problem passing its MOT, needing only a pair of rear tyres. Since they bunged on some fresh Avons the car has been bestowed with vastly

**'WITH FRESH REAR TYRES, THE JAG HAS VASTLY IMPROVED TRACTION'**

improved traction and bite out of corners. The ride feels moderately better too.

I picked Avon tyres over the original-spec Pirellis for two reasons. Firstly, because they were slightly cheaper. And secondly, because a childhood spent poring over the spec sheets for Newport Pagnell-built Aston Martins has left me forever associating Avons with big, British-made bruisers hammering their obvious flaws into submission with a well-filled trouser of charm. In other words, they're the perfect match for the Jag. **Richard Porter**



People gawp at this car, particularly younger people (which in Jaguar terms means anyone under 50). The old guard view it with suspicion, some with outright hostility – which is doubtless exactly what Ian Callum intended. My father, a lifelong Jaguar man, is one of them. 'Absolutely awful,' was his verdict when he saw our XJ. 'Why have they made it look like a Volvo?' Had Callum been there he'd probably have given him a hug. **Peter Tomalin**



## END OF TERM MAZDA 3 MPS

**Date acquired** May 2010 **Duration of test** 12 months  
**Total test mileage** 22,438 **Average mpg** 29.8 **Costs** £337 (service)  
**Purchase price** £22,595 **Trade-in value** £14,000 **Depreciation** £8595

**W**e certainly had our ups and downs, the Mazda 3 and me. I thought it might have a tough time as a photographer's car, but I didn't expect things to be quite so eventful.

It all started well. The 256bhp 2.3-litre turbo engine was punchy and powerful; in the dry the handling felt reasonably sure-footed, and the car was a good companion on a holiday to Wales, packed full of my girlfriend's and my gear for the week. But as I explored its performance more thoroughly it soon became apparent that driving the MPS quickly wasn't going to be as easy as I had become accustomed to.

The power delivery was quite old-school-turbo, with little happening below 3000rpm and then all hell breaking loose until around 5000rpm, at which point the power started to drop off. Some significant torque-steer also accompanied fast acceleration in this



Top: 2.3-litre engine was potent; pity it suffered a turbo failure (above). Below: interior well equipped, but felt a little cheap



rev-range, with constant steering inputs needed to keep the MPS on the straight and narrow. This wasn't really a problem – until you threw some tight corners or roundabouts into the mix. Then the whole experience started to get even more frantic, with the front wheels struggling to put all the power down smoothly and the torque-steer becoming more of an issue. A couple of members of the road-test team who tried the car came to similar conclusions, with Henry even describing the MPS as being 'like a 911 GT2 RS in reverse'.

If I was in the right mood and on the right road then the MPS was still fun, but it soon became wearing on my daily 100-mile commute. Despite this, the Mazda and I called a truce and we started to get along pretty well, with me accepting the way it wanted to be driven and it putting up with being shoved full of camera and cleaning kit at every opportunity.

Then, on our Car of the Year 2010 test, the MPS decided to throw a spanner in the works. After chasing a host of fast cars around Yorkshire for three days, the engine called enough. With the exhaust smoking and an engine fault light showing on the dashboard, I had to call the RAC and wait for them to collect the car.

The problem turned out to be a blown turbo. It was going to be a costly fix, and there was a further complication: a mix-up with the details that came with the car meant we had missed its first, 3000-mile service. A month of discussion between myself, Mazda and the dealership ensued, which was finally resolved, thankfully,

without me having to pick up the bill.

With the car running well again, it was back to the daily grind. As the miles wore on, and particularly after the 18,000-mile service, the engine started to feel smoother and even more willing to give at the higher end of the rev-range, but it was still slightly frustrating in everyday driving.

Now, I know it shouldn't be a major consideration, but as a photographer I do like cars to look good, and I'm afraid I never really got to grips with the styling of the Mazda. There were too many slashes and lines for my taste, although with the bonnet scoop and curved lower grille it did have a bit of 'attitude' from the front.

I had similar feelings about the interior. Although not badly designed, I wasn't keen on the red-spotted detail of the seats and some of the trim, and, as with many Japanese cars, the plastics felt a little low-rent, especially for a car that now lists at just over £23,000. That said, that is all you'll pay. The only option on our MPS was the metallic paint – and even that was a no-cost one. The satnav, heated seats, parking sensors and even the 'Rear Vehicle Monitoring' system (which warned of cars in your blind spots) were all standard. However, to be honest, apart from the heated seats, most of these features remained dormant most of the time.

It's decent value for money, then, the Mazda 3 MPS, and on a good day, on good roads, it's a willing and entertaining drive, but it's safe to say there are more relaxed and more satisfying ways to get 256bhp onto the road.

Chris Rutter




*'IN THE RIGHT MOOD AND ON THE RIGHT ROAD, THE MPS WAS FUN'*




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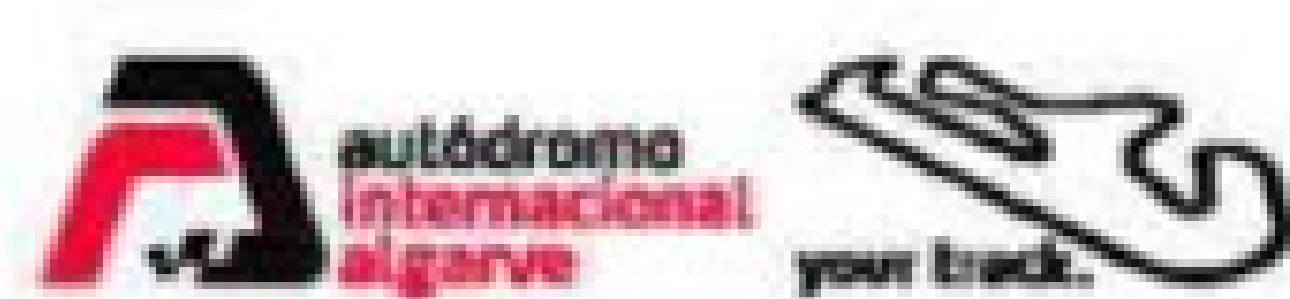


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**SKODA YETI 1.8 TSI**

I took the Yeti on a bit of an adventure this month, up into the Scottish Highlands and across to the Isle of Skye, North Uist, Harris and the Isle of Lewis. I braved a lot of narrow dirt-roads in order to get off the beaten track, and the Yeti seemed to love every minute of it. I only wish the Skoda were slightly more economical than its usual 27-28mpg, although the £1.51-per-litre petrol prices on the islands didn't help. **Sam Riley**

**MINI COOPER S COUNTRYMAN**

If you want to get noticed, then save money on a supercar and buy yourself a Countryman. The XXL Mini gets more attention than pretty much anything else I've driven. I'm almost out of fingers on which to count the number of times I've been accosted in car parks by strangers wanting to find out more. And the reactions, I have to report, are overwhelmingly positive. **Mike Duff**

**INFINITI G37S COUPE**

Stopped by the hand car wash near Evo Towers the other day – the first time I'd been there in the Infiniti. 'What kind of car is this?' asked one of the guys working there, checking out the badge on the G37's nose. 'Is it a Daewoo?' I've had people mistake it for a Lexus before, but a Daewoo? Yikes. **Ian Eveleigh**

**LAMBO MURCIÉLAGO & LP640**

My last report on the 206,000-mile orange Murciélago was upbeat. I spoke too soon, as a recent routine oil-check revealed water present, while a nasty droning heralded a gearbox rebuild. With the V12 coming out for a new head gasket at the same time, the bill came to £15,000. Ouch. To make matters worse, the dreaded whining is now starting to emanate from the LP640's 'box too... **Simon George**

**SEAT LEON CUPRA R**

**Date acquired** Sept 2010 **Total mileage** 15,161 **Mileage this month** 1931 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 28.3

The SEAT was called on for a round trip of 370 miles this month – from Peterborough to Cardiff Millennium Stadium to see (whisper it) Take That in concert. The trip there was a four-and-a-half-hour slog, but the late-night return run was a blast.

The motorways were empty, dual-carriageways were clear, and any lorries dawdling at 40mph were overtaken with ease.

The Cupra R excels at this sort of journey. With 261bhp it can cover ground very quickly, the brakes are outstanding, the standard bi-xenon headlamps ensure you can see the road ahead clearly and the seats hold you snugly in place.

The buzz the Leon was giving me kept me awake and I didn't want the journey to stop. Forget Sunday-morning blasts, its 2am trips that get the adrenalin pumping.

And now I have to apologise to my wife. She thought she might get some shut-eye on the way back, but instead she felt like she should have been reading pace notes. Sorry, sweet. **Paul Lang**



Cupra R's bi-xenon headlights turn with the steering and are perfect for fast night driving



**FORD CAPRI V8**

**Date acquired** October 2001 **Total mileage** 1211 **Mileage this month** 45 **Costs this month** £450 (valet) **mpg this month** 15.0

Black paintwork, eh? Looks wonderful when it's clean but gets dirty so quickly that it rarely looks wonderful. So they say. That's never been the case with the Capri, which is perhaps a testimony to the Permagard treatment applied some years ago. Oh, and to the fact that it hasn't gone very far in the last few years. (By the way, this October marks the tenth anniversary of me buying a part-restored 'Modena Green' Capri 1600 GT – this car's starting point.)



Above and below left: before and after. Below: Perfection Valet in action

There are different types of clean, though. I've known Richard Tipper since he started Perfection Valet (perfectionvalet.co.uk) a decade ago, and for about half that time he's wanted to get his mitts on the Capri. With all the progress that's been made recently, now seemed the right time, so a few weeks ago he and his colleague Tom turned up bright and early, intent on transforming it.

It was soaked and soaped like a pampered pet, and then buffed and machine-polished for hours. At about three o'clock I went out to offer them another cup of tea, and the Capri looked stunning. 'Have you got time for another bevvie?' I asked, believing the job to be done. 'Yeah – we've still got to wax and polish it yet,' said Richard. I thought he was joking. He wasn't. The end result is like liquid black, so deep is the shine.

It's so amazingly spotless – inside, outside and underside – I haven't dared drive it since! Happily, the perfect opportunity to show it off has now come along: Quentin at QPrep, who has done most of the recent work on the car, has asked if he can have it for his stand at the Oundle Carnival. I just hope it doesn't rain... **John Barker**

*'THE END RESULT IS LIKE LIQUID BLACK, SO DEEP IS THE SHINE'*





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# evo Showroom

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INSIDE THIS MONTH'S PACKED, 44-PAGE SHOWROOM SECTION

## BUYING GUIDE

p136

Ever wondered what it would be like to run a Lancia Integrale? Of course you have. **Brett Fraser** is your guide to the 4wd superhatch

## JUST LOOKING

p141

Every month, we try two of the cars from the classified ads. This issue we drive a very rare BMW and a very 1980s Porsche Turbo

## SPEEDSHOP

p145

A brand new feature, Speedshop brings you the latest tuning products and expert advice on how to get the best from your car

## WORKSHOP

p147

Another new feature, Workshop is where you'll find all the latest tools and cleaning products, plus tips from a pro valet

## ESSENTIALS

p149

Car-themed T-shirts and DVDs, plus some really nice model cars (and model Cars). Go on, treat yourself – you deserve it

## TRIPS & TRAVEL

p150

The world's greatest driving roads, starting with the Col de Turini. Plus: readers' top road trips and the latest sat-navs tested

## TRACK & RACING

p154

evo's favourite race circuits, starting with the newly redeveloped Snetterton, plus what our road testers have been racing this month

## TRACK BATTLE

p156

Porsche 911 GT3 RS 4.0 and Maserati MC Stradale go head-to-head at the Bedford Autodrome. **Roger Green** referees

## KNOWLEDGE

p160

All the essential data – and evo's verdict – on every new performance car, plus the very best second-hand buys

## ME & MY CAR

p178

Le Mans legend **Derek Bell** and the Porsche 924 GTS that he planned to flog the moment he got it. That was 30 years ago...

## MARKET WATCH



## 'Residuals on top brands hit the skids'

The fall – and rise – of the exotic car market, and what's happening now

The second-hand car trade has always fascinated me. Understanding why a 2002 BMW 735i is worth the same as a 2006 Fiat Panda 100HP is what makes it fun, as do the hours discussing which one makes the best buy. Well, each month I'm going to guide you through what's caught my eye in the classifieds, as well as spilling the beans on what those in 'the trade' are really up to. First, though, it's probably worth us looking back over the last 18-24 months to understand what's changed in the world of second-hand cars since this pesky economic storm took hold.

In late 2008, as finance deals dried up, residuals on premium brands really hit the skids, giving the trade a proper fright. Fortunately, it proved to be short-lived, and by mid-2009 the dramatic slide in values had started to stabilise. Currency turned out to be the saviour of the UK's premium car sector – as sterling dropped from 1.40€/£ (2007) to close to parity in early 2009, our Continental neighbours came bargain-shopping. Export became the name of the game and it wasn't long before dealers started to get calls from other parts of the globe too. Our domestic car trade went international.

The other reason why they came to the UK is that we have always had a higher density of 'glamour' stock than almost any other market. Our used stock tends to be cheaper than anywhere else in the world too, so the UK is seen as the destination to find that special car.

In late 2009/early 2010, the UK car buyer finally woke up to what was going on and realised that with interest rates historically low and residuals stronger than ever, now was a pretty good time to dump any savings into that car you'd always promised yourself. The result was a number of cars (particularly Lamborghinis, Ferraris and iconic classic cars) started to increase in value quite dramatically and, as usually happens when this occurs, other less iconic cars got caught up in the excitement and saw their values increase as well.

Today, what I like to call the iconic car trade is again dominated by export, with Australian buyers hoovering up much of our stock thanks to the Aus\$ gaining 40 per cent against sterling over the last 18 months. Ferrari specialist Simon Furlonger reckons that almost half of his sales are to Australian buyers at the moment. Far Eastern buyers are also active but they tend to buy limited-run, collector-type cars.

Will it continue? We'll look at that next month. The one thing all dealers increasingly complain about is how hard it is to find good stock these days, and that's not going to get easier any time soon.

**Harry Metcalfe,**  
Editorial director



## DEAL OF THE MONTH: PORSCHE CARRERA GT £210,000

» Putting a price on higher mileage supercars is a tricky business. It's why most owners aren't put any miles on them, just in case they might have to sell them one day. Proving the point, here's a 2004 Porsche Carrera GT with an almost-unheard-of 37,578 miles on the clock.

Up for £210,000 (or some £75,000 less than one showing 8-10,000 miles or so) at Target Cars in the Netherlands, it might be worth making a cheeky bid, to see if you can snatch it away for under £200K. If you do, then you'll have yourself a bargain.



Year 2004 Mileage 37,578  
Vendor Target Cars, Netherlands (www.target-cars.eu, 040-2925888)

## AUCTION WATCH: PORSCHE 924 GT £5000-£7000

» If you like the look of Derek Bell's 924 GTS on page 178, then you might be tempted by this 924 Carrera GT. It isn't a pukka, original car but a recreation using the mechanicals from a 65,000-mile 924 Turbo, but built into a genuine 'Pro9' Carrera GT bodyshell.

Painted Alpine White and with genuine Fuchs wheels and black leather trim, it certainly looks the part, and with genuine cars fetching £25,000-plus, a guide price of £5000 looks entirely reasonable.

The car is coming up for auction with Barons, at Esher in Surrey, on July 26.



Year 1980 Mileage 65,000 Auctioneers Barons (www.barons-auctions.com, 08454 306060) Date of auction July 26



## LANCIA DELTA INTEGRALE

In rallying form it won five WRC manufacturer titles; in showroom trim it remains one of the best road cars ever made. But you must buy with care, as **Brett Fraser** explains

**T**he passage of time can turn heroes into has-beens. Not so the Lancia Delta HF Integrale. Even today, almost 24 years after the original 8-valve Integrale was launched, you can storm along in the company of modern high-performance machinery and not have to make many excuses regarding the four-wheel-drive Lancia's age. Sure, it may not erupt out of corners with the savage rage of a Mitsubishi Evo FQ-400 or Nissan GT-R, but – in the

later editions especially – the speed you carry into a corner can be maintained and used to rocket you out the other side.

Though more than capable of blinding speed across challenging roads and in dire conditions, the Integrale's other attributes are what have helped it endure – and remain adored. Its wonderfully neutral chassis balance and agility. Its intimate steering feel. The whoosh and chuff of its turbocharger as it stokes the seductive-sounding 2-litre twin-

cam four-cylinder engine. Not to mention the Integrale's looks: beefily broad, broodingly hard-faced. As an overall package it's deeply charismatic, which partly explains why values continue to remain strong.

It helps that the Integrale has motorsport heritage. A towering pile of the stuff, most of it podium-topping. When Group B rally cars were legislated out of the World Rally Championship at the end of the 1986 season, Lancia needed a production-based alternative



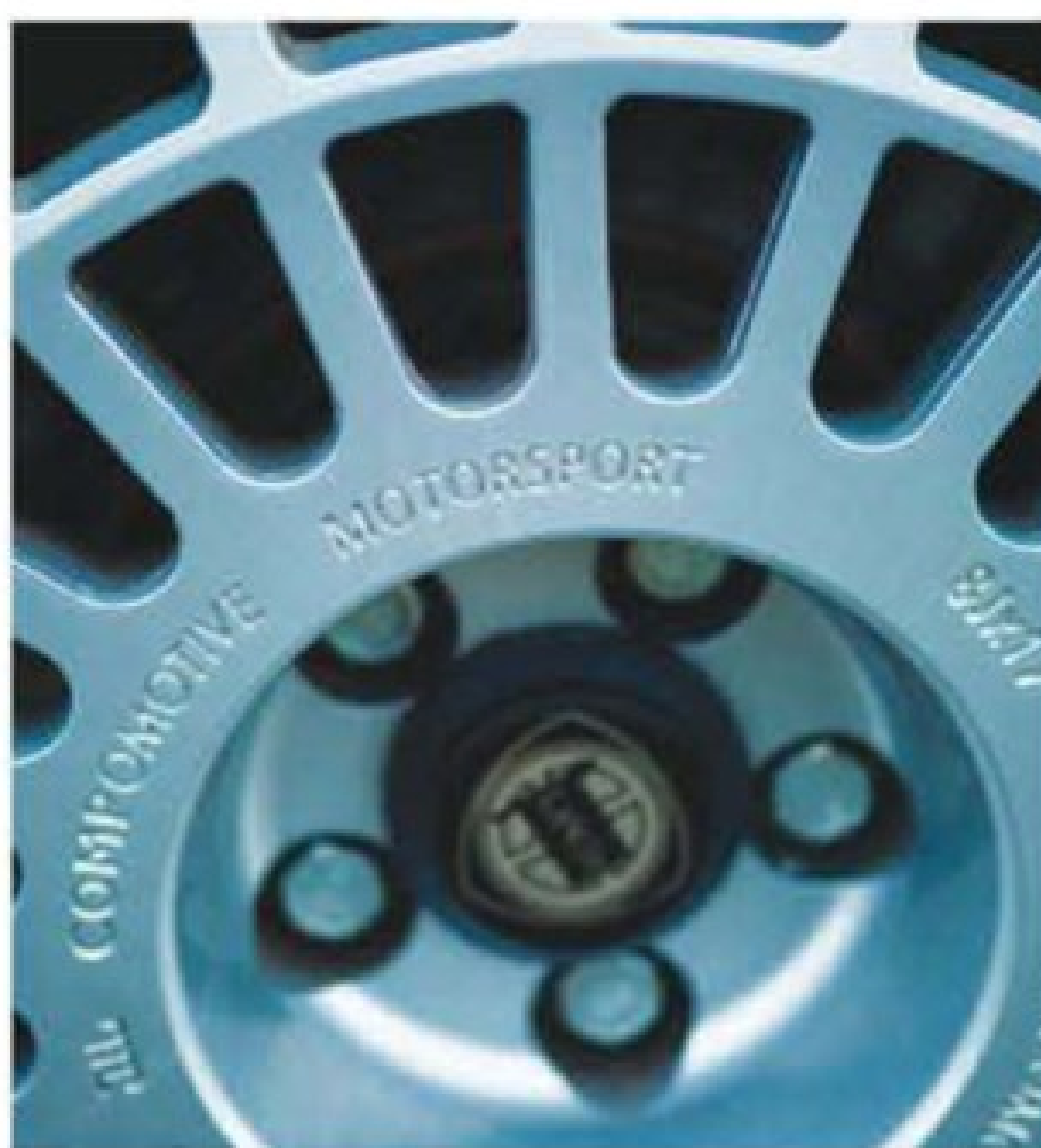
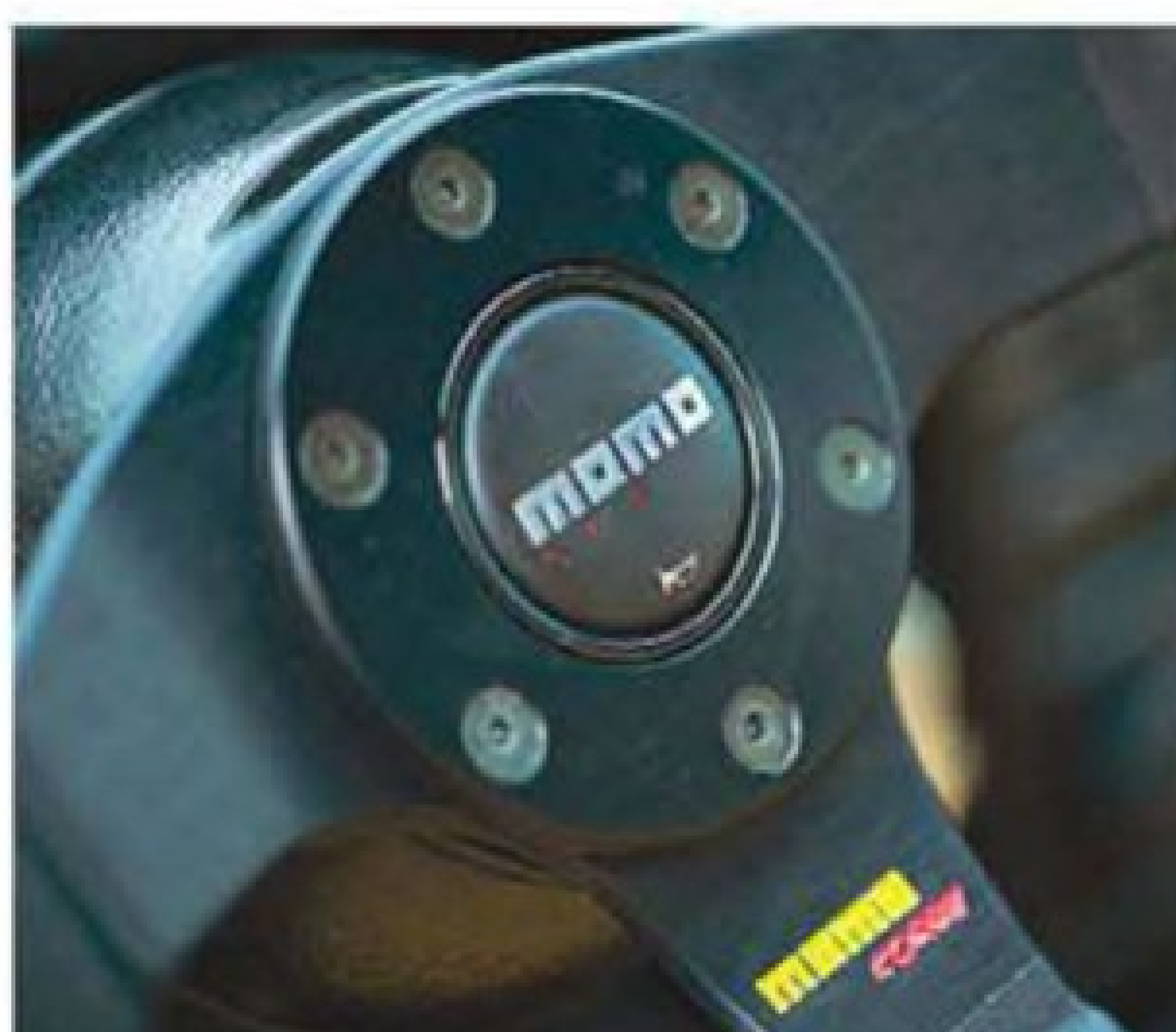


to tackle Group A. Key technologies from the Delta S4 Group B, namely four-wheel drive and turbocharging, were then applied to the narrow-bodied Delta HF 4WD to create a very short-lived (yet able) road car and, for 1987, a WRC championship-winning rally car.

As rivals struggled to catch up for the 1988 season, Lancia widened the Delta's track and wheelarches and produced the Integrale. And from then until the end of 1992, the Delta Integrale and its evolutions owned the WRC, taking consecutive manufacturers' crowns during this period. It cleaned up in many European national championships, too, becoming what's often claimed to be the most successful rally car of all time.

Because of the much closer relationship between competition cars and road-going equivalents than is enjoyed these days, the

Right, from top: red engine top indicates an Evo II; Momo wheel standard from Evo I; check all instruments are working; 17in alloys were an option



## CHECKPOINTS

» Low mileage is no guarantee of good condition – specialists such as John Whalley advise putting aside £4000-5000 of 'just-in-case' money for any car you buy. It's also a good idea to get any potential purchase checked by an expert, for authenticity (there are fakes around) as well as good health.

### ENGINE

» Check that the cambelt servicing has been done, and that means looking at garage bills and not just ticks in the service book. It's vital that the cambelts are renewed every 24,000 miles on the 16-valve, or 36,000 miles on the 8-valve. With a replacement 16-valve motor costing about £5500, it's worth making the effort to check.

Same goes for the oil level. If it gets too low the number three big-end bearing may signify its displeasure by seizing and breaking the crankshaft. Cost of repair? Think the other side of £2000.

If the car you're looking at still has the original turbo, as the mileage hits the other side of 80,000 miles, replace it. Even if it's still functioning, blade wear on the turbine will have rendered it very inefficient.

### TRANSMISSION

» A clutch should last around 60,000 miles. Judder, slippage and a 'wooden' pedal are signs that a replacement will soon be required: expect to pay £800 fitted.

### SUSPENSION & BRAKES

» Keeping the chassis in fine fettle is no simple task. Front suspension bushes will have lost their sparkle by 40-50,000 miles, while those on the rear trailing arms are likely to be shot by 30,000 miles. On the Evolution the front anti-roll bar drop-links need replacing roughly every 20,000 miles (they knock against the floorpan), while the dampers are done by 60,000 miles. You might get as much as 45-50,000 miles from a set of front brake discs, but the pads are generally fried by the mid-20s.

### BODYWORK & INTERIOR

» Lancia's notorious rust issue doesn't affect the Integrale, but it's now an old car so there are some bodywork grot-spots, notably around the windscreen and sunroof, the bottom of the doors and tailgate, the sills and the rear wheelarches.

Cabin fittings are classic examples of 1980s Italian flimsiness.





## SPECIFICATION

- Lancia Delta HF Integrale 16v 'Evo II'
- » **Engine** In-line 4-cyl, 1995cc, turbo
  - » **Max power** 212bhp @ 5750rpm
  - » **Max torque** 232lb ft @ 2500rpm
  - » **Transmission** Five-speed manual, four-wheel drive
  - » **Tyres** 205/45 ZR16 front and rear
  - » **Weight (kerb)** 1340kg
  - » **Power-to-weight** 161bhp/ton
  - » **0-62mph** 5.7sec (claimed)
  - » **Top speed** 137mph (claimed)
  - » **Price when new** £25,000 (1993)

## PARTS PRICES

» Supplied by John Whalley, Integrale specialist. Tyre price from Carson Tyre & Autocare. All prices include VAT at 20 per cent.

- » **Tyres** £85.92 each (Hankook K110, fitted)
- » **Brake pads (front set)** £135.55
- » **Brake discs (front pair)** £141.00
- » **Clutch kit** £323.57
- » **Oil filter** £11.28
- » **Air filter** £22.22
- » **Exhaust system, cat-back** £214.80

## SERVICING

- » **Oil service** £99.99
- » **9000-mile service** £165.92
- » **18,000-mile service** (including fuel and air filters, brake fluid, gear oil change and brake check) £527.84
- » **Cambelt change** (including all tensioner/idler bearings and auxiliary belts) £751.90

## WHAT TO PAY

» Integrale prices vary wildly, from £4K for an 8-valver in need of substantial TLC, through to £37,000 for a 1996 Evo II in spanking condition. Generally, though, less than £10,000 should find you a 16-valver with lowish miles, while the Evo models begin in the mid-teens for something in average nick.

Evo IIs restored and in 100 per cent condition now command around £25K, though some vendors are testing the waters with prices far higher even than that. Integrales imported from Japan are clouding matters slightly: these cars should be inspected thoroughly.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

- » [www.whalley-integrale.uk.com](http://www.whalley-integrale.uk.com) (specialist)
- » [www.walkers-garage.co.uk](http://www.walkers-garage.co.uk) (specialist)
- » [www.tancbarratt.co.uk](http://www.tancbarratt.co.uk) (specialist)
- » [www.lanciasport.com](http://www.lanciasport.com) (enthusiasts' club)
- » [www.lancia.org.uk](http://www.lancia.org.uk) (specialist)
- » [www.evo.co.uk](http://www.evo.co.uk) (cars for sale)

## 'I BOUGHT ONE'



### John Maxwell

For John it was quite a step up from a mk2 Cavalier to an

8-valve Integrale, both in terms of performance and running costs – during six and a half years of ownership he spent £13,500, and although he has now sold the car, he's currently on the hunt for an Evo II.

'Many moons ago I saw an Integrale 8-valve buying guide, which sparked my interest. I test-drove several before settling on a 66,000-mile 1989 model.

'It was a real pleasure to own, despite all the problems. The back section of the exhaust was the first thing to go, prompting a Scorpion replacement for £500. The big-end shells failing caused the first engine rebuild, and the crankshaft was responsible for the second. And for a while it would pop out of fifth gear.

'It was blinding on back roads, though, which may explain why the tyres only ever lasted 12-16,000 miles...

'The Integrale gave me some cherished memories: I've really got to find another one.'

upgrades required for the stages were also applied to the showroom models. Well, to a degree... The wide-arched 182bhp Integrale 8-valve replaced the HF 4WD in late '87; within 18 months it gained a new engine with twice the number of valves and 197bhp. Together with wider wheels, bigger brakes and a torque split that favoured the rear wheels, this was the Integrale 16v.

In October 1991 the Evoluzione arrived, with an even wider track, new front suspension and a revised rear set-up. This demanded fatter wheelarches, and the Integrale looked more stunning than ever. A remap resulted in 207bhp, while the interior got a Momo wheel and Alcantara upholstery.

What we now call the Evo II rocked up in June 1993. In reality it was an Evoluzione with a cat, plus a new turbocharger that helped raise power to 212bhp to counter the effects

*'IT WAS CLEAR THE EVO II WOULD BE A LEGEND, AND OWNERS HAVE CARED FOR THEM ACCORDINGLY'*

## IN THE CLASSIFIEDS

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» 1990</li> <li>» 16-valve</li> <li>» 92,000 miles</li> <li>» Monza Red, very good service history, stored for a few years, excellent</li> <li>» <a href="http://walkers-garage.co.uk">walkers-garage.co.uk</a></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» 1993</li> <li>» Evo I</li> <li>» 87,000 miles</li> <li>» White, black leather interior, air-conditioning, electric sunroof</li> <li>» <a href="http://lancia.org.uk">lancia.org.uk</a></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» 1995</li> <li>» Evo II</li> <li>» 79,000 miles</li> <li>» Lord Blue, beige Alcantara interior, air-conditioning, ABS, alarm</li> <li>» <a href="http://lancia.org.uk">lancia.org.uk</a></li> </ul> |
|---|--|---|

£9995

£14,995

£19,495

of the exhaust cleanser. It also got 16in alloys, up from 15s. A number of special editions, which were nothing more than different paint colours and some stickers, followed before the Integrale was phased out in 1994.

Although all four-wheel-drive Deltas are fun, the pick of the bunch is the Evo II. Last-of-the-line models aren't always the best, but this one is. And it has an added benefit: from the outset it was clear that the Evo II would be a legend, and most owners have cared for them accordingly – a fact that is, of course, reflected in the prices...





**Lamborghini Murcielago LP 640**  
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**Lamborghini Murcielago V12 Coupe**  
2002/02, 42,000 miles,  
£79,995



**Lamborghini Gallardo Spyder E Gear Convertible**  
07/57, 10,800 miles,  
£89,995



**Lamborghini Gallardo V10 Spyder Performante Convertible**  
07/57, 14,000 miles,  
£92,995



**Lamborghini Gallardo Spyder**  
06/56, 11,000 miles  
£85,995



**Lamborghini Gallardo V10 Coupe LHD**  
06/06, 8,000 miles  
£85,995



**Lamborghini Gallardo Coupe**  
06/56, 8,000 miles,  
£80,000



**Lamborghini Gallardo V10 Scissor Doors**  
2004, 18,000 miles,  
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**Lamborghini Gallardo V10 Coupe**  
High Spec, 06/06, 24,000 miles,  
£77,990



**Lamborghini Gallardo V10 Coupe**  
High Spec, 04/04, 12,000 miles,  
£66,995



**Lamborghini Gallardo V10 Coupe LHD**  
High Spec, 2005, 11,000 miles,  
£69,995



**Gallardo V10 Coupe**  
2004, 22,000 miles,  
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**Lamborghini Gallardo V10 Coupe**  
High Spec, 2005, 28,000 miles,  
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**Lamborghini Gallardo V10 Coupe, High Spec**  
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## Bentley Continental GTC Supersport



2010/10, 4,100 miles, Yellow/ Black With Yellow piping, R/cam, Big Spec,..... £150,000

## Bentley Continental GTC's



2007 - 2011 Model's, choice of four cars in stock, all with FSH from,..... £69,999

## Bentley Continental GT Speed's



2008-2010, choice of four low mileage examples in stock from, ... £82,999 - £109,999

## Bentley Azure



2006/56, 11,600 miles, Blk with Blk quilted lthr 20" Brooklands alloys,..... £114,999

## Bentley Continental Coupe's



2004-2010 Model's, choice of 15 in stock, all with FSH, from,..... £39,999 - £109,999

## Maserati Granturismo V8 S MC



2009/09, 13,000 miles, Silver with Black leather, crested seats, ipod, sat nav, £69,999

## Porsche 997 C2 S Gen 2 Convertible



2008/08, 31,000 miles, Black/Black, T/S Nav, Bluetooth, iPod, Bose sound,..... £51,999

## Bentley Arnage T, Green/Red Label



1998-2007 Models, Choice of Eight in stock, all with FSH from,..... £29,999 - £82,999

Lexus RX 450H, 2009/59, 11,013 miles, Hybrid, Black with Black leather, Reverse camera,..... £36,999  
 Ferrari 550 LHD, 1999 MD 29,000 miles, Black with Tan leather,..... £P.O.A  
 Ferrari 599 GTB LHD, 2007/07, 8,100, Grigio Silver, Cream leather Carbon trim, 1 owner,..... £139,950  
 Porsche Cayenne GTS/Turbo, 2008 - 2009 Models From,..... £42,999  
 Mercedes CL65 AMG Bi-Turbo 6.0L, 2004/04, 45,000 miles, Silver with Black leather, 2 owners,..... £32,500  
 Aston Martin DB9, Choice from, ..... £44,999  
 Maybach 57, 2003, 35,800 miles, Caspian Black with cream leather, Rear screens, navigation system, .. £80,000  
 Bentley Continental T Wide Body, 2002, 31,800 miles, Black with Black leather, Aluminium dash,..... £85,000  
 Flying Spur, 2005 - 2011 Models, choice of four cars in stock, all with FSH from..... £54,999

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# evo Just Looking

DRIVING THE CARS IN THE CLASSIFIEDS

## BMW Z1 £23,949

**Vendor** Dick Lovett Ferrari, Swindon, SN5 7XR  
www.dicklovett.co.uk 01793 615000

Only 75 BMW Z1s were sold new in the UK, making them a rare sight in this country. Most of the 8000 built were sold in Germany, which is where this car was first delivered before coming into the UK in 1990.

Parked outside Dick Lovett's BMW showroom, it still looks pretty contemporary. The red paint helps it stand out, but it's the doors that drop down into the sills that really make it look so unique. It's surprising how small the Z1 is, too. Measuring less than 4m from nose to tail and just 1.69m wide, it's some 30cm shorter and 10cm narrower than today's Z4. As the Z1 was made only in LHD, meaning you have to drive it from the 'wrong' side of the cabin in the UK, this is a major advantage.

This particular car has been in a collection for the last few years, covering only 190 miles since July 2007, when it was last serviced. It will receive a full service before it's delivered to its new owner, but there didn't appear to be any issues with it mechanically on my test drive.

Driving with the doors down is pretty draughty but a unique experience, a bit like driving a beach buggy. The punch from the silky smooth 2.5-litre straight-six isn't that strong by today's standards (0-62mph in 7.9sec), but who cares when it's accompanied by a wonderful old-school BMW rasp from the exhaust. Harry Metcalfe



Above: Z1 a rare sight in the UK. Right: left-hand drive only, but narrow width means it isn't a problem. Below: 2.5 straight-six has just 171bhp, but sounds great



### SPECIFICATION

**Year** 1989  
**Mileage** 29,360  
**Engine** In-line 6-cyl, 2494cc  
**Max power** 171bhp @ 5800rpm  
**Max torque** 164lb ft @ 4000rpm  
**0-62mph** 7.9Sec (claimed)  
**Top speed** 136mph (claimed)

### SUMMARY

#### EXTERIOR

» All the body panels are made of 'thermoplastic', so rust is never a problem

#### INTERIOR

» Driver's seat is a little baggy and there's some scuffing on the leather on the driver's doorsill, but otherwise in good condition

#### MECHANICALS

» OK on our test drive, and will get a thorough service before delivery

#### VERDICT

» A quirky choice, but it's well-built and those disappearing doors make it unique

### ALSO FROM THIS DEALER

**MORGAN AERO 8** £59,950, '07, 28,512 miles

» Silver, grey leather, facelift model

**FORD GT** £139,950, '07, 6339 miles

» Black, 600bhp, Acufab exhaust



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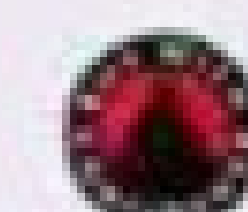
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# evo Just Looking

DRIVING THE CARS IN THE CLASSIFIEDS

## PORSCHE 911 TURBO SE CABRIOLET c£100,000

**Vendor** Bramley Motors, nr Guildford, Surrey  
www.bramleyweb.co.uk 0844 8227917

There is, so I'm told, an '80s revival going on at the moment, and it would be hard to find a car that screamed that decade more than this flatnose 911 Turbo in Carrara White. This is one of only nine genuine factory flatnose right-hand-drive cars built for the UK market. The Flachbau ('slantnose') looks won't be to everyone's taste but there is definitely something mesmerising about the extravagant gills in the rear arches, the gorgeous Fuchs alloys and the cartoonish tabletop of a rear wing.

It wasn't just the looks that changed over the standard 930 Turbo either. The SE had a hike in power too, thanks to a larger KKK turbo, high-lift cams, a larger intercooler and a sports exhaust (with four tailpipes). This took the output up by 30bhp to 330bhp, dropped the 0-60mph time to 4.9sec and raised the top speed to 171mph.

Despite being absolutely spotless and only having had three owners from new, the asking price still seems like strong money. However, with such rarity allied to the propensity for old Porsches to go up in value, it probably wouldn't be too bad an investment. It'll certainly be a better tribute to the '80s than wandering around in a pair of red braces.

Henry Catchpole



None more '80s... And because it's one of the last of the line (930 production stopped in 1989) this is one of the few 930s to have a G50 5-speed manual 'box



### SPECIFICATION

**Year** 1989  
**Mileage** 32,300  
**Engine** Flat-six, 3299cc turbocharged  
**Max power** 330bhp @5500rpm  
**Max torque** 318lb ft @ 4000rpm  
**0-60mph** 4.9sec (claimed)  
**Top speed** 171mph (claimed)

### SUMMARY

#### EXTERIOR

» Immaculate all round, with even the fabric roof looking very tidy

#### INTERIOR

» Similarly spotless – even the driver's side seat bolsters are barely marked

#### MECHANICALS

» With such a low mileage and all the MOT certificates dating back to 1993, there shouldn't be any serious worries

#### VERDICT

» If you think a woman looks at her best in shoulder pads, then this is the car for you

### ALSO FROM THIS DEALER

**BMW M3 SALOON** £31,995, '08, 33,700 miles  
» Black metallic, manual, high spec, keen price  
**FERRARI 599 GTB** £122,995, '08, 11,300 miles  
» Grigio Silverstone with tan, discreet supercar

## Simon Furlonger

SPECIALIST CARS



### Lamborghini Gallardo Spider £94,990

Nov 2007, 2,717 Miles

This stunning Lamborghini has been cherished from new by its 2 owners. Fully serviced by Lamborghini main dealers it has been kept as an occasional toy rather than a daily driver as so many Gallardo's. Finished in 'stealthy' Grigio telesto with Nero hide and Silver stitching.



### Porsche Carrera GT £289,990

2005, 8,738 Miles

Porsche's first limited production supercar since 959 production stopped in 1988. GT Silver with Black leather interior. Options: 6 point harnesses, 3 point reel seat belts, Porsche Online Pro sound system, Yellow calipers and Porsche car cover. No. 501 out of 1,270, an appreciating Supercar.

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**F50**  
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**Gumpert Apollo**  
2007, 5,698 miles  
£249,990



**430 16M**  
2009, 3,674 miles  
£164,990



**360 Spider F1**  
2004, 15,000 miles  
£62,990



**599 GTB**  
2007, 10,687 miles  
£119,990





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**ALCON REPLACEMENT NISSAN GT-R (R35) DISCS**  
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Specifically designed to work with the existing Brembo caliper, these new 400mm Alcon discs for the R35 Nissan GT-R have been developed in conjunction with leading performance specialist Litchfield.

Although 10mm larger in diameter than the OE disc, the Alcon item is lighter. Other features include crescent grooves, which Litchfield claims deliver the bite of drilled discs without durability problems, plus a reduced tendency to judder due to the floating disc system



**WOLFRACE SLOT-MAG**  
**£123.95 EACH WWW.WOLFRACE.CO.UK**

One of the most famous wheel designs of the '70s makes a comeback this year: the Wolfrace Slot-Mag. The 'new' Slot-Mag has a cover plate hiding the the bolt holes, plus a choice between the classic silver or a new black finish, both with a stainless steel lip. The only downside is the comparatively small size on offer: 7 x 15in



**K-TEC MÉGANE 2 UPATED BUSHES**  
**£166.80 PER PAIR WWW.K-TECRACING.COM**

The Renaultsport versions of the mk2 Mégane are popular used-car choices for their pace and balance – something K-tec is pushing further with a number of performance parts. Having noticed worn lower-arm bushes on customer cars, the Renault tuning specialist has developed these uprated alternatives. Elsewhere, it has also engineered a new twin-core alloy radiator for cars with power upgrades. It's the same size as the original but adds 50 per cent surface area with a twin-core matrix. Clever stuff



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» With a reputation for making the best exhaust systems for high-end performance cars, Akrapovic now makes them for some cheaper sporty models too, such as the Abarth 500.

Constructed from stainless steel, with carbonfibre sleeves for the tailpipes a no-cost option, this £992 system features an optional wireless control fob (£552) that can open a bypass valve to subtly change the exhaust note.

The Akrapovic system only saves 3kg and the claimed output increases are a modest 3bhp and 4lb ft. However, I decided to take my 500 to Alfa/Fiat/Abarth specialist AHM in Hampshire, not only to fit the Akrapovic, but to get rolling road power readings both pre- and post-install and after getting a custom remap complete with high-flow air filter panel (£495).

The results were surprising: 156bhp and 179lb ft as standard (Abarth claims just 135bhp and 152 lb ft), rising to 163bhp and 185lb ft with the Akrapovic and finally a whopping 190bhp and 232lb ft with the remap and filter.



The result is a hilariously quick pocket-rocket with enough low and mid-range torque to embarrass many a grown-up hot hatch, accompanied by a deliciously snarly, meaty exhaust rasp, with pops and bangs on the overrun. At over £2000 all-in, this combo isn't cheap, but it's great fun. **David Yu**

**ASK THE EXPERT**

**Q** I've just finally bitten the bullet and bought a £1000 BMW E30 3-series. It's a slightly ragged old thing that's going to become my track and occasional B-road toy. With a budget of £300 to spend on modifying it to suit, where do you recommend I put my money?

**Craig Wickham, Norwich**



Stripping a car's cabin is a free modification

**A** Trackdays punish cars, making them run flat-out for long periods, so it's vital to ensure things like the cooling system, engine mounts and fuel system work properly. Fully service the engine beforehand and use the best quality oil, but don't worry about tuning the engine for more power – you are not in a race and it will just put more strain on it.

As ever, tyre choice is critical, but in a very different way to a racing car. A fun track car needs durable tyres that give consistent handling and let you play all day, and it is easier to learn your track craft with tyres that break away controllably rather than race tyres that will grip more but break away faster. Some people have had good results buying part-worn performance road tyres.

Next on the list are the brakes. Heavy repeated braking builds ferocious heat, so race-spec brake fluid and pads will prevent catastrophic fade. With a low budget, use new standard discs but avoid fakes.

Stripping the interior is always a favourite – it's amazing how little difference it makes to performance, but the weight saving reduces strain on the car, and it's free!

On your budget you are unlikely to get a lowered suspension kit, but a pair of stiffer front dampers will make a big difference.

The best advice, however, is to spend as much time and money as you can on checking and replacing worn parts to make your car as reliable as possible – a broken car is no fun at all.

**Ralph Hosier**





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**MEGUIAR'S HEADLIGHT RESTORATION KIT**  
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**AUTOGLYM CUSTOM WHEEL CLEANER**  
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Claimed to safely dissolve brake dust from chrome, polished aluminium and anodised wheels thanks to an acid-free formulation of chemicals. The kit contains 1 litre of wheel cleaner plus two brushes, and works a treat



**DRAPER FLEXI INSPECTION CAMERA**  
 £188.98 [WWW.DRAPER.CO.UK](http://WWW.DRAPER.CO.UK)

This camera is the perfect tool for looking behind dashboards and door panels or viewing inside an engine to check wear. It has a 2.4in TFT inspection screen and waterproof 1-metre flexible probe. It'll even allow you to record what the camera sees

**TRIED & TESTED**

**HALFORD PROFESSIONAL 150PC SOCKET/RATCHET BOX SET**  
 £129.99 [WWW.HALFORDS.COM](http://WWW.HALFORDS.COM)

» Thirteen years ago when I started out as a journalist, my daily hack was a 1973 VW Transporter van. Without fail it broke down every day, making commuting a miserable and somewhat labour-intensive task.

Staunch car DIYers like to scorn Halfords, but it became my Sunday-afternoon saviour – not least when I splashed out on this 150-piece 'Professional' socket/ratchet set. At my peril would I leave home without it.

Looking like an '80s briefcase (but plastic rather than faux leather), it contains almost everything required to tweak a car to health or limp back from the hard shoulder: Allen keys, open and ring spanners, extension bars, spark plug sockets, Torx bits and even imperial sockets for when my taste changed to American V8 dinosaurs.

To this day I rely on it, and have never needed to test its lifetime guarantee. All generously coated in chrome vanadium, the ratchet ring spanners are particularly tactile. When I swapped the VW for a 1975 mk1 Ford Granada, the slim set lived permanently beneath the



driver's seat. That's its beauty, the case is a Tardis of a thing. All of this for £130. Eat your heart out Snap-on...  
 Jonny Smith

**ASK THE EXPERT**

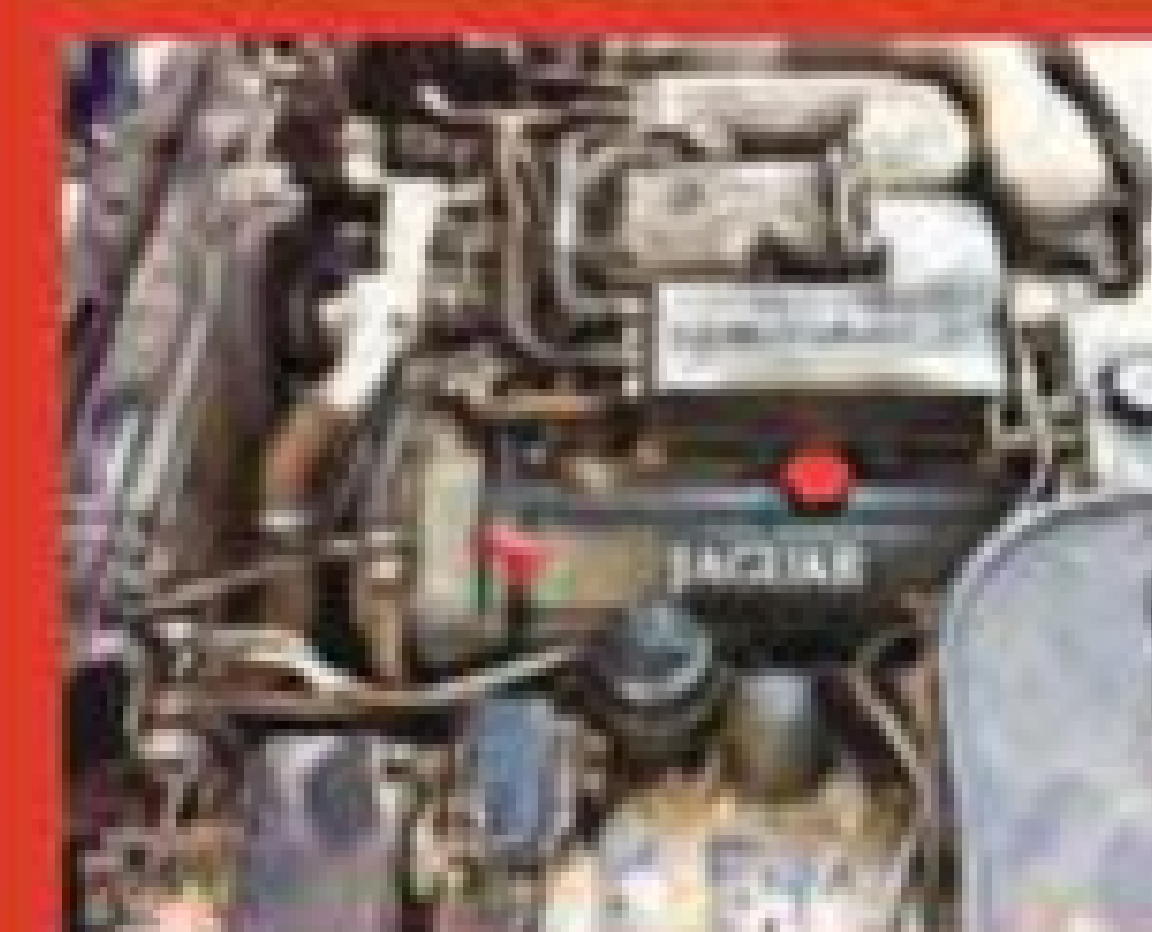
**Q** What are the tricks for cleaning an engine? I'm always nervous of which products to use and whether jet washing is a good idea.  
 David Long, Droitwich

**A** First ensure that anything electrical (fuse boxes, distributors, coils, etc) is covered or avoided. Cover air intakes too. I use small bags, latex gloves and elastic bands.

The engine should be warm but not hot – cleaning a hot engine with cold water causes condensation.

Apply an engine degreaser to the worst areas first so it can penetrate early, but avoid getting any on paintwork as it will need to be re-waxed. I use a soft-bristle brush to agitate heavily soiled areas.

Once the engine is covered you can



With care and time, even the grubbiest engine (left) can be turned into something spotless (below)



begin pressure washing it. Avoid high pressure water on bearings, linkages and any electrical connections and show environmental consideration to water run-off – dispose of it sensibly.

Once cleaned and dried, re-grease the relevant moving parts with something like GT85, which contains Teflon.

If you don't use a pressure washer then brushes, microfibre cloths and degreasers can still be used but results may not be as satisfactory and the whole process takes much more time.  
 Richard Tipper

» Richard Tipper of [www.perfectiondetailing.co.uk](http://www.perfectiondetailing.co.uk) has been detailing cars professionally for 22 years.



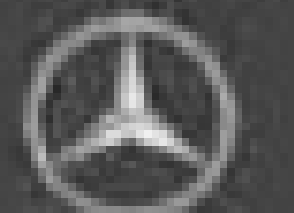
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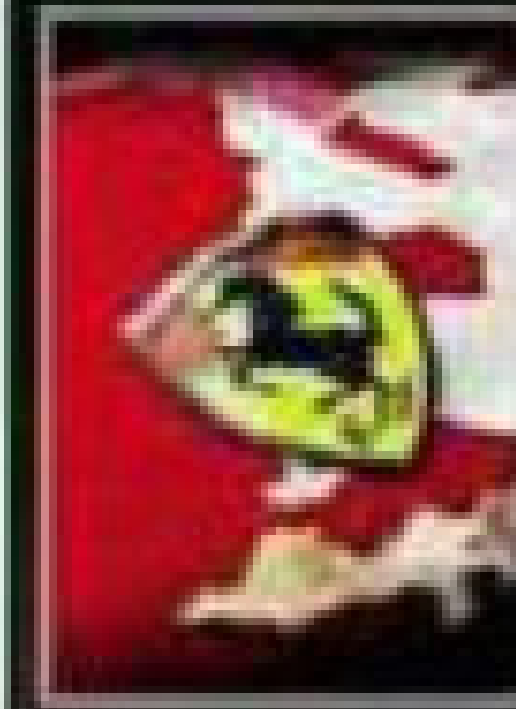
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Remember the GT1 version of the Nissan GT-R that we tried in issue 156? A real one will set you back around half a million pounds, but you can get your hands on this 1/10th-scale radio-controlled Tamiya version for a tiny fraction of that. It hasn't got a V8 under the bonnet, but it has got four-wheel drive, slick tyres and the correct Sumo Power livery



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If the big-screen release of *Cars 2* has got your children obsessed with Pixar's four-wheeled creations again, then you've got the perfect excuse to stage your own World Grand Prix races with these Scalextric models of Lightning McQueen and his new arch rival, Francesco Bernoulli. All for the benefit of the kids, obviously

T-SHIRTS

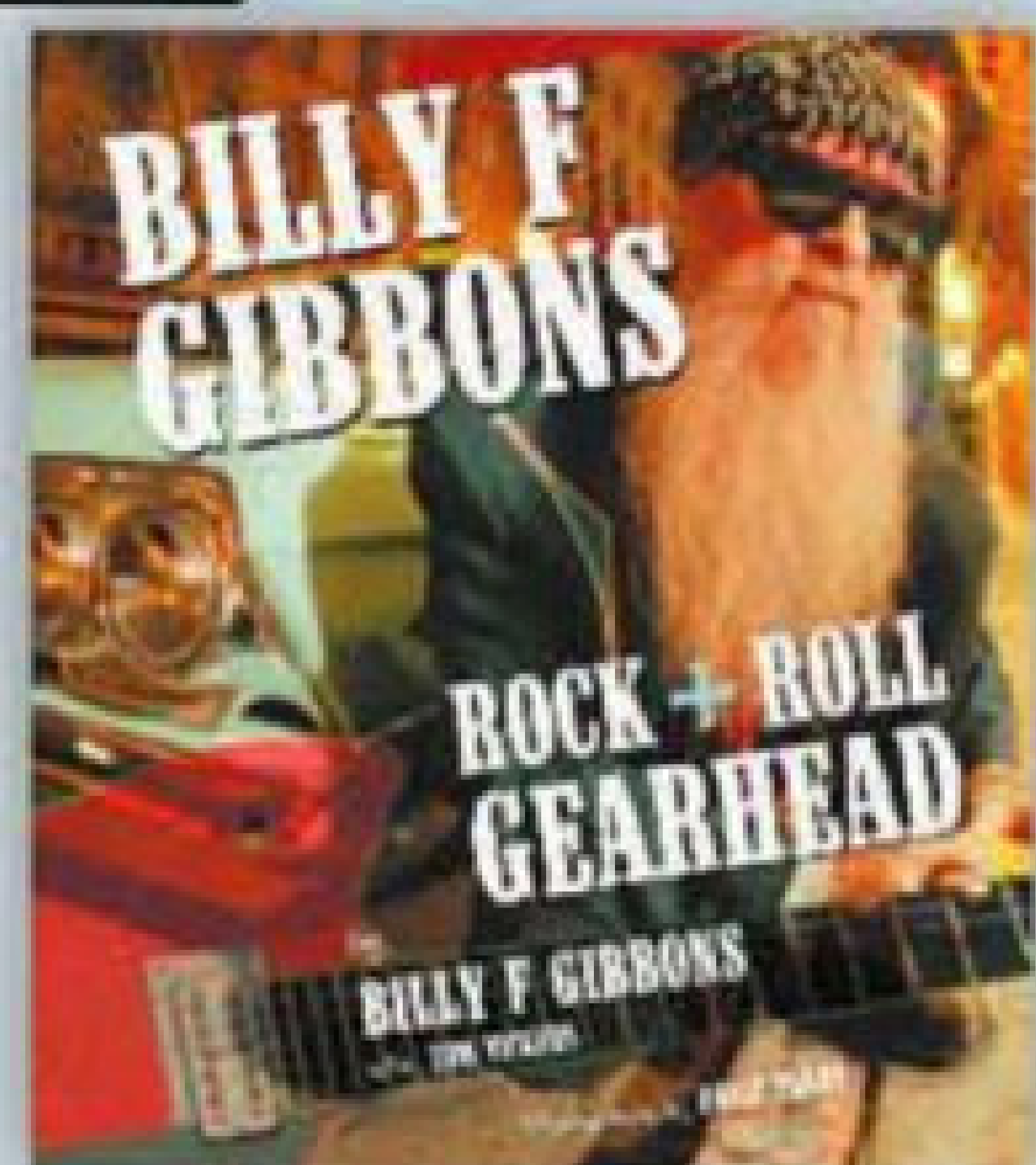


**M3 TEE £20**  
 PETROLTHREADS.COM  
 Check The Knowledge in the back of this magazine and you'll see that we still rate the E30 BMW M3 as the best M-car ever. If you're of the same mind and want to let the world know, this T-shirt showing the 1980s icon in all its glory is a must



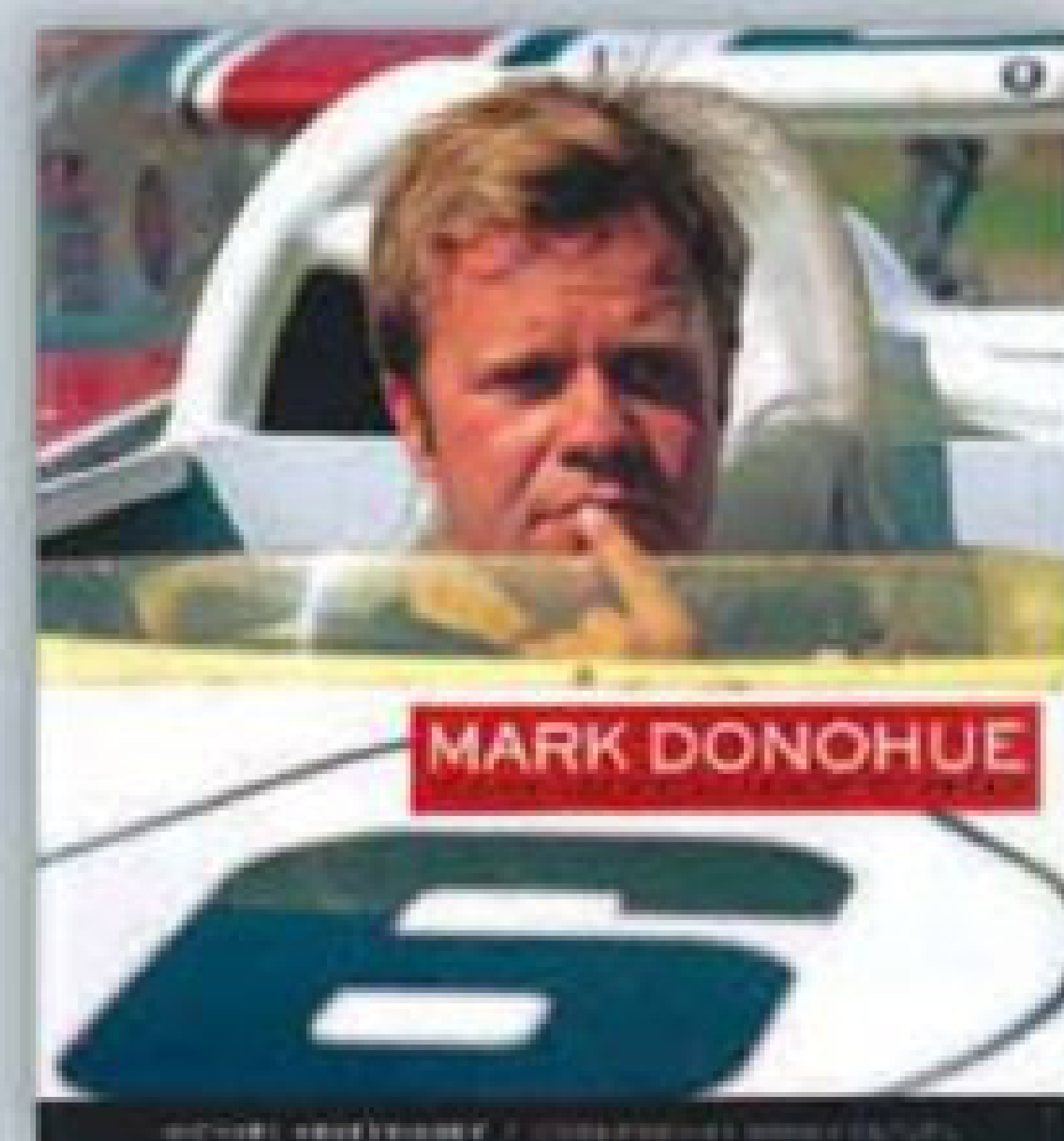
**PORSCHE 911 DUCKTAIL**  
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 PEOPLE/SUPERSNAPPER  
 That enormous bench on the back of the new GT3 RS 4.0 is all well and good, but the coolest 911 spoiler surely remains the 1970s 'ducktail'. This T-shirt from renowned Porsche snapper Antony Fraser shows one from its best angle and is available in nine different colours

BOOKS



**BILLY F GIBBONS: ROCK & ROLL GEARHEAD** £16.99

WWW.AMAZON.CO.UK  
 Billy F Gibbons is perhaps best known for being the singer and lead guitarist in ZZ Top, but he's also a collector of customised cars. In this book, co-written with Tom Vickers, he tells the stories behind ten of them, from his lowered and louvred 325i Cabriolet to CadZZilla, the Boyd Coddington-modified 1948 Cadillac Sedanette, and not forgetting, of course, the Eliminator Coupe, the red 1933 Ford that starred in several of the band's 1980s videos. Fans of ZZ Top's music will also enjoy Gibbons' recollections about the history of the group and the close-up look at more of his treasured 'gear': his collection of personalised guitars



**MARK DONOHUE: TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE AT SPEED** £29.99

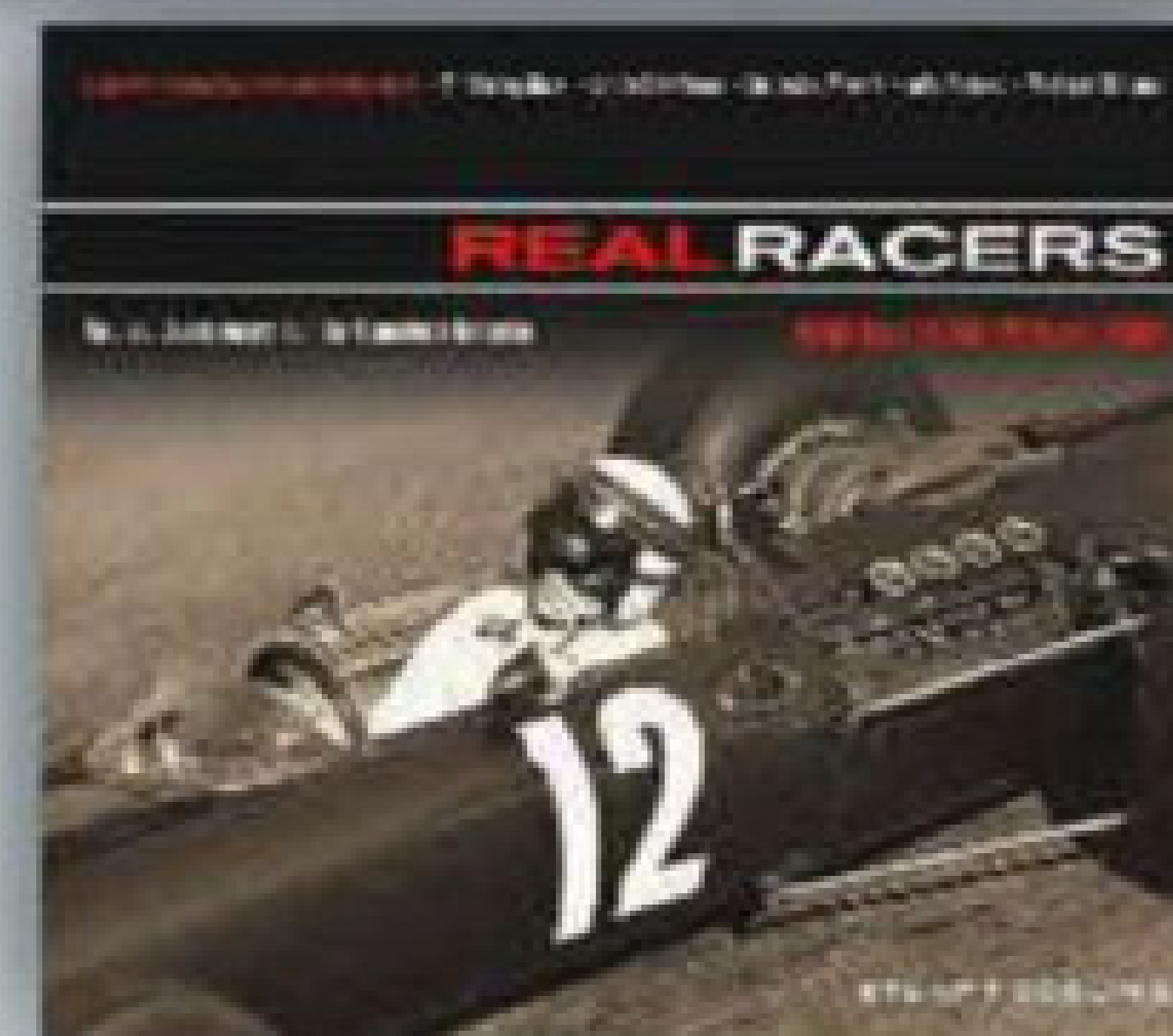
WWW.HAYNES.CO.UK  
 The man was undoubtedly a hero. Mark Donohue dominated Can-Am racing in the early '70s in the fearsome Porsche 917/30, won the Indy 500, lapped Talladega at over 221mph and once said he would only have too much horsepower once 'the tyres are spinning in top gear at the end of the straightaway'. This thorough biography by Michael Argetsinger has a foreword by Donohue's long-time boss, Roger Penske, and tracks the rapid changes in technology at the time. However, Donohue's death in practice for the 1974 Austrian GP tragically highlights the danger too.

BOOK OF THE MONTH

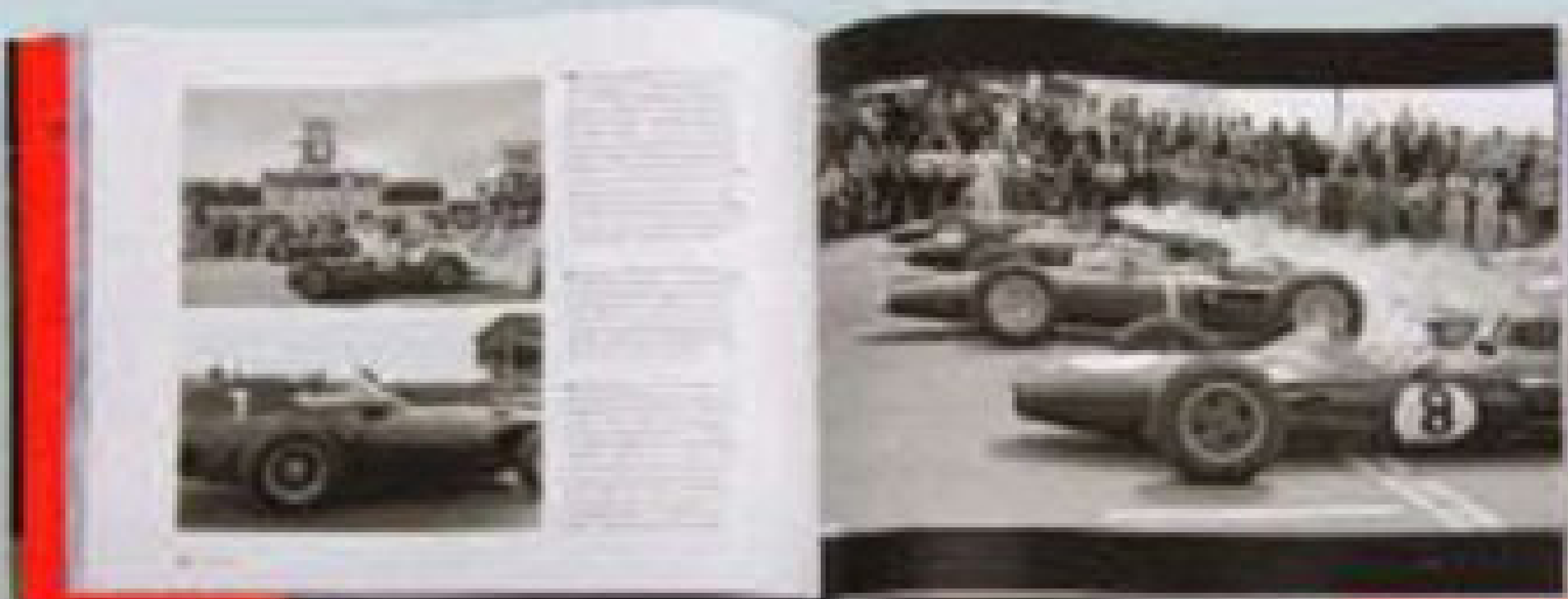


**REAL RACERS: FORMULA 1 RACING IN THE 1950s AND 1960s** £27.50

WWW.AMAZON.CO.UK  
 'A driver's perspective.' That's the angle of this excellent new book by Stuart Codling on what, for many, remains the golden age of motorsport. Tellingly, very few drivers of that era survived to tell their tale. Here, insightful contributions from the likes of Moss, Stewart and Surtees, contemporary quotes from Bruce McLaren and Graham Hill, and page



after page of quite brilliant images from the Klemantaski Collection transport you back to the days when mechanics smoked fags while refuelling the cars and drivers genuinely put their lives on the line every time they got into the cockpit. You'll wish you'd been there too.



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**YELLA PERIL**  
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 WWW.SLICKATTIRE.COM  
 Since it first arrived on the endurance racing scene in 2005, the thunderous Chevrolet Corvette C6.R has had spectators reaching for their earplugs at ALMS and FIA GT races, and, of course, at the 24 hours of Le Mans. Here this mighty Vette is celebrated in a suitably wild and caricaturish style by the good people at Slick Attire



## CATCHPOLE'S VIEW

### 'AS THE TAGLINE SAYS, IT'S ABOUT THE THRILL OF DRIVING'

Just occasionally you might have seen extreme ironing make it into the press (and by press I mean the daily newspapers or the six o'clock news, although I'm sure there's a more regular *Extreme Ironing Monthly* magazine that will appear on *Have I Got News For You* at some point). But in case you're not familiar with the sport, it involves putting a crease down the front of some chinos while halfway up a mountain, or flattening a shirt whilst bobbing down the Amazon. Odd, I know, but whatever lights your candle, as they say.

Anyway, I imagine that an extreme ironer could appreciate, possibly even enjoy a new Russell Hobbs Steam 2000 in the kitchen or the front room at home (or perhaps more likely, halfway up the ladder to the loft), but it wouldn't be the full package. Location is, I think, a crucial element for the extreme ironer.

And so it is for me and cars. I enjoy the occasional motor show and, if offered the chance to potter a McLaren F1 around Sainsbury's car park, I would grab it with both hands, because I love cars. But this magazine is not just about cars, it is, as the tagline says, about the thrill of driving, and for me that means car and road together.



Henry Catchpole  
Features editor



## GREAT DRIVES

# COL DE TURINI

Made famous by the Monte Carlo Rally, this 1600m-high, hairpin-packed pass is a must-drive if you're in south-east France

**E**ven if you've never been to the Col de Turini before you're likely to recognise it instantly on your first visit, because whenever a director or producer says 'get me hairpins, lots of hairpins' this corner of southern France tends to be where the cameras come to roll.

But it's the Col's long association with rallying that is likely to have more resonance with *evo* readers: this is the most famous tarmac stage in the world. And when the Monte Carlo Rally isn't using various parts of it – and the snow hasn't closed it – it's open to all comers.

Short of a lap of the Nordschleife, there are few bits of driveable tarmac with more motorsport associations than the road that winds its way from Sospel to La Bollène-Vésubie, via the 1600m-high Col de Turini itself. As part of the Monte Carlo Rally, it's seen everything from the wheezy Saab 96

## EVENTS CALENDAR

### JULY

» **23 July** Silverstone Classic Retro Run, Silverstone [www.silverstoneclassic.com](http://www.silverstoneclassic.com)

» **29-31 July** TVR Griff Growl, Stratford-upon-Avon Google 'Griff Growl 2011'

### AUGUST

» **6-7 August** Classic Days Motorfestival, Schloss Dyck, Germany [www.schloss-dyck-classic-days.de](http://www.schloss-dyck-classic-days.de)

» **7 August** Breakfast Club Classic Sunday, Goodwood [goodwood.co.uk/breakfast-club](http://goodwood.co.uk/breakfast-club)

» **12-14 August** Club Lotus Show and Festival, Donington Park [www.clublotus.co.uk](http://www.clublotus.co.uk)

MORE EVENTS AT  
[WWW.EVO.CO.UK/EVENTS](http://WWW.EVO.CO.UK/EVENTS)

## UPCOMING TRIP

### TRAVEL DESTINATIONS

#### OLDTIMER GRAND PRIX 12-14 AUGUST 2011

» One of the UK's best-known classic and performance car travel operators, Travel Destinations has been arranging tours abroad for over 15 years. Indeed, it is the default tour operator for many Le Mans visitors – this writer included. I have travelled to the 24-hour race many times with Travel Destinations, and every trip has been impeccably organised.

Of particular interest over the next couple of months is Travel Destinations' Oldtimer Grand Prix trip to the Nürburgring. The Oldtimer is an extraordinary event – more than 600 cars competing in 11 races over a weekend on the GP circuit and the Nordschleife. Everything from pre-war Grand Prix racers to Touring Cars of the



'80s compete, with practice, qualifying and racing occurring from Friday to Sunday.

Like the Nürburgring 24-hour race (see [evo.co.uk](http://evo.co.uk) or page 154), the paddock is open to spectators, allowing you to get up close to the action – and

Above: typical action from the Oldtimer Grand Prix at the Ring



that Erik Carlsson drove to victory in 1962 to the fire-breathing Group B monsters of the mid-1980s.

Although the WRC no longer comes here, the Monte being part of the lesser IRC these days, there's no better way to admire the mixture of skill, bravery and a complete lack of imagination that makes up a top-flight rally driver than by coming here and experiencing it for yourself: the upper reaches alternate between rock walls and air-drops.

Because the Col de Turini is regularly cited as one of the greatest driving roads on the planet, you have to pick your timing carefully if you want to enjoy a quiet run at it. During summer – and French holidays – it can get very busy. It's quietest in the early mornings and – if your lights are up to it and you're keen on the purest rally experience – at night.

#### HOW TO GET THERE

» For Brits there's no great navigational challenge in getting to the Col – at least not if your wallet is up to the costs of the dull autoroute schlep from Calais to Nice via Reims and Dijon (you'll need to budget about £85 in tolls).

The easiest way to get to the stage itself is to attack from the south, passing Nice while heading east on the main A8 coastal autoroute and then hacking up from Menton, just before you reach the Italian border. From Menton you take the D2566 north – no mean road in its own right – which will take you to Sospel.

From there you turn west, sticking

to the D2566, and follow signs to Moulinet and La Bollène. Past Moulinet, you'll know when you're on the stage itself when the corners turn black with rubber.

#### WHERE TO STAY

» Sospel is the big town around here – these things being strictly relative – with a couple of tourist-type hotels to stay in plus some *pension* guest houses. Out in the sticks you're more limited, although there's the well-reviewed Hotel Des Trois Vallees at the Col itself – a standard skiing-type chalet – charging about £80 a night off-season.

#### WHO TO GO WITH

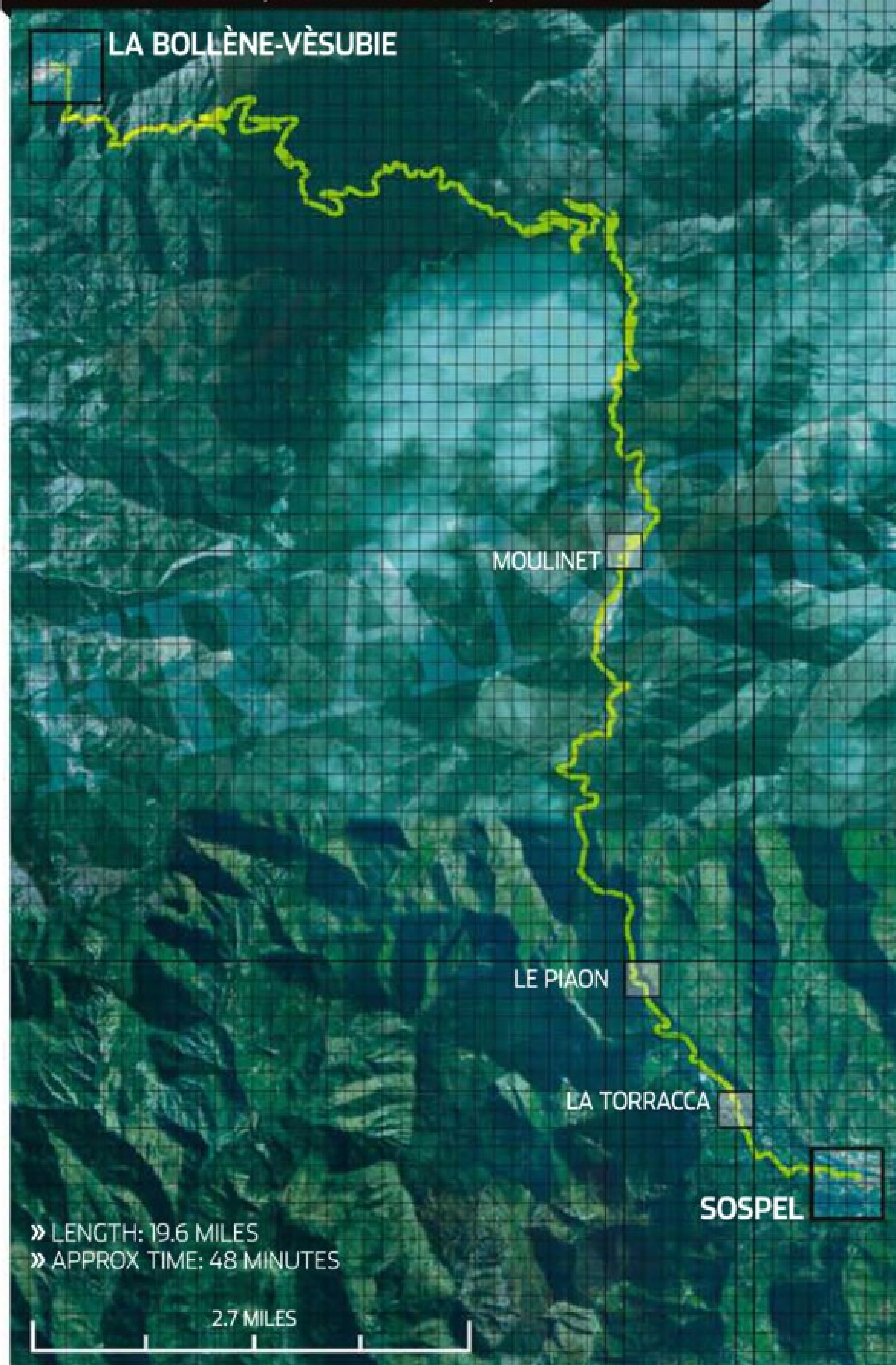
» The Col's accessibility makes it the perfect location for a DIY driving holiday. However, if you fancy heading down with a bunch of likeminded enthusiasts, some UK 'driving adventure' companies include it as part of their itinerary – try the Riviera Adventure from Circuit Days ([www.circuit-days.co.uk](http://www.circuit-days.co.uk))

#### WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

» The road gets very narrow in places and many of the corners are unsighted – look out for low-flying Brits heading in the other direction. The tarmac is mostly smooth but there are bumps and compressions that will catch out low-suspended supercars. And on the long descents brake fade can become an issue in most mortal stuff – it may be best to budget for a new set of pads before heading out.

Mike Duff

#### THE BIT TO DRIVE, TURN AROUND, AND DRIVE AGAIN



Google © Image © 2011 IGN-France Image © 2011 Geoeye Image © 2011 DigitalGlobe

witness the frequent mechanical repairs occurring all weekend. And during the Oldtimer Grand Prix the far end of the paddock is transformed into a car park from the gods – last year over 1000 Porsches and 500 Ferraris were on display.

This year's Oldtimer, the 39th running of the event, also features a special 50th anniversary celebration of the Jaguar E-type. Two dedicated E-type races will occur on track and Travel Destinations is working with Jaguar Heritage in the UK and Germany to provide what it is promising will be 'a memorable occasion for all of our customers'. For 2011, Travel Destinations (a member of both ABTA and ATOL) will be offering camping, hotel and self-catering options at the Oldtimer Grand Prix. Call 0844 873 0203 or visit [www.traveldestinations.co.uk](http://www.traveldestinations.co.uk)

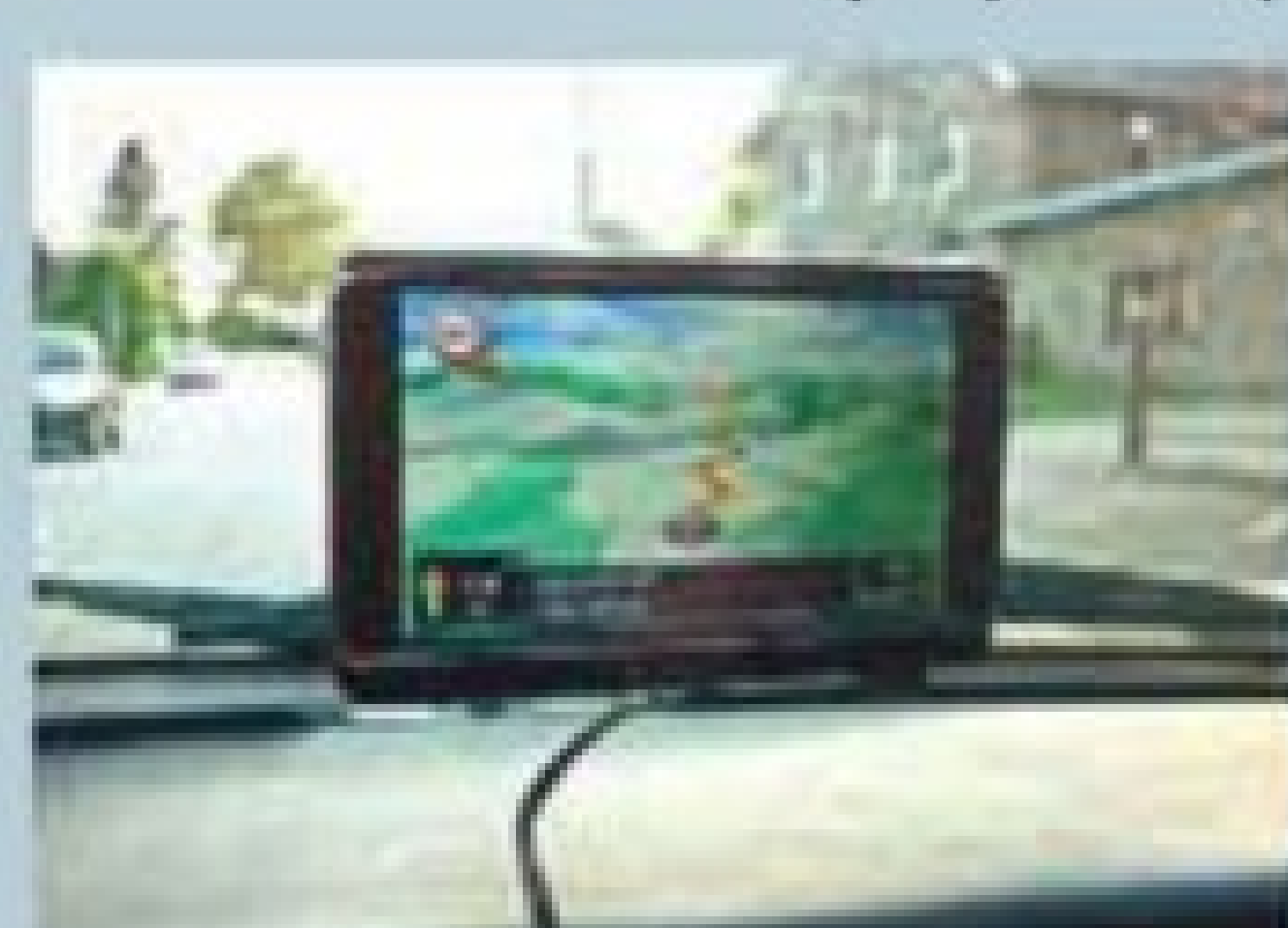
Nick Trott

#### TRIED & TESTED

##### NAVIGON 70 PREMIUM £179.99 [WWW.NAVIGON.COM](http://WWW.NAVIGON.COM)

» The Navigon 70 Premium has a few nifty features to help it stand out. Headline grabbers are its 3D panorama views, Bluetooth connectivity, voice command, 44-country European mapping and a sightseeing option, which can guide you round a city's highlights.

But the bits that impressed us were a little simpler. Parking assistance that displays car parks close to your destination.



Easy-to-read petrol, parking and food distances when you're on a long journey. And the best lane assistant we've yet seen – one that guides you to the correct lane in 3D and proved invaluable on unfamiliar roads,



especially abroad. Best of all, a hi-res 4.3in widescreen makes it all a doddle to follow while still keeping an eye on the road.

At under £180, it shames just about every car maker's factory-fit system.

Stephen Dobie

HAVE A PRODUCT FOR US TO REVIEW? CONTACT [TRIED&TESTED@EVO.CO.UK](mailto:TRIED&TESTED@EVO.CO.UK)





## YOUR ROAD TRIP STELVIO PASS ON A BUDGET

What happens when a group of friends fly to Italy, rent identical Fiat 500s and head for the Stelvio Pass? A road trip to remember...

I'm sure many evo readers have felt childlike excitement in the run up to a European road trip, but the return leg from somewhere like the Ring or Spa is invariably a ball-ache of endless Autobahn and miserable, unplanned passengers trying to repatriate their broken track toys. If only there were a quicker, cheaper, risk-free way of getting to the best driving roads in Europe...

And so emerged a sketchy plan involving a no-frills flight to Milan, Fiat 500 rental cars and a route map up to the legendary Stelvio Pass. It didn't matter that we weren't in snarling snot-green 911 GT3s; here were a dozen chums in equally matched motors that could not have been more quintessentially Italian. Sure, you had to flog their 68 horses hard uphill, but every one of the 48 first-gear switchbacks was an absolute hoot.

Our overnight adventure to Stelvio (including flights, hotel, car hire, petrol and paninis) cost less than the typical UK trackday. Epic scenery and stunning roads; this is a trip that every petrolhead should tick off. **Darryl Sleath**

### BEEN ON A GREAT ROAD TRIP?

» Send your story and pictures to [yourroadtrip@evo.co.uk](mailto:yourroadtrip@evo.co.uk)



Top: pack of hired 500s look like a road-going one-make series. Above: the Stelvio




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## GREEN'S VIEW

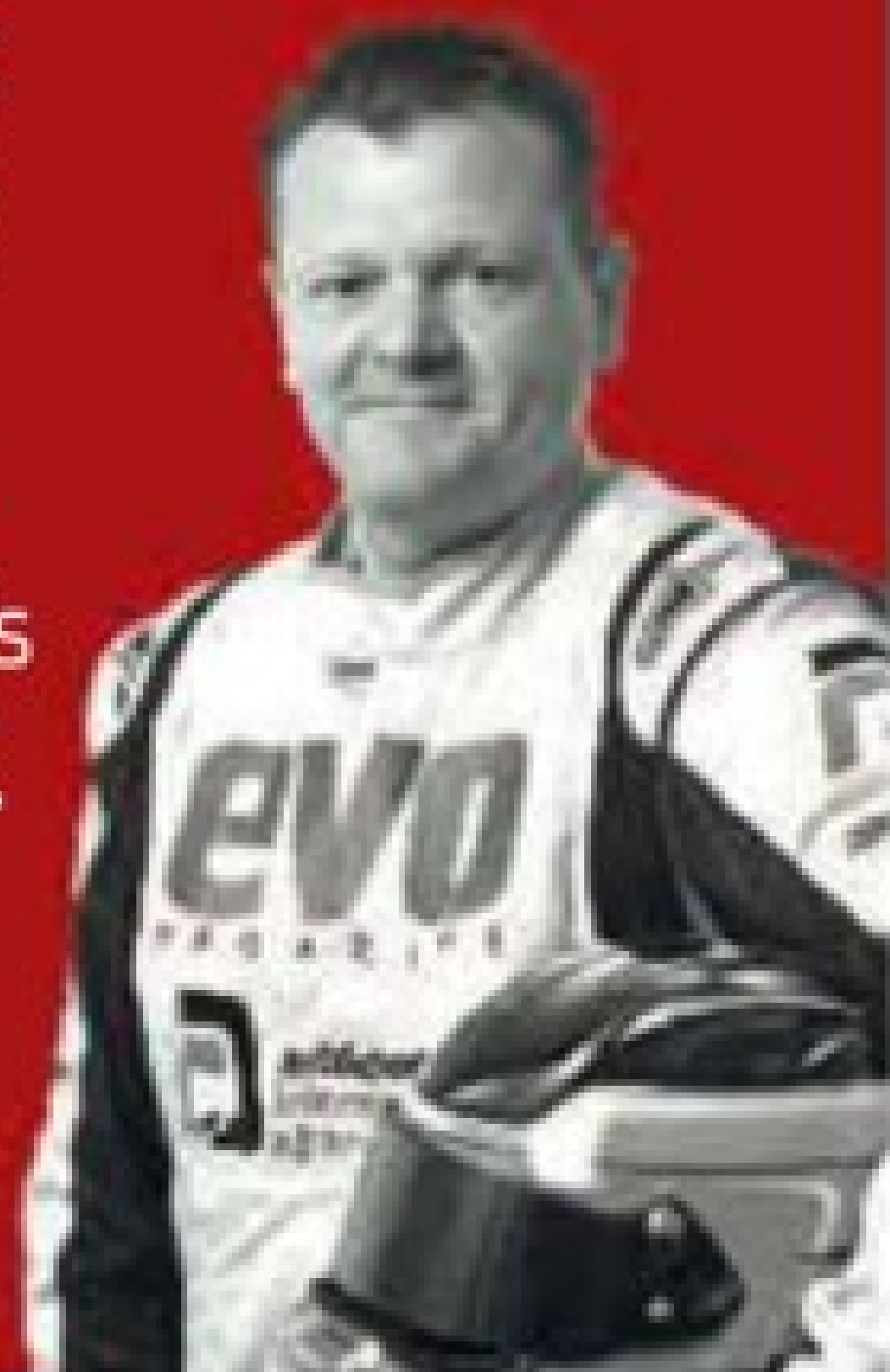
### 'PEUGEOT NEEDS TO TAKE A GOOD, HARD LOOK AT ITSELF'

The dramatic events of the 79th running of Le Mans created lots of headlines, but for all the wrong reasons. That someone wasn't injured or worse was mere luck.

The multitude of huge shunts was created by a combination of the rules and the incredible levels of reliability that have turned the race into a 24-hour sprint. The ACO has seemingly found a way to increase the danger now that the cars themselves are much safer.

Aerodynamics play a big part in all of this. Top speeds in all categories are now very similar, so where inter-category overtaking used to be easy a couple of decades ago, it now happens in the braking and cornering phases, promoting last-minute lunges.

So I reckon the rules need a rethink, and equally Peugeot needs to take a good, hard look at itself. Using lapped cars to repeatedly block the lead Audi in a blatant attempt to allow its only competitive car to catch up was nothing short of disgraceful. The unique French rules may allow it, but at the cost of sporting ethics. It was lucky Peugeot didn't succeed for, if it had, the victory would have been one of the hollower in the history of the race. Let's hope for better in 2012.



**Roger Green**  
Features writer



## PORSCHE WINS N24

Manthey takes fifth 24-hour victory at Ring; evo boys do well too

**T**he last weekend of June saw the 39th running of the Nürburgring 24-hours. Of the 202 starters, 135 finished, the inevitable crashes and mechanical maladies of a round-the-clock race only intensified by the challenging 15.5 miles of the Nordschleife and Nürburgring GP circuit combined.

A Manthey Racing Porsche took overall victory to make it five wins in six years for the private team with manufacturer backing. The 911 RSR (pictured) of Marc Lieb, Lucas Luhr, Timo Bernhard and Romain Dumas led from the race's 7h25m mark to its end, completing a record distance of 156 laps, or nearly 2500 miles.

Bernhard now has a joint-record five N24 wins. One of the drivers with whom he shares that accolade is Pedro Lamy, who drove the winning BMW M3 GT2 last year. This year Lamy's M3 finished 4m23s behind the victorious 911 after a collision with a backmarker, which saw Lamy

attract a three-minute penalty and several minutes of repair work. The Manthey car also suffered a clash with a slower car, but its scuffed splitter was fixed with tape.

evo was represented well again this year. John Barker's Audi Race Experience R8 LMS, with just one of its four drivers a professional racer, finished 18th, climbing 22 places from its starting position. Chris Harris's Porsche 911 GT3 Cup did well too, starting 50th and finishing 20th, despite two of his teammates being unwell overnight. Richard Meaden's car, a works Aston Martin V12 Zagato, qualified 46th but finished 118th after mechanical faults resulting from contact with a car leaving the pits.

In the early stages, our trio of cars held consecutive top-30 positions, Meaden and Harris even sticking to each other throughout a 90-minute race stint as Saturday night fell. Had luck been more on the Zagato's side, we'd have had even more to shout about. **Stephen Dobie**

## EVENTS CALENDAR

### JULY

» **22-24 July** Silverstone Classic, Silverstone  
[www.silverstoneclassic.com](http://www.silverstoneclassic.com)

» **24 July** German GP, Nürburgring  
[www.nurburgringtickets.de/en](http://www.nurburgringtickets.de/en)

» **31 July** Hungarian GP, Budapest  
[www.hungaroinfo.com/formell](http://www.hungaroinfo.com/formell)

### AUGUST

» **28 August** Belgian GP, Spa  
[www.spa-francorchamps.be/en](http://www.spa-francorchamps.be/en)

» **7 August** BTCC, Snetterton  
[www.btcc.net](http://www.btcc.net)

» **27 August** Ruhr-Pokal 6hr, Nürburgring  
[www.nurburgringtickets.de/en](http://www.nurburgringtickets.de/en)

MORE EVENTS AT  
[WWW.EVO.CO.UK/EVENTS](http://WWW.EVO.CO.UK/EVENTS)

## TRIED & TESTED

**ASTON MARTIN V8 VANTAGE GT4 FROM £96,645**  
[WWW.ASTONMARTINRACING.COM](http://WWW.ASTONMARTINRACING.COM)

» Astons have become one of the mainstays of the GT4 category – you see them racing everywhere. In fact there are so many about that they even have their own one-make UK championship, and this is where we tried one.

It's a series designed primarily for the gentleman racer (with pros given extended pit stops), and the cars are perfect for this. With over 420bhp, the 4.7-litre V8 is quick enough to be exciting and it sounds fabulous amplified by the free-flowing exhaust and the stripped and lightened interior (at 1330kg the GT4 is 300kg lighter than the road-going V8 Vantage).

The car is very friendly on the limit, sliding progressively thanks to larger anti-roll bars and adjustable Bilstein dampers, and it can be specified with adjustable systems for



both ABS and traction – handy for less experienced drivers, and also when you're on slicks and it starts raining.

The races run up to three hours in duration, but the cars are not overly physical on a long stint – particularly if you specify the ASM paddleshift gearbox, which suits the racer better than the road car. Overall, then, it's a great way to get into endurance racing – if you have deep enough pockets. **RG**



## TRACK GUIDES: NO. 1

# SNETTERTON

The former American Second World War airbase just outside Norwich underwent a multi-million pound redevelopment over the winter, bringing it up to the recognised international standard and adding a mile to its length. It can now be used in three different configurations, but the full three-mile '300' version is the one that is proving most popular so far, and we've already raced on it.

The changes have effectively added

an infield section, but some of the old corners – such as Coram and Murrays (the renamed Russell) – have also been re-profiled and the whole circuit has been resurfaced, removing some of the bumps and ensuring grip levels are consistent throughout the lap.

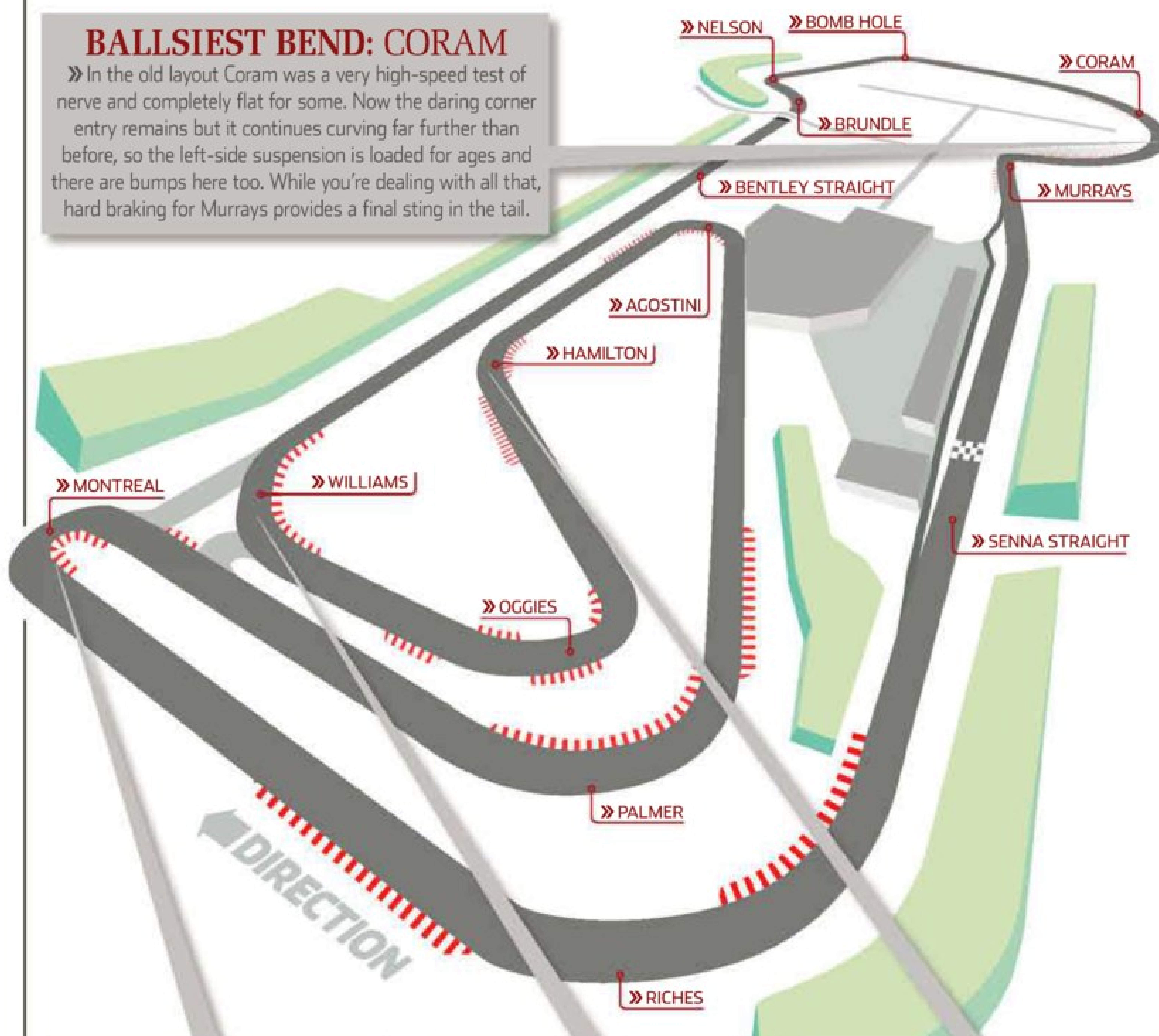
More importantly, the character has remained, and the great mix of fast and technical turns ensures it's challenging whatever your level. And the long back straight, now called

Bentley Straight, still allows very high top-speed scores under the bridge.

The barriers are closer on the infield section than the rest of the lap, but the introduction of a viewing bank just behind the paddock has made the circuit far more spectator friendly, enabling you to see a large percentage of the track from one point. So whether you're a do-er or a viewer, the new Snetterton is well worth checking out. **RG**

### BALLSIEST BEND: CORAM

» In the old layout Coram was a very high-speed test of nerve and completely flat for some. Now the daring corner entry remains but it continues curving far further than before, so the left-side suspension is loaded for ages and there are bumps here too. While you're dealing with all that, hard braking for Murrays provides a final sting in the tail.



### MONTREAL

» The old Sear corner has gone and in its place is a tight hairpin to take you onto the new infield section. Heavy braking is required and it's very easy to outbrake yourself or carry too much speed on turn-in and lose time scrabbling around with understeer.

### WILLIAMS

» Trickier than it first looks because it's vital that you carry maximum speed onto the straight to prevent a following car gaining a benefit that grows all the way to the bridge. Like Hamilton (right), a small touch of the brakes is required and a late apex is key.

### HAMILTON

» Fast left-handers are rare on UK circuits and this one requires the most commitment of all the turns in the new section. Nothing more than a dab of the brakes is required before pitching in, but watch the exit. Don't hold the car too tight, as spins are common here.

## ASK THE EXPERT

**Q** I'm currently looking at investing in a new track toy that I plan on using for circuit racing and the odd hill climb and sprint. I have a budget of around £20K and have been looking at purchasing a Radical – either a Clubsport, SR3 or SR4. However, I'm not sure which one would be the best for me. I want something that's going to be competitive, but more importantly something that I can develop with and won't outgrow within a year or two.

**David Ormerod**



**A** The Clubsport, with its 180bhp 1100cc Kawasaki motor, is the entry-level Radical and at £8-10K it's well within budget and a huge amount of fun. However, production ceased at the end of 2003, so I would suggest looking at something newer and faster.

The SR4 was its successor and here power comes from a 1300cc Suzuki Hayabusa engine tuned to 205bhp. Unlike the Clubsport, it can also take passengers (useful for entertaining sponsors). It has wings but retains the Clubsport's playful, kart-like handling qualities. Production began in 2004 and continues today, so there are plenty to choose from.

The larger SR3 can also be found powered by the same engine, but more common is the Powertec-developed 250bhp, 1500cc version. In your price range you would be looking at a model up to 2006, which was before the bodywork facelift and the new front floor/splitter.

In terms of raw pace, your best bet would be to go for the PR6, a single-seater that looks not unlike the original Clubsport except it comes with big wings, splitters and a rear diffuser, which perfectly complement the F3-spec slick tyres and 1340cc powerplant. It's lighter than an SR3 and is a proper downforce machine.

To get a flavour of the PR6 you can see video footage on [www.evo.co.uk](http://www.evo.co.uk) as I raced one at Donington earlier this year in the Radical Clubman's Cup. **RG**



# evoTrack Battle

HEAD-TO-HEAD LAPS AGAINST THE CLOCK



## PORSCHE 911 GT3 RS 4.0 v MASERATI MC STRADALE

The battle between 911 and GranTurismo continues, this time on track. How will the two compare around the Bedford Autodrome's West Circuit? **Roger Green** finds out





## SPECIFICATIONS

### PORSCHE GT3 RS 4.0

Engine Flat-six, 3996cc  
Power 493bhp @ 8250rpm  
Torque 339lb ft @ 5750rpm  
Weight 1360kg  
0-62mph 3.9sec (claimed)  
Top speed 193mph (claimed)  
Price £128,466

### MASERATI MC STRADALE

Engine V8, 4691cc  
Power 444bhp @ 7100rpm  
Torque 376lb ft @ 4750rpm  
Weight 1770kg  
0-62mph 4.6sec (claimed)  
Top speed 187mph (claimed)  
Price £110,000

**I**t may have been optimised for track work and possess a few extra vents and bulges than lesser Maserati GranTurismos, but the MC Stradale still appears a touch incongruous sitting at the end of the Bedford Autodrome pitlane. It's huge, the largest trackday car I think I've ever seen, and with curves that sweep extravagantly the entire length of its long, svelte body, it's almost too elegant to be here – despite the addenda.

The effect is exaggerated when it's parked up next to a GT3 RS 4.0 that's dressed in white war-paint and wearing a massive rear wing, an aggressively low front splitter and a pair of natty race-spec dive planes. These two machines may harbour the same latent sporting intent but their make-up couldn't be more different. It's like a gentleman racer lined up against a pro.

It's likely to be a one-sided fight, for the Porsche has more than just pitlane presence – it's lighter, more powerful and has been successively honed for just this kind of challenge. But trackdays aren't about raw figures alone, so it's equally important to discover how this pair offer up their lap times, and on that score the Maser can fight back with its classic front/mid-engine layout and one of the sweetest V8 motors you'll find anywhere.

Out on the wide expanses of the West Circuit the Stradale still feels big. It may be 110kg lighter than the GranTurismo S, but at 1770kg it's still no lightweight and it's a whopping 410kg more than the Porsche. All that extra bulk makes a big difference on track; you sense the mass shifting uncomfortably every time you request a change of attitude. It's further exaggerated by the long wheelbase and suspension that, despite an eight per cent increase in spring rate, is still too soft.

Hit the brakes and the low-slung snout dives hard. Turn in and there's too much roll. It might have a thicker anti-roll bar up front but when you turn you have to wait for the suspension to settle before the car reacts to the directional change you've just requested. Don't get me wrong, it still tacks quickly for a car of this size, but it doesn't give you the clean, darting responses you crave on track. It's not as agile or as immediately responsive to subtle mid-corner alterations either.

The Stradale therefore demands accuracy from your initial input. A tiny error on turn-in will lose time because you're unable to make that instant, subtle correction. This is a shame because the MC's overall balance is good. Once it's settled you can pick up the throttle good and early, and from the apex to the exit induce a little steering from the rear. In fact it's quite easy to apply just the right amount of rumbling V8 grunt so the steering has no lock on at all.



# evoTrack Battle

HEAD-TO-HEAD LAPS AGAINST THE CLOCK



*'THE STRADALE REQUIRES A SOFTER APPROACH TO THE THROTTLE, YOU WAIT FOR THE CAR TO KEEP UP WITH YOU'*

The carbon-ceramic Brembo brakes are strong and resist fade well too, and the automated manual gearbox shuffles sweetly through the cogs with a minimal 60-millisecond torque interruption (in Race mode). The resulting lap time of 1min 24.5sec is decently quick – besting the Mercedes SLS by a tenth of a second is impressive. However, there's ultimately a small sense of frustration, because with a little light tweaking it would be faster yet and more satisfying too.

You're presented with a proper manual gearbox in the GT3 RS 4.0, but it's so slick you rarely feel you're losing time by having to do your own cog-swapping. Yet this thing is so focused you half expect to find a sequential race 'box in there; it almost comes as a surprise that they've fitted a passenger seat.

We expect the Porsche to take a big bite out of the time laid down by the Stradale, but it isn't just up against the Maserati – there's another, faster car it has to usurp. This ultimate incarnation of the GT3 RS has more power and grip than last year's 3.8-litre version, and that car recorded a lap of 1min 21.9sec. So just how much pace does the extra £19,000 buy you? We're about to find out.



Above: Stradale takes time to settle in the corners, but is nicely balanced thereafter. Below: RS's grip levels are huge, helped by its lightly treaded Cup tyres (the Maser wears P Zero Corsas)

The lap begins with the Hangar Hairpin, always a Porsche strong suit. The (optional) ceramic brakes dissipate the speed so effectively you can leave the moment when you hammer the middle pedal incredibly late. Get the speed off, dispense with the turning phase as quickly as possible and get back on the gas hard to exploit the traction provided by the engine slung out over the rear axle.

Here you can sense the greater level of mid-range torque from the stroked 4.0 motor; revs are low at the apex and yet the swell of thrust begins the moment you fire fuel into the combustion chambers. To get the same effect in the 3.8 you had to wait

until the tacho needle had climbed back up to the upper echelons of the gauge.

The incredible sharpness of response through the Palmer Curves is massively different to the Maserati. Each request is met by an immediate directional change. There's no attitude to assume, just a snap-to alteration of line, and the aero effect takes hold towards the exit of this section. The rear Michelin Cups really dig in, while the front axle resists the light steering sensation that you feel in lesser 911s when the suspension is squatting under power.

You attack the track so much harder than you do in the Maser. The Stradale requires a softer approach to the throttle, you wait for the car to keep up with you, whereas in the 4.0 RS it's the driver that is more likely to be the weak link. You have to match the car's ability and be right on top of your own game to exploit the full capacity of what it's capable of. But its accuracy and ability to adjust its trajectory in fine detail inspires confidence. You tread a thin line, but you can feel every fibre of the tightrope beneath you, allowing the margins to be worked and taken right to the edge.

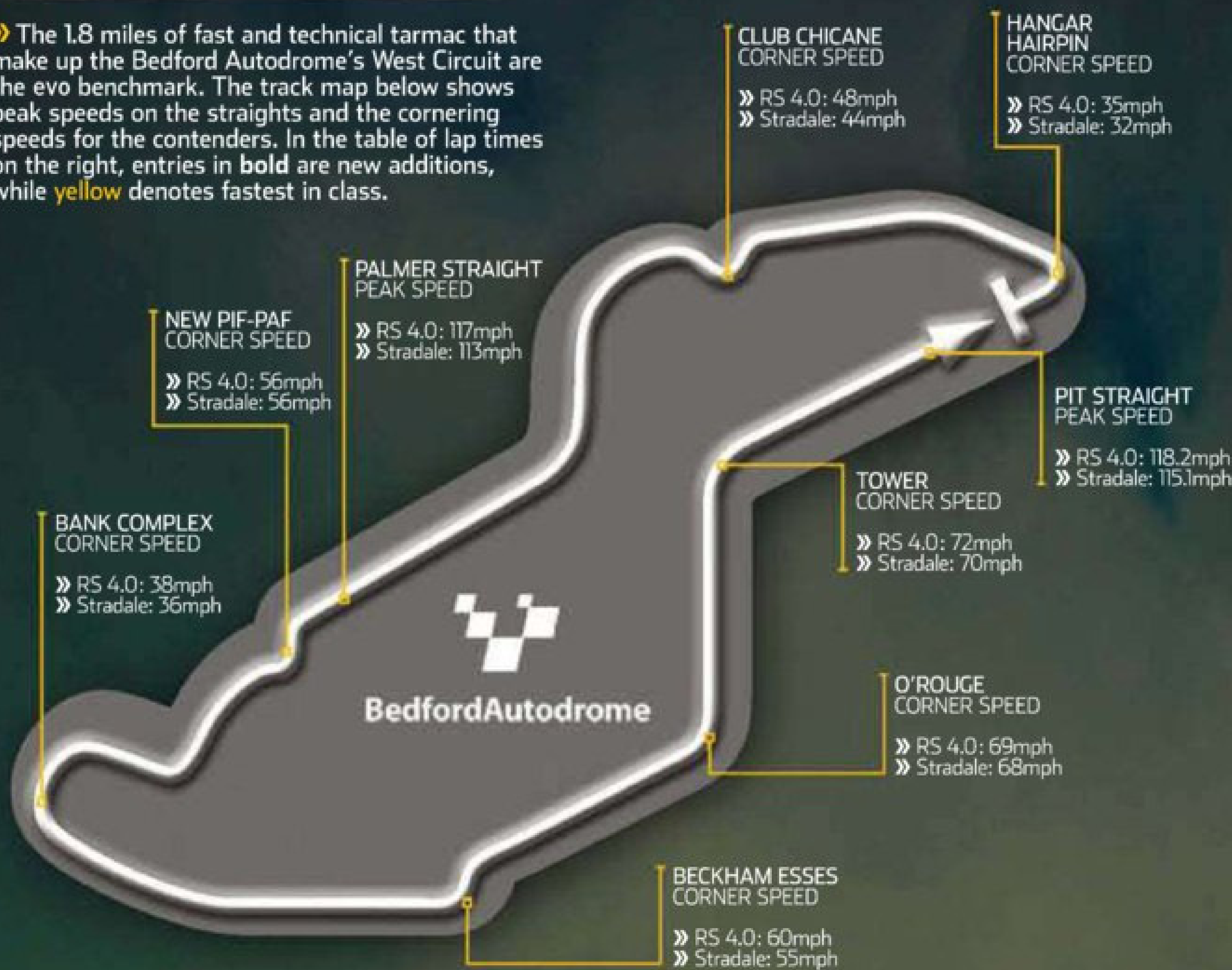
It's a race car-like performance then, and a damn good one at that. The time? 1min 21.0sec – 3.5sec ahead of the Maserati and almost a second faster than the 3.8 RS. It's deeply impressive.





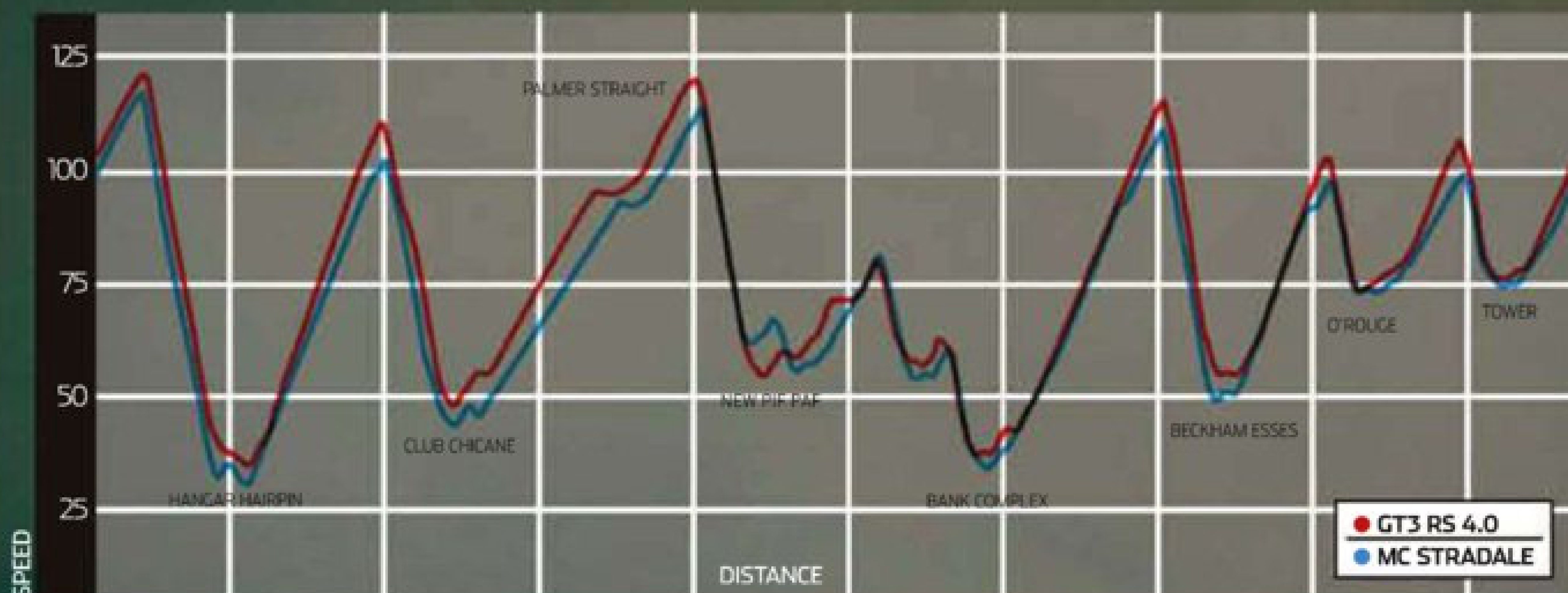
# THE WEST CIRCUIT

» 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 the contenders. In the table of lap times on the right, entries in **bold** are new additions, while **yellow** denotes fastest in class.



## WHICH WAS FASTER?

**GT3 RS 4.0** 1min 21.0sec (peak speed 118.2mph) **MC Stradale** 1.24.5 (115.1mph)



» Although the MC Stradale (blue trace) puts in a more than respectable performance, the superior acceleration of the lighter, more powerful GT3 RS (red) shows throughout. Its more biddable chassis results in faster cornering speeds too

## THE LEADERBOARD

	LAP TIME	PEAK
Radical SR8LM (fastest car)	1.13.6	127.8
Caparo T1 (fastest supercar)	1.14.8	130.9
Ferrari 458 Italia	1.19.3	120.0
Gumpert Apollo S	1.19.4	120.4
McLaren MP4-12C (Corsa tyres)	1.19.6	121.2
Caterham Levante V8	1.19.6	118.6
Porsche 997 GT2 RS	1.19.9	122.3
Lotus 2-Eleven GT4	1.20.1	113.2
Caterham Superlight R500	1.20.2	115.7
McLaren MP4-12C	1.20.6	120.9
Noble M600	1.20.8	121.8
<b>Porsche 997 GT3 RS 4.0 (fastest coupe)</b>	<b>1.21.0</b>	<b>118.2</b>
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 (3.8)	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
Porsche 997 GT2	1.23.5	115.1
Porsche 997 Turbo S	1.23.5	117.5
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
<b>Maserati GranTurismo MC Stradale</b>	<b>1.24.5</b>	<b>115.1</b>
Mercedes SLS AMG	1.24.6	115.7
Ferrari California	1.25.0	111.8
KTM X-Bow	1.25.0	105.0
Mercedes SL65 AMG Black	1.25.2	108.6
Porsche Cayman R	1.25.5	106.8
Aston Martin V12 Vantage	1.25.8	110.9
BMW E92 M3 Coupe	1.25.9	108.8
BMW 1-series M Coupe	1.25.9	106.4
<b>Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-400 (fastest saloon)</b>	<b>1.25.9</b>	<b>107.5</b>
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 DB5	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
<b>Porsche Cayenne Turbo (fastest 4x4)</b>	<b>1.26.9</b>	<b>107.4</b>
Audi R55	1.26.9	106.8
Lotus Evora	1.27.1	104.2
Nissan 370Z	1.27.1	104.0
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
<b>Renaultsport Mégane R26.R (fastest hot hatch)</b>	<b>1.27.8</b>	<b>103.3</b>
<b>Audi RS6 Avant (fastest estate)</b>	<b>1.27.9</b>	<b>111.0</b>
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
Subaru WRX STI	1.28.3	101.6
Jaguar XJ Supersport	1.28.4	106.6
Bentley Continental Supersports	1.29.2	105.8
Renaultsport Mégane 250 Cup	1.29.9	101.4
Honda NSX	1.30.1	101.3
VW Scirocco 2.0 TSI	1.30.4	98.9





## 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 Mégane 250 is the Clio's more mature but still thrilling big brother, while Mini's mad JCW still appeals, too. If you're on a tighter budget, the Fiat Panda 100HP, Renault Twingo 133 Cup and Suzuki Swift Sport (right) are all evo favourites.



	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	
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 Esseesse power upgrade	★★★★
Abarth 500 Esseesse	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	★★★★
*Aston Martin Cygnet	159 D	£30,995	4/1329	97/6000	92/4400	920kg	107	11.8	-	106	116	54.3	+ Necessary - Evil	★★★
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	216	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/Peugeot 107/Toyota Aygo	126 F	£8485+	3/998	68/6000	68/3600	790kg	87	14.2	-	98	103	61.4	+ Full of character and insurance-friendly - Insurance friendly power	★★★★
Citroën C2 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	110	<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	1157kg	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	157 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	1235kg	195	5.9	-	155	-	-	+ Fantastic on road and track - There'll only be 20, and it's a tad pricey...	★★★★
Honda Civic Type-R	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, dull steering	★★★★
Lancia Delta Integrale	011 F	'88-'93	4/1995	210/5750	220/3500	1350kg	158	5.7	-	137	-	23.9	+ One of the finest cars ever built - Demands love, LHD only	★★★★
Mazda 2.1 S 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	£18,015	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	★★★★
Mini Cooper SD	158 D	£18,750	4/1995	141/4000	225/1750	1225kg	117	8.0	-	134	114	65.7	+ A quick diesel Mini with impressive mpg - But no Cooper S alternative	★★★★
Mini John Cooper Works	154 R	£22,320	4/1598	208/6000	206/1850	1205kg	175	6.5	-	148	165	40.9	+ A seriously rapid Mini - Occasionally just a little unruly	★★★★
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	★★★★

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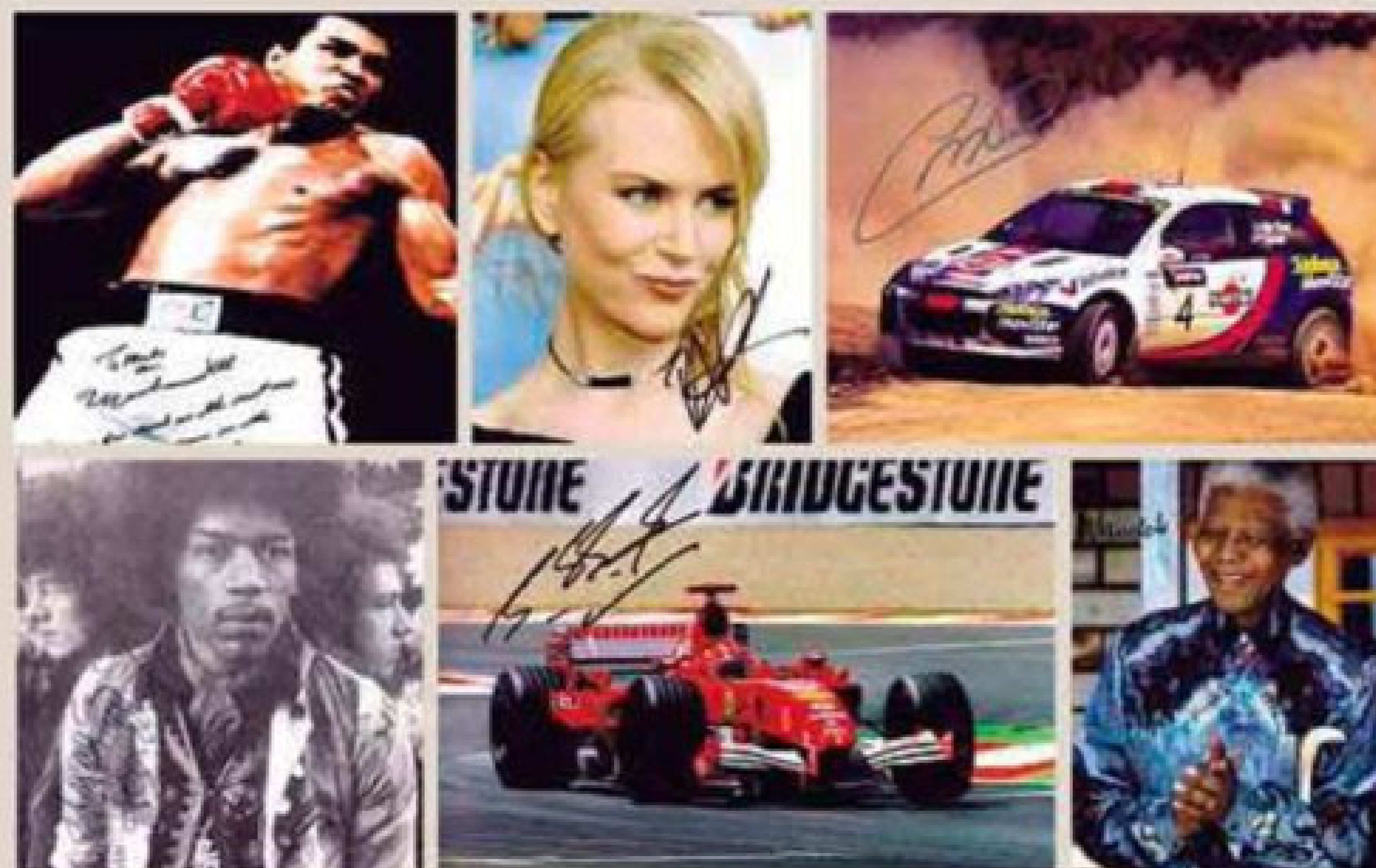
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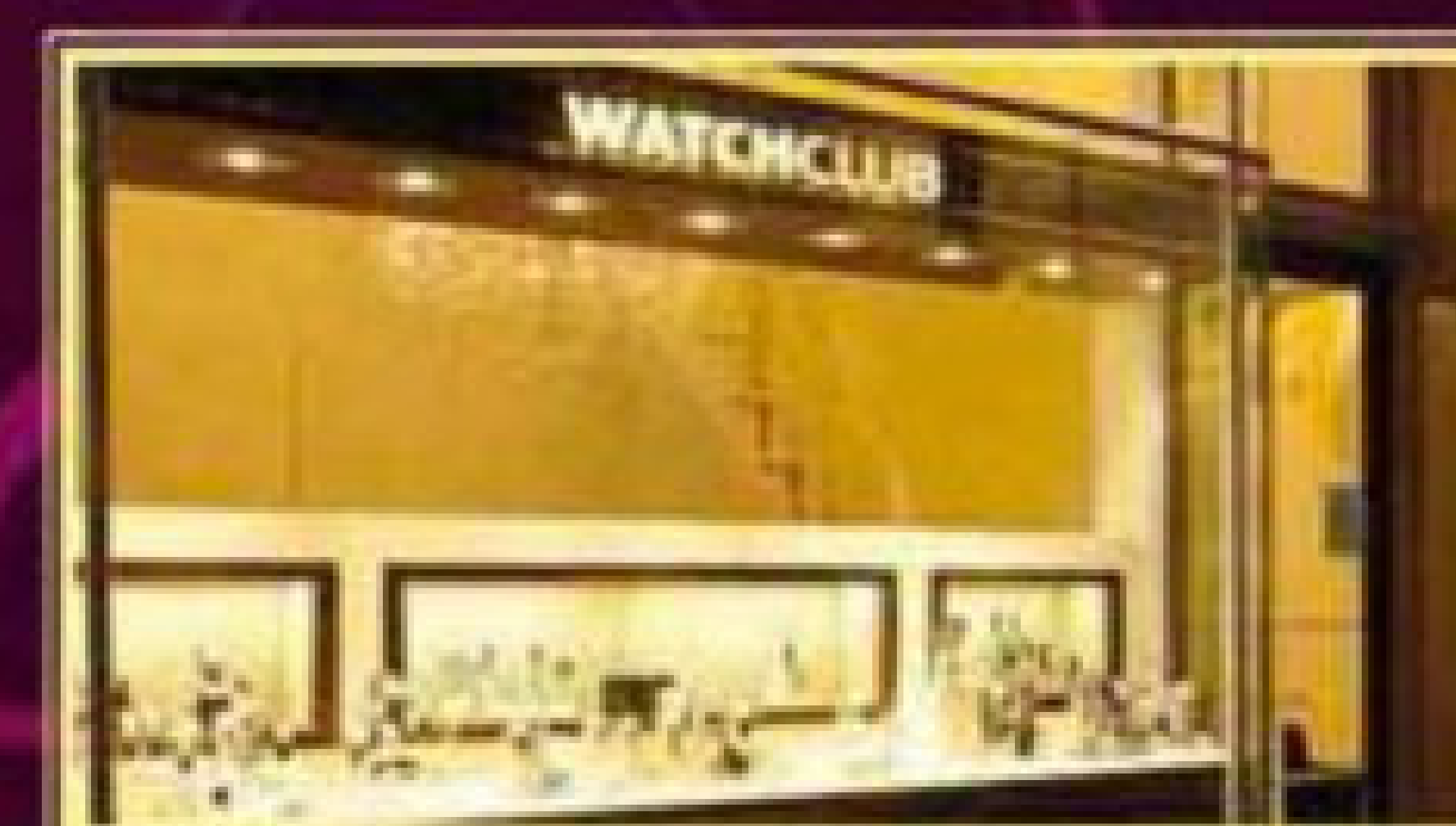
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AUDI RS4, ISSUE 088

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: Lexus's 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	CO2 g/km	EC mpg	EVO rating	
Alfa Romeo 156 GTA	045 F	'02-'06	6/3179	247/6200	221/4800	1410kg	180	6.3	-	155	-	23.3	+ Noise, pace and individuality - Front-drive chassis can't keep up	★★★★
Alpina D3		£30,950	4/1995	211/4000	332/2000	1495kg	143	6.9	-	152	-	52.3	+ Excellent chassis, turbodiesel oomph - Rather narrow powerband	★★★★★
Alpina B5 Biturbo	149 D	£69,995	8/4395	500/5500	516/3000	2040kg	265	4.7	-	191	-	-	+ Big performance and top-line luxury - Driver not really involved	★★★★★
Alpina B5 S	118 D	'07-'10	8/4398	523/5500	535/4750	1720kg	309	4.5	-	197	-	23.0	+ Quicker and more exclusive than the E60 M5 - Suspension has its limits	★★★★★
Alpina B7	134 D	£97,950	8/4395	507/5500	516/3000	2040kg	252	4.5	-	174	-	-	+ Massive performance and top-line luxury - Feels its weight when hustled	★★★★★
Alpina B7	085 R	'05-'08	8/4398	500/5500	516/4250	1950kg	261	4.8	-	186	-	-	+ Alpina makes a mad, bad 7-series - Over-cautious traction control	★★★★★
Aston Martin Rapide	141 F	£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	£35,250	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	£57,290	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	'06-'11	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 Arnaige 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 Arnaige 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 330 - 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	£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 *	109 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	★★★★★

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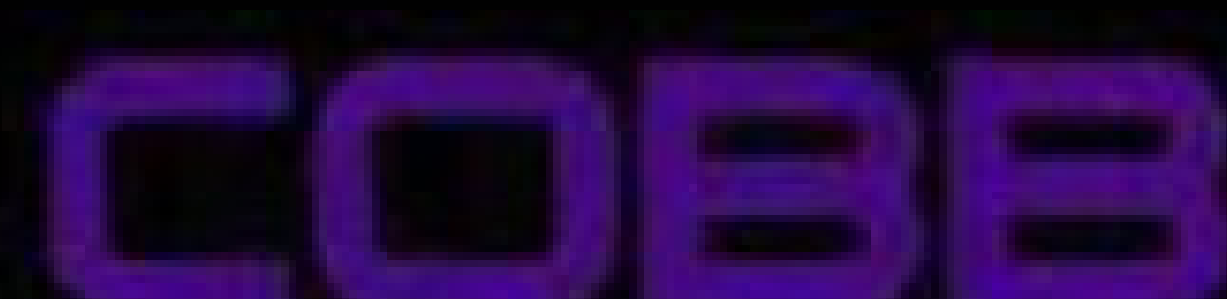
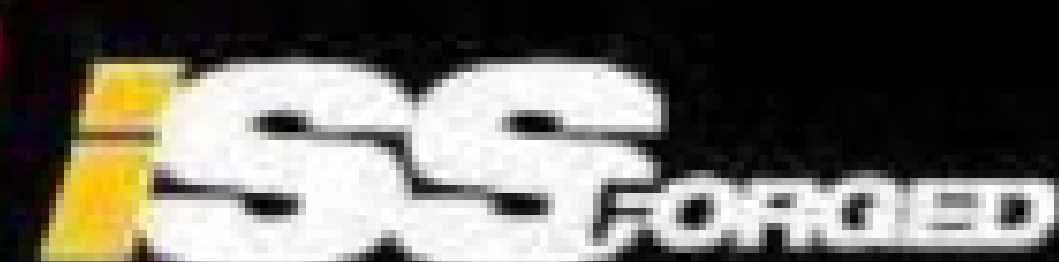
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	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	Bhp/rpm	Lb ft/rpm	Weight	Bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2 g/km	EC mpg	EVO rating
Jaguar XF 3.0D S	145 D	£39,900	6/2993	271/4000	443/2000	1820kg	161	5.9	-	155	179	42.0	+ Best XF after the R - But we'd still have the R... <b>★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★</b>
Jaguar XFR	138 F	£65,350	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1891kg	270	<b>4.8</b>	<b>10.2</b>	155	292	22.5	+ Brilliant blend of pace and refinement - Doesn't sound as special as it is <b>★★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★★</b>
Jaguar S-type R	048 R	'02-'07	8/4196	400/6100	408/3500	1800kg	226	5.3	-	155	-	22.5	+ Fine dynamics belie old world looks - Auto-only, and no LSD <b>★★★★★</b>
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... <b>★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★</b>
Jaguar XJR 4.0	018 R	'00-'03	8/3996	370/6150	387/3000	1775kg	211	<b>5.6</b>	<b>13.5</b>	155	-	21.9	+ Matchless grace, extraordinary pace - Not much space <b>★★★★</b>
Lamborghini LM002	016 F	'86-'89	12/5167	450/6800	369/5200	2700kg	169	-	-	130	-	-	+ Craziest 4x4 ever, Countach V12 - Craziest 4x4 ever... <b>★★★★</b>
Lexus IS-F	151 R	£58,300	8/4969	417/6600	372/5200	1714kg	247	<b>4.7</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>173</b>	270	24.8	+ Shockingly good Lexus - The M3's available as a four-door too <b>★★★★★</b>
Lotus Carlton	035 F	'91-'93	6/3615	377/5200	419/4200	1658kg	231	<b>4.8</b>	<b>10.6</b>	176	-	17.0	+ The Millennium Falcon of saloon cars - Every drive a work-out <b>★★★★★</b>
Maserati Quattroporte S	137 R	£87,350	8/4691	425/7000	361/4750	1990kg	216	<b>5.1</b>	<b>12.1</b>	174	365	18.0	+ Finally, a QP with more bhp - New grille a bit Hannibal Lecter <b>★★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★</b>
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG	151 R	£54,600	8/6208	451/6800	442/5000	1730kg	264	<b>4.4</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>160</b>	312	21.1	+ Monstrous pace and extremely engaging - M3's just a little better... <b>★★★★★</b>
Mercedes-Benz DR520	148 D	£62,920	8/6208	513/6800	479/5000	1750kg	301	4.1	-	187	-	-	+ C63 AMG goes feral - For an extra ten grand, though <b>★★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★</b>
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 grumpy as its rivals <b>★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★</b>
Mercedes-Benz E55 AMG	052 R	'03-'06	8/5439	476/6100	516/2650	1760kg	271	<b>4.8</b>	<b>10.2</b>	155	-	21.9	+ M5-humbling grunt, cossetting ride - Speed limits <b>★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★</b>
Mercedes-Benz 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 - Pricey options <b>★★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★★</b>
Mercedes-Benz ML63 AMG	104 F	'07-'10	8/6208	503/6800	464/5200	2310kg	221	<b>4.6</b>	<b>11.0</b>	155	-	17.1	+ Goes like an SUV has no right to - Gordon Murray will hate you <b>★★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★</b>
MG ZT 260 V8	068 F	'03-'05	8/4601	256/5000	302/4000	1680kg	155	<b>6.5</b>	<b>16.3</b>	155	-	21.5	+ Lovely woolly V8, well-sorted rear-drive chassis - Thirst <b>★★★★</b>
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? <b>★★★★</b>
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-300 SST	118 F	£32,699	4/1998	290/6500	300/3500	1590kg	185	<b>5.2</b>	<b>13.9</b>	155	256	26.2	+ As above with twin-clutch transmission - As above, with paddles on <b>★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★</b>
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?! <b>★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★</b>
Mitsubishi Evo IX FQ-340	088 F	'05-'07	4/1997	345/6800	321/4600	1400kg	250	<b>4.3</b>	<b>10.9</b>	157	-	-	+ Gives Porsche drivers nightmares - Points. Lots of <b>★★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★★</b>
Mitsubishi Evo VIII MR FQ-300	057 R	'03-'05	4/1997	305/6800	289/3500	1400kg	221	4.8	-	157	-	20.5	+ Extra pace, extra attitude - Extra money <b>★★★★★</b>
Mitsubishi Evo VII	031 F	'02-'03	4/1997	276/6500	282/3500	1360kg	206	<b>5.0</b>	<b>13.0</b>	140	-	20.4	+ Terrific all-rounder - You tell us <b>★★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★★</b>
Mitsubishi Evo VI RS Sprint	011 F	'99	4/1997	330/6500	323/3000	1255kg	267	<b>4.5</b>	<b>11.8</b>	145	-	-	+ Lighter, keener, quicker than regular Evo - A little uncompromising <b>★★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★</b>
Porsche Panamera Turbo	137 R	£102,909	8/4806	493/6000	516/2250	1970kg	254	<b>3.6</b>	<b>8.9</b>	188	286	23.2	+ Fast, refined and dynamically sound - It still leaves us cold <b>★★★★</b>
* Porsche Panamera Turbo S	159 D	£122,623	8/4806	542/6000	590/2250	1995kg	276	3.7	-	190	270	24.6	+ Pace, excellent ergonomics - Steering feel, ride <b>★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★★</b>
Porsche Cayenne Turbo	104 F	'06-'10	8/4806	494/6000	516/2250	2355kg	213	<b>4.7</b>	<b>11.4</b>	171	-	19.0	+ Appears to defy physics - Still cracks mirrors at 50 paces <b>★★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★</b>
Subaru WRX STi	151 D	£32,995	4/2457	296/6000	300/4000	1505kg	200	5.1	-	158	243	26.9	+ The last Subaru saloon is back - Blue paint and gold wheels aren't <b>★★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★★</b>
Subaru Impreza WRX	087 F	'05-'07	4/2457	277/5600	236/3600	1410kg	163	5.4	-	143	-	27.4	+ 25 litres gives even greater thump - Slightly light steering <b>★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★</b>
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 <b>★★★★★</b>
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? <b>★★★★★</b>
Subaru Imp' a WRX STi PPP	073 F	'03-'05	4/1994	300/6000	299/4000	1470kg	207	<b>5.2</b>	<b>12.9</b>	148	-	-	+ A Subaru with real edge - Bit too edgy in the wet <b>★★★★★</b>
Subaru STi Type RA Spec C*	067 F	'03-'05	4/1994	335/7000	280/3750	1380kg	247	<b>4.3</b>	<b>11.1</b>	160	-	-	+ Best Impreza since the PI - Lost its throbby flat-four voice <b>★★★★★</b>
Subaru Impreza WRI	067 R	'04-'05	4/1994	316/5800	310/4000	1470kg	218	<b>5.3</b>	<b>13.1</b>	155	-	-	+ Most powerful official UK Impreza until RB320 - Spec C is better <b>★★★★★</b>
Subaru Impreza Turbo	011 F	'98-'00	4/1994	215/5600	214/4000	1235kg	177	<b>5.4</b>	<b>14.6</b>	144	-	27.2	+ Destined for classic status - Thirsty <b>★★★★★</b>
Subaru Impreza PI	067 F	'00-'01	4/1994	276/6500	260/4000	1283kg	219	<b>4.9</b>	<b>13.3</b>	150	-	25.0	+ Ultimate old-school Impreza - Prices reflect this <b>★★★★★</b>
Subaru Impreza RB5 (PPP)	011 F	'99	4/1994	237/6000	258/3500	1235kg	195	<b>5.0</b>	<b>14.1</b>	143	-	-	+ Perfect blend of poise and power - Limited numbers <b>★★★★★</b>
Subaru Impreza 22B	011 F	'98-'99	4/2212	276/6000	265/3200	1270kg	220	<b>5.0</b>	<b>13.1</b>	150	-	-	+ On paper, the ultimate - On the road, too uncompromising <b>★★★★</b>
Subaru Forester STi*	087 F	'05-'08	4										



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## SPORTS CARS/CONVERTIBLES



**OUR CHOICE:** Audi R8 Spyder. The Spyder boasts supercar looks, presence and performance, yet you really could drive one every day. And while the V10-engined car makes the more spine-tingling noise, the lighter and even more agile V8 version gets our vote.



**BEST OF THE REST:** The Elise is a joy, with just enough power, while the revamped MX-5 handles like it should again. The Porsche Boxster is getting on a bit, but still special. For the ultimate thrills, though, treat yourself to a Caterham R300 or an Ariel Atom (right).

	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
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	115 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 Mugen	157 D	£55,000	4/1998	270/8300	188/6000	550kg	499	2.9	-	150	-	-	+ Perfect engine for the Atom's chassis - Only ten being made ★★★★
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 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	£57,695	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	205/2200	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 - Wibble wobble, wibble 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	£54,995	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 Supersport	159 R	£22,995	4/1595	140/6900	120/5790	520kg	273	4.9	-	120	-	-	+ One of the best Caterhams is less than £20K... - If you build it yourself ★★★★
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	256/7500	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 ★★★★
Ferrari California	143 F	£146,910	8/4287	453/7750	358/5000	1735kg	265	<b>3.8</b>	<b>9.0</b>	193	299	21.5	+ Despite the CC roof, it's a real Ferrari - We'd still take an F430 Spider ★★★★
Gnetta 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	£78,550	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 toupees 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 ★★★★
KTM X-Bow R	152 D	£64,850	4/1984	295/5500	295/3300	790kg	379	3.6	-	144	-	-	+ Sharper handling, more power - Pity it's not even lighter, and cheaper ★★★★
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 ★★★★
* Lotus Elise Club Racer	159 R	£27,500	4/1598	134/6800	118/4400	852kg	160	6.0	-	127	149	45.0	+ Even lighter, even more focused Elise - A touch pricey for a stripped-out Elise ★★★★
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 ★★★★

## evo POCKET BUYING GUIDE

### FORD FOCUS RS MK1

#### WHY WOULD YOU?

It's one of the most character-rich hot hatchbacks of recent times, and while it has divided opinion like few other Fords, the Focus RS and its Quaife 'torque-biasing' differential provide a compelling driving experience.

#### WHAT TO PAY

Just 4501 Focus RSs were made, though there are usually plenty for sale. Avoid the modified stuff and pay between £8500 and £11,000 for good, low-to-average-mile examples with proper history. Pristine cars can touch £15K.

#### WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

Cambelts should be changed at 60,000 miles; dampers lose their edge after 20K. Hard use can warp discs; two-part AP Racing discs an effective upgrade. Check for front wing or rear quarter panel damage; new ones no longer available.





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+ Handles brilliantly again  
- Less than macho image

MAZDA MX-5 2.0i, ISSUE 138

	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	Bhp/rpm	Lb ft/rpm	Weight	Bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2 g/km	EC mpg	EVO rating
Lotus 2-Eleven GT4	138 F	£76,590	4/1796	266/8200	179/7200	670kg	403	3.7	-	155	-	-	+ evo Track Car of the Year 2009 - It's a 76-grand Lotus with no roof *****
Lotus Elise S 1.8	104 F	'06-'10	4/1794	134/6200	127/4200	860kg	158	6.3	18.7	127	-	37.2	+ Brilliant entry-level Elise - Precious little *****
Lotus Elise S2 111S	049 F	'02-'04	4/1796	156/7000	129/4650	860kg	197	5.1	-	131	-	40.9	+ A genuinely useable Elise - Air-con? In an Elise? *****
Lotus Elise S2 Sport 135	040 D	'03	4/1796	135/6200	129/4850	726kg	189	5.4	-	129	-	-	+ One of our fave S2 Elises - Brakes need more bite and pedal feel *****
Lotus Elise S2 Sport 190	044 F	'03	4/1796	190/7800	128/5000	710kg	272	4.7	12.1	135	-	-	+ Fabulous trackday tool - Pricey *****
Lotus Elise S1	126 F	'96-'00	4/1796	118/5500	122/3000	731kg	164	6.1	18.5	126	-	39.4	+ A modern classic - A tad impractical? *****
Lotus 340R	126 F	'00	4/1796	190/7800	146/5000	658kg	293	4.5	12.5	126	-	-	+ Hardcore road-racer... - ...that looks like a dune buggy from Mars *****
Lotus Elan SE	095 F	'89-'95	4/1588	165/6600	148/4200	1022kg	164	6.7	-	137	-	21.0	+ Awesome front-drive chassis - Rather uninvolved *****
Lotus Elan Sprint	126 F	'71-'73	4/1558	126/6500	113/5500	720kg	178	6.6	-	122	-	-	+ Sensational chassis, properly quick - Affording a mint one *****
Maserati GranCabrio	142 D	£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		£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	5.5	13.5	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	4.9	11.2	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	4.6	10.2	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 pricey *****
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... - ...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	1355kg	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	£32,400	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	5.0	14.3	120	-	-	+ If this is the future, it's going to be fun - Limited range, high price *****
Toniq-R Duretec	102 D	£23,500	4/1999	193/6500	174/4500	550kg	357	4.5	-	140	-	-	+ Very good value, well built, and lots of fun too - No roof, no windscreen *****
Toyota MR2	078 F	'00-'06	4/1794	138/6400	125/4400	975kg	141	7.2	21.2	130	-	38.2	+ Tight lines, taut dynamics - Minimal luggage space *****
TVR T350T	067 D	'04-'07	6/3605	350/7200	290/5500	1100kg	318	4.4	-	175+	-	-	+ Targa top roof, grunty engine - Lacks polish *****
TVR 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 Chimera 5.0	007 R	'93-'03	8/4988	320/5500	320/3750	1060kg	307	4.6	-	167	-	26.4	+ Gorgeous noise, tarmac-ripping grunt - Details *****
TVR Griffith 4.3	068 F	'92-'93	8/4280	280/5500	305/4000	1060kg	268	4.8	11.2	148	-	-	+ The car that made TVR. Cult status - Mere details *****
TVR Griffith 500	009 R	'93-'01	8/4988	320/5500	320/3750	1060kg	307	4.8	11.2	167	-	22.1	+ Griff diamond - A few rough edges *****
Ultima GTR	017 R	£45,500	8/6300	534/5800	528/4800	990kg	548	3.9	8.2	204	-	-	+ Turns the M1 into the Mulsanne - You'll have to build it yourself *****
Vauxhall VX220	023 R	'00-'04	4/2198	145/5800	150/4000	875kg	168	5.6	-	136	-	34.4	+ Absurdly good Vauxhall - The badge? *****
Vauxhall VX220 Turbo	066 R	'03-'05	4/1998	197/5500	184/1950	930kg	215	4.7	-	151	-	-	+ Nothing comes close for the money - Marginal everyday usability *****
Westfield Megabus	036 F	£24,450	4/1298	175/9800	102/9000	430kg	413	3.7	-	140	-	-	+ Bike-engined road-rocket - Not big on practicality... *****
Westfield 1600 Sport Turbo	140 D	£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	4.4	9.4	144	-	-	+ Snarling, fire-breathing V8, ferocious pace - Spits fuel at you *****
Wiesmann Roadster MF3	077 D	£65,000	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1180kg	291	4.9	-	158	-	-	+ Engine, ride, build quality, exclusivity - Umm... '50s styling? *****

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+ Sublime five-cylinder turbo engine  
- Rest of package can't quite match it

AUDI TT RS, ISSUE 158

COUPES/GTs



**OUR CHOICE:** Porsche 997.2 GT3 RS 4.0. We really didn't think the previous 911 GT3 RS could be improved upon, but the new 4.0 version is even faster, even more hardcore and even more intoxicating. Quite possibly the greatest roadgoing 911 ever.

**BEST OF THE REST:** Lotus's Evora 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 new 1-series M Coupe (right) is the best M-car in years.



	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	Bhp/rpm	Lb ft/rpm	Weight	Bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2 g/km	EC mpg	eVO rating
Alfa Romeo Brera 3.2 V6	120 F	£30,065	6/3195	256/6300	237/4500	1552kg	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 BC 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 DB5	142 F	£175,891	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1695kg	306	4.2	-	191	388	17.3	+ Stupendous engine, gearbox, brakes - Pricy. 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	158 R	£45,840	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 R55	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 get 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 1-series M Coupe	158 R	£40,020	6/2979	335/5900	369/1500	1570kg	217	4.8	-	155	224	-	+ Character, turbo pace and great looks - Could hinder BMW M3 sales... ★★★★★
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 - ...except the cheaper 1-series M ★★★★★
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	1635kg	311	<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 ★★★★★

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	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	Bhp/rpm	Lb ft/rpm	Weight	Bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2 g/km	EC mpg	EVO rating
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 + Extra grunt of 4.2-litre motor - Lacks feedback
Jaguar XKR		'98-'06	8/4196	400/6100	408/3500	1735kg	234	5.2	-	155	-	22.9	+ Non-limited edition of the Exige 240R - Uninspiring soundtrack
Lotus Exige S	105 F	£35,550	4/1796	218/7800	158/5500	930kg	238	4.5	-	148	199	33.2	+ Feels like a race car, yet works on the road - Costs the best part of £50K
Lotus Exige Cup 260	139 D	£45,950	4/1796	256/8000	174/6000	890kg	293	4.0	-	152	199	31.1	+ Highly focused road and track tool - Lacks visual impact of S1
Lotus Exige (series 2)	068 R	'04-'08	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	875kg	219	4.9	-	147	-	32.1	+ Lightweight with a hefty punch - Instantly sold out
Lotus Exige 240R	087 F	'05	4/1796	243/8000	174/7000	930kg	264	3.9	9.9	155	-	-	+ Looks and goes like Elise racer - A tad lacking in refinement
Lotus Exige (series 1)	067 D	'00-'01	4/1796	192/7800	146/5000	780kg	247	4.6	-	136	-	-	+ Sublime ride and handling. Our 2009 car of the year - Pricy options
Lotus Evora	138 F	£49,600	6/3456	276/6400	258/4700	1382kg	203	5.6	13.6	162	205	32.5	+ A faster and better Evora - But one which spars with the Porsche 911...
Lotus Evora S	152 F	£58,800	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1430kg	245	4.6	-	172	239	-	+ More of a Lotus than before - Still overshadowed by the Exige and Evora
Lotus Europa SE	127 F	'08-'10	4/1998	222/5600	221/4000	995kg	227	4.9	-	146	-	28.8	+ Designed for track work but brilliant on the road - Limited edition
Lotus Esprit Sport 350	005 R	'99-'00	8/3506	350/6500	295/4250	1299kg	274	4.3	9.9	175	-	22.0	+ Striking, accomplished GT - Doesn't spike the pulse like an Aston or 911
Maserati GranTurismo	114 R	£80,450	8/4244	399/7100	339/4750	1880kg	216	5.5	12.7	177	330	19.7	+ A genuinely sporty Maser - A bit heavier and pricier than we'd like
Maserati GranTurismo S	120 F	£92,360	8/4691	433/7000	361/4750	1880kg	234	4.9	-	183	354	17.0	+ Brilliant blend of road racer and GT - No rear seats
Maserati GT MC Stradale	155 D	£110,000	8/4691	444/7100	376/4750	1770kg	255	4.6	-	187	-	-	+ Glorious engine, improved chassis - Overly sharp steering
Maserati Coupe	064 F	'03-'07	8/4244	390/7000	333/4500	1680kg	237	4.8	-	177	-	17.6	+ Maser Coupe realises its full potential - Very little
Maserati GranSport	073 F	'04-'07	8/4244	400/7000	333/4500	1680kg	239	4.8	-	180	-	-	+ Even sharper chassis than basic RX-8 - Same wafer-thin torque output
Mazda RX-8 R3	122 R	£26,065	2R/1308	228/8200	156/5500	1429kg	162	6.5	16.4	146	299	24.6	+ Never mind the quirkiness, it's a great drive - Dull-sounding engine
Mazda RX-8	071 R	'03-'08	2R/1308	228/8500	156/5500	1394kg	166	7.0	19.0	146	-	25.2	+ Straight-line performance - Cheaper C250 CDI is better in the corners
* Mercedes-Benz C350 CGI Coupe	159 D	£36,830	6/3498	302/6500	273/5500	1615kg	190	5.9	-	155	164	-	+ Mercedes makes a proper two-door M3 rival - C63 saloon looks better
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Coupe	158 D	£56,665	8/6208	451/6800	442/5000	1730kg	264	4.4	-	186	280	-	+ Power, control, build quality - Lacks ultimate involvement
Mercedes-Benz CLK63 AMG	092 D	'06-'09	8/6208	481/6800	464/5000	1755kg	278	4.6	-	155	-	19.9	+ AMG goes Porsche-hunting - Dull-witted gearshift spoils the party
Mercedes-Benz CLK63 AMG Black	106 F	'07-'09	8/6208	500/6800	464/5250	1760kg	289	4.2	-	186	-	-	+ Presence, pace, monster engine - Stiff ride, stiff competition
Mercedes-Benz CL63 AMG	150 D	£115,620	8/5461	536/5500	590/2000	2060kg	264	4.5	-	155	244	-	+ Unsurprisingly rapid on non-wiggly bits - Lacks charm, involvement
Mercedes-Benz CL65 AMG	115 F	£161,545	12/5980	603/4800	737/2000	2240kg	273	4.4	-	155	334	19.1	+ Weird and utterly wonderful - They're all sold
Morgan AeroMax	097 D	£110,000	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1180kg	312	4.1	-	170	-	-	+ Quicker, leaner, keener than 350Z - Not quite a Cayman-killer
Nissan 370Z	158 R	£29,150	6/3696	326/7000	269/5200	1520kg	218	5.4	-	155	248	-	+ Huge fun, and great value too - Honestly, we're struggling
Nissan 350Z (309bhp)	107 R	'07-'09	6/3498	309/6800	264/4800	1532kg	205	5.5	13.0	155	-	24.1	+ Small power boost adds to Z's appeal - Slightly low-rent interior
Nissan 350Z (296bhp)	094 F	'06-'07	6/3498	296/6400	260/4800	1525kg	197	5.8	-	155	-	24.8	+ Original 350Z makes a great used buy - As above
Nissan 350Z (276bhp)	059 D	'03-'06	6/3498	276/6200	268/4800	1525kg	184	6.1	14.8	155	-	24.8	+ Our 2008 Car of the Year. Now even better - Pricier than before
Nissan GT-R	152 F	£69,950	6/3799	520/6400	475/5200	1740kg	304	3.5	-	194	295	-	+ Phenomenal brakes and handling - Not really worth the extra £55K
Nissan GT-R Spec V	150 F	£124,950	6/3799	478/6400	447/3500	1680kg	289	3.4	-	193	295	-	+ Big, brutal, and great fun - Very firm ride
Nissan Skyline GT-R (R34)	009 R	'99-'02	6/2568	276/7000	289/4400	1560kg	180	4.7	12.5	165	-	20.1	+ Proof that Jap hi-tech can work (superbly) - Limited supply
Nissan Skyline GT-R (R33)	019 F	'97-'99	6/2568	276/6800	271/4400	1540kg	182	5.4	14.3	155	-	22.0	+ Devilishly fast - Demon Tweaks interior
Noble M400	089 F	'04-'06	6/2968	425/6500	390/5000	1060kg	407	3.5	-	185	-	-	+ The ability to humble exotica - Flawed driving position
Noble M12 GTO-3R	070 F	'03-'06	6/2968	352/6200	350/3500	1080kg	332	3.8	-	170	-	-	+ Gives GT3 drivers a fright - Styling could be more cohesive
Noble M12 GTO	023 R	'00-'03	6/2544	310/6000	320/3500	980kg	321	4.1	10.2	165	-	-	+ Distinctive looks, highly capable handling - Could be a bit more exciting
Peugeot RCZ 16 THP 200	155 R	£23,245	4/1598	197/5500	202/1700	1421kg	141	7.3	18.1	147	159	40.9	+ Extra power, just as involving - Still lacks the desirability of other Porsches
Porsche Cayman	131 F	£37,261	6/2893	261/7200	221/4400	1330kg	199	5.8	-	165	221	30.1	+ Still want that 911? - Yeah, us too (even though it's the best Cayman yet)
Porsche Cayman S	132 F	£47,604	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1350kg	237	5.2	-	172	223	29.7	+ Total handling excellence - Styling additions not to all tastes
Porsche Cayman R	158 R	£51,728	6/3436	325/7400	273/4750	1295kg	255	4.7	-	175	228	-	+ Pure and rewarding - If they'd just move the engine back a bit...
Porsche Cayman S	097 F	'06-'09	6/3387	291/6250	251/4400	1350kg	219	5.3	12.2	171	-	26.6	+ Faster and greener than the mk1 997 - Lost a little of the 911 magic
Porsche 911 Carrera (997.2)		£67,270	6/3614	341/6500	288/4400	1415kg	245	4.9	-	180	225	29.4	+ Poise, precision, blinding pace - Feels a bit clinical
Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.2)	121 F	£76,172	6/3800	380/6500	310/4400	1425kg	271	4.7	-	188	242	27.4	+ Fitting finale for the 997 generation - Absolutely nothing
Porsche 911 Carrera GTS (997.2)	152 D	£78,371	6/3800	402/7300	310/4200	1420kg	288	4.6	-	190	240	26.6	+ Huge grip, power and composure - The Carrera S is £4K cheaper
Porsche 911 Carrera 4S (997.2)		£80,785	6/3800	380/6500	310/4400	1480kg	261	4.7	-	185	247	26.9	+ The ultimate modern 911 - They're all sold
* Porsche 911 GT3 RS 4.0 (997.2)	159 D	£128,466	6/3996	493/8250	339/5750	1360kg	368	3.8	-	193	326	-	+ Even better than the car it replaced - Give us a minute...
Porsche 911 GT3 (997.2)	138 F	'09-'11	6/3797	429/7600	317/6250	1395kg	312	4.2	9.2	194	303	22.1	+ Our 2010 car of the year - Looks and noise are slightly OTT
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (997.2)	152 F	'10-'11	6/3797	444/7900	317/6750	1370kg	329	4.0	-	193	314	-	+ Curious concept that works well - GT2 price with Carrera S performance
Porsche 911 Sport Classic	140 F	'10-'11	6/3800	402/7300	310/4200	1425kg	287	4.6	-	188	-	-	+ Runner-up evo Car of the Year 2006 - Ferrari 599 GTBs
Porsche 911 GT3 (997.1)	103 R	'07-'09	6/3600	409/7600	298/5500	1395kg	298	4.3	9.4	192	-	-	+ evo Car of the Year 2007 - A chunk more money than the brilliant GT3
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 2003 - Looks softer than previous GT3
Porsche 911 GT3 (996.2)	066 F	'03-'05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1380kg	272	4.3	9.2	190	-	-	+ Track-biased version of above - Limited supply
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (996.2)	068 R	'03-'05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1330kg	286	4.2	9.2	190	-	-	+ Barking engine note, gearchange - Not quite hardcore enough
Porsche 911 RS (993)	036 R	'95	6/3746	300/6500	262/5400	1270kg	240	4.7	11.2	172	-	-	+ Our Car of the Year 1999 - Porsche didn't build enough
Porsche 911 GT3 (996.1)	066 F	'99	6/3600	360/7200	273/5000	1350kg	271	4.5	10.3	187	-	21.9	+ 'S' is like a junior GT3 - Tech overload?
Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.1)	070 F	'04-'08	6/3824	350/6600	295/4600	1420kg	246	4.6	10.9	182	-	24.5	+ Second best 996 only to the GT3 - Very little
Porsche 911 Carrera 4S (996)	051 F	'02-'05	6/3596	316/6800	273/4250	1470kg	218	5.1	-	174	-	-	+ Beautifully polished 911 - Some like a bit of rough
Porsche 911 Carrera (996 3.4)	008 R	'98-'01	6/3387	300/6800	258/4600	1320kg	230	4.6	-	173	-	28.0	+ More character than 996 - Harder work at speed
Porsche 911 Carrera (993)		'94-'97	6/3600	285/6100	251/5250	1372kg	211	5.2	-	168	-	25.0	+ One of the all-time greats - Lots have been driven very hard
Porsche 968 Club Sport	019 F	'93-'95	4/2990	240/6200	225/4100	1335kg	183	6.1	15.7	149	-	-	+ Big-hearted and beautiful - Be sure to buy a good one
Porsche 928 GTS		'92-'95	8/5396	350/5700	317/4250	1790kg	199	5.2	-	171	-	17.0	+ Overlooked, bargain-price French 911. Try one - R5 interior
Renault Alpine A610		'92-'96	6/2975	250/5750	258/2900	1420kg	179	5.4	13.8	160	-	21.0	+ Awesome engine, awesome looks - Damp roads equal moist palms
Superformance Daytona Coupe	149 D	£102,225	8/6162	437/5900	424/4600	1300kg	342	3.9	-	200+	-	-	+ Looks, engine - Unsupportive seats; chassis lacks ultimate polish
TVR T350C	057 R	'03-'07	6/3605	350/7200	290/5500	1100kg	318	4.7	10.0	175	-	-	+ Looks outrageous - 406bhp feels a touch optimistic
TVR Sagaris	099 D	'05-'07	6/3996	406/7500	349/5000	1078kg	383	3.7	-	185	-	-	+ Possibly TVR's best ever car - Aerodynamic 'enhancements'
TVR Tuscan S (Mk2)	076 R	'05-'07	6/3996	400/7000	315/5250	1100kg	369	4.0	-	185	-	-	+ Carbon body, exclusivity - Interesting damping, no supercharger
TVR Typhon	102 F	'06	6/3996	400/7000	330/5250	1060kg	383	3.9	-	180+	-	-	+ Accomplished and desirable - Check chassis for corrosion
TVR Cerbera Speed Six	004 R	'98-'04	6/3966	350/6800	330/5000	1130kg	315	5.0	11.4	160+	-	-	+ Genuine supercar pace - Integrity?
TVR Cerbera 4.5	014 F	'97-'04	8/4578	420/6750	380/5500	1100kg	388	3.9	-	180+	-	-	+ Improved chassis and steering. 180mph - Looks a bit snooty
Vauxhall Monaro VXR 6.0	079 D	'05-'07	8/5967	398/6000	391/4400	1677kg	241	5.1	-	180+	-	-	+ Golf GTI price and performance - Interior lacks flair
VW Scirocco 2.0 TSI	155 R	£24,450	4/1984	207/5300	207/1700	1375kg	153	6.1	15.8	149	172	38.2	+ Great engine, grown-up dynamics - Looks very grown-up, too
VW Scirocco R	138 F	£29,485	4/1984	261/6000	258/2500	1352kg	196	5.8	-	155	189	35.3	+ One of the great all-rounders - A little nose-heavy
VW Corrado VR6	095 F	'92-'96	6/2861	190/5800	180/4200	1237kg	156	6.2	-	143	-	29.5	+ Old-school looks with new-school go - Big-school price
Wiesmann GT MF4	117 D	£108,000	8/4799	362/6300	361/3400	1250kg	294	4.5	-	174	-	-	



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KOENIGSEGG AGERA R, ISSUE 158

SUPERCARS



**OUR CHOICE:** Lamborghini Aventador LP700-4. The first all-new Lambo in nearly a decade has been worth the wait, and then some. A potent new V12, carbon construction and the new ISR gearbox move the game on nicely, and it looks absolutely sensational.



**BEST OF THE REST:** The Veyron Super Sport is just awesome, and Ferrari's 458 Italia, FF and 599 GTO are all utterly brilliant. We also love Porsche's GT2 RS and the screaming Lexus LFA, while the new McLaren MP4-12C (right) is flawed but staggeringly quick.

	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
911 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 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 *****
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	1106/5000	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	603/5800	1528kg	424	3.8	7.6	205	-	18.8	+ Huge pace and character - Take plenty of brave pills if there's rain *****
Ferrari 458 Italia	159 R	£173,132	8/4499	562/9000	398/6000	1485kg	384	3.2	6.8	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 FF	157 D	£227,026	12/6262	642/8000	504/6000	1880kg	347	3.7	-	208	-	-	+ Four seats and 4WD, but a proper Ferrari - Looks divide opinion *****
Ferrari 612 Scaglietti FI	090 R	'04-'11	12/5748	533/7250	434/5250	1840kg	294	4.3	9.8	199	470	13.8	+ Awesomely capable grand tourer - See above *****
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 FI Berlinetta	003 F	'97-'99	8/3496	375/8250	268/6000	1352kg	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 FI *****
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	157 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? *****
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	157 F	'92-'94	6/3498	542/7200	475/4500	1470kg	375	3.7	-	213	-	-	+ Britain's greatest supercar... - ...until McLaren built the FI *****
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+	-	-	+ One of the world's fastest cars - Spiky power delivery *****
Koenigsegg Agera R	158 F	£875,000	8/5000	1100/6900	885/4100	1435kg	779	2.8	-	261+	-	-	+ As fast and exciting as your body can handle - It's almost Veyron money *****
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 *****
Lambo Aventador LP700-4	158 F	£247,000	12/6498	690/8250	509/5500	1575kg	445	2.8	-	217	-	-	+ Most important new Lambo since the Countach - Erm... expensive? *****
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 Galdo 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 *****
Lamborghini Murcielago 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 Murcielago	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-'01	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	159 R	£168,500	8/3799	592/7000	442/3000	1434kg	419	3.0	6.4	205	279	24.2	+ Staggering performance, refinement - Flawed gearchange, snatchy brakes *****
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-Benz SL65 AMG Black	131 F	£250,000	12/5980	661/5400	731/2200	1876kg	358	4.0	8.1	199	-	-	+ Bonkers looks, bonkers speed - Bonkers price *****
Mercedes-Benz 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-Benz 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 *****
Noble M600	159 R	£200,000	8/4439	650/6800	604/5800	1250kg	528	3.8	7.7	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	479/950	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)	157 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	4.7	10.0	189	-	21.0	+ The 911 for all seasons - We can't find any reasons *****
Porsche 911 GT2 (996)	072 F	'04-'06	6/3600	475/5700	457/3500	1420kg	339	4.0	-	198	-	-	+ Later revisions made it even more of a star - Care still required *****
Porsche 911 Turbo (993)	066 F	'95-'98	6/3600	408/5750	398/4500	1502kg	276	4.3	9.2	180	-	19.4	+ Stupendous all-weather supercar - It doesn't rain enough *****
Porsche 911 GT2 (993)	003 F	'96-'99	6/3600	430/5700	398/4500	1290kg	339	3.9	-	184	-	-	+ Hairy-arsed homologation special - Harry won't buy one *****
Porsche Carrera GT	149 F	'04-'06	10/5733	604/8000	435/5750	1380kg	445	3.8	7.6	205	-	-	+ Probably the greatest modern supercar - Can bite *****
Porsche 959	149 F	'87-'90	6/2850	444/6500	369/5000	1450kg	311	3.7	-	197	-	-	+ Tech showcase, still a great drive - Limited choice of colours? *****
Ruf Rt 12	097 F	£155,000	6/3746	641/7000	641/3500								



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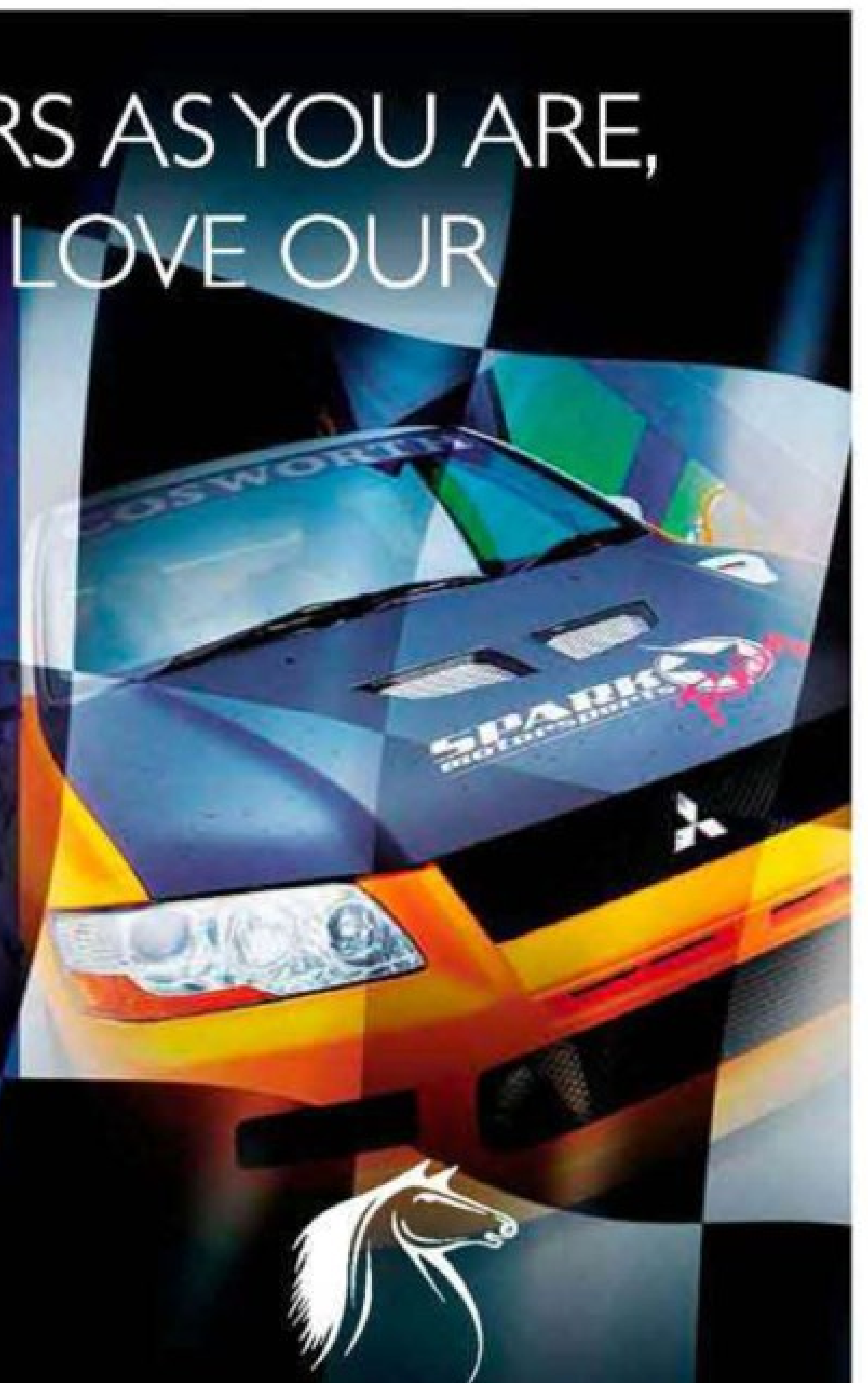
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## Derek Bell & his Porsche 924 GTS

The multiple Le Mans winner and the freebie 924 he intended to sell – but then kept for 30 years

**B**ack in the early '80s I had two separate contracts, one with Rothmans and one with Porsche, and as part of the deal I was to be given a car. The Porsche guys presented me with a piece of paper on which was a list of cars that I could choose from. All very nice, but I reckoned it wouldn't be long before Porsche found me out and employed someone better. I had very little confidence that this would be long-lasting – though in fact it ran for 20 years – so I looked through the list with my business head on and chose the most expensive thing I could find. At least that way if it all went wrong I could sell it and use the funds to get by while I looked around for a new job.

A short while later I received a call telling me I couldn't have the 928 and instead I'd be getting a 924 GTS, as this was similar in spec to the car I raced with Al Holbert at Le Mans in 1980. I was disappointed to be honest – I wanted a real Porsche rather than an Audi-based version, but I consoled myself with the fact that it was worth around £25,000, which was a pretty handy amount back then.

I didn't really think any more about it until the day I was testing a 956 at Paul Ricard in January the following year. I remember

Russell Bulgin from *Car and Car Conversions* magazine was with me writing a feature on Group C, and I was chatting to him when suddenly this stunning, bright red 924 came into the paddock. It looked superb with its pumped-up arches, vents and white wheels, so good in fact that we stopped nattering and wandered over to take a closer look. When I got there, the driver presented me with the keys and said it was mine. All my concerns of the GTS being an inferior Porsche were instantly forgotten.

These thoughts were backed up by the way it drove. I well remember the trip back with Bulgin: we went past Dijon at 150mph in the pouring rain and the thing just felt brilliant. It's good for 290bhp, which was only thirty less than the Le Mans car, and with all the lightweight body parts (poly wings, aluminium doors and bonnet and thin glass windscreen) it really flew and was impressively stable too. I think by the time we got to Calais I'd completely changed my mind about making a quick buck from it.

When we arrived at customs I had to sort out the duty payments and here I got lucky, for the GTS was so rare – only 59 were ever made – that it got put through the system as a more standard model, saving me a whole load of cash. It was touch and go for a

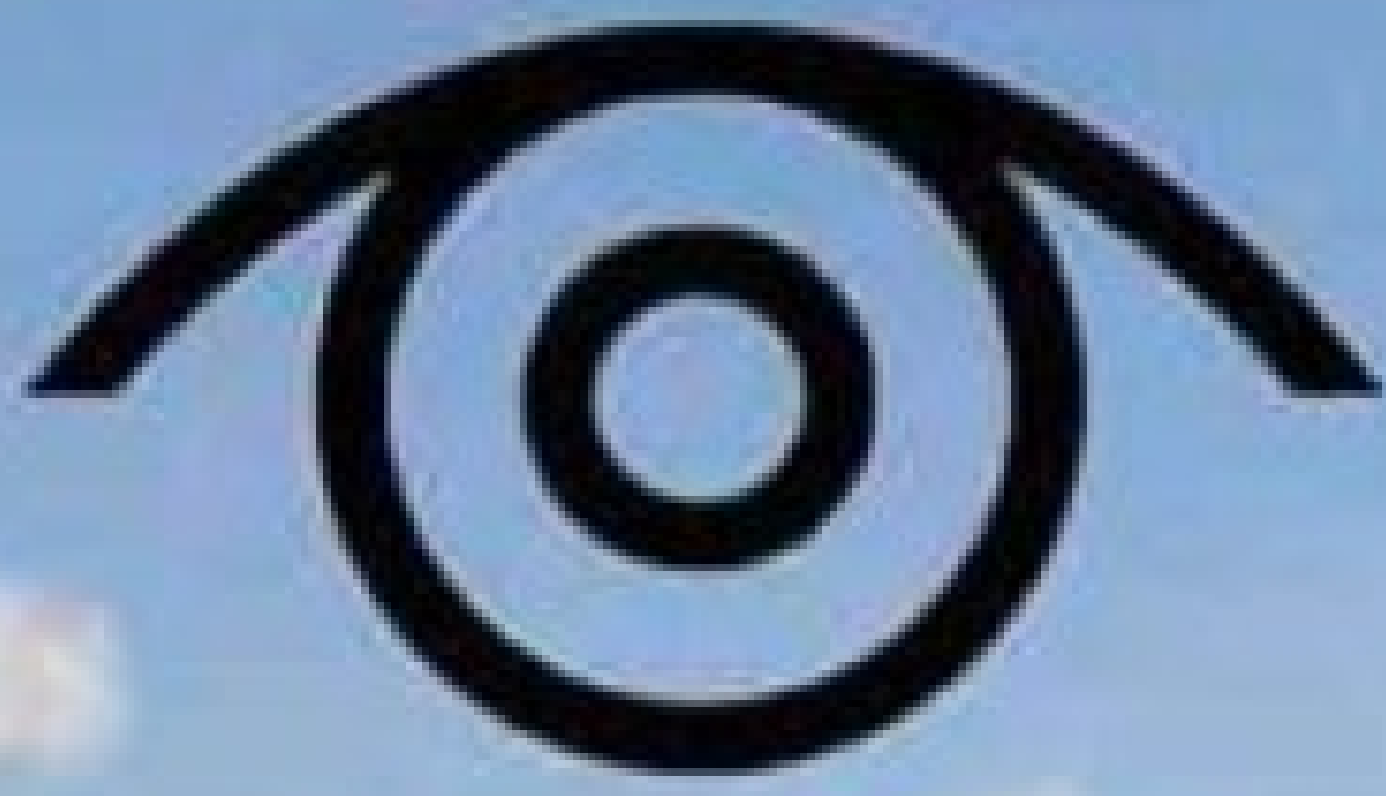
while: the customs officer was a subscriber to CCC and recognised Bulgin, so I thought he'd know the true value of the GTS. Fortunately he didn't.

For a few years I used it as my everyday car, and even though it doesn't get quite that amount of use now, I still drive it regularly and always look forward to taking it out. It's just come back from Stuttgart actually, where it's been with the Porsche Classic people who restore any model over ten years old. My car really only needed a

*'IT'S JUST HAD A NEW TURBO, NEW BRAKES, NEW LIGHTS – I THINK IT DESERVED A BIT OF A REFRESH AFTER 30 YEARS'*

general overhaul, so it's had a new turbo, new brakes, new lights – that kind of thing. I think it deserved a bit of a refresh after 30 years. It's not had paint or anything major, but then it didn't need it. In fact it's never really been a difficult car to own; even after all these years I just get in and go and there aren't many cars that can do that. Numerous cars have come and gone in the intervening years, but the biggest compliment I can pay my 924 GTS is that I have absolutely no intention of selling it. Ever.'





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### Case Study

So committed are we to customer satisfaction that sometimes a repair just isn't enough. Mr Bennett from Edgware bought a Warrantywise warranty for his car. Just 2,390 miles into the cover he suffered a series of catastrophic failures with costs spiralling towards £10,000 to put the car back on the road. Needless to say that Mr Bennett has lost all faith in the car and told us he was going to sell the car as soon as it was fixed.

Quentin came to the rescue, and suggested we buy the car from Mr Bennett for the full market value. The deal was done and Mr Bennett (pictured below with Quentin at the handover) was only too happy with his settlement and service from Warrantywise. Another supremely happy customer.



### Testimonial

"First class service, Warrantywise are an exception to the public's image of car warranties. A genuine plan for genuine repairs. Would highly recommend Warrantywise to anyone. You cannot improve on a perfect product."

**Mr Foreham, Kent.**  
(Warrantywise customer).

### Testimonial

"Authorisation was given straight away. No lengthy claim forms to fill in and if I needed to ring you your operative was always helpful and pleasant. I can't tell you how grateful I am and how service like this is becoming harder and harder to find."

**A Coates, Huddersfield.**  
(Warrantywise customer).



*Quentin Willson*  
Designed by **Quentin Willson**





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<sup>^</sup>Specifications may vary by model. \*Lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions based on the improvements made to the new SEAT Alhambra when compared to previous model.  
<sup>†</sup>Requires driver control. Model shown Alhambra SE Lux 2.0 TDI CR Ecomotive 140PS at £29,440 RRP with bi-xenon headlights (£805 RRP) and custom palette paint (£635 RRP).  
 Official fuel consumption for the SEAT Alhambra range in mpg (litres per 100km); urban 30.1(9.4) - 42.2 (6.7); extra-urban 42.8 (6.6) - 57.6 (4.9); combined 37.2 (7.6) - 50.4 (5.6). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 178-146 g/km.