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Welcome

CHANGING OF THE GUARD



Welcome to the Winter issue of Ultimate Supercar and a new era in the magazine's short but illustrious history. Eagle-eyed readers may have spotted a different name at

the bottom of this page, which you've probably guessed is mine. Who am I? Well, I'm your new editor.

I've been involved in automotive journalism for 20-plus years and, naturally, have a huge passion for all things motoring, especially of the faster variety. I want to say a massive thanks to my predecessor, Nigel Fryatt, for handing over the reins of this cracking magazine. I was a huge fan of the engaging content Nigel collected over the past three issues, and we've kept several of his ideas, such as Launch Control, Time to Buy and the informative Badge Engineering.

Of course, we will carry on testing supercars. In fact, we've put Ferrari's appropriately named Superfast through its paces on page 70. And I'm delighted to say Nigel will carry on contributing to the magazine, too.

So why the change? Well, the newsstand is awash with high-end supercar and hypercar magazines, all offering very similar content. But there isn't another magazine on the shelf that specialises in the performance tuning and styling side of supercar ownership. Our emphasis from now on will be in this growing sector. After all, this magazine is called Ultimate Supercar and while a standard supercar is,

erm, super, there's always room for improvement. As the old saying goes, 'nothing is perfect, until you strap a turbo to it'.

Okay, I made the last bit up. But you get the idea. So expect more of the same content, but a lot more from the world of modified supercars.

In this issue we've concentrated on the forced induction side of tuning. All four feature cars boast boost, whether it's the supercharger on the **R8 GT V10** (page 62), or the heavily breathed-on **Porsche 911 Turbo** (page 34), not to mention the insane cover car - the world's fastest manual car over half a mile - **Underground Racing's** twin turbo **Gallardo**. It's packing a 2300bhp punch! Make sure you read the story about its incredible build (page 16).

If you're inspired by these amazing machines and would like to know more about boosting your very own supercar, then check out our comprehensive **Under Pressure** tech guide on page 54.

Jules Truss, Editor
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MEETING THE TEAM



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Steve Chalmers

ULTIMATE SUPERCAR

NEXT ISSUE
On sale Friday
22 February

To subscribe:
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on page 88

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This car is a world record holder. It recorded a speed of 226mph over a half mile sprint from a standing start. What does it take to achieve that level of speed? 2300bhp...

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The F40 isn't so much a supercar but an icon, so it would be sacrilege to modify one, right? Not if you do it like this...

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70 DRIVEN FERRARI 812 SUPERFAST

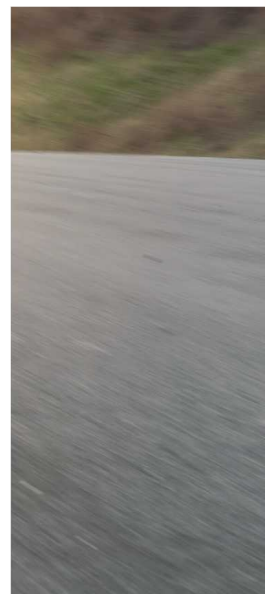
We test the aptly named Ferrari and put the most powerful naturally aspirated engine ever through its paces in Dubai.



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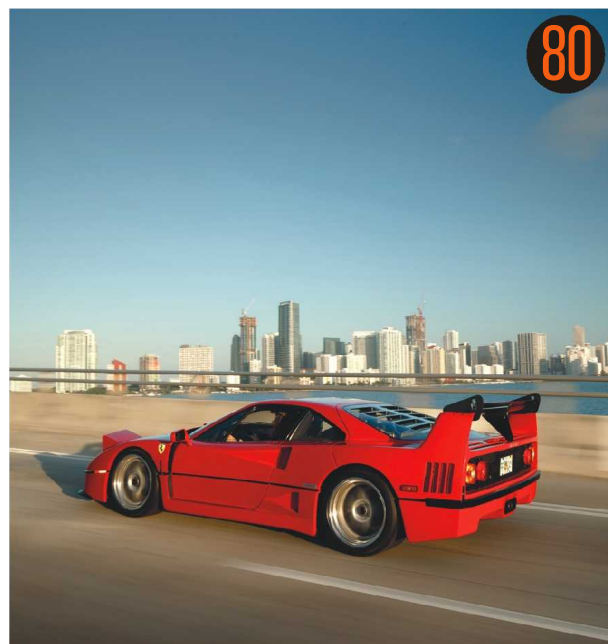


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PAGE 88



LAUNCH MODE

JAGUAR E-TYPE ZERO

Welcome to the Jag with no sound and no tailpipes...



The idea of an E-Type with an electric motor will be anathema to some, but Jaguar have been very smart about the engineering of the Zero.

First of all, every Zero built will be a restoration of a rough and tired E-Type, rather than harming the originality of matching-numbers cars; they'll then be restored to better-than-new condition and fitted

with an electric drivetrain. The engineering principle from the start was to make it as E-Type-like as possible, without adding extra weight or harming the dynamics.

The 40kWh battery stack is lifted from the I-PACE and positioned where the old straight-six would have been; behind that lies a 295bhp electric motor. As the standard engine is quite heavy, there's no noticeable weight penalty here, and everything, from

suspension and tyres to brakes and propshaft, is authentically E-Type. The only way you can tell it's electric is that it makes no sound and has no tailpipes!

Most cleverly of all, the changes are entirely reversible – if you wanted to throw away the electric motor and reinstate the straight-six at some point in the future, you could.

The cost of the E-Type Zero? £300,000. A lot more than an I-Pace. But infinitely cooler.



FERRARI MONZA SP1 AND SP2

THE LATEST ULTRA-DESIRABLE niche product to gallop from Maranello is the rakish Ferrari Monza. Based on the formidable underpinnings of the 812 Superfast (which helped the homologation process no end), this is essentially a road-legal racer for collectors and marque aficionados. It exists in two distinct variants: the Monza SP1 has just the one seat, whereas the SP2 has space for a passenger, although they'll have to suffer without a windscreen.

These cars represent the genesis of Ferrari's Icona series, which will launch limited runs of special-series cars for serious collectors. 500 Monzas will be built, costing £2,000,000 each. Pure performance cars aimed at serious drivers. Although the nature of their rarity may see more than a few of them ending up in static collections...



HOLDEN TIME ATTACK CONCEPT

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of their first victory at legendary endurance circuit Bathurst, Holden - GM's Australian wing - have created a new toy: the Time Attack Concept.

This outlandish single-seater is

based around a carbon fibre web chassis with electric motors on each axle. It's a vision of future race cars rather than a production viability. But it does show an incredible step forward from the brand's tradition of old-school V8 muscle cars. Exciting times indeed.

"This outlandish single-seater with electric motors on each axle is a vision of future race cars"



DB4 GT ZAGATO CONTINUATION

Continuation models are big business these days. Jaguar, for example, went to phenomenal lengths to compete the stalled production run of the iconic XK-SS with its classic but modern-build road cars, and now Aston Martin have announced a similar notion for the revered DB4 GT Zagato.

Created to commemorate Zagato's centenary, the continuation racers will be built at Aston Martin Works in Newport Pagnell, the hand-crafted aluminium bodies positioned over a tubular Superleggera frame in the traditional style. Power will be mighty at 380bhp, and track day kudos will be unparalleled. One catch, though, if you want to buy one, you have to also buy a DBS GT Zagato at the same time. For UK buyers, this adds up to £7,200,000 for the pair.





HYBRID 911

THE NEXT GENERATION of Porsche 911, the 992, will most likely be available as a hybrid. It's a little way off yet though, as project head August Achleitner explains: "It's prepared for hybrid power in the future, but not for the next few years. We're currently waiting for the batteries to improve."

The new model will be adopting the eight-speed auto from the Panamera to replace the old seven-speed PDK, because the big saloon's 'box leaves room for an electric motor, and there's also plentiful space for batteries. Despite this, Porsche say a hybrid 992 would be no heavier than a 991. We'll have to wait and see.



720S TRACK PACK

MCLAREN ARE NOW offering a 'Track Pack' as an option for the 720S, which shaves a handy 24kg from the kerb weight. Chief among the upgrades are a gloss-finish carbon-fibre rear wing, forged lightweight wheels, carbon bucket seats, and a titanium harness bar. The Track Telemetry System is also included, allowing drivers to download their performance for analysis. Good for a pub boast.

911 GT2 RS 935

AS PART OF their many and varied 70th anniversary celebrations, Porsche have unveiled a homage to the legendary 1970s 'Moby Dick' 935 race car, based on the new 911 GT2 RS. It's neither road-legal nor homologated for racing, so each of the 77 examples built will be solely for track day use and club-level events. The bodywork has been outrageously reworked with

wider arches, a flat nose and a long tail, while the interior has been fully stripped and fitted with bucket seats and a rollcage. The GT2 RS's 3.8-litre twin-turbo flat-six remains, all 700bhp of it, and the race car creds are bolstered by air jacks and even an emergency escape hatch in the roof!

Prices start at £625,000, with delivery commencing in June 2019.





PROJECT ONE: TESTING, TESTING...

Mercedes-AMG's Project One is a car we've been getting excited about for a little while now, the uber-hypercar being as close as any manufacturer has ever come to creating a genuine Formula One car for the road. And the excitement levels have just increased, as the car's been spied testing at Millbrook Proving Ground. The testing camo does little to hide the Project One's startling design, and it's encouraging to learn that this 1.6-litre V6 hybrid F1 powertrain should be road legal by next year.



“This 1.6-litre V6 hybrid should be road legal by next year”

ARES DESIGN 250 GTO

Some cars are arguably untouchable, so any plans to recreate the legendary Ferrari 250 GTO are bound to be met with suspicion. But that hasn't stopped controversial Modenese coachbuilder Ares Design from announcing a limited run of 10 reimaged GTOs, at a cost of £1,000,000 each. Ares plan to base these cars on either the F12 or the 812 Superfast - customer's choice - with extensive use of carbon fibre to reinvent the classic racer as a modern road car.

“Ares plan to base these cars on either the F12 or the 812 Superfast”



ASTON MARTIN'S HYBRID HYPERCAR

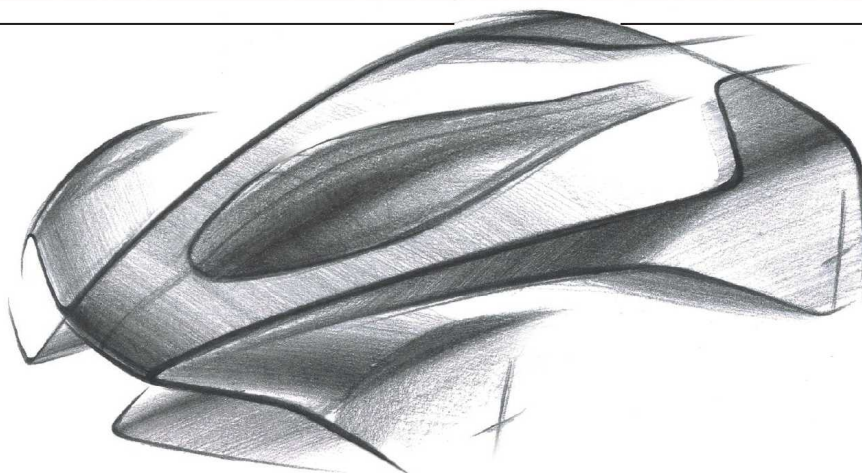
ASTON MARTIN CEO Andy Palmer has announced that the company will launch its third hypercar by 2021. Hot on the heels of the 001 Valkyrie and 002 Valkyrie AMR Pro - which revised the astonishing 001 with improved aero, a weight reduction to 1,000kg wet, and a power hike to 1,100bhp - the forthcoming 003 promises to be something truly special.

We don't know what it will look like beyond a symbolic styling sketch that A-M have released, but we do know that it'll have a carbon tub, with a mid-mounted and turbocharged

3.5-litre V6 producing 950bhp. Aero and suspension will both be active, imbuing it with unparalleled track poise, and the power level will position it below the Valkyrie but way above the DBS Superleggera.

What's most impressive is that Aston Martin promise the 003 will be usable in the real world. It'll have a proper boot, and be available in both left- and right-hand drive.

Production will be limited to 500 examples, priced at £1,000,000 apiece. And expect a Volante variant to follow shortly after.



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THE SUPERCARS OF SEMA

The biggest aftermarket automotive show of the year played host to some amazing builds

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY: **JULES TRUSS**

The Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA) Show doesn't sound like the most exciting event in the world. But it is!

Held at the Las Vegas Convention Center in early November, there are just three things you need to know about SEMA: it's the biggest, the best and the most important car show on the planet.

Back in November, their 52nd annual event saw 170,000 visitors, over three million square feet of exhibitors and thousands of top-notch builds. We're not saying that other events aren't truly amazing. Just that the sheer scale of SEMA dwarfs everything else you're likely to experience.

You may think that SEMA is

rammed to the gills with modern American muscle cars, trucks and old-skool V8s that don't work too well here in Europe, and to some extent you'd be right. But we just wouldn't bother with an 11-hour flight if that's all there was to it. These cars may be a huge part of the US market but the truth is that SEMA is all about diversity nowadays. It's a global event, and that's reflected in what's on display. No matter what you're into, you'll find everything your heart desires at SEMA. And most relevantly to us, you'll see lots of supercars - some standard but mostly modified.

In many cases these cars are built specifically for this show, before they go on to wow the rest of the world over the next show season. Here's a few of the best...





SUPER-RARE
THE LAMBORGHINI CENTENARIO is a tribute to the 100th anniversary of the birth of Mr Ferruccio Lamborghini and they are incredibly rare. Only 40 models will be made: 20 coupes and 20 roadsters. So it was a bit of a surprise to stumble across one at SEMA! For more information on this awesome car, make sure to read our feature on the Centenario in the next issue of US.

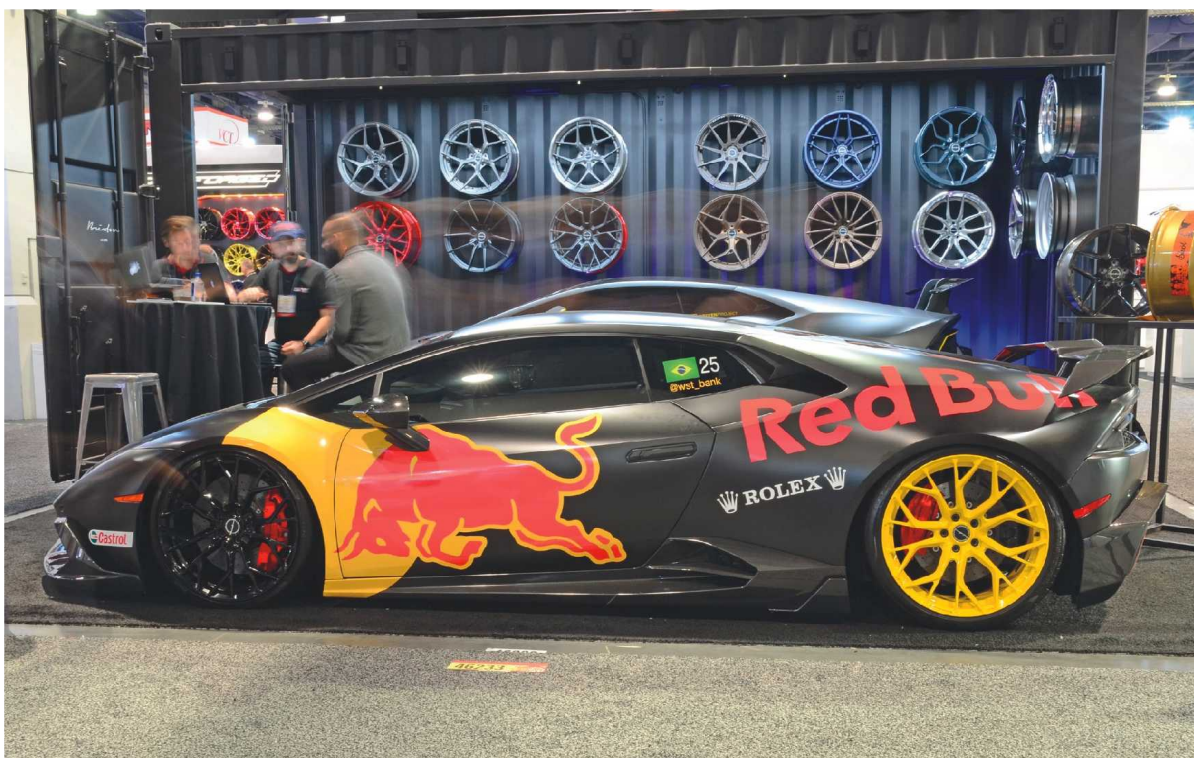


TESLA-POWERED PORSCHE
PARKED A COUPLE of cars down from the Ferrari 328 was this beautiful RWB-kitted 911. While the wide arches, deep-dished BBS split rims and stunning custom interior might seem like the main attractions on this build, it's the power plant that caused the biggest reaction. The classic air-cooled engine has been swapped out for a new-skool Tesla motor. Again, the purists won't be happy but we certainly are.

“There are just three things you need to know about SEMA: it's the biggest, the best and the most important car show on the planet”



FERRARI 328 GTS
THIS WIDE-BODY Ferrari was the most talked about build of the show and it's not hard to see why. The purists might not like the fact this classic Ferrari has been lowered over Rotiform Wheels on air-ride suspension, but maybe they should look a little closer before judging the car. The bodykit is made from Kevlar, the paint is Ferrari Grigio Medio, the fog lamps are from a 288 GTO, and the mirrors from a 458 GT3. A truly stunning build, carried out to the highest of standards.



WHAT IS IT?
 THAT'S EXACTLY OUR thought when we saw this car parked on Pirelli's stand. A bit of research tells us it's a Karma Revero, a luxury electric sports car built by Karma Automotive. It's basically a revamped version of the 2012 Fisker Karma.



COMING SOON...
 TWO CARS THAT really caught our eyes were an Audi R8 RWS and Ferrari 458 and we'll be bringing you full features on both cars in the next issue.
 The Audi belongs to Brian Henderson of Rotiform Wheels. Not only has Brian modified an R8 V10, but he's done it to the

limited-edition rear-wheel-drive RWS version. The engine boasts a VF Engineering supercharger which has increased power to around 800bhp.
 The Ferrari is also boasting forced induction, but this time in the form of a custom twin turbo set-up which has pushed power to over 1000bhp (estimated).

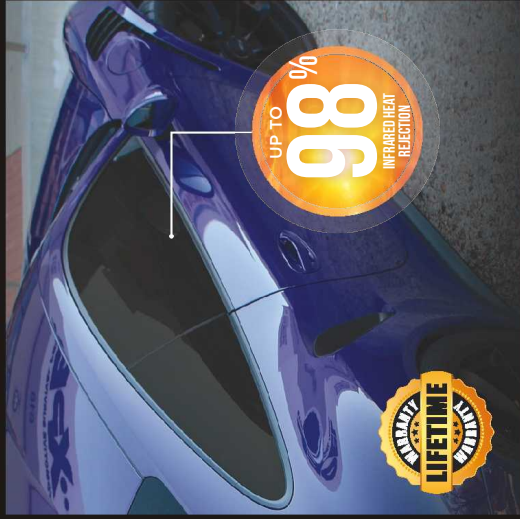


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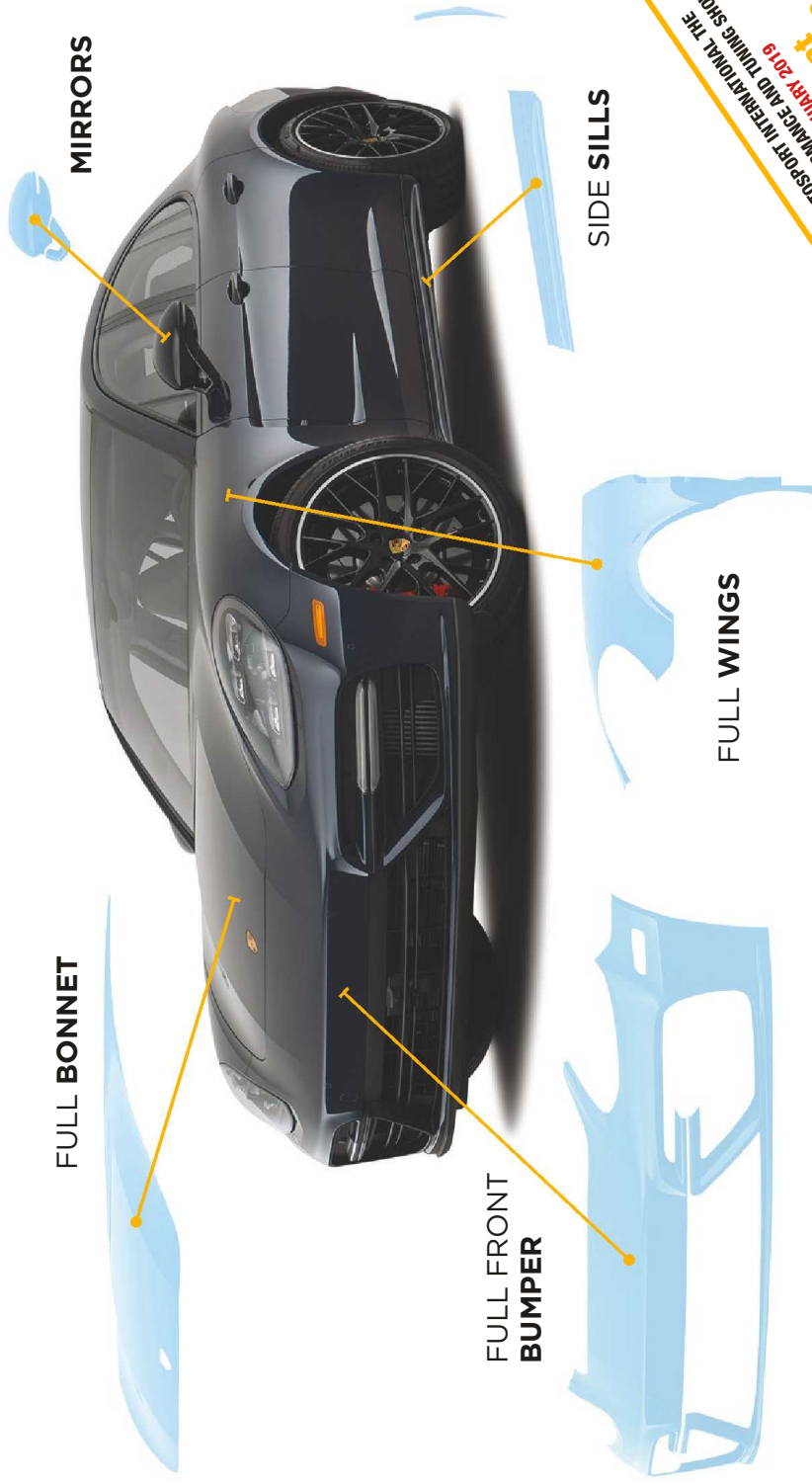
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BABY DRIVER

Some people call the Gallardo ‘the baby Lambo’.
These people presumably haven’t seen what 2,300bhp can do...

WORDS: DANIEL BEVIS PHOTOGRAPHY: MIKE KUHN



“There isn’t a single manual-transmission car in the world that can beat it over the half mile”



This Gallardo can reach 226.59mph in a standing half-mile, something no other manual in the world can do

We live in exciting times for the supercar genre. As is well-documented, the term was originally

coined for the Lamborghini Miura way back in 1966 – a car that transcended everyday transport, it was stunning to look at and moved faster than anyone at the time could comfortably cope with. For generations, that iconic name – ‘supercar’ – has held children in its thrall and grown-ups spellbound.

And these days? The goalposts have moved an unimaginable distance. The game’s moved on so much in recent years that we’ve had to formulate a new term, ‘hypercar’. Some of these otherworldly machines fuse up-to-the-minute hybrid tech with improbable aero to achieve their scientifically challenging ends, others stick rigidly to the classic big-engine big-horsepower formula. But they’re all doing things that we once never believed possible.

Of course, as much as the manufacturers endeavour to cram ever-more improbable levels of technology and spaceship-performance into their latest bedroom-wall-poster machines, so the aftermarket is always keen to take a step back, view the performance landscape with an objective eye, and develop means to apply the latest hypercar performance to the previous generation of supercars. Imagine if you could take, say, the power of the Lamborghini Aventador SVJ and squeeze it into something with the footprint of the Huracán, maximising power-to-weight and exponentially ramping up the inherent drama? That would condense the entire model range into one fabulous entity, wouldn’t it? Well, you don’t need to imagine such a thing – Underground Racing exists to carry out just such lunatic endeavours... with a unique twist. If you take them, for example, a 12-year-old Gallardo and give them the brief to make it quicker than any brand new hypercar, they’re happy to oblige. Sound unlikely? Feast your eyes on the Nardo Grey 2007 Gallardo you see before you: it may look relatively stock, but there isn’t a single manual-transmission car in the world that can beat it over the half mile. And that’s a verified fact.

Going mainstream

As a base for a project, the bone-stock Gallardo is already a pretty brutal and savage thing. It’s the car that really pushed Lamborghini into the volume-selling mainstream. Production ran from 2003-2013 and they shifted over 14,000 units – unprecedented numbers for a company that always belligerently walked its own path and had to



Above Wheels are HRE C103 forged three-piece split-rims, their 19-inch diameter chosen to offer the ideal mix of acceleration and top-end. HRE competition-spec wheels were chosen because they're incredibly light and strong

accept the financial setbacks that came with this uncompromising quest for uniqueness. The first-generation Gallardo, like the one we have before Mike's lens today, came equipped with a 5.0-litre V10 producing a nice round 500bhp; it would run 0-62mph in 4.2 seconds straight out of the box and go on to 196mph. Standing quarter-mile? An unstressed 12 seconds. Some people may call it the 'baby Lambo', but don't go thinking it's not thoroughly grown-up. Naturally, however, such things can always be made more aggressive - and, inevitably, faster. 500bhp? It's a nice starting point. But how about doubling that? Or trebling it? Or more? That was the key driver for Murad Alzuraiki, owner of this startling grey brute; known to friends as Moe, he employed the services of Underground Racing to take his Gallardo to the next level - and ended up several levels beyond that.

"I've always modified my cars because I love to go fast," Moe laughs. "I've had this Lamborghini



“I knew Underground Racing could bring my vision to life: an unbeatably powerful car that I could still use every day”



since 2012, and at the time I bought it, it was the perfect platform for Underground Racing. I'm a long-time friend and customer of theirs. We work as a team, and I knew they'd bring my vision to life – an unbeatably powerful car that I could still use every day.”

Underground Racing are a bit like a cult. If you scroll through the customer build list on their website, you'll find well over 80 big-horsepower conversions... and that's just for the first-gen Gallardos. They also offer massive power enhancements for the LP560, Huracán, Aventador and Murciélago, as well as Audi's R8 in both V8 and V10 guise, and the Ferrari F430 and 458.

The official tuning menu lists five upgrade options for the early Gallardo, although Moe's is something rather special even beyond that. The first option available is for the firm's Stage 1 twin-turbo setup to be fitted to the stock V10 motor – an arrangement which will

Above There's much about the engine spec that Moe would prefer to keep secret

Far left above Those mighty tailpipes have a tendency to spit huge blue flames when angered

Far left below The Superleggera rear spoiler is a hint that all's not quite factory stock on this car

Left Moe's wrapped his hoops in sticky Toyo R888R rubber

provide 700bhp on pump fuel, or up to 900bhp on race fuel. The next step up is to have the Stage 2 turbo system bolted to a modified engine – they'll upgrade the internals with forged pistons and stronger rods, the whole thing will be blueprinted and balanced, and you'll be on the way to 850bhp on pump fuel or 1,150bhp on race fuel. Staggering numbers, right? But we're only at the second stage. The Stage 3 option adds further engine mods to allow 1,250bhp, the next step is unobtrusively called 'Race Version' which brings you up to 1,500bhp, and the final act of lunacy is Stage 2 Race, at which point you'll be staring down the barrel of 1,750bhp and the very foundations of the Earth itself will have started to shift and crumble.

But even this act of certifiable craziness wasn't sufficient for Moe's heady aspirations. He didn't want to just be ludicrously fast – he wanted to be so fast that nobody could catch him. So he's worked closely with Underground Racing to tailor a

unique and eye-watering spec for his Gallardo, side-stepping the mainstream menu and going à la carte. The engine has been blueprinted and features twin billet 62mm Precision turbos, Tial billet wastegates and BOVs, and a custom-fabricated stainless steel exhaust system with ultra-lightweight silencers. It inhales through a mighty stainless steel ram-air induction arrangement with hungry K&N filters, and inside the block reside custom CP reverse-dish aluminium pistons with Carillo rods and custom steel cylinder sleeves. The fuelling is frankly massive, and it's all overseen by AEM engine management to keep everything safe as well as utterly ballistic. The ice water reservoir is a neat touch, allowing Moe to significantly reduce charge temperatures by pouring in a bunch of ice before a high-speed run. And perhaps the most notable feature of this car, aside from the near-unbelievable horsepower, is the fact that it's still running a six-speed



manual gearbox. There's no e-Gear chicanery or motorsport sequentials here, simply a billet gearset inside the standard 'box. Now, this car's running 2,300bhp, a figure you may need to absorb for a moment, with potential for up to 2,500bhp depending on setup – there's much about the engine spec that Moe would prefer to keep secret. That's a lot of grunt to entrust to your wrist and your left ankle.

World Record

Thankfully Moe's limber extremities are up to the task. Indeed, in August 2018 he took a World Record in this amusingly frightening machine, reaching 226.59mph in a standing half-mile, something no other manual car in the world has managed. This particular record has been pinballing about between five different Underground Racing customers for the better part of a decade now, and it's Moe's combination of stratospheric horsepower and steady hand on the tiller that netted him the worldwide accolades. This is the fastest 6-speed Gallardo there is. It's as simple as that.

What surprises most Lambo aficionados about this car is the

relative levels of stealth. OK, you could never describe any Lamborghini as a sleeper, they're way too ostentatious for that, but to the untrained eye this appears to be nothing more extraordinary than a mainstream, factory-spec Gallardo. The fact that it's painted in subtle Nardo Grey further adds to the under-the-radar mystique; a fashion-forward shade that fans affectionately know as 'shiny primer', it helps Moe to blend in with the traffic as much as is possible in such a machine. Indeed, there are only four clues that give away the simmering malevolence that resides beneath that engine lid: firstly, there's the wheels. They're HRE C103 forged three-piece split-rims, their 19-inch diameter chosen to offer the ideal mix of acceleration and top-end; HRE competition-spec wheels are incredibly light and strong, and Moe's wrapped his in sticky Toyo R888R rubber. So that's clue one. The second hint that all's not quite factory is the Superleggera rear spoiler – although, to be fair, a lot of owners do that. The third? It's those mighty tailpipes, which do have a tendency to spit huge blue flames when angered. And finally, above all, there's

the incredible noise this car makes, an aggressive crescendo of growls, rumbles, whooshing sounds and wastegate chatter. It sounds like an entire fairground has been squeezed inside the diminutive Sant'Agata sweetheart. It heralds chaos like a binary supernova.

But let's not forget Moe's original brief: an unbeatably powerful car that I could still use every day. Surely with these levels of record-breaking thrust, he's thrown any semblance of practicality right out of the window? Far from it, actually. "I drive this car around town every day, just like any other car," he assures us. "It's very docile, it has air-con and all the factory options. It just also happens to have well over 2,000bhp." Put like that, the logic is impeccable. The original spirit of the Miura, refracted through a 21st-century filter, with next-gen power and everyday usability. What Moe and Underground Racing have created here is the perfect car – trundle to work through the week, set a world speed record on Saturday before cruising to the drive-thru, then head out for a spirited Sunday blast. Keep your Regeras and your Speedtails, this Gallardo can do anything.

Above The engine has been blueprinted and features twin billet 62mm Precision turbos, Tial billet wastegates and BOVs

Right middle The interior is stock (if it ain't broke...)

Right A whopping 2,300bhp on a manual six-speed



TECH SPEC: GALLARDO

Styling: Stock Gallardo with Superleggera rear wing, Nardo Grey.

Tuning: 5.0-litre V10, blueprinted and balanced, twin billet 62mm Precision turbos, Tial billet wastegates and BOVs, custom-fabricated stainless steel exhaust system with ultra-lightweight silencers, custom stainless steel ram-air induction with K&N filters, custom air/water intercooler with upgraded water pump, high-flow heat exchanger, ice water reservoir, crankcase ventilation system, silicone hoses, custom heat-shielding, custom CP reverse-dish aluminium pistons, Carillo rods, CP spiral locks and wrist pins, custom

steel cylinder sleeves, twin high-flow fuel pumps on billet hangers, Aeroquip stainless fuel lines, Aeromotive adjustable fuel pressure regulator, upgraded fuel injectors, AEM engine management, GReddy electronic boost controller, custom wiring harness, billet manual 6-speed gearbox.

Chassis: 19in HRE C103 wheels, Toyo R888R tyres, stock suspension and brakes.

Interior: Stock Gallardo

Follow the car's development on social media: [@moemurad](#) on Instagram, [moemurad](#) on Facebook




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Rare and Desirable Supercars

When a limited edition
Lamborghini Gallardo just
won't cut it, you'll need to look
to the pinnacle of supercar
exclusivity...

WORDS: DANIEL BEVIS



S

upercars, by definition, inspire shock and awe wherever they go. The nature of the genre, ever since the term started to be widely thrown around with the inception of the Lamborghini Miura back in 1966, has been to offer something so far removed from the everyday automobile to make jaws drop and eyes light up every time such

a thing hoves into view. Everybody regresses back to a child-like level of excitement when these outlandish machines are around... or, at least, they should.

It's context-bound. Because while any production-spec Aventador or 488 GTB will stop everyone in their tracks if it were to appear in a rural Hampshire village among the Corsas and Fiestas, it's a different story for the moneyed types cruising around Knightsbridge, Monaco or Beverly Hills. Certain geographical locations enjoy a concentration of wealth, and with that inevitably comes a concentration of supercars. Driving a production supercar isn't enough to impress in this sort of context; anyone with the ready cash can amble into a showroom and come away with an off-the-peg machine. That's not uniqueness, that's just shopping. So manufacturers have always had a keen awareness of the wealthy connoisseur customer, those who want the latest model but don't want to have the one everyone else has got. Status is everything, and the rarer a car is, the more desirable it becomes. And these are the cars we're looking at here. The ones that have become most desirable owing to their inherent obscurity. Because you can't make a statement outside Harrods if someone cruises past in the same car, can you?

“The gearbox is reprogrammed, the suspension’s retuned. It’s all very unseemly and hooliganesque”



Rolls-Royce Wraith Black Badge

It seems deliciously incongruous to describe any Rolls-Royce as a supercar. As a point of note, the R-R plant at Goodwood has automated vertical sunblinds to regulate light levels on the production line, and horizontal blinds on reception to emulate the radiator slat history. These are the levels of detail that speak of motor-cars built on heritage and quality rather than overt sporting prowess. A factory trimmer once told us, “Only the best leather hides make it through our inspection process; we send the offcuts to Bentley”.

A Rolls-Royce detaches you from such base hoi-polloi activities as changing gear or operating a handbrake; all of these things are dealt with by one simple column stalk.

Yes, they're immensely powerful cars, but that's only because rich people need to get places in a hurry. The passenger experience is one of exemplary luxury and opulence. But Rolls-Royce engineers have as much petrol

pumping through their veins as you, dear reader. Hence the development of the Black Badge series.

In the case of the Wraith, it involves taking the vast two-door coupé – already formidable with its 623bhp twin-turbo V12 – and amping it up a bit. Peak power remains the same, but torque is increased from 590lb.ft to 642lb.ft, increasing mid-range urge, as if anybody had ever found it lacking in this goliath of a car.

The gearbox is reprogrammed to let it rev higher and the suspension's retuned for improved handling. It's all very unseemly and hooliganesque. But the best part is that the Black Badge is significant to other Rolls owners. Yes, it's possible to spec any Roller in any way you like, so you could theoretically have made a bog-standard Wraith like this anyway. But other owners will know that you paid a £35k premium for the kudos of having the limited-edition one. Which is very much the point of all this.



DETOMASO PANTERA GT5-S

THE PANTERA WAS an unusual proposition right from the off. It brought elements of fast-car muscularity from across the globe to create a surprisingly alluring package. Designed by Italian styling house Ghia's American-born pencilsmith Tom Tjaarda, it combined an oh-so-seventies wedge profile with a full-fat, blue-collar Cleveland V8, as found in numerous Ford muscle cars of the era.

The keen pricing – definitely a premium product, but markedly cheaper than a thoroughbred Italian – was mixed in with the handy fact that Ford imported and sold them through their Lincoln-Mercury dealers in the States, meaning that 7,260 Panteras ended up getting built in an impressively long production run, from 1971-92. Arguably not the most super of supercars,

given its hewn-from-granite engine, it still holds a special place in the pantheon of fast wedges... and, as befits the oeuvre, of course there's a special edition for the connoisseur to hunt down.

Because if you want to stand out at the concours, a bone-stock 1971 351ci just won't cut the mustard. No, the one you want is the runout special, the GT5-S. The GT5 had existed since 1980, sporting bonded-on fibreglass arch extensions, wider wheels, aggressive spoilers and a more luxurious interior. The GT5-S built on this by incorporating single-piece steel wide arches and a steel airdam (indeed, the 'S' in the name stood for 'steel').

Just 183 examples of the GT5-S were built – a thug in a sharp suit, wearing ostentatious jewellery and making a lot of loud noises. It's not subtle.





Aston Martin V8 Zagato Volante

The Aston Martin V8 holds a special place in the hearts of many British car enthusiasts. Built from 1969-89, this refined bruiser is often referred to as the first British supercar, its glorious finesse underpinned by astounding power and continent-smashing agility. Each car was handbuilt, taking 1,200 hours apiece, and the 5.3-litre V8 offered well in excess of 300bhp, shoving this wood-and-leather-filled coupé from 0-60mph in under six seconds.

The fun part came when Aston Martin decided to plunder their heritage in the late-eighties and shake up the V8 formula with something fresh. Calling back to the marque's historic ties with Italian styling house Zagato, they commissioned a run of

limited-edition rebodied V8s.

The avant-garde design was massively more futuristic than the traditional aesthetic of the base car that sat beneath the skin, with a controversial squared-off grille and truly unusual glasshouse. It retained the V8's luxurious appointments, but the brawny 5.3, fed by juicy Weber carbs, was now producing 430bhp and able to rocket the V8 Zagato up to 186mph.

Just 52 coupés were built, along with a subsequent 37 convertibles (named Volante) – which really annoyed all the buyers who'd already bought a coupé. Suddenly their exclusive car wasn't quite so exclusive any more. For true pub bragging rights in Aston Martin circles, the V8 Zagato Volante is the one to have.

PAGANI ZONDA REVOLUCIÓN

The Zonda is, in the most respectful tone possible, the supercar that just won't die. Debuting in 1999 as the Zonda C12, it represented at the time a staggering fusion of craftsmanship and devastating pace, its AMG-developed engine transcending its mainstream roots by working with savage aerodynamics to create what's still regarded as one of the greatest driver's cars of all time.

Combined magnificently with this was Horacio Pagani's obsessive attention to detail, with every single design element of the car being fastidiously pored over to ensure form was every bit as exquisite as function.

Naturally, for such an astonishingly good car, it remained in limited production for a long time, with each iteration getting better. There's no shortage of special-edition Zondas, from 2009's Zonda Cinque to the 11 different versions of the brutal 760-series. The Zonda R of 2007 was effectively a race car, sharing only 10 percent of components with the standard Zonda base in spite of looking remarkably similar, and the ultimate evolution of this was 2017's Zonda Revolución. The final version of the Zonda R dropped a 789bhp motor in a car weighing just 1,070kg. It's got a sequential gearbox and an F1-style DRS system, and even among the special editions, the Revolución is the one to have. Just five were built, selling for around £1.9m. Expect them to be worth rather more now.

Lamborghini Sesto Elemento

IF THERE'S ONE SUB-NICHE that really gets supercar spotters super-excited, it's the pointless supercar. These are machines that aren't road legal, but also aren't eligible for any race series. So you can't really drive them anywhere except on track days, but they're too valuable to risk being knocked into by some boy racer in a Saxo, so you really have to book out the whole track. These, then, are cars for incredibly wealthy people.

The best thing about the pointless supercar is that manufacturers put huge effort into ensuring they're the very best they can be. Ferrari's XX programme, for example, allows them to capture data from these cars at Fiorano to aid development of future road and race models.

But our favourite of the pointless supercar genre isn't a Ferrari – it's the Lamborghini Sesto Elemento. The name translates as 'sixth element', referring to the periodic table of elements and carbon's position within it. Carbon fibre is the overarching theme of this outlandish spaceship of a car; the body, chassis, suspension, wheels and driveshafts are all crafted from the magical weave, the seats are essentially just soft pads glued to the sculpted carbon tub, and the whole car weighs in at just 999kg. Thrown into this body that has to be tethered down to stop it floating away is the 5.2-litre V10 from the Gallardo, developing 562bhp. This makes it superbike-fast: 0-62mph takes 2.5 seconds, 0-124mph is despatched in eight seconds flat, and by the time it's howled onward to 205mph your retinas will have most likely detached. Thirty Sesto Elementos were built in 2011, costing the thick end of £2.5m each, the entire production run selling out immediately. If you do ever see one up for sale, you'll be buying your way into supercar royalty. But you won't be able to use it anywhere.





Maserati MC12

THIS IS THE CAR that exists for people who feel that the Ferrari Enzo is a bit common, but don't have the contacts at Pininfarina to build a P4/5.

The MC12 was a homologation model for Maserati, constructed to allow them to go racing in the FIA GT Championship – 25 cars were built in 2004, and then another 25 in 2005, all of which were presold at £520,000 apiece. The bones of the car are pure Enzo (chassis, engine, gearbox, it's all the same), but Maserati's exterior design makes the car significantly larger and with more of a focus on aerodynamics – just look at the delicacy of the strakes on the bonnet, it's almost Formula One-esque. The windscreen is the only obviously shared component, and the MC12 is actually a targa – although, somewhat unhelpfully, you can't store the roof panel in the car once removed. But you don't buy a thing like this to be practical, do you?

In Top Trumps terms, the MC12 actually loses out to the Enzo on every important measure, being less fast in acceleration terms, with a lower top speed (205mph plays 217mph) and a longer stopping distance. But these things don't matter when you're cruising through Monaco. An MC12's most important characteristic is that it isn't an Enzo, even though that's precisely what it is under the skin. It's one-of-50. And that's worth a huge amount of kudos.

“Just look at the delicacy of the strakes on the bonnet – it's almost Formula One-esque”

FERRARI P4/5

The Special Projects programme at Ferrari is not something that's open to everyone. But should that stop you from owning a bespoke modern Ferrari? Jim Glickenhaus certainly didn't think so. If you're not familiar with the name, this is a guy who's at once a film director and a stock market magnate, with a scintillating and otherworldly collection of cars hidden away in his unassuming garage. If you know the name, you'll know the almighty splendour of his latest project, the Scuderia Cameron Glickenhaus SCG 003 – which is essentially an FIA-approved race car with incongruous number plates attached.

But way before the SCG 003 happened, Glickenhaus was sidestepping Ferrari's rules with his P4/5. This is an Enzo underneath – the last remaining unsold Enzo in the world, in fact – which Jim asked Pininfarina to rebody for him in the style of the marque's 1960s race cars. (It was Pininfarina who approached him with the idea of crafting some manner of one-off, interestingly.)

Over 200 unique components were designed and manufactured for the P4/5, although it retains its Enzo VIN number; upon inspecting it, Luca di Montezemolo was sufficiently impressed to allow it to be officially badged 'Ferrari P4/5 by Pininfarina'. It's 270kg lighter than an Enzo, slightly more powerful at 660bhp, and has markedly more downforce. You see, if you have the means and the contacts, you don't need to wait for the manufacturer to make a special edition. You can simply spirit your own into existence.



Honda NSX Type R

There was a time when the words 'Honda' and 'supercar' couldn't possibly have sat comfortably in the same sentence. When the NSX was unveiled at the 1989 Chicago Auto Show, it was met with genuine confusion. A Honda that wanted to be a rival to Ferrari? There's just no way that would work. But Honda were deadly serious – the NSX may have shared a badge with the Civic, but it had a few tricks up its exquisitely tailored sleeve.

The all-aluminium quad-cam VTEC V6 mounted amidships produced an urgent 270bhp at 7,300rpm, which was more than

enough to overwhelm the rear tyres in a shell weighing 1,340kg. The chassis was specifically designed to offer a sublime duality for the driver: supercar tactility with Civic-esque ease of use, making a hero of the average Joe.

Ayrton Senna himself helped to develop the car; he even used one as a promo on race weekends, famously being pulled over for speeding in his NSX en route to the British Grand Prix. Sadly for Honda, cachet is a significant element in the supercar matrix and they were never likely to coax too many people from Ferrari showrooms, no matter how capable the offering. In a surprisingly lengthy 16-year

production run, fewer than 20,000 examples were sold. But, of course, there was a tantalising special edition for the chosen few: the NSX Type R. Weight-saving efforts were savage, junking all the sound-deadening, the air-con, the traction control and the stereo, with the seats swapped for carbon-Kevlar buckets. Forged Enkei wheels reduced unsprung mass, and the NSX Type R ended up weighing 120kg less than the stock NSX. It had stiffer suspension, thicker anti-roll bars, a blueprinted engine and a higher-rate LSD. Just 483 cars were built, solely for the Japanese market. It's an obscure version of an offbeat choice in the realm of the supercar.

“Ayrton Senna himself helped develop the car, famously being pulled over for speeding en route to the British Grand Prix”



PORSCHE 961

1980S SUPERCARS ARE very big business these days. The likes of the Ferrari F40, Jaguar XJ220 and Porsche 959 are the hot ticket for the serious collector, with concours examples selling for eye-watering sums. Even iffy ones sell for big bucks – a 959 was crashed on the way to being auctioned at Monterey this summer, and despite its heavy front-end damage it still sold for \$467,500.

The 959 is the car everyone had an Athena poster of on their bedroom wall in the 1980s, and with fewer than 350 built they have rarity value in spades. But compared to some cars in these pages, 300+ seems extravagantly abundant, doesn't it?

The real connoisseurs' choice is the 961. Arguably the prettiest race car Porsche ever built since the 917K, the 961 took the supercar-familiar 959 platform and reworked it for Group B Sports Car racing. The 4WD system was carried over, but re-engineered to be more rear-biased, and the boost was cranked up on the 2.8-litre turbocharged flat-six to provide a shouty 680bhp. It only weighed 1,150kg, had the brakes from the 962C endurance racers, and looked utterly fabulous.

Sadly, since the Group B rules kept changing before being scrapped altogether, just one 961 was built, competing in only three races before being retired. The rarest and most desirable supercar? It might just be.



Lamborghini Diablo SE30 /Jota

The Diablo was a pivotal model for the Sant'Agata firm, bridging a chaotic period in the marque's history when finances went from shaky to questionable, to finally secure. In the 1980s, Lamborghini was financed by a pair of Swiss brothers, the Mimrans, who contracted Marcello Gandini to design a Countach replacement in 1985. While this was under development, the brothers sold the company to Chrysler in 1987, who in turn sold it to a Malaysian investment firm in '94, who then sold it to Volkswagen in '98.

The Diablo endured all of this, with production running from 1990-2001, so the model certainly has a diverse set of tales to tell. At launch, the car had a 5.7-litre V12, 485bhp, those iconic scissor doors, and one of the widest backsides in the business. It sold like hot cakes too, in supercar terms – over 900 were built, as well as over 400 of the all-wheel-drive VT version. So how to stand out from the Diablo crowd? Enter the SE30, launched in 1993 to celebrate the marque's 30th birthday. This was essentially a street-legal race car, both lighter and faster than the regular road car; it was rear-wheel-drive, and had 523bhp, Plexiglass windows, carbon fibre seats and a fire extinguisher system, as well as magnesium-alloy wheels and unique purple paint.

This model was rare, with just 135 built – but what if that still wasn't enough? That's where the SE30 Jota comes in: a factory upgrade to the SE30, just 15 Jotas were built, with 595bhp, unsilenced exhausts, intake snorkels, and track-only status. Until the race-ready Diablo GT arrived in '99, the SE30 Jota was king – and it remains super-desirable today.



MERCEDES-BENZ CLK GTR ROADSTER

THE MERCEDES-BENZ CLK is not a supercar. But the CLK GTR? Oh, yes. That is and then some. Its genesis came from a Mercedes-AMG project to build a hardcore race car for the 1997 FIA GT Championship – something that had about as much in common with the road-going CLK as a lampshade. It was a race car first and a road car second, with the latter only being developed to satisfy homologation criteria.

The racer was developed in quite an unorthodox way – the engineers procured a McLaren F1 as a test mule, removing the BMW V12 and replacing it with their own LS600 6.0-litre engine. By attaching experimental bodywork to the F1, with the odd CLK design cue pasted on for a chuckle, they were able to test their design using a solid competitor benchmark. They then set about developing a carbon-fibre and

aluminium honeycomb monocoque to house the fiery running gear.

The model enjoyed sporadic success across 1997, but was only used for two rounds in '98 before being superseded by the CLK LM. FIA GT was then cancelled for 1999. However, Mercedes was still obliged to deliver the 25 GTR road cars they'd promised. So 20 coupes were constructed before AMG spec-ops division HWA started working on a roadster version. Just two were built in right-hand drive – one coupé, one roadster. The interior was lined with sumptuous magenta leather, with the engine opened out to 6.9-litres to unleash 604bhp. It could accelerate from 0-62mph in 3.8 seconds and hit 199mph. It had the dials, grille and headlights from a production CLK, but nothing else. It was a bespoke supercar. Now one of the rarest and most sought-after Mercedes of all.

Ferrari SP12 EC

For some buyers, the ability to acquire a limited-edition supercar simply isn't enough. Only a one-of-one will do, and a fortunate few are able to work with manufacturers in order to create their own unique machines. Naturally this is an eye-wateringly expensive endeavour, and it's not something that just anybody can do. No matter how wealthy you may be, you can't just amble into Ferrari HQ and ask them to build you a custom supercar. But if you are, for example, at Eric Clapton's level of prestige, you'll have bought quite a few Ferraris before and will be at the top of their mailing list.

It's these special customers who get to take advantage of the Ferrari Special Projects

programme, and in 2012 that's exactly what Clapton did. The SP12 EC took the 458 Italia as a base and brought in a variety of design elements from the classic 512BB. Developed by Ferrari Centro Stile in collaboration with Pininfarina, it features all of the performance attributes of the £180,000 458, including its 4.5-litre V8 and seven-speed dual-clutch transmission, and clothed it all in a custom retro-futurist body.

As you might imagine, it cost Clapton rather a lot more than £180,000. The nature of the Special Projects programme is that much of the details are veiled in secrecy, but the SP12 EC is reported to have cost around £3,000,000. And no, unfortunately you can't buy one.



B ENGINEERING EDONIS

Given their small production numbers, modern-era Bugattis are characterised by their special editions. Any followers of the clique of London supercar spotters on Instagram will note with amusement how frothed-up these snappers get when they spot a Veyron Pur Sang or Nocturne. But if you want real Bugatti exclusivity, you need to wind the clock back a little. Back to the time of the EB110 – itself a really quite obscure and exclusive supercar. But not obscure and exclusive enough.

The windmill we're tilting toward here is the B Engineering Edonis: based on the EB110 Super Sport, the Edonis used the big Bug's carbon-fibre chassis, carrying over the 3.5-litre motor and stretching it out to 3,760cc. The four small IHI turbos were replaced by two big ones, resulting in 671bhp – quite an increase on the EB110's 603bhp. The interior and exterior were totally redesigned, and the 4WD drivetrain was junked in favour of a RWD transaxle, saving about 70kg in chassis weight.

The original plan in 2001 was to build just 21 of these cars – it being a reworked Bugatti for the 21st century – but the records are shadowy and it's hard to prove whether they sold that many. If you ever find one on sale, and have seven figures burning a hole in your pocket, you're guaranteed a sizeable wedge of Bugatti exclusivity.

Oh, and there is another option. At the start of 2018, Las Vegas-based Casil Motors announced that they were restarting the project, working with B Engineering, to create a further 15 'Edonis Fenice' cars. These are so rare we couldn't even find a picture of one! A niche within a niche within a niche.

Spyker D12 Peking-to-Paris

This car is unique within this round-up in that it doesn't technically exist. But it almost did. And it really should have. Because it was a very clever idea indeed. Spyker are interesting folk, handbuilding their sumptuous little masterpieces like the splendid C8 under the name of a Dutch coach-building and aeronautical company founded in the 1880s – a company that Spyker Cars, founded in 1999, actually has nothing at all to do with. But don't let the details get in the way of the perceived heritage. It's a lovely excuse to sprinkle the cars with little propeller symbols, and the company motto, 'Nulla tenaci in via est via', is Latin for 'For the tenacious, no road is impassable' – which neatly explains the D12 Peking-to-Paris. Announced at the 2006 Geneva Motor Show, the D12 was an unusual mix of contrasts and contradictions; a substantial and surprisingly large SUV, but with all the character and styling cues of a coupé. Capable of tackling rugged terrain, yet so intricately and exquisitely formed that you'd feel a tremendous sense of guilt even taking it out in the rain. It weighed nearly two tonnes, yet would accelerate to 60mph in five seconds dead and power on to the saucy side of 180mph. The interior was a mind-boggling blend of the sporty and the luxurious, with individual competition-spec bucket seats trimmed in sumptuous cream leather. In short, a pretty weird piece of kit; named for the Peking-to-Paris race of 1907, the hyper-SUV was a riot of absurdity with a 500bhp Volkswagen 6.0-litre W12 engine powering its gigantic 24-inch Aeroblade wheels. The problem was, nobody wanted a supercar-SUV in 2006, so they didn't end up building it. Shame, as that idea's a very hot ticket these days. If you had a D12 Peking-to-Paris, you could make all the new Bentayga and Urus owners feel a little outclassed.





KOENIGSEGG AGERA RS

Unlike every other car in this collection, the Agera RS is actually the most abundant of its kind rather than the least; just seven standard Ageras were built, 18 of the Agera R, 5 of the Agera S, 6 of the One:1. With 25 Agera RSs built, it's the most common Agera there is. But 25 really isn't that big a number, and the RS earns a place in this list because of the sheer ultimate-ness of it.

The original Agera was a truly monstrous thing; launched in 2011, it boasted a frankly unbelievable 927bhp from its twin-turbo V8, accelerating from 0-62mph in 2.8 seconds and going on to a heady 249mph. These are absurd numbers. And as the decade's progressed, we've grown used to increasing levels of absurdity from Koenigsegg: the Agera R claimed a top speed of 273mph and shattered countless world speed records, the One:1 was marketed as a megacar, since its 1,360PS (1,341bhp) power output was equivalent to one megawatt (the One:1 name referencing the fact that it had one PS per kilogram of weight – 1,360PS, 1,360kg), and the RS turned everything up a notch again. It was super-lightweight, created 450kg of downforce on track thanks to its revised aero, and was available with the One:1's 'megawatt package' engine upgrade. Sure, the RS may be the most abundant Agera, but this 1-of-25 hyperlunatic has broken enough records to stand proudly among the rest of this distinguished line-up.



TVR SPEED 12

Power, as the old saying goes, corrupts. And absolute power? That was enough to send TVR boss Peter Wheeler scurrying under the duvet to hide, back in 1997. The Speed 12 is one of the most terrifying cars that's ever existed; the kind of car you tip-toe up to, being careful not to annoy it in case it spits hot race fuel in your eye.

TVR, of course, were always well known for their uncompromising builds, fusing outlandish and otherworldly curves with shouty, brawny engines, and there was never space for anything as fancy-pants or soft as ABS, airbags, or any of that nonsense. And the Speed 12? This was the most uncompromising of the lot. Taking the slinky Cerbera as a base, it formed a test-bed for a potential GT1 racer – something that never came to fruition; the Speed 12 GTS did compete in a few rounds of the 1998 FIA GT1 Championship, but the rules changed rendering the car obsolete. The sole survivor exists now as a bonkers and unique creation; under that rampantly slatted bonnet lurks a 7.7-litre V12. It's effectively two Speed Six units on a shared crank, but the whole is far more than the sum of its parts – reputedly good for over 1,000bhp, although official figures were never forthcoming. TVR's dyno was only rated to 1,000bhp and the car kept ripping it to pieces.

Wheeler ultimately concluded that the Speed 12 was undrivable as a road car. It was just too powerful. So the whole project was scrapped. However, in 2003, TVR mischievously put an advert in Auto Trader for a Speed 12, registered W112 BHG, saying they'd rebuild one of the decommissioned prototypes and sell it to a TVR fan. The buyer had to be interviewed personally by Peter Wheeler to make sure they were suitable and, since the original bodies had all been destroyed, W112 BHG used a genuine GT racer body. As TVRs go, this is very much the rarest of the rare.



JAGUAR PROJECT 8

SOMETIMES THE MOST exciting supercars are the ones people don't believe are supercars at all. Look at Jaguar's box-fresh Project 8: its four-door saloon shell is the same as you'll find on the 2.0-litre diesel XE, possibly the least exciting car Jaguar has made. Nothing special there, is there?

To underestimate the Project 8 would be a colossal mistake. Jaguar Land Rover's SVO programme has been churning out some amusingly unlikely models lately, from the Project 7 that

turned the F-Type into a manic Barchetta, to the Range Rover SVR which can scramble over a rocky mountain and then hit 175mph on the drive home. But Project 8 is a whole other level of lunacy; indeed, it's the most powerful production Jaguar ever – it'll do 0-62mph in 3.3 seconds and run on to over 200mph, its supercharged 5.0-litre V8 producing 592bhp. And while it may look like the travelling salesman next door has had a mid-life crisis and bolted a Halfords wing

to his XE, the body is in fact entirely reworked: everything from the adjustable front and rear spoilers to the bonnet, wings and diffuser is made from carbon fibre. The wings are fatter to accommodate a wider track, with cutouts to draw away turbulent air; the exhaust's made from titanium, the brakes are 400mm Brembo carbon-ceramics, and if you tick the 'Track Pack' box they'll junk the rear seats and bolt in a rollcage. Only 300 are being built, and it's got real niche appeal: if you know, you know.



Bristol Fighter

The Bristol Fighter is a little different to the other cars in this list, as it's not an extreme version of an existing supercar per se; in fact, it's more an extreme version of no car that's existed before or since. Because this is Bristol's modus operandi – they make deliberately polarising cars, some of which have been deliberately ugly, positioning

themselves as a sort of thinking man's Rolls-Royce.

The firm has been using Chrysler engines since 1961, and with the advent of the barking mad V10-engined Dodge Viper, someone at Bristol evidently had a rather nutty brainwave. What resulted was one of the most inspiring acts of craziness ever carried out in the automotive world. Bristol had hitherto been known for building

extremely limited-edition, hand-crafted, hyper-expensive and über-luxurious cars; upmarket transport for savvy plutocrats. But in 2004, Bristol surprised everyone by building a supercar, completely out of nowhere. It was a fibreglass coupé with gullwing doors and, astonishingly, it had the 8.0-litre V10 from the Viper in it – and they'd tweaked it too, cranking it up to 525bhp.

Naturally, very few of these were sold, because Bristol owners didn't want supercars and supercar owners didn't want Bristols, and in the end only 13 Fighters were made. They also mooted a turbocharged version with 1,012bhp, which would have been the first ever production car with a turbocharged V10 petrol engine, but sadly there just wasn't a market for it. They did, however, develop a Fighter S which had 660bhp. In a world of instantly recognisable Italian exotics, this peculiar British curio genuinely possesses the power to make onlookers double-take and wonder just what the heck it is.

Porsche 911 GT1 Straßenversion

The Porsche 911 is just part of the furniture these days, isn't it? It's been around since 1963, belligerently persevering with having the engine in arguably the wrong place, hanging out behind the back wheels and acting like a pendulum to catch out unsuspecting drivers who lift off the throttle mid-corner. The fact that Porsche have stuck with this outlandish format for so long is achievement enough. But to have taken this layout and evolved it into one of the most capable and entertaining sports cars the world has ever known is frankly incredible.

The use of the term 'sports car', of course, is key there: initially the 911 was just that and, while it still remains so today, the top-spec variants have convincingly pushed it into the realms of the supercar, with the current Turbo S and widowmaker GT2 RS giving any McLaren you care to name a run for its money. But what if you want a 911 that's a bit different? Or rather, exponentially different? The 911 GT1 is the car to tick that box – principally because it's not rear-engined, thus fundamentally altering the car's character. In fact, the GT1 of 1996 had its engine mid-mounted. It was a homologation model for GT1 racing and, as such, they had to make a road-legal version – the GT1 Straßenversion. There really wasn't much 911 in it; the nose had a bit of 993 in there, but aside from that it was all 962-derived at the back end. It had about 600bhp, it was insanely long, and it was really good at confusing passers-by. It's a 911, but at the same time it really isn't.



McLaren F1 GT

Owning a McLaren F1 is enough to elevate you into the pantheon of all-time connoisseurs. This car will forever be an icon. Launched in 1993, and with just 106 cars built over a five-year run, this is the startling creation that entirely rewrote the supercar rulebook, markedly reframing everybody's perspective on what it was possible for a road car to do. On the one hand, here was a car that could reliably achieve 240mph; on the

other, it could trundle to the shops and act as a friendly daily driver. Every inch of it is a clever design solution, from the centrally-mounted seat (not just for weight balance or to imbue F1-style dynamics into a road car, but also to eliminate the bugbear of most supercars – the offset pedal box which makes you sit crooked) to the real gold heat-shielding, its functional bling enabling the ultimate boast.

But for some buyers, even unparalleled kudos and tiny production numbers can't hold back the urge for uniqueness. And

for these people, the F1 GT exists. The final evolution of the F1, this was intended to be a homologation special in the same vein as the 911 GT1. It had the long tail from the Le Mans racers, an extended nose, acres of louvres, larger arches for vast wheels. It was a caricature of the F1, taking its already cartoonish profile and expanding it.

Technically, McLaren only had to build one homologation car and weren't obliged to sell it, but such was demand that they built and sold two F1 GT road cars. The ultimate McLaren collectible.

“It took the already cartoonish F1 profile and expanded it”





CLICK AND COLLECT



Driftwork's Phil Morrison, flew all the way to Japan to pick up this 550bhp, wide-body Porsche 964 Turbo. And here's why...

WORDS: **STAV** PHOTOGRAPHY: **DAVE COX**

Social media, while it has its downsides, is a wonderful thing that has made the world a much smaller place, enabling you to see things on a daily basis you'd have never otherwise known existed. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the car world, and while they're always interesting to see, spotting your dream car for sale in some far away land is also massively frustrating; out of reach for all but the most determined car fanatics.

The aforementioned determination is key to this feature, as this awesome, wide-body, big power Porsche 964 Turbo was found in a way almost all of us will be familiar with; by a friend tagging us in a picture of it on Facebook.

"I was in a pub one evening, which is of course where all great ideas start, and someone tagged me in a post about this car at a Japanese auction house. I immediately tried to buy it, but I was too late, the auction had ended." The owner of this car, Phil Morrison, explained. This wasn't simply a drunken impulse buy though, Phil really wanted this car, and this was the start of a roller-coaster of emotions as the car went in and out of his grasp for weeks on end.

"It didn't actually sell at the auction, the reserve wasn't met, so I simply waited for two weeks, expecting it to go back up for sale like most unsold cars do, but apparently a deal was done elsewhere, and it was gone". Thankfully, Phil had a saviour in the form of Scottish expatriate Andy Gray, who runs specialist vehicle exporter Power Vehicles in Japan, who kept an eye out for the car. Unbelievably he spotted it on Yahoo Auctions, the Japanese equivalent to eBay, about a month later. "The car was now for sale at a dealer, but for considerably more money than it would've sold for at auction, regardless of this I made them a really generous offer. Unfortunately, I didn't hear back from them." explained Phil. After yet more chasing and investigative work, it transpired the car had been sold to a Japanese resident, and Phil was understandably dejected. But two weeks later the emotion-coaster once again headed sky high, as Andy contacted Phil to say that the Japanese buyer was having difficulty coming up with the money for the car, so if he still wanted to buy it, he finally had the chance. And guess what? He did exactly that!

The start of an epic journey

At this point, what practically everyone else does is organise for the car to be loaded on to a ship and sent to the UK, but Phil had other plans... he wanted to collect the car himself!

"The car had two months Shaken (Japan's equivalent of the MoT) left, and I'd already booked a holiday to Japan, so I decided to combine the two." Phil explained.

As well as being an all-round car enthusiast, Phil happens to be the director of Driftworks, one of the world's best known brands for specialist parts and equipment in drifting, and his industry contacts are what helped him track down the car. Power Vehicles are most famous within the drift world, and the negotiation and communication was handled by Arios, a luxury car dealer in Japan who, quite unusually, uses a modified Ferrari F430 as a drift car (search YouTube for Arios Ferrari and you will find lots of videos).

So a plan was hatched: Phil and his wife were to fly to Japan, head to Arios to pick up the car and then drive it over 600-miles through Japan, before finally loading it into a container for the journey to the UK.

Flying to the other side of the world



This One's Mine

Name: Phil Morrison

Age: 41

Occupation: Director of Driftworks Ltd

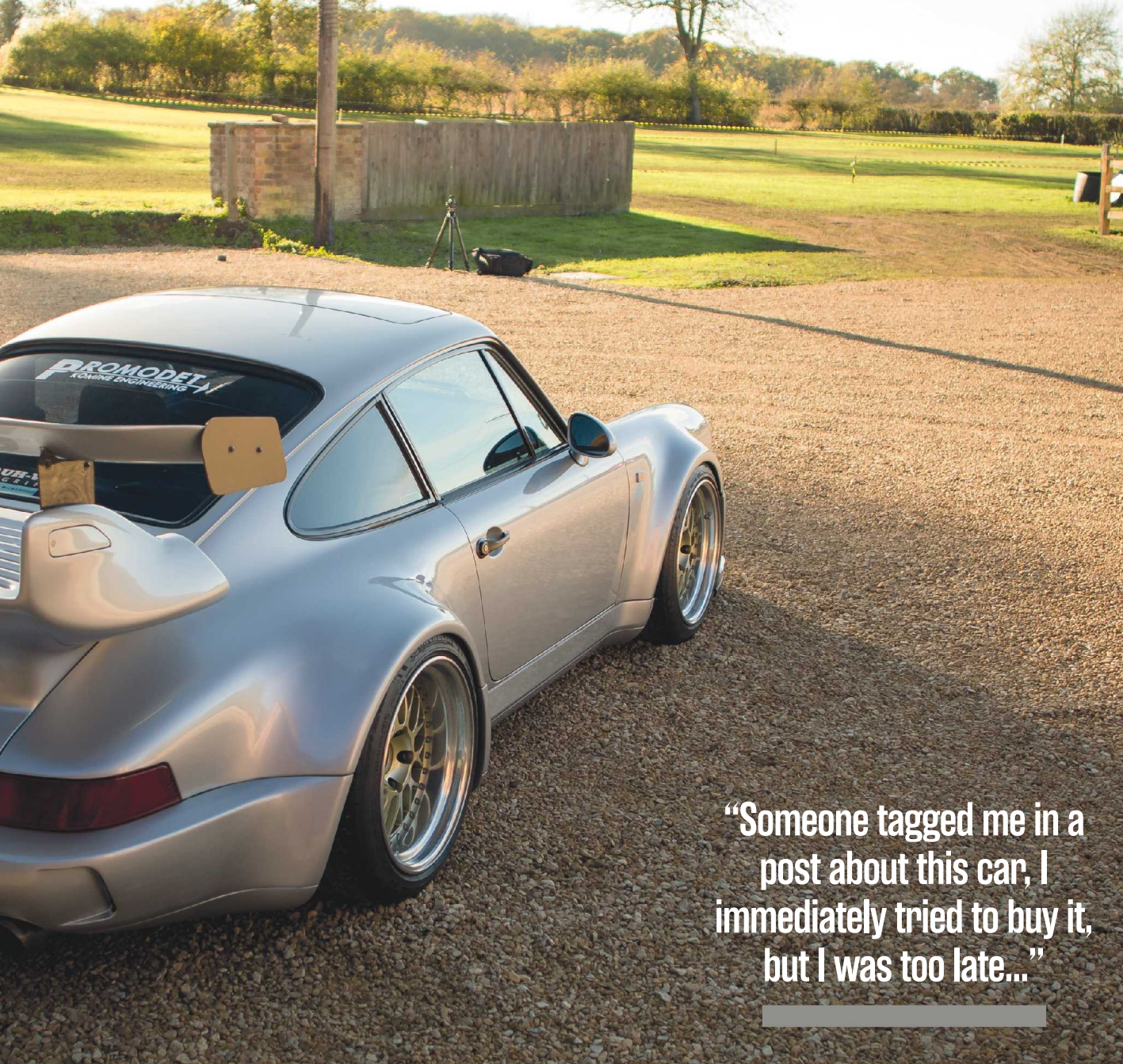
You've got quite a collection, but what's your dream supercar?

I'd love to have had the chance to own a McLaren P1, which is quite a strange choice as I'm not a big fan of any other modern McLarens.

Have you any other cars in the pipeline?

I put a deposit down on a new 991.2 GT3 over three years ago, but there's a long waiting list, so don't hold your breath.



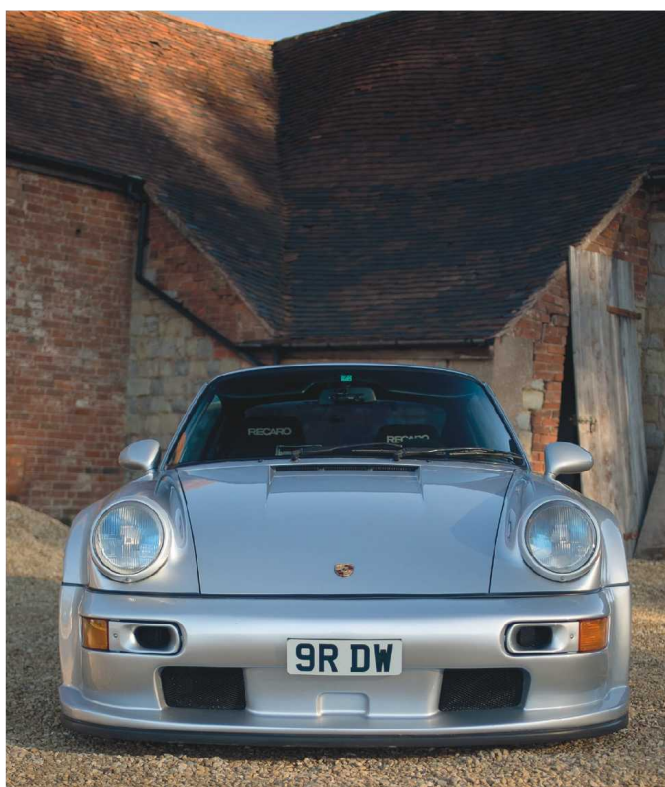


Far left bottom
The wide-body is prominent when viewing the car from the rear

Left The 964 sits on 11x18-inch front and 12x18-inch rear WORK Brombacher two piece split rims with Michelin Pilot Super Sport tyres

Far right bottom
Porsche 993 GT2 Evo-style bootlid and rear wing

“Someone tagged me in a post about this car, I immediately tried to buy it, but I was too late...”





PROMODET JAPAN

WHILE NOT THE first name most think of when it comes to Porsche tuning, to the people who have heard of them, Japanese tuner Promodet has an almost legendary reputation for tuning 911s, especially air-cooled versions. From high speed street racers to circuit cars, they have built them all. They are perhaps most famous for building the BlackBird (and replicas

since for customers), a tuned 964 Turbo featured heavily in the Manga series Wangan Midnight.

Another reason they're considered so special (thanks to the totally different attitude to car modification in Japan, where individuality is always respected and rarely criticised), is for their more flamboyant and one-off tuning modifications compared

to what we are used to seeing on tuned Porsches in Europe. This is especially noticeable with their big turbo conversions that are almost always fully custom made with no two setups ever quite the same.

Their website is obviously in Japanese, but it is still worth a look. The URL you'll be needing is: www.promodet.co.jp



to pick up a highly tuned 26-year old 911 Turbo you've paid a lot of money for without ever seeing, and then expecting to drive it over 600-miles through Japan, is a daring move to say the least, but one that thankfully worked out brilliantly.

The moment of truth

"When I first saw it I couldn't believe the condition. It is unbelievably clean inside, outside, and underneath, and all the work that had been done was like nothing I'd ever seen come out of Japan before. While the planned relaxing holiday turned in to another crazy car adventure, it was one of the best things we've ever done."

Although the story of the purchase is pretty epic, it's the car this feature is about, and what a stunning car it is. Phil isn't someone who is into pure originality and keeping cars wrapped in cotton wool, he loves cars for the performance and enjoyment of driving them, and it's safe to say for people like him, which we'd also guess is most of you readers, this is pretty much the perfect incarnation of a 964 Turbo.

The 3.3ltr flat six has been tuned by Japanese Porsche tuning legends Promodet, and while the exact specification of the engine internals are unknown, going by similar builds of other

customers, it is likely a fully balanced and blueprinted engine, with pinned cases, ported heads, uprated valve springs, and long duration RSR-spec cams; the very peaky power delivery certainly hints at that.

The biggest engine modifications however consist of the huge custom intercooler, stunning Promodet exhaust manifold, big HKS T04 turbocharger (significantly larger than the factory K27), and along with uprated fuel and ignition systems. With all of this controlled by the Motec ECU, the engine puts out around 550bhp while revving hard to the 7000rpm rev limiter.

From an engine performance point of view the car is a beast, but the first thing anyone notices about this car is the looks - which are nothing short of stunning. We're sure almost all of you will have heard of RWB, aka RAUH-Welt BEGRIFF (another Japanese Porsche tuner that is world famous for the wild race-style wide arch body conversions for 911s), and Nakai-San, the main man behind RWB, is also responsible for the stunning looks of this car.

Above left Nardi Torino steering wheel. An Italian brand that's synonymous with Japanese car culture

Above right Phil has added a Turbosmart E-Boost 2 electronic boost controller

Below Recaro Profi SPG fixed back buckets replace the factory seats

The whole package

One big difference between this car and most RWB conversions you see, is that this car has smooth bodywork. RWB cars are known for having rivet-on, race-style arch extensions, much like many Porsche GT race cars over the decades, but this is a 'smooth fender' conversion, which while still incredibly wide and imposing, gives a slightly more factory look. Combined with the GT2 Evo-style rear wing, stunning WORK Brombacher wheels, and the millimetre perfect ride height and wheel fitment, makes for one of the nicest looking 964s we've ever seen.

It's powerful, it looks incredible, and it's been a wild journey to even bring it to the UK, but how does it actually drive? Well thankfully Phil is more qualified than most to explain how this car feels when pushed hard, as not only does he own this, but also a RWD converted Lamborghini Murciélago LP640. He has previously owned a 997.2 GT3 and 991 GT3 too, not to mention his other race and drift toys he regularly uses on track. So, what does he think...?

"It's probably the laggiest handful of a car I've ever driven, but that's partly why I absolutely love driving it. It's really quite difficult, pretty lethal in some circumstances,





“This 964 Turbo is truly dangerous and an absolute handful on the limit. Hilarious, but dangerous. I love it like that.”

but I wouldn't have it any other way.” Phil explains. “There's no boost before about 4000rpm, and because of the long gearing the lag is frustrating as you always require a downshift to go anywhere fast, but that's a big part of the fun and drama of the car, and the noise and power of it when it's on boost is just perfect.”

Final destination

So this car is clearly a beast to drive, but many people call modern GT3 Porsches beasts too, so how does this compare to his previous 997.2 and 991 GT3s? “The GT3s were eye openers for me, absolutely incredible to drive hard on track, but the 964 is nothing like them at all. It's a comparatively tiny car compared to the newer models, and while literally anyone could jump in a modern GT3 and go fast, this 964 Turbo is truly dangerous and an absolute handful on the limit. Hilarious, but dangerous, and I love it like that. Unlike the GT3s, there's very few people I'd ever trust to drive it.”

So this car is an amazing build, so does this mean Phil won't change a thing about it? Well, no, not quite, in fact he's already changed quite a bit! The boost controller, ignition system, and fuel pump wiring were changed once it arrived in the UK to correct some intermittent running issues it had, and purely for his own preference he's changed the tyres to slightly wider Michelin Pilot Super Sports, lowered the ride height a little more, and fitted an uprated gearbox mount.

Future plans are to get the car mapped again to see if the lag can be improved upon, creating and fitting a bump steer correction kit, and as Driftworks are the official UK WORK Wheels dealers, he has a new set of the same WORK Brombachers currently fitted to the car arriving shortly, just in a slightly different colour to the ones you see here.

He's not trying to improve on what many tuning fans would see as 964 perfection, he just knows that in the world of modified cars, nothing is truly ever perfect...



Top The unmistakable side profile of the Porsche 964 Turbo

Middle The iconic Porsche turbo badge is displayed with pride

1992 PORSCHE 964 TURBO

Engine Promodet-built 3.3ltr flat 6, Promodet custom titanium tubular turbo manifold, HKS T04S turbocharger, HKS GT external wastegate, custom GReddy intercooler, alloy intercooler pipework, turbo oil return tank, Motec M4 ECU, high flow injectors, MSD 6AL-2 CDI ignition, MSD Blaster ignition coil, Turbosmart E-Boost electronic boost controller, twin Bosch 044 fuel pumps, twin custom exhaust systems (one from turbo and one from external wastegate), 7000rpm rev limiter.

Power 550bhp at 1.2bar boost (estimate).

Transmission G50 5 speed gearbox, ORC twin plate clutch, limited slip diff, Powerflex uprated gearbox mount.

Suspension Endless Zeal coilovers with Swift springs.

Brakes Brembo Racing front and

rear calipers, two piece 355mm grooved discs (front), two piece 330mm grooved discs (rear), Endless pads front and rear.

Wheels and tyres 11x18in front (+31 offset) and 12x18in rear (+18 offset) WORK Brombacher two piece alloy wheels with 265/40x18 (front) and 295/35x18 (rear) Michelin Pilot Super Sport tyres.

Exterior RWB 'smooth fender' wide body conversion and RWB bumpers, 993 GT2 Evo style bootlid and rear wing, clear side repeaters, front foglamp air ducts.

Interior Recaro Profi SPG fixed back bucket seats, Nardi Torino steering wheel.

Contacts and thanks Driftworks www.driftworks.com

Power Vehicles www.powervehicles.com

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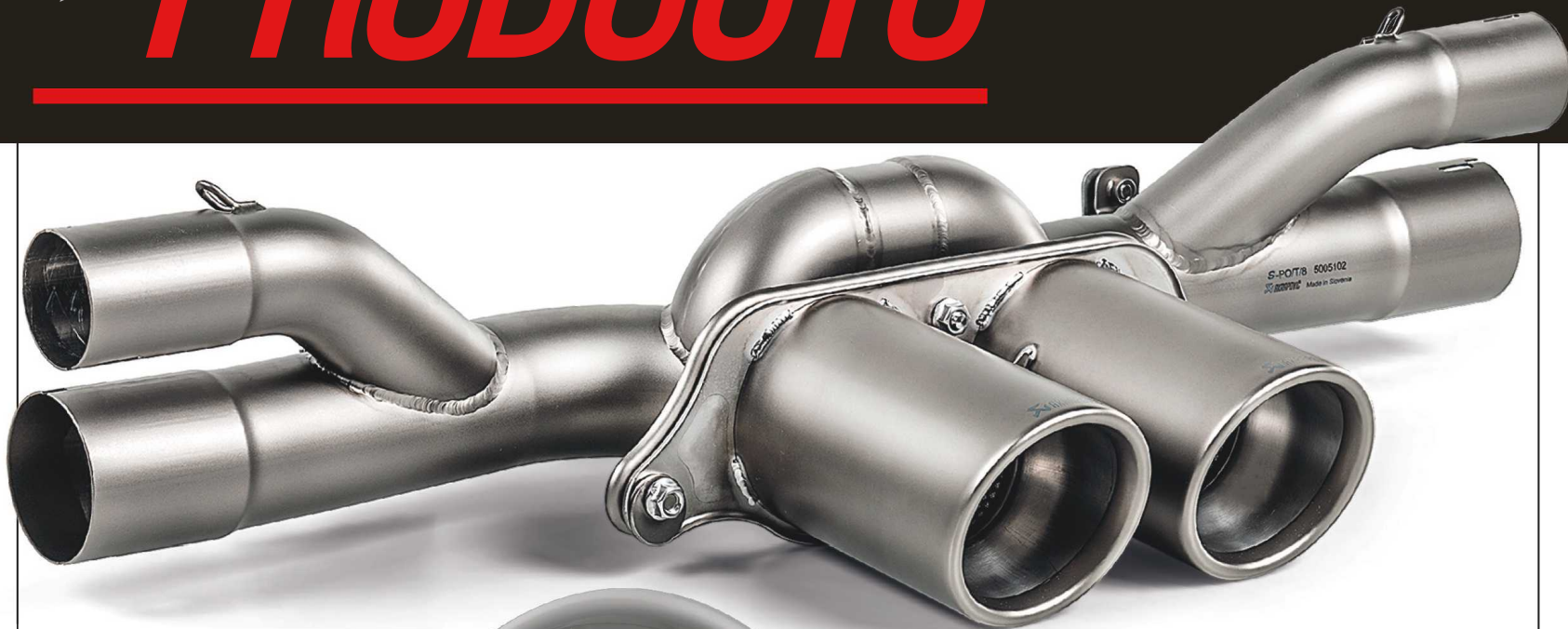
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Velgen Forged VFDB10 wheel

Getting a set of off-the-shelf rims for your supercar isn't easy, so many owners opt for bespoke items. US company Velgen's lightweight Forged line up includes dual-block and multi-piece rims, available in diameters from 19 through to 22 inches and in pretty much any width from eight to 12 inches. Each wheel is tailored to your specific car including PCD, centre-bore and

offset. This 10-spoke three-piece VFDB10 is one of our favourites, offering a nice dish, plus those thin, sculpted spokes. It's available in a multitude of colours and finishes, with UK delivery guaranteed in just six weeks, from placement of order.

PRICE: From £6,500 (set of four)
FROM: Steeda UK
CONTACT: www.steeda.co.uk

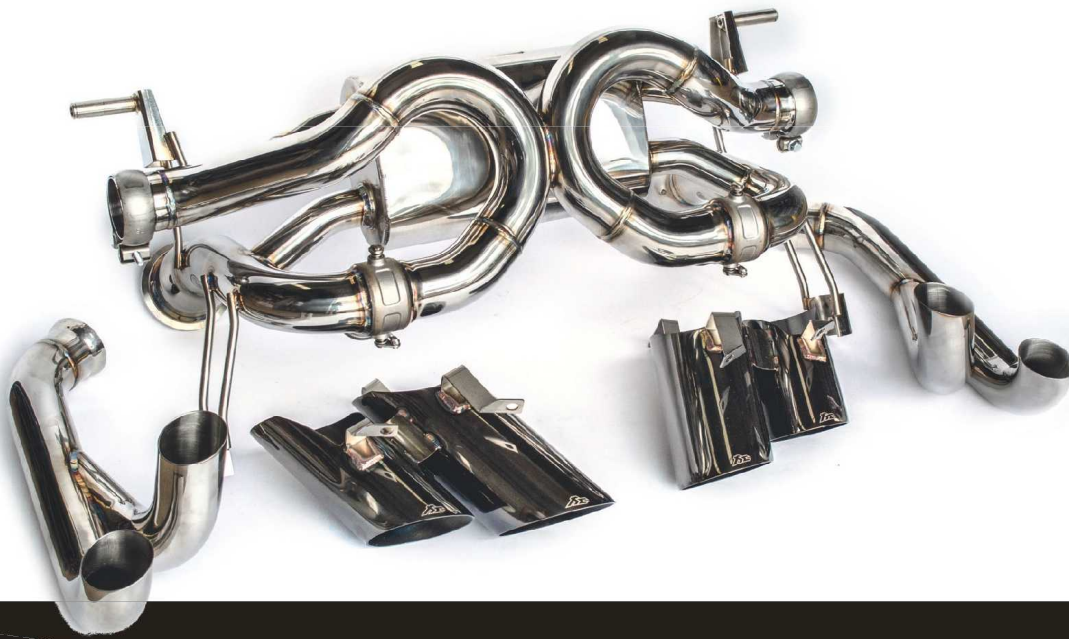
Akrapovic Race Line titanium exhaust for Porsche GT3 (991.2)

For those looking to achieve even greater performance and vastly improve the stock exhaust note of their GT3, the titanium Slip-On Race Line option is the first option to consider. Essentially a central silencer delete pipe, it is a direct replacement for the stock, central silencer box.

The new modular nature of this system means customers can now choose from a range of options, safe in the knowledge they will be able to add to their chosen set-up in the future. The Slip-On Race Line system can be ordered with the optional Titanium Link Pipe set or, as a full header-back system when ordered with either the Evolution Race Header Set (without valves) or the Evolution Header Set (with mufflers and valves). Manufactured from ultra-lightweight titanium, the GT3 Slip-On Line system is a direct fit to the OEM setup. Not only does it deliver more power and torque, but it also offers a huge reduction in weight behind the engine and the rear axle which in turn improves the handling of the car.

Add to this the sonorous soundtrack that's the trademark of every Akrapovic system, and you have the recipe for a thrilling driving experience. The twin, round, titanium tailpipes add the finishing touch to the rear of the aggressively styled GT3. Also available from Akrapovic is a carbon-fibre rear diffuser in a matte or high gloss finish.

PRICE: From £3,157 (Slip-On Race Line)
FROM: PERON
CONTACT: www.peron-automotive.co.uk



Fi Exhaust for Lamborghini Huracán LP610-4

The Huracán has become one of the most popular supercars thanks to its blend of aggressive styling, sure-footed handling and that epic 5.2-litre V10 mid-mounted powerhouse. The sound of a wrung out LP610 is something to behold, but there's so much more to be had. Fi Exhausts have developed a system to

unleash the full force of that V10, delivering a racecar howl when you hammer the throttle. This cat-back system features Frequency Intelligent Valvetronic technology, which allows you to adjust the valves sound from inside the car - handy for those cold starts. The sound can be set to adjust automatically according to RPM, or manually via the remote or

smartphone app. This high-quality stainless steel system is finished off with quad exit tailpipes in diamond black - the perfect accompaniment to any Huracán LP610-4.

PRICE: £7,863 (cat-back system)
FROM: The Performance Company
CONTACT: www.theperformance.co

AirREX air suspension for BMW i8

BMW's i8 is one of those cars that attracts a lot of attention. The sweeping, low lines and sculpted styling give it a futuristic edge, while the hybrid engine delivers a potent performance punch. If you're looking for the ultimate in road presence, then this AirREX system could be for you.

As the preferred supplier to Liberty Walk, AirREX have created a full plug and play set-up that contains everything you need,

including valve block, compressor, air tank and purge valve all ready to go, in one composite unit. This saves up to 10 hours' in installation time over rival air set-ups. There really is no easier way to convert your i8 to air suspension. Choose between struts only or the full kit with sophisticated digital management.

PRICE: £3,399 (struts only) £5,649 (full system with management)
FROM: AirREX UK
CONTACT: www.airrexuk.com



Novitec carbon pack for Ferrari 488 GTB

The Ferrari 488 is already an achingly gorgeous machine, but if you're looking to really make it your own, then a bit of carbon fibre can go a very long way. This extensive package from German specialists Novitec will allow you to add carbon goodness throughout the exterior; from the front lip, to the rear spoiler, rear diffuser add on, mirror covers, side skirts and more. There's also a set of sports springs to allow you to lower the ride height and further enhance the looks.

PRICE: £3,450 (front lip), £2,200 (rear lip spoiler), £3,900 (rear diffuser add-on), £590 (mirror covers), springs £1,250 (prices subject to exchange rates)
FROM: Projex Design UK
CONTACT: www.projexuk.com





Litchfield package for Porsche Carrera T (991.2)

The latest 3.0T Carrera is a pretty impressive tool straight out of the box, but if you're looking to take it to the next level in performance, then Litchfield may have the answer. They can supply a range of quality OEM+ style upgrades to sharpen the handling and boost power and torque of the 991.2.

The package kicks off with a custom OBD ECU map, which increases power from 365bhp to 454bhp and torque from 450Nm to 542Nm – significant gains. This is complemented by an Akrapovic Slip-On Line titanium exhaust system, which delivers an extra +19bhp and +28.5lb/ft. Suspension has been tweaked with KW springs, there's revised front suspension geometry (a 991.2 GT3 was used as a benchmark) and a set of spacers bring the wheels out for improved looks. It's a subtle range of upgrades, but they add up to a whole lot, transforming the Carrera T into a very rapid and sharp handling machine. Packages are also available for the Carrera S and GTS, with further hardware upgrades available soon.

PRICE: £12,406 including fitting (ECU tune, chassis upgrades, Akrapovic exhaust)
FROM: Litchfield
CONTACT: www.litchfieldmotors.com



RE Performance tuning box for McLaren 675LT

Supercar specialists, RE Performance offer a wide range of bespoke ECU tuning solutions for some of the most popular supercars out there. This tuning box for the rare McLaren 675LT is a simple plug-and-play device that can be fitted (by RE Performance) in around 15 minutes. It comes pre-loaded with a custom REP map and delivers an increase of 80bhp and almost 100lb/ft – significant numbers, given that the

675LT already produces a devilish 666bhp. The system can easily be removed and leaves no trace on the car's ECU – handy for those concerned about invalidating their warranty with a full re-map. REP tuning boxes are currently available for a range of turbocharged supercars including various McLarens and Porsches and the Ferrari 488.

PRICE: £2,700
FROM: RE Performance
CONTACT: www.reperformance.co.uk



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Handpresso Pump, £150 full set)

No one can deny they take their posh coffee rather seriously on the continent and it's something that's steadily, ahem, filtering down to us tea-drinkers here in the UK.

Designed in France and engineered to conjure up the perfect espresso on any grand tour, the Handpresso Pump, may be new to our little island, but these sort of devices are practically standard equipment nowadays. Containing all the essentials needed to keep your eyes wide open on those long jaunts, or simply to warm your cockles when you're out exploring those mountain passes. Coffee-lovers rejoice!

www.handpresso.com



ARKK Veqon 1 Mesh D135

Fancy a new pair of trainers but want something different? Then why not try a pair of ARKKs. The Copenhagen-based brand is coming out with some seriously fresh styles and we're loving the new, simple but stylish Veqon 1 Mesh sneaker.

Arriving in two tonal colourways - Black and Army Green - the Veqon 1 Mesh is a deceptively simple sneaker that brings together Nordic design sensibilities and modern street style.

www.arkkcopenhagen.com



Floris of London Shaving Set £492

This luxurious hand-made briarwood and gold plate shaving set has to be about the most opulent face-smoothing gear we've ever seen. This is for the man who has a 488 GTB on his drive and a Cartier on his wrist. We can't help loving the 'best badger' brush that comes with it too.

www.florislondon.com



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www.masterdynamic.com



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www.tagheuer.com



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www.adidas.co.uk



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2010 Lamborghini Reventon



£999,950

Roadster, Reventon Grey, 1 of 15 produced, 1,000 miles, RHD

2010 Ferrari 599 GTO



£399,950

Bianco Avus, highly optioned, 1 of 599 produced, 8,000 miles, LHD

2013 Ferrari California 30



£104,950

Blu Tdf, Full service history, Magnaride, 20" forged wheels, 12,000 miles, RHD

2017 Lamborghini SV



£404,950

Aventador SV Roadster, 1 owner, Rosso Arancio, 3,300 miles, LHD

2017 Aston Martin GT8



£164,950

Lightning Silver, Freshly serviced, 2,700 miles, LHD

2001 Ferrari 550 Barchetta



£399,950

Grigio Alloy, Classiche Certified, Delivery mileage, LHD

1976 Ferrari 365 GT4BB



£349,950

Rosso Chiaro, 1 of 387 produced, Classiche Certified, 850 miles from partial restoration, RHD

1969 Ferrari Daytona



£679,950

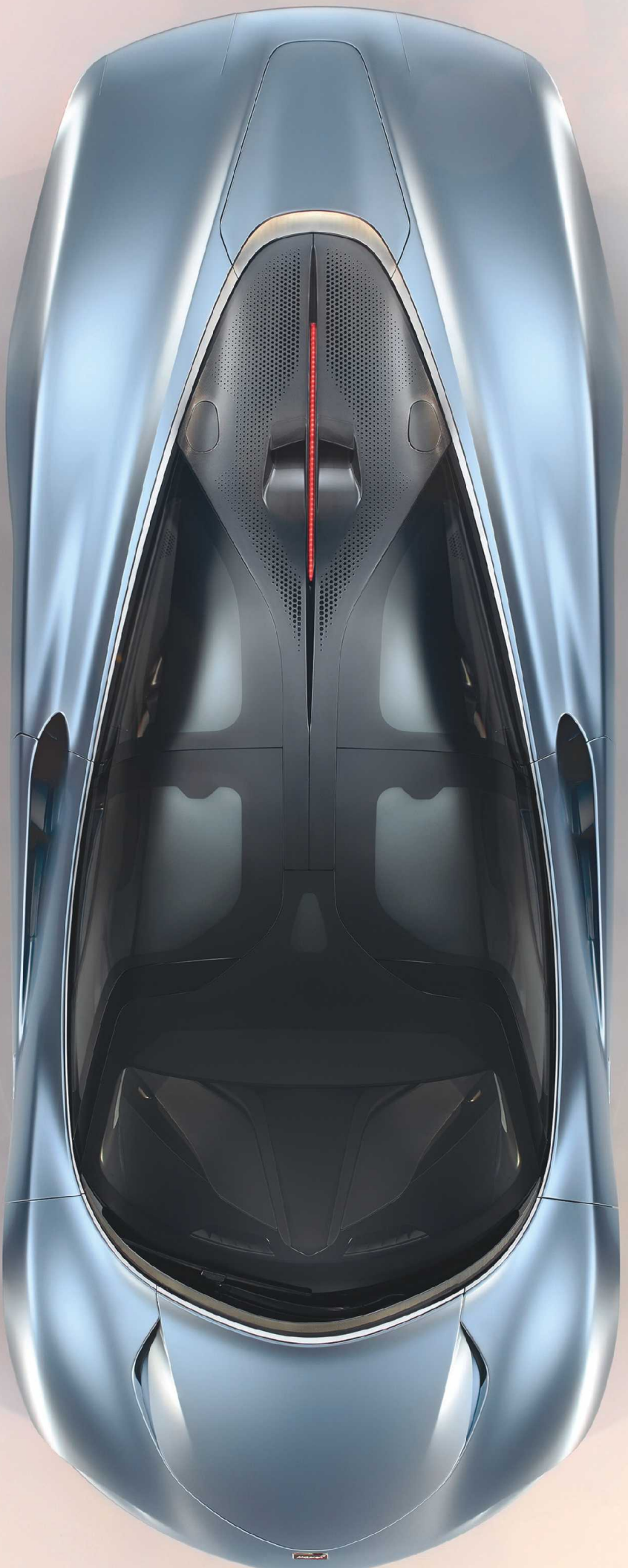
Rosso Chiaro, Desirable Plexi car, Classiche Certified, 34,190 miles, RHD

1973 Ferrari Dino GTS



£339,950

Rosso Corsa over Nero, Fantastic condition, 55,000 miles, RHD



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Under Pressure

When your goal is ultimate acceleration, the best solution is always... boost!

WORDS: **STAV** PHOTOGRAPHY: **VARIOUS**

Boosted supercars, both factory standard vehicles and aftermarket conversions, are now relatively commonplace. In fact naturally aspirated supercars are rapidly becoming the ones that are the rarity. While many people still consider anything other than naturally aspirated engines impure or plain wrong when it comes to supercars, especially with turbocharging, it's almost impossible to deny the huge power potential boost-pressure brings to an engine. Modern forced-induction engines are generally far away from the laggy and unwilling to rev stereotypes many people still wrongly associate with turbocharged engines especially. While there's a whole heap of factory turbocharged and supercharged supercars, with more and more being released each year, all with huge tuning potential, this feature is specifically about cars that left the factory in naturally aspirated form and then were converted to forced induction.

Why turbocharge or supercharge your supercar anyway? (Why not just buy a faster one?)

This is a common question, especially from people who haven't experienced much in the way of performance tuning. And the answer is threefold: bang for your buck, exclusivity and individuality, and the want for extreme performance that no production car can give.

The bang for your buck idea is something many people don't realise, and this is indeed why many don't understand the point of tuning cars. But the simple fact is, providing you're spending your money wisely, tuning a 'lesser' supercar can be hugely cheaper for any given performance level than simply buying a factory car with the same rate of acceleration. Of course, it may not be as good as an all-round package. But when performance is your goal, money well spent on tuning is by far the best value.

Exclusivity and individuality is easier to understand, and in the now social media-led world, it's more important than ever to many supercar owners. Thanks to the internet, Earth has become a much smaller place, so while owning a standard supercar may make you stand out in your own



small town, it takes individual touches, things that few if any others have, to truly stand out overall. And supercharging or turbocharging your supercar is one of them.

Finally, and again one that many simply don't realise is possible, it's because we want to go faster, far faster in fact, than any production vehicle can go. We don't mean top speed as such, as production cars are getting closer and closer to that magic 300mph mark all the time. We mean acceleration.

While the top hypercars have top speeds well in excess of 250mph, it takes many miles to get there, so the fact they have this top speed is relatively useless. Rather it's their acceleration you use, feel and enjoy. Some tuned supercars are well proven to hit upwards of 250mph in less than half the distance of even the fastest production cars on the planet. So if you truly want fast, it's time to add boost...

A history of supercar turbo and supercharger conversions

Thanks to the wonders of social media, everybody has seen wild turbocharged supercars in recent years, but while they were rarely well known, there's been a variety of supercars with added boost for decades, with the trend really growing from the mid-1980s onwards.

While there was only two ever made, and it's arguably an official Lamborghini conversion, albeit not actually done by them, the Countach LP500 Turbo S was an incredible car in many ways, and was built right back in 1984! Starting with the 4.7ltr V12 LP500S, which at the time was still fuelled by six twin Weber carburetors rather than fuel injection, an Austrian tuner added, amongst other

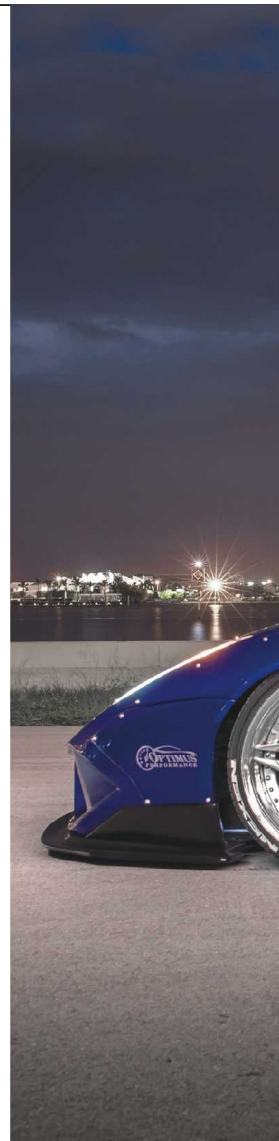
things, twin turbochargers, doubling the engines performance, taking it from 375bhp and 308lb/ft to a massive 746bhp and 646lb/ft at 1.5bar (22psi) boost, while still running with the carburetors taking care of the fuelling; albeit ones highly modified to handle boost pressure.

One of the best-known tuners to turbocharge supercars in the '80s and '90s were German company Koenig. While they tuned a variety of cars, they are most famous for their wild turbocharged Ferraris, which often had equally wild bodywork and many famous owners. Their Ferrari 512 twin turbo of the early '80s was able to produce as much as 620bhp and hit over 200mph, and by the late '80s their Testarossa



turbo conversions were said to make 800bhp and a claimed 217mph! While these cars were their most famous turbo conversions, they also did them for the relatively tame Ferrari 308, the 348, 355, and even an 850bhp F50.

Perhaps the wildest of the boosted supercars of the past come from the USA, specifically Ferraris, and from one tuner, Bob Norwood. Norwood is well known for unconventional tuning methods, but the results spoke for themselves. From Ferrari 308 and F50 twin turbo conversions right through to insane 5ltr 1500bhp+ creations based on the Ferrari Testarossa engine, he's done it all. He was never afraid to go against the purists either, creating a front engine Ferrari 308 drag car which used a heavily modified Testarossa engine featuring a gigantic centrifugal supercharger that made 1400bhp at 60psi boost, and a 308-based 288 GTO replica used for land speed racing, which eventually ended up with a twin turbocharged Chevrolet V8 in it. That car is still the



fastest Ferrari on the planet, being officially timed at 277mph - and unofficially at over 290!

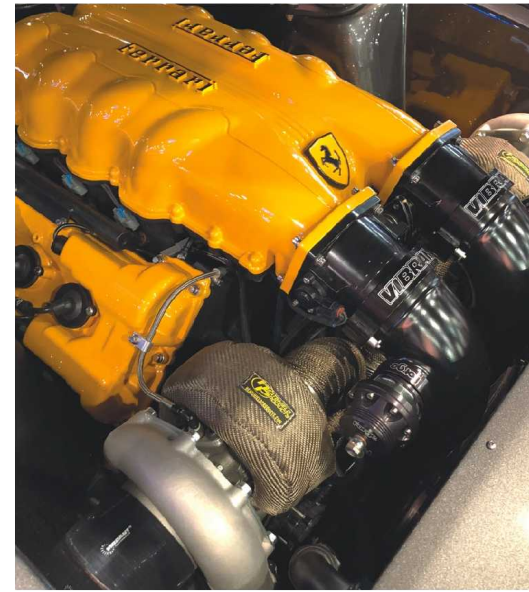
Supercharger or turbo?

While there are countless variations on each theme, there are three main options to talk about: turbocharging, centrifugal supercharging, and positive displacement supercharging.

Turbocharging is by far the most common, and is a centrifugal compressor that is spun by exhaust gasses. Centrifugal superchargers have a compressor side much the same as a turbocharger, but are spun via a step-up gearbox and usually a belt connected to the engine's crankshaft. Positive displacement superchargers are also belt driven via the crank, but are basically a large lobe-style pump, using twin rotors that mesh together to force air in.

Technically, turbocharging is best. There is no escaping the fact it's the most efficient way of increasing performance, the most adaptable, and by far the most catered for. But regardless of this, there's serious disadvantages of turbocharging too, and indeed huge advantages in the other forced induction options. Because of this

“Turbocharging is the most efficient way of increasing performance, the most adaptable way, and also the most catered for way”



there isn't a cut and dried decision when it comes to boosting a naturally aspirated supercar. It depends on your goals, your driving style, and indeed what car you are tuning.

Turbocharging: pros

While in reality there's no such thing as free power, turbocharging is the closest form of free power you can get with forced induction. While supercharging has quite significant parasitic losses, as they use engine power to spin the charger, turbocharging uses exhaust gas to turn the compressor, which, while technically restricting exhaust flow to do so, the theoretical power losses are nowhere near as big as other engines.

Turbos are also very efficient for other reasons too. While certain supercharger types are fairly efficient, a turbocharger's compressor is a very efficient piece of kit, heating up the inlet air only a relatively modest amount, and this combined with the low parasitic losses tends to mean, if all else is equal, more power for any given boost level.

The variety of parts available for turbocharging is unbeatable too. There's an almost unlimited number of different turbochargers and turbocharger related parts available, making life very easy

Left above Bob Norwood's 288 GTO replica is the fastest Ferrari on the planet

Left middle In 1984 an Austrian tuner added twin turbochargers to Lamborghini's LP500S, increasing power from 375bhp to 746bhp

Above Allen Wasko's Gallardo runs a custom Optimus Performance twin turbo setup

for not only getting the perfect parts for a conversion, but also making upgrades in the future.

Perhaps the most unsung advantage of turbocharging over supercharging is the ease of tunability. You want more boost? Easy. You want the boost to rise gently as the rpm rises, or have different amounts of boost in each gear to maximise traction? Easy. You want different amounts of boost at the press of a button? Easy. And that's literally a fraction of the potential functions you have available with a well-done turbocharger setup.

Turbocharging: cons

Probably the biggest disadvantage of turbocharging is it tends to add a lot of heat to the engine bay, not only due to the red hot turbine housings, but the significant amount of extra exhaust piping in the engine bay. The exhaust manifolds are usually more prominent and have higher than usual gas temperatures, and the exhaust downpipes tend to be in the engine bay, unlike on naturally aspirated and supercharged setups. All these hot parts radiate heat to other components, and if the setup has been done badly, you risk things melting or even catching fire.

The most famous, and often over-stated downside of turbocharging, is lag: the delay between when you want the turbo to be at full boost, and when it actually is. This comes in two forms. The true definition of lag is the delay while being in the engine's power band, between when you hit the accelerator and when the turbo responds. In reality, in a modern turbo setup, this is actually very small, and to be honest hard to notice on all but extreme setups.

What most call lag is actually being below the boost threshold, and is basically the lower rpm range where there's simply not enough exhaust gas for the turbo to spool up to full boost. This, while technically an issue, is rarely a problem in performance terms, as even very large turbos are in the boost threshold at an rpm lower than where most performance engines are truly in their power band anyhow. You don't drive a naturally aspirated supercar at low rpm and expect explosive performance, so why should it be any different when turbocharged?

There can also be complications. With many supercar engine compartments already packed with a large multi-cylinder engine, room for anything extra is at a premium. And of all the forms of forced induction, turbocharging without doubt takes up the most room and uses the most individual components. So much so, it may be almost impossible to achieve on some cars.

Centrifugal supercharger: pros

With many supercars, especially front engine ones, having incredibly crowded engine bays, the fact that centrifugal superchargers are very compact is a massive plus point. While things like brackets, pulleys and belts mean you can't simply mount them anywhere at all, when space is a serious issue, centrifugals are usually your best bet for a solution to your boosted needs.

While not as good as a turbocharger, purely because fairly significant amounts of potential power is sapped from the engine to turn the supercharger in the



first place, the design itself is overall very efficient. The compressor is basically the same as the one on a turbocharger, so similarly efficient, and in some respects a little more so as there's less heat transfer.

The power delivery of a centrifugal blower, especially if you're traction limited due to two wheel-drive, adverse weather conditions, or simply huge amounts of power, makes for a far easier car to maintain traction, as it gives a very smooth increase in power as the revs increase; almost feeling like an incredibly powerful naturally aspirated engine.

It does this as they work in a way that the boost increases in a linear fashion from almost nothing at low rpm to its maximum level right at the rev limiter. With a positive displacement blower full boost is available pretty much the instant you hit the throttle, and with a turbo boost can increase incredibly quickly in the midrange, and these sudden hits of boost can cause serious traction issues. When you're used to turbocharged engines, while you will miss the feeling of the hard boost hit, you find it quite amazing how much power you can have with no traction issues with a centrifugal supercharged engine.

Centrifugal supercharger: cons

One thing there's no escaping with any supercharger is parasitic losses, ie the supercharger itself saps power from the engine to spin the supercharger. This is one of the reasons why, for any given boost level, if all else is equal, supercharged cars tend to make less power than the equivalent turbocharged



Above left TTS Performance's twin centrifugal Rotrex supercharger setup on an Audi R8 4.2ltr V8

Below left VF Engineering's positive displacement R8 supercharger setup

version. It's better with centrifugal chargers than positive displacement ones, but it is still a significant number. There's another disadvantage of the supercharger being driven via the engine's crankshaft too, and that's extra stress on the crankshaft bearings, which has been known to shorten their life in some applications.

While the linear power delivery of a centrifugal supercharger is a plus point, its also a minus in some respects, as the lack of low and midrange boost vs the other options can make them feel less punchy in some circumstances. They still feel much better at all rpm than when naturally aspirated. But it can't beat the low-down punch of a positive displacement blower, or the midrange of a turbo.

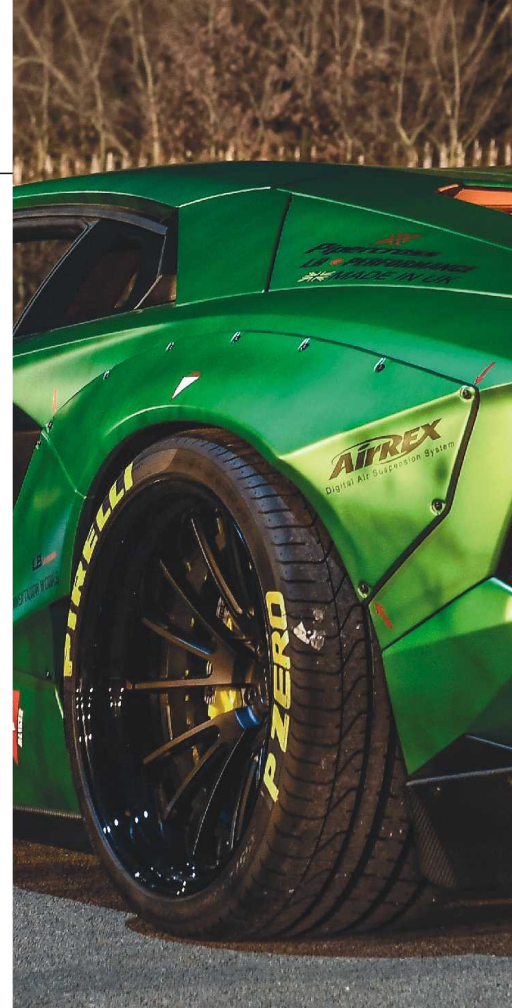
The final minus point for the centrifugal is the same for any type of supercharging, and that's you can't easily increase the boost pressure without messing about changing pulleys. And there's simply no where near as many tuning options as with a turbocharged setup.

Positive displacement supercharger: pros

If you want instant bang for your buck, no matter where you are in the rev range, accept no substitute. The way positive displacement superchargers work mean you pretty much have full boost pressure at any rpm when you go to full throttle, meaning it has the most low rpm grunt of any setup. That makes for a fun drive and a car that's easy to use the performance without needing to change down a gear or three.

While positive displacement superchargers are far from compact, one of the reasons they've always been popular on big American cars is just as relevant for most supercars too, and that's the fact they can be mounted between the heads of a V engine on a custom inlet manifold. That makes installing them in an otherwise cramped engine bay relatively easy.

When fitted like this they sometimes incorporate a chargecooler to cool the air leaving the supercharger, and in many cases can take up little to no more room than the original inlet manifold, making for a very neat install.



Finally, while all boosting methods have their own unique and cool noises, positive displacement superchargers give the most iconic noise. With a high pitched whine you can hear from a long distance away and is sometimes louder than the exhaust, there's no mistaking the car is boosted when you have one of these fitted. Sometimes the noise can be so much that it can annoy some people and actually become a downside. But if you want everyone to know that your supercar is boosted, no matter how you're driving, then this is the one for you!

Positive displacement supercharger: cons

While modern ones are far better than earlier models, one of the big reasons positive displacement superchargers just aren't as popular as other methods of adding boost to your engine these days, is the fact they have the highest parasitic losses and least overall efficiency. They struggle to make high boost pressure without creating huge amounts of heat, which is bad for both power and reliability, and also sap a significant amount of power from the engine to turn them. With typical positive displacement supercharger conversions on supercars being relatively low boost, this isn't a huge issue, but this is a big reason why for truly big power most go for a turbo.

Just like a centrifugal supercharger, an increase in boost pressure usually means a pulley swap on a setup like this, and from an upgrades point of view the positive displacement charger can be even worse. If you decide to fit a bigger supercharger it rarely if ever will be a straight swap for your smaller one, and



with the supercharger mounted within the V, it is hard to fit any kind of intercooler at all, and almost impossible to fit one that's truly effective for sustained periods of wide open throttle at high boost.

So what's actually involved in adding boost to a supercar?

Despite many people thinking supercar engines are magical specialised things, in reality, especially in this day and age, on the whole they are much the same as any other engine. They are just often bigger and more highly tuned from the factory than typical production car engines.

The fact they produce huge power figures even when naturally aspirated from the factory is actually a big bonus when it comes to adding boost, as the bigger the naturally aspirated number, the bigger the increase will be for any given boost pressure. So while a lower power engine might need huge boost pressures to reach over 1000bhp for example, a supercar that may already be making 550bhp may only need 15psi through an efficient turbocharger setup to make the same numbers.

Regardless of engine, any real increase in airflow from a turbo or supercharger requires more fuel to be delivered; much more in fact. This to allow both more power to be made, and more importantly, for the engine to not run lean and destroy itself in an incredibly expensive way. To prevent this you will need bigger fuel injectors and an uprated fuel pump at the very least, and more often than not other uprated fuel system components too.

Bigger injectors are no use without the ability to control them, so at the very



least you will require the standard ECU to be remapped to suit by a specialist. But on the whole, a full aftermarket ECU will need to be fitted and quite possibly with a custom wiring loom too.

The layout of many mid-engine supercars suits turbocharging as it tends to leave a lot of room on the rear for turbochargers, and unlike other engine layouts, it often means the standard exhaust manifolds can be retained; they just need relatively simple adapters to go from the ends of these to the turbocharger and wastegate mounting positions.

In fact, this method is exactly what a great many supercar turbo conversions use, especially as the majority of factory supercar exhaust manifolds are fantastically designed tubular items that are pretty hard to improve upon even if you wanted to.

While they're certainly in the minority these days, front engine supercars have completely the opposite issue, as they



tend to massively lack room in the engine bay for turbochargers, which can make things either complex or practically impossible without serious engineering changes or out of the box thinking.

Regardless of engine though, to mount a turbocharger, or indeed more than one, you need suitable exhaust pipework from your engine to the turbo(s), the turbo(s) themselves, one or more external wastegates, a custom exhaust system, oil and water lines to the turbo(s), new air inlet pipework, boost pipework, intercooler(s) or chargecooler(s). Not to mention a variety of more minor parts such as vacuum pipework and additional sensors. All of this can be a very serious undertaking on many supercars, something that can require engine removal even if the factory engine internals don't need to be modified.

As previously mentioned, supercharging tends to take up less room than a turbo setup, which can be a big advantage on some cars, with centrifugal superchargers being very compact, and positive displacement superchargers often able to be nestled between the banks of V engines.

On milder turbo and supercharger setups, standard production engine internals can be retained, and that is often the case even on many boosted supercars now producing well over 700bhp, but for truly insane power levels (and bear in mind some turbocharged supercars are producing well over 2000bhp), uprated engine internals are needed to both increase strength to reliably handle the power increase, and to simply flow the incredible amount of air that is needed for these sort of power levels.

Of course, while no modification to a supercar is what most people would call cheap, once you delve in to the internals to replace pistons, conrods, camshafts, gaskets, and so on, things do get

Above Turbocharging requires a lot more work than supercharging but is the most efficient way of increasing performance

Right above Heat is the Achilles heel of any forced induction conversion, so turbo blankets are essential

particularly expensive. This is due to both the parts and the specialised labour cost, and in general conversions which need uprated engine internals cost at least twice that of conversions which leave the standard internals stock.

So what does it cost?

Generally, the saying tends to go with supercars, "If you have to ask, you can't afford it". And while many companies understandably give the prices only when directly enquired about, some prices are out there in the public domain. Considering the base prices for the supercars themselves, and the incredible performance increases you get, we'd actually say the prices aren't as wild as many would assume.

A great example of this is the TTS Performance (www.tts-performance.co.uk) twin supercharger conversion for the R8 V8. Once converted, the engine makes in excess of 700bhp, but the full conversion kit only costs £13,995 plus the VAT.

Perhaps the best known supercar turbocharging company are Underground Racing (www.undergroundracing.com) from the USA, who again list their prices, and while turbocharging always tends to cost more due to the increased amount of parts and labour, the results tend to be far bigger too. They have many options for Audi, Ferrari, and Lamborghini, and the prices vary from a little over £25,000 for conversions that can make a Gallardo or R8 V10 to be around 800bhp on pump fuel and potentially over 1000bhp on race fuel, to setups making well over 2000bhp that can cost upwards of £110,000.

Extreme Turbo Systems (www.extremeturbosystems.com) stock off-the-shelf turbo kits for Lamborghinis



at around the £20,000 mark, with a wide variety of turbocharger options up to 1500bhp and more if needed, enabling you to import them to the UK and get it fitted and tuned by the specialist of your choice if you wish.

If a screaming positive displacement supercharger is more your thing, VF Engineering (www.vfengineering.com) make a variety of kits for the R8 V10 and Lamborghini engines that make upwards of 750bhp and cost from around £16,000.

This is only a small snapshot of the options that are currently out there, and if there's nothing off-the-shelf that takes your fancy, there are many performance specialists who are more than capable of making a complete custom system for you should you so wish.

So what kind of performance do you end up with?

Well, while you can make your own educated guesses by comparing figures to production supercars with similar power levels, at the higher levels of tune, where no production car is even comparable, that's not something you can easily estimate. Thankfully though, many of these cars are regularly performance tested.

A great example of this is a Lamborghini Huracán twin turbo built by Underground Racing that has hit, at the time of writing, a stunning 259.67mph. While the top speed is incredible, effectively matching the Bugatti Chiron, this car is not about the top speed. Instead it's about the acceleration: as mentioned, that's the true indication of performance.

The Chiron has been recorded, with F1 driver Juan Pablo Montoya at the wheel, going 0-400kmh (248.5mph) in 1.63miles.

But what was the distance this twin turbo Huracán took to go over 10mph faster than the Chiron? Half a mile. Less than one third the distance of the Chiron, to go 10mph faster.

Even the Koenigsegg One:1, arguably the fastest accelerating production car on the planet, takes well over a mile, over double the distance the Huracán hit almost 260mph in, to hit 250mph.

And that's why people tune already incredible supercars, to out-accelerate other supercars in a way that production supercars out-accelerate typical economy cars!

Above The Bugatti Chiron is no match for Underground Racing's twin turbo Huracán

Left above See the feature on this 2300bhp twin turbo Underground Racing Gallardo on page 16

Left below TTS Performance offer a twin supercharger package for the R8 V8



TTS PERFORMANCE

AUDI SUPERCHARGER CONVERSIONS FOR RS4, S5 AND R8 V8

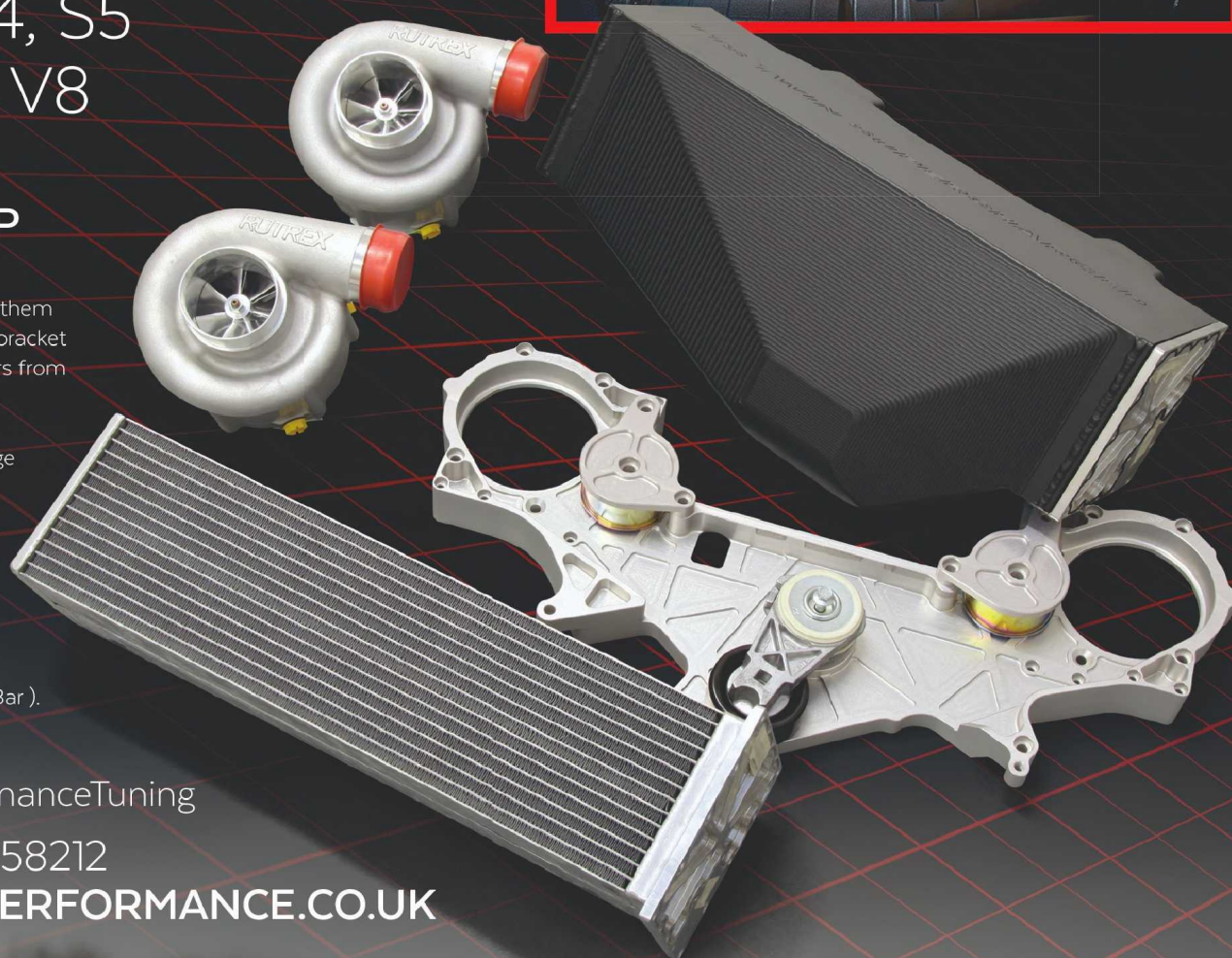
R8 700+ BHP

TTS paired 2 Rotrex C38 superchargers and mated them to a CNC Billet mounting bracket running both superchargers from an 8 rib belt for reliability. These two superchargers blow through a huge charge cooler that controls the air temperature into the engine. This charge cooler in turn is cooled by a large front mounted radiator. Making in excess of 700 bhp with boost limited to 15 psi (1 Bar).

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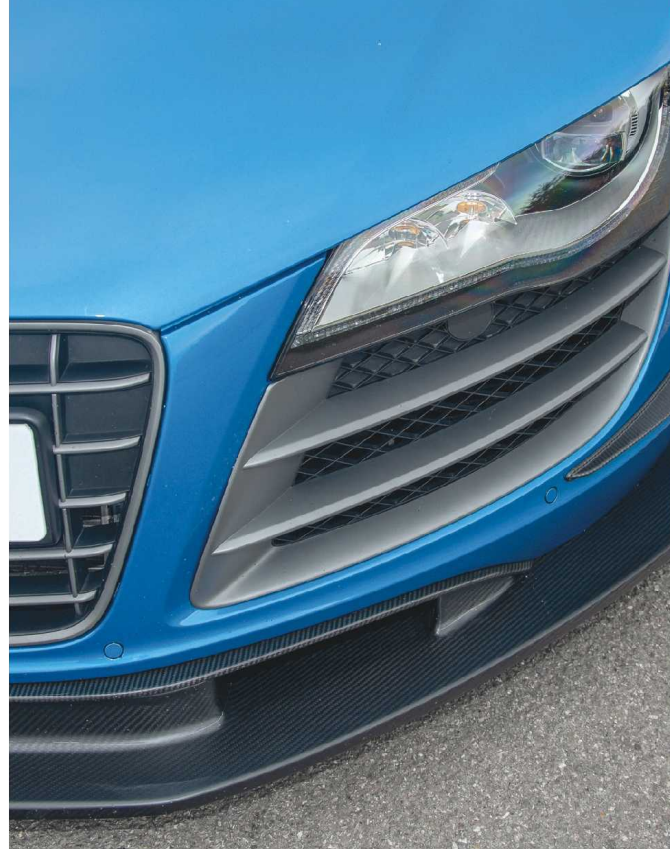
BLOWN AWAY

Just over 30 R8 GTs came to the UK, but this one has been transformed into an 800bhp, supercharged track weapon, thanks to supercar specialists RE Performance

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY: **DAVY LEWIS**









As I slip down into the R8's carbon-fibre passenger seat and fasten my six-point harness, my driver, Ricky Elder of RE Performance gives me a mischievous look. "Are you ready?" he asks.

That's a good question. You see this isn't just any R8. For starters it's a rather desirable GT model, of which just 333 examples left the factory at Ingolstadt, with a mere 33 reaching the UK. Priced at a hefty £142,000, these uber R8s came with more power (552bhp), less weight (-100kg) and featured unique styling, including front winglets, oval tailpipes and a fixed rear wing. It's fair to say they're as rare as (insert your own hens' teeth or rocking horse analogy here).

The second reason to pause for thought is that we're at Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground, near Leicester. In case any of you have been living in a cave for the last 20 years, it's an ex-WW2 airfield where it's possible to achieve trouser-worrying speeds without getting your collar felt by the Police. Still, that's no big deal, really is it? Well, perhaps not. Except this V10 Coupe is packing a rather hefty 800bhp, thanks to the VF Engineering supercharger. And that's not all. Because this particular car belongs to one of RE Performance's best customers, a guy who loves track days and has even entered Time Attack in this very car. Consequently it goes rather fast, thanks to the chassis upgrades, £10,000 adaptive rear wing (yes, ten grand; that's not a typo!) and sticky Michelin Pilot Cup 2 rubber.



Above Stock R8 GT alloys with Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres

Left Akrapovic Slip-On Line titanium exhaust system with OEM tailpipes

Bottom Aeromotion DRS adaptive rear wing is a £10,000 extra





Think I'd better tighten that harness a little bit more...

This is basically an R8 that's been turned up to 11. It's harder, faster, more focused, yet has a fine balance that almost defies belief. With over 100kg removed, it feels much more nimble and changes direction with alacrity. Heading into the esses at well over 100mph, Ricky hits the brakes and the carbon ceramics scrub off speed with devastating efficiency, making the R8 squirm under pressure as the Pilot Sport Cup 2s do their thing. I'm thrown forward as the G-force hits, then flung sideways as we mount the kerb, first to the left, then again to the right, before exiting wide onto the main straight. It's startling stuff.

I've been out in countless quick cars over the years, but this thing is already starting to make me feel a little light headed with its ability to change direction so rapidly. Part of the reason is that there's virtually no body roll and it feels like we're cornering almost flat. Clearly a lot of work has gone into making this car handle like no other R8.

Gear tricks

The R-tronic gearbox may be criticised for its recalcitrant nature and it's light years behind the superb S-tronic unit fitted to the Gen 2s. But at the hands of an experienced track racer, it still allows us to make rapid progress. "The trick with the R-tronic 'box, is to treat it almost like a manual and lift slightly when you change gear," explains Ricky, which he ably demonstrates as we head towards a sweeping right-hander, eliciting a delicious bark from the V10.

The 5.2-litre unit is one of the finest sounding engines ever made and delivers that authentic racecar howl, something that's amplified as we're using the full rev range on track. But there's more. Ricky has fitted a super-



"I'm thrown forward as the G-force hits, then flung sideways as we mount the kerb, first left, then right. It's startling stuff"

lightweight Akrapovic Slip-On Line titanium exhaust system, which not only delivers a thrilling race-car soundtrack when you open the taps, but is refined enough to pass track day noise tests. Although no longer available (they do cater for the Gen 2, plus Huracán), this sublime system releases the full performance potential of the V10 and is the perfect accompaniment to the supercharger. The VF Engineering set-up produces an extra 250-odd bhp, which makes a significant difference to performance, in partnership with the RE Performance custom ECU map.

Power delivery is impressive on a stock R8 GT, but this is on another level. Hammer the throttle in pretty

Above top The VF Engineering supercharger kit adds another 250bhp to the 5.2ltr FSI V10

Above Technocraft carbon fibre colour-matched seats and Schroth 6-way harnesses keep the driver (and passenger) securely fastened

much any gear and this thing just goes. The supercharger delivers a very linear response and the car behaves almost as if it's a larger, naturally aspirated unit. The shove in the kidneys as it accelerates is intense, and although there are no figures available, I'll eat my hat if this thing can't reach 60, from rest, in less than three seconds.

One thing that has been measured is the top speed. The owner recently competed at the V-Maxx 200 event, where this hard-charging R8 managed a very credible 206mph.

"The client lives in the Bahamas, so he stores the R8 in the UK, along with his other toys and uses it for track days," says Ricky. "It came to us in



RE PERFORMANCE

Swindon-based RE Performance have made a name for themselves as one of the UK's premier supercar specialists. Founded by Ricky Elder, their ethos is simple: "We build insanely powerful and unique supercars." With a growing list of clients who demand the best, RE Performance offer a truly bespoke service. From ECU mapping, to high-end hardware such as Akrapovic exhausts, the sky is the limit for discerning supercar owners. The R8 GT is taken care of by in-house detailing partners Pro-Detail UK who specialise in supercars and offer paint correction, ceramic coating and much more. Head to www.reperformance.co.uk or call **07786 170031**; www.pro-detailuk.co.uk or call **07818 598960**.



“Make no mistake, this thing is an absolute weapon on track. Few stock supercars could live with it”

2016 as a totally stock car and we've carried out all of the work to get it to where you see it today.”

Every aspect has been carefully looked at in order to achieve maximum performance and ensure it all works as a package. The KW Clubsport coilovers keep it planted on track, ably assisted by uprated ARBs and rear toe arms. The Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres offer prodigious grip, while the adaptive rear wing provides greater downforce, the faster you go.

Carbon cure

Inside, this thing feels very special thanks mainly to the gorgeous custom Alcantara and carbon steering wheel and those uncompromising, but surprisingly comfortable carbon seats. The set of larger and more tactile paddle shifters (in carbon, of course) make a huge difference to the driving sensation. With the half-rear cage and six-point harnesses, it's how you imagine a Clubsport edition R8 might look. The track theme is reinforced by the lightweight battery and fire suppression system also fitted inside.



Above top APR Performance front carbon splitter helps with downforce (and aesthetics)

Above KW Clubsport 3-way coilovers help keep the RE Performance Audi R8 GT planted

At a recent Akrapovic track event, Ricky took several high-profile UK tuners out for hot laps of Bruntingthorpe and every one of them came back with a huge smile on their face.

For me, the best part about this GT is that it still feels like an R8. The character hasn't been lost and the upgrades have maintained the innate drivability, which was central to Audi's plan when they designed it.

Make no mistake, this thing is an absolute weapon on track and few stock supercars could live with it, but you can also drive it home afterwards. No reliability issues, no dramas. It is a very special car and a credit to the prodigious talent of Ricky and RE Performance.



GT

AUDI R8 V10 GT

5.2 FSI V10, VF Engineering Supercharger kit, pulley upgrade, RE Performance engine calibration, RE Performance intake tubes, filters and breather mods, RE Performance engine oil cooler upgrade, Akrapovic Slip-On Line titanium exhaust system with OEM tailpipes and RE Performance valve controller.

Power 800bhp.

Transmission Audi R-tronic.

Suspension KW Clubsport 3-way coilovers with HLS height lift, Push Performance spec rear anti-roll bar, Push Performance adjustable ARB links, Push Performance adjustable rear toe arms.

Brakes Carbon ceramics front and rear.

Wheels Stock R8 GT alloys with Michelin

Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres.

Interior Voltphreaks lightweight battery with RE Performance motorsport cut-off, GT half cage, Technocraft carbon fibre colour-matched seats, Schroth 6-way harnesses, lightweight fire extinguisher, carbon fibre interior upgrade pack, custom carbon fibre and Alcantara steering wheel, long-reach carbon paddle shifters.

Exterior APR Performance front carbon splitter, APR Performance carbon side skirts, Aeromotion DRS adaptive rear wing with REP mounts, carbon door mirrors.

Contacts and thanks RE Performance, www.reperformance.co.uk, **07786 170031**; Akrapovic UK, Pro-Detail UK.



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DESERT STORM



Ultimate Supercar heads deep into the dunes of Dubai with the Ferrari 812 Superfast, to see exactly what the most powerful naturally aspirated engine ever produced can really do

WORDS: **STEVE CHALMERS** PHOTOGRAPHY: **FERRARI**

Right Four-wheel steering and a huge amount of triple-word electronic wizardry keep the 812 flat, fast and unshakable

Right main "It makes for some effortless, high-speed driving and cements the 812 as possibly the greatest GT car on the planet"



Dubai isn't short of supercars. Head out to any mall, hotel or club on any given evening and you'll see a queue of Italian exotics waiting impatiently in the valet parking area. Supercars are everywhere, and unlike the rest of the world, here these ultimate machines get used and used hard. So much so, that every half a mile you'll find a speed camera. In Dubai that makes complete sense. If they weren't here keeping speeds low, the entire population would be wiped out by 911 drivers.

Thanks to the numerous speed limit enforcement devices, driving quickly in Dubai is virtually impossible. All of the supercar clubs are fully aware of this, and so, at the weekend they migrate into the desert like a herd of V8 and V12 Oryx.

Out here, there are no speed cameras and, even better, we have motorways that were built but never finished: empty three lane roads that carry on for miles and end abruptly when the like-new tarmac comes to an end, quite literally at the edge of the desert.

Today we've brought Ferrari's 812 Superfast to one such empty stretch. We're on our own out here, with not even a token camel to keep us company. Just a gentle red-hot breeze and about a mile of deserted, forgotten motorway.

Despite the unrelenting heat, we're unruffled, as despite having the most powerful naturally aspirated engine ever produced under the bonnet, the 45-minute drive here was relaxed and easy going. The big Ferrari is a docile pussycat in everyday life, just as well as it's classed as a daily driver over here. The seats are supremely comfy and the multifunction wheel (which controls everything from the

indicators to the suspension stiffness) allows you to keep your full attention on the road ahead.

To get here, from one of the busiest parts of the city, all I did was press the Auto button on the centre console, made sure the steering wheel-mounted performance dial was set to Sport (no point being a hero), flicked the right-hand carbon-fibre gear shift paddle in to first and gently pressed down on the go pedal. At commuter speeds the Superfast just drives itself. No fuss. With the Getrag gearbox changing up rapidly through the seven gears at an indicated 24mph.

That's just crazy and highlights the torque of the V12. It also goes some way to explain the Ferrari's combined fuel cycle consumption of 14.9 l/100km - about the same as my Jeep Wrangler. So, in Auto/Sport mode, the fastest and most powerful Ferrari yet is as easy and predictable to drive as family saloon.

All torque

Dropping the windows, the massive air vents which look like they've been taken from the back of a MiG 29 throw out more than enough cold air to keep me cool in the 40°C heat.

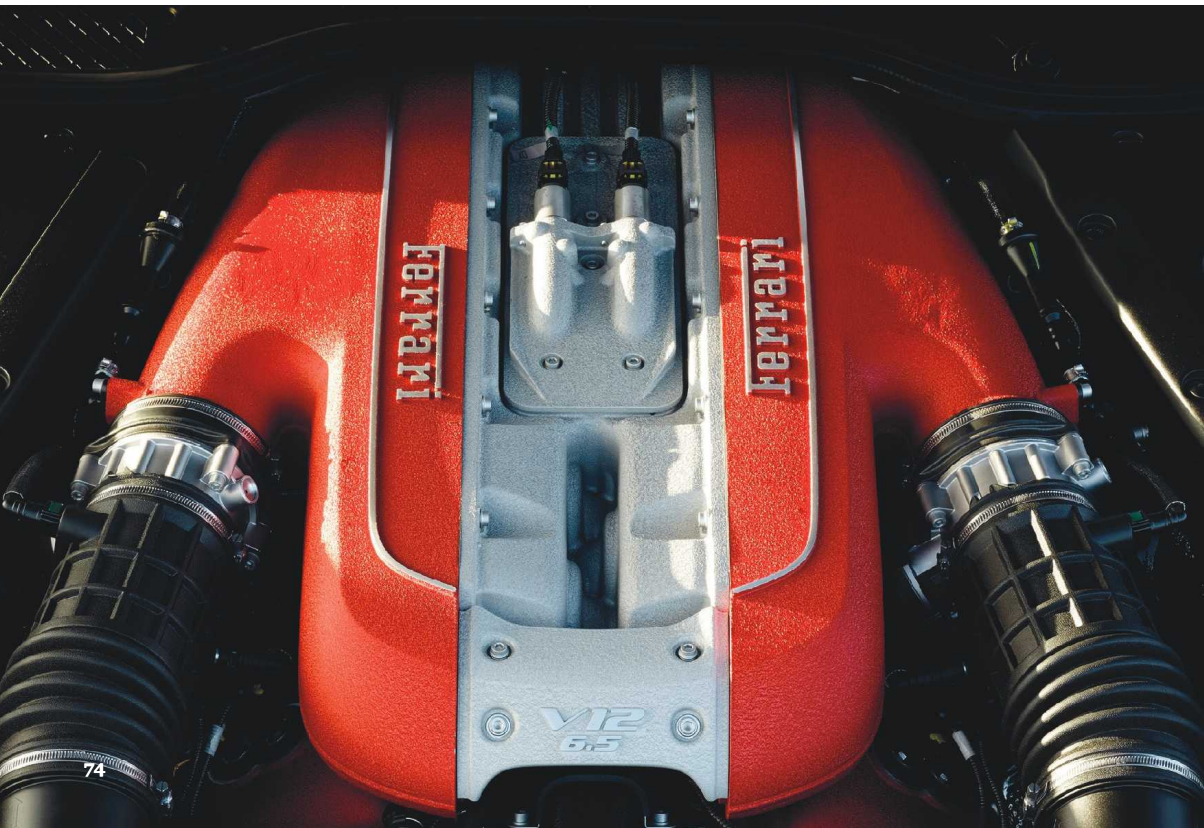
Still in Auto, I nip around the back streets of Al Quoz, slowly adding tiny amounts of pressure to the accelerator. At these low speeds, the V12's torque means you can waft about, almost Rolls-Royce style, as the engine isn't being remotely used. It's a strange feeling at cruise speed, almost like there's nothing mechanical on the end of the gas pedal - just some sort of nuclear reactor that is hardly being used and has an awful lot of power still left to produce.

On the gentle drive up towards Al Qudra, I get a chance to take in my





“There’s not a word in the English language to describe the experience of an 812 accelerating through the gears in maximum attack mode”





Left Warning lights in the steering wheel change from red to blue as you reach the 8,900rpm redline

Left below far The V12 engine that muscles in with 800bhp and 529 ft/lb of torque

Left below near The leather seats are designed for comfort on long journeys

Below right "It feels like no matter your speed, you'll always have half the engine's power in reserve"

surroundings, which are unmistakably Ferrari. In here, the steering wheel is the focal point, as this is where you change gear, indicate and choose your performance settings. I've got a V12 in front of me and the windows down, so I have no idea if the 812 has any sort of entertainment system. I can't see any speakers and to be honest I don't care – my driving playlist will be remaining in my iPhone. At this moment, I have to point out the leather seats. Initially they don't appear to be that supportive and you sit on them rather than in them, but this makes them extremely comfortable for long journeys and also it opens up the 812 to all sizes – space isn't an issue in this two seater.

But now the Auto mode is starting to grate me. It's perfect for sitting in rush hour traffic and navigating the back roads of Al Quoz, but its eagerness to save fuel and get into seventh gear as soon as possible isn't what this car is really about.

Race mode

As the last Toyota Land Cruisers disappear into the heat haze and the desert roads empty I press Auto. But this time to disengage it and now my left and right finger tips are in full control of those seven gears. I turn the steering wheel selector to Race, flick down into second gear and well... there's not a word in the English language that best describes the experience of an 812 Superfast accelerating through three gears in maximum attack mode.

The word isn't violent, as the Ferrari, despite howling like an old V12 Formula One car as it climbs the rev range feels taught, safe and firmly planted to the desert tarmac. The

315/35xZR20 rear tyres seemingly unstressed by the 800bhp and 529 ft/lb of torque being transmitted through them. I guess brutal is the best word to describe an angry 812. The change from second to third to fourth happens in seconds, with the warning lights in the steering wheel changing from red to blue as you reach the 8,900rpm redline.

This naturally aspirated engine is not of this earth. It feels like it's got a couple of big turbos bolted onto it, such is the relentless power delivery, which is eerily unstressed. It feels like no matter what speed you're traveling at, you'll always have half the engine's power in reserve ready to do as you wish. This makes for some effortless high speed driving and also cements the 812 as possibly the greatest GT car on the planet (a quick Dubai-Abu Dhabi blast can confirm this).

So, as I respectfully let the Superfast cool down with a relaxed cruise along an empty Lehab to Jebel Ali highway, can I say that I tamed the most powerful Ferrari ever built? No, not really. The 812 allowed me to drive it, but no matter what I did, it had plenty in reserve. This is highlighted every time I enthusiastically take on one of the wide, open roundabouts on the E77: the four wheel steering and a huge amount of triple-word electronic wizardry (FPP, FPO, ESP, EPS, PCV, SSC) keep it flat, fast and unshakable.

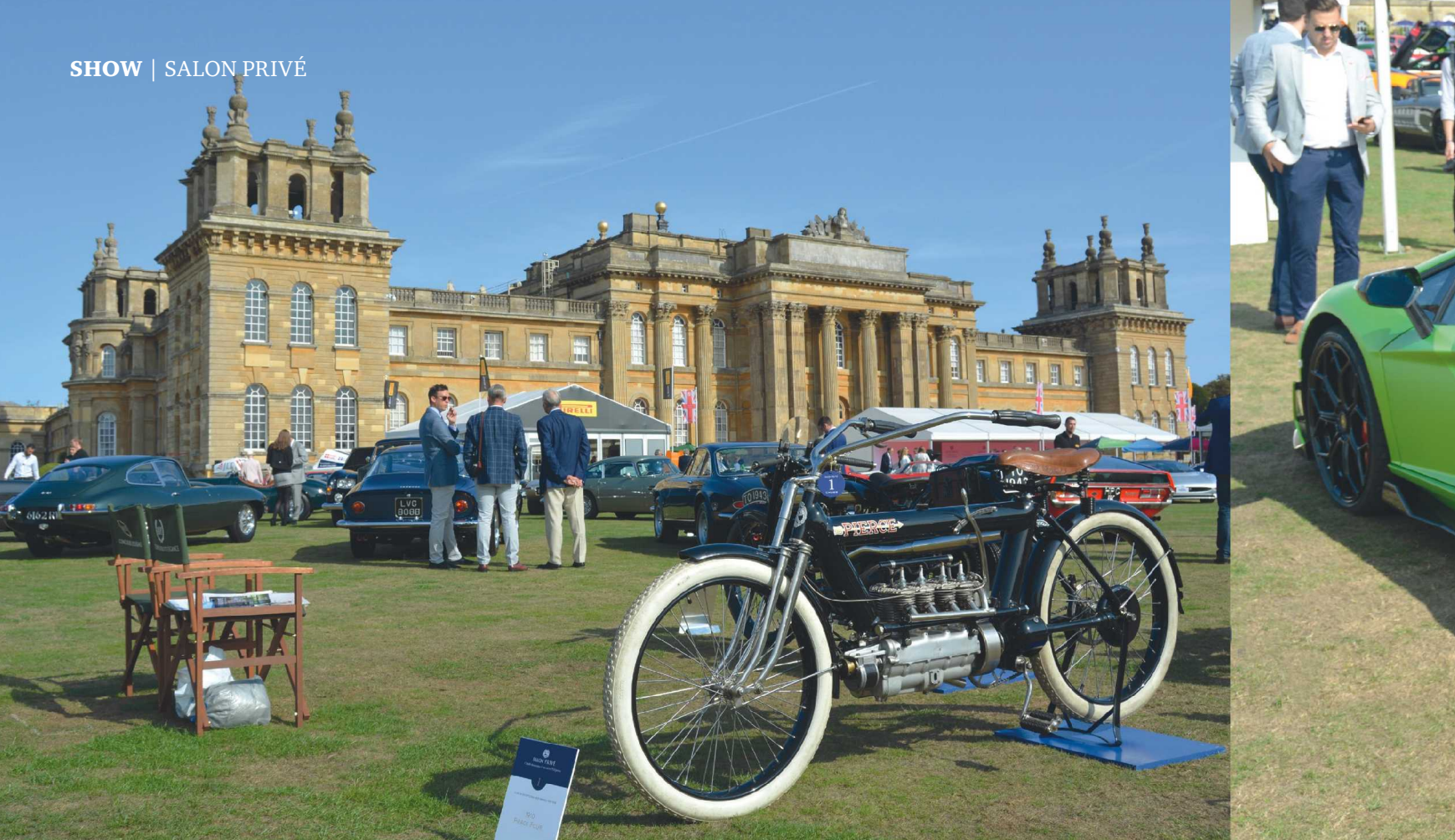
Few cars can match the 812's all round capabilities and despite its massive power output, it never feels scary or intimidating. The Ferrari 812 Superfast is one of the greatest automobiles ever made and it raises the supercar benchmark to another level.



Ferrari 812 Superfast Specifications

Type: V12
Displacement: 6,496cc
Max power: 789bhp @8,500rpm
Torque: 530 lb/ft @7,000rpm
Max speed: 340km/h
0-100km/h: 2.9sec
0-200km/h: 7.9sec
Combined fuel consumption: 14.91 l/100km
www.dubai.ferrari dealers.com





Salon Privé 2018

Champagne, concours classics, outlandish concept cars, lobster, more champagne... that's Salon Privé in a nutshell. We braved the 30°C heat (and the relentless champagne) to bring you a flavour of the event

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY: DANIEL BEVIS

Few car shows offer the luxurious package that Salon Privé provides. While the cost of entry may be prohibitive to some, you do get what you pay for: not just a ticket into one of the UK's most exclusive motoring events, but also a sumptuous lobster luncheon and unlimited champagne refills throughout the day. A more mischievous correspondent may even suggest that the more you visit the bar, the better value the ticket works out to be...

This hedonistic flavour is appropriately mirrored by the venue at which Salon Privé takes place. The event used to reside at south-west London's Syon Park, but in recent years it's called Blenheim Palace home, and 2018 was the first year to see the concours staged right up next to the mighty house itself.

Categories in the concours this year numbered 13, the first three for motorbikes, and the remaining 10 exhaustively listed as follows: Preservation at its Best, Pre-War Bugattis, Pre-War Luxury Tourers, Grand Tourers of the '50s and '60s, Wind in Your Hair, Best of British, Streamlined Closed Sports Cars, 50 Years of the Dino, Supercars of the '70s, and Competition Cars. The standard in each category was phenomenally high, with multiple concours winners being shipped from all over the globe to compete. Interestingly, this event was once





Lamborghini Aventador SVJ

The new-for-2018 SVJ is proof positive that Lamborghini can't leave things alone. As brutal and accomplished as the Aventador is, there are always ways to make these things better. So the SVJ, which retails at £360,000, has titanium valves and a lighter flywheel along with a raised rev limiter, making it both more eager and more powerful at 759bhp. It has lightweight wheels and much-lightened bodywork, enabling all-in dry weight of an impressively low 1,525kg. Dampers and anti-roll bars are stiffer, and the aerodynamics greatly improved. This, then, is the Aventador refined; the best possible version of what it can be. For now, at least...

again scheduled to clash with the Concours of Elegance at Hampton Court Palace, so entrants were forced to choose between one or the other. Suffice to say that each event boasted a sterling line-up, and those at Salon Privé were there because they'd prioritised this event as the favourite. You can see from the photos just how discerning a group they are.

The fiercely contested Best of Show was scooped by a 1933 Bugatti Type 55 Roadster, with second and third place in the category taken by a Delage D8-120 and Rod Stewart's old Lamborghini Miura S. Prizes elsewhere went to the Porsche 550 Spyder for Most Unique Bodywork (bit of a misnomer as uniqueness can't be quantified, but you can't deny the unusualness of a small roadster wearing an aeroplane spoiler as a hat), the Ferrari 250 LM winning People's Choice, and a Ferrari 365 GTC winning Most Elegant. You won't hear any arguments from us there.

The 2019 dates are 5-7 September. Let's hope they've booked the sunshine again!

“The standard was phenomenally high, with multiple concours winners shipped from all over the globe”

Brabham BT62

The new BT62 is a limited-run curiosity – one of those cars that's neither road-legal nor eligible for any race series, so it's simply a very expensive track toy. But £1.2m buys a lot of heritage, along with a 700bhp nat-asp V8, gorgeous carbon-fibre bodywork, a tubular spaceframe chassis, six-speed sequential gearbox, motorsport-derived suspension, and a GT3 race-style interior. Exclusivity is guaranteed, with just 70 examples being built. And if you can afford to buy one, you can probably afford to pay someone like RML to make it road-legal!

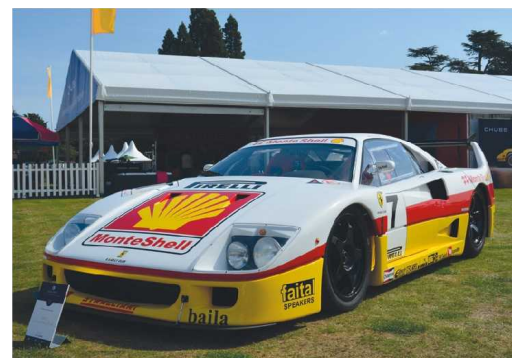


Jaguar XJ220

At concours events, it's not uncommon to hear the dulcet tones of a string quartet, or perhaps a stripped-back rockabilly trio knocking out a few standards. But it's quite unusual to hear Maggie May blasting out at full volume. The source of the incongruous sound was a silver Jaguar XJ220 as it passed the judges' desk. Why? This very XJ220 used to be Rod Stewart's car, delivered new to the singer back in 1994. It's only covered 6,000 miles since and is every inch the show-stopping retro supercar.

Steyr 220

Steyr isn't exactly a household name these days, but this sumptuous cabriolet has a few tales to tell. The rolling chassis was built in the Austrian Steyr-Daimler-Puch factory in 1938 before being shipped to Gläser-Karosserie in Dresden for this unique hand-crafted bodywork. It was displayed at the 1939 Berlin Motor Show, being bought by the Austrian consul for Latvia, and after the war passed into the hands of the renowned Russian surgeon and politician Viktors Kalnberzs. The present owners bought it unrestored in 1994 and the 220 was painstakingly rebuilt over the course of 20 years. An incredible effort, and now a priceless automobile.



F40 GT/LM

There are few supercar silhouettes as immediately recognisable as the Ferrari F40 and, while it was never conceived as a race car, it wasn't surprising that some owners wanted to take them to the track. This one, chassis no. 80742, was one of seven F40s converted to race specs by Michelotto, to run in the Italian Campionato Italiano Supercar GT. It was entered by the infamous Jolly Club in this eye-catching Monte Shell livery, with Marco Brand driving the GT/LM to victory in nine out of 10 races that season. It enjoyed a sparkling motorsport career, and has recently been restored to original Monte Shell specs by DK Engineering.



Ferrari Daytona Spider

'Daytona' was always a nickname, the correct name for the Spider version of this iconic model being 365 GTS/4. This was a world-beating car back in 1969. It may not have been mid-engined like the rival cars over at Lamborghini, but it was good for 174mph and 0-60mph in 5.4 seconds – astounding figures in 1969! The 1972 example at Salon Privé is one of just 122 Spiders built; it was delivered in US-market spec and is today one of only three Daytonas in original factory black paint. A careful restoration 20 years ago, and a recent interior retrim, ensure this Ferrari looks flawless on the showground.



Jaguar E-Type

This isn't just any old E-Type, but a very significant one. 6162 RW was one of three cars built specially for the hugely high-profile launch of the model at the Geneva Motor Show in 1961. The

other two cars were 9600 HP, another fixed-head coupé which is now in private ownership, and 77 RW, a roadster now owned by Jaguar Heritage. 6162 RW was Jaguar's official press demonstrator and development car,

meaning that a heck of a lot of important backstories have sat in the artfully weathered driver's seat. It's also noteworthy that all of the early development cars were dismantled. So this is the only tangible part of that heritage that remains.



Lamborghini Miura

Another of Rod Stewart's old motors, this 1971 Miura S featured the later 360bhp power hike, and was purchased by Stewart with the proceeds of the chart-topping Maggie May single. He also bought a Miura SV around the same time and famously used both as regular road transport. This one has recently received a full Polo Storico Lamborghini factory restoration, and deservedly took a top-three place in the Best of Show rankings.

Merry Christmas



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CUBAN SOUL



Upon finding himself growing up in the USA, how does a simple Cuban chap go from having nothing to owning a modified F40? Simple: he puts a hell of a lot of work in...

WORDS: DANIEL BEVIS PHOTOGRAPHY: LARRY CHEN



It takes a serious amount of courage to mess about with a Ferrari F40.

This isn't just a car. It's an icon. Something that adorned every bedroom wall throughout the 1980s, on through the '90s and, realistically, still freshens up many an interior design concept today.

The archetypal retro supercar poster-boy, the F40 was Enzo Ferrari's last sign-off, a celebration of the 40th anniversary of his first car, and a boisterous 90th birthday present to himself. The 2.9-litre engine with its twin IHI turbos produced 478bhp, which was all channelled entirely without electronic intervention through cartoonishly fat rear tyres. It was a real contender in the late-eighties supercar wars, able to hit 60mph in 3.9 seconds and top the mythical double ton. And it looked like a full-on race car (despite not actually being designed to race). It's a legend. Everyone wants one, and anyone who says otherwise is a filthy liar.

While not being specifically designed to race, however, the F40 LM proved that the platform could more than hold its own on track if you were sufficiently persuasive. The LM was an in-house Ferrari development to create customer cars suitable for endurance racing; the chassis was extensively reinforced with carbon fibre, while the already legendary handling was further improved by the addition of new Koni springs and dampers and thicker anti-roll bars. Larger 355mm Brembo brakes were useful given the power hike to 720bhp, thanks to increased boost pressure and compression



Top The F40's rear window louvres are instantly recognisable

Left A particularly shouty Tubi Inconel race exhaust

Far right The hinged centre-section of the rear wing is adjustable from the cockpit

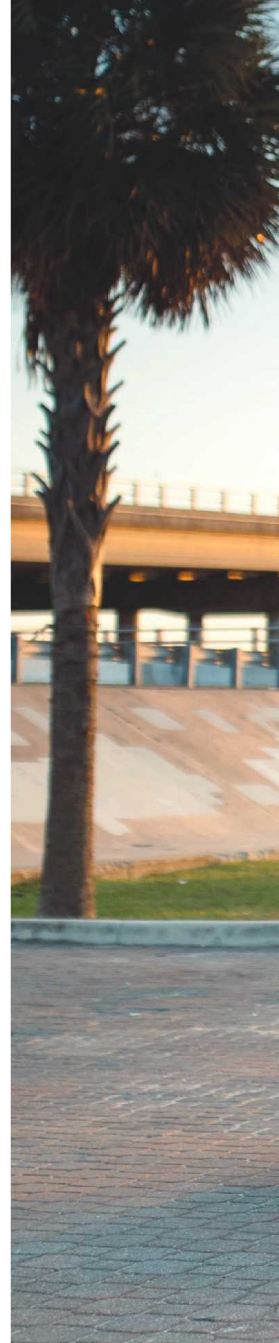
ratio, bigger intercoolers, more aggressive cams and an all-new engine management system.

The model largely retained the stock road-car looks, although subtle addenda were added to aid both cooling and downforce – there was an extra little NACA duct on the nose and a discreet carbon-fibre chin spoiler, while the headlights sat behind Lexan covers instead of traditional pop-ups. And you see the hinged centre-section of the rear wing? That's adjustable from the cockpit. Interior weight savings brought kerb weight down to 1,050kg. The F40 LM was capable of zero to 60mph in 3.1 seconds, going on to 229mph. A mighty, mighty car.

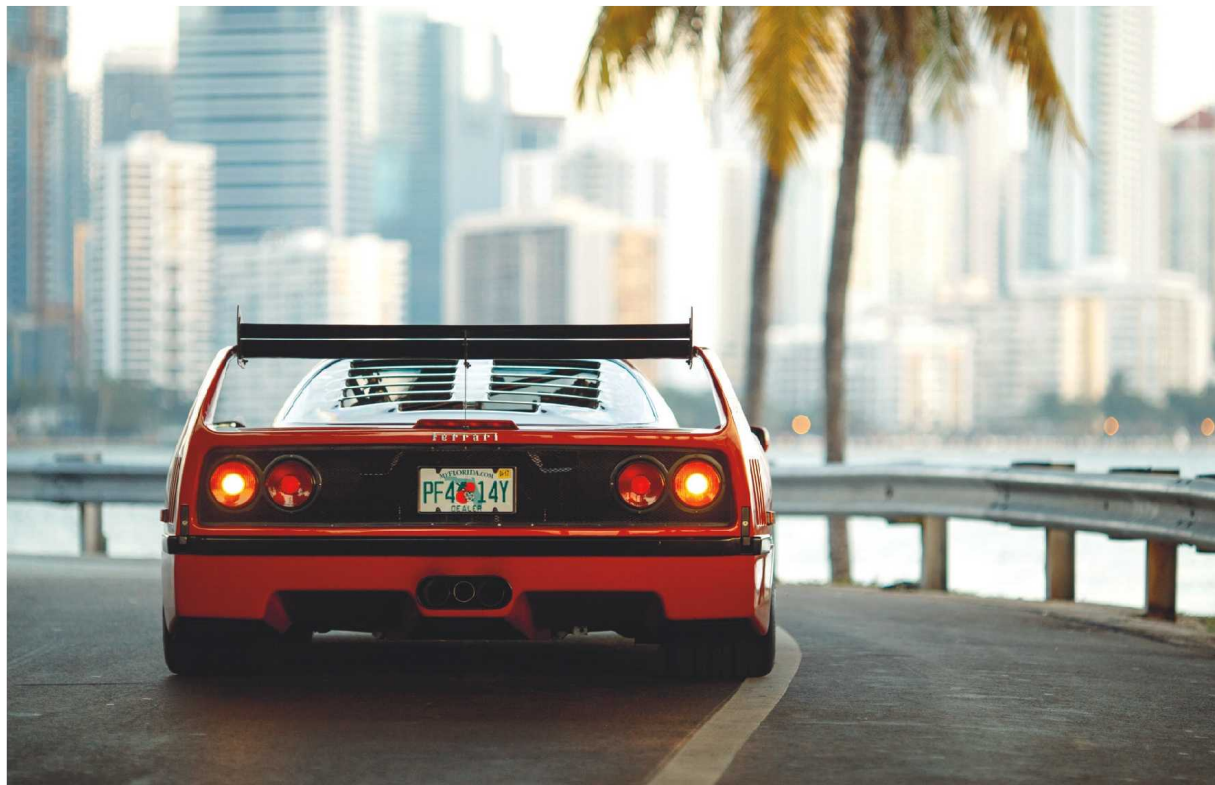
Maintaining the spirit

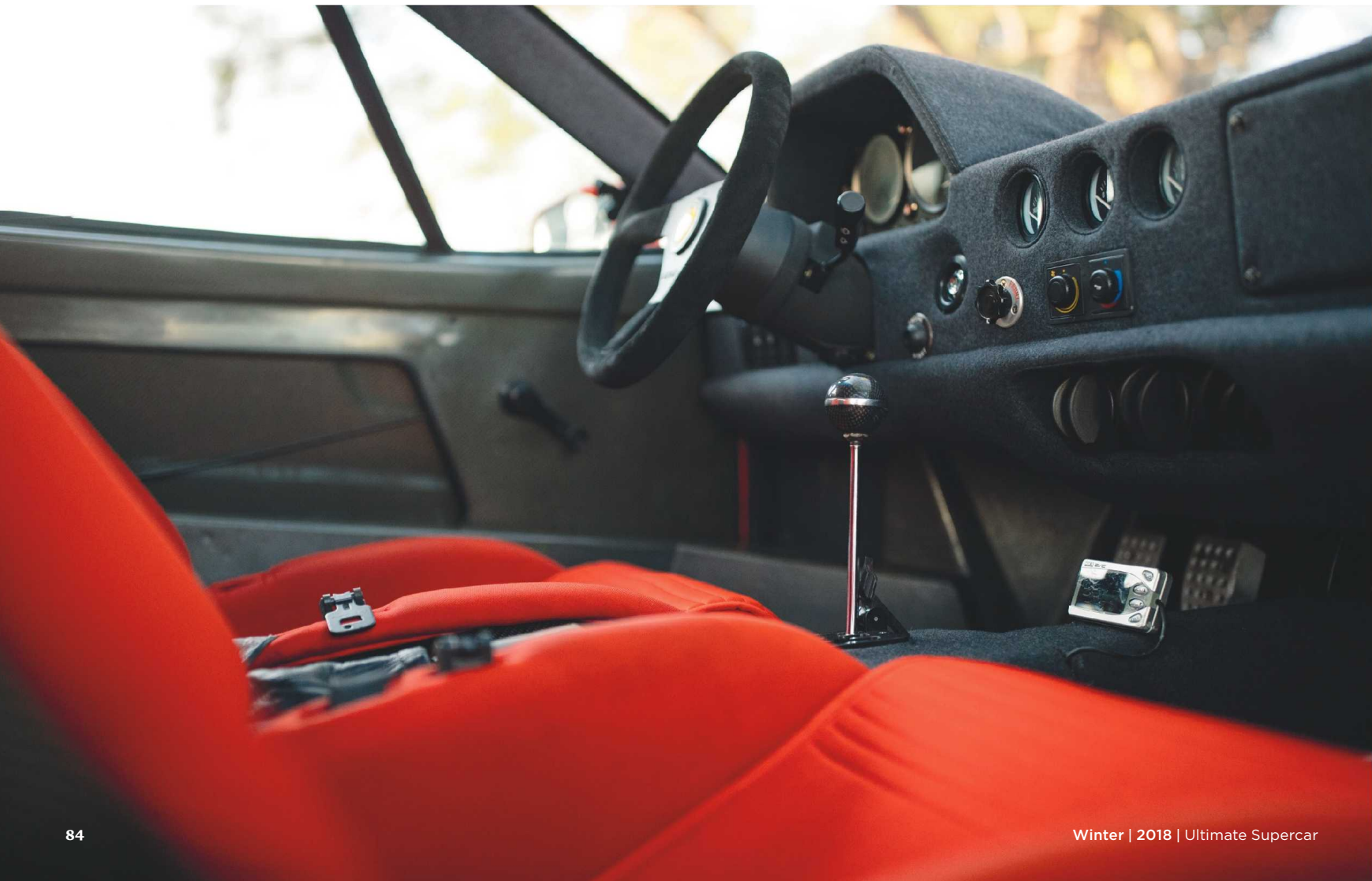
What you're seeing here, then, is something special indeed: not an F40 LM. But an F40 that's been extensively modified to incorporate its upgrades, its spirit, its sense of purpose. As if the stock F40 wasn't an angry enough thing already!

You'll be unsurprised to learn that the owner of this machine is a pretty



**“Everyone wants a Ferrari.
And anyone who says
otherwise is a filthy liar”**





special guy. You'd have to be, as the act of fiddling with perceived Maranello perfection is hardly a job for a shrinking wallflower. No, the man in question, Juan Carlos Fernandez, emigrated to the US from Cuba in the early 1960s, and if you know your history, you'll know that this was a far from easy transition.

With the family starting from nothing in the Land of the Free, aside from a strong bond of togetherness and a pocketful of dreams, it was hard graft that pulled Juan up from that wide-eyed boy into the man he is today. He grew up eagerly admiring the muscle cars that the trade embargo denied his homeland, and vowed to own at least one of them someday.

Working hard selling shoes in his spare time while at college, Juan saved up enough readies to acquire a '73 Datsun 260Z, and before long the modifying bug bit and he found himself bolting on Weber carbs, arch flares, racy manifolds and all sorts. Once that bug bites, its infectious wiles can really infiltrate your system. Juan was a bona fide petrolhead. There was no turning back.

Lightbulb moment

The next acquisition was a rough-and-ready '68 Corvette, a car of such admirable simplicity that he was able to hone and learn his automotive craft, unbolting the broken bits, banging them with hammers, screwing them back on, and putting his foot down. Simpler times.

And then, one day, something life-changing happened. Juan saw an F40. A lightbulb illuminated cartoon-style above his head, and suddenly his impassioned automotive journey had a clear sense of purpose. Remember that scene in Wayne's World, where Wayne's eyeing up the white Fender in the guitar shop? "Oh, yes... it will be mine..."

So, how does an ordinary person go about purchasing a Ferrari F40?

“The cherry on the cake was Michelotto agreeing to make an LM wing for the car – the last one ever made, in fact”



Top The view every supercar connoisseur dreams of

Left Badge of honour: the iconic Prancing Horse of Ferrari

Below The F40's water temp, speedo, rpm and boost pressure gauges





They're hideously expensive, and surely out of the grasp of all but the most moneyed collectors? Well, Juan has a proven method: all you need to do is graft, and graft hard, 11 hours a day, seven days a week, for 15 years. Then the F40 door swings open just for you. Simple, eh?

Impressively, it's not all just about the fabled F40 for Juan. He's got a collection of around 50 cars now, something which his business selling used cars has helped him to build up from a base point of pretty much zero. But naturally it's always been this Italian stallion that was the laser-targeted hope, the reason to get up in the mornings.

Having owned the F40 for around 15 years now, Juan's been keenly modifying the thing but has been sure to only make reversible changes.

He's not an idiot. This hyper-rare poster-boy will be a nice little nest egg one day. Still, whereas most collectors like to mothball their investments, this dude has a far more pragmatic approach: this is a performance car, it was designed to be driven hard and driven fast, and that's exactly what he does. To this end, he's bolted on a bunch of period mods to make it even more exciting.

Turbo time

Working in conjunction with Costa Mesa, California's Caribou Engineering, the original IHI turbos have been swapped for F40 LM units, working with a particularly shouty Tubi Inconel race exhaust, along with a custom remap and an HKS boost controller (those turbos are Japanese, remember).

STYLING: Rosso Corsa, F40 LM adjustable rear wing, LM front splitter.

TUNING: 2.9-litre twin-turbo V8, F40 LM IHI turbo upgrade.

CHASSIS: Custom HRE 547 wheels, F40 LM Brembo brakes.

INTERIOR: Stock F40, reverse-lockout shift gate.

The F40 LM also inspired the brake upgrades, with mighty LM-spec Brembos sitting behind those bespoke HRE 547 wheels.

It was somewhere around this point in the story that fate decided to intervene, and somehow parachuted Ferrari factory tuner Michelotto into the scene. Juan had befriended a local mechanic who was once part of Ferrari's F1 team before emigrating to Florida. He introduced Juan to the legendary Michelotto (who just so happened to have developed the F40 LM), and it was through this freshly opened avenue of awesome that he was able to purchase a pukka LM-spec magnesium pedal box with brake bias adjuster. Nice when things just work out, isn't it?

The cherry on the cake was that the revered tuner agreed to make Juan an LM wing for his car – the last one ever to be made, in fact. And, even more thrillingly, because it took a while to be crafted they even sent him an uber-rare reverse-lockout shift gate as a thank you for his patience. Things really don't get a lot better than that.

It's obvious Juan is an incurable enthusiast. He uses his F40 as it was always meant to be used; while it has all the original manuals and paperwork – and even the matching luggage set – he hasn't been afraid to customise and modify to make it his own. It's a realisation of a long-held dream: while there are other cars that handle better, or go faster, or boast bigger numbers, this is the one he used as motivation for all those years of dedication, and he's modified it to make it perform the way he always dreamed it would.

This isn't just a car. This is proof that hard work pays off.



Top The unmistakable side profile of the Ferrari F40

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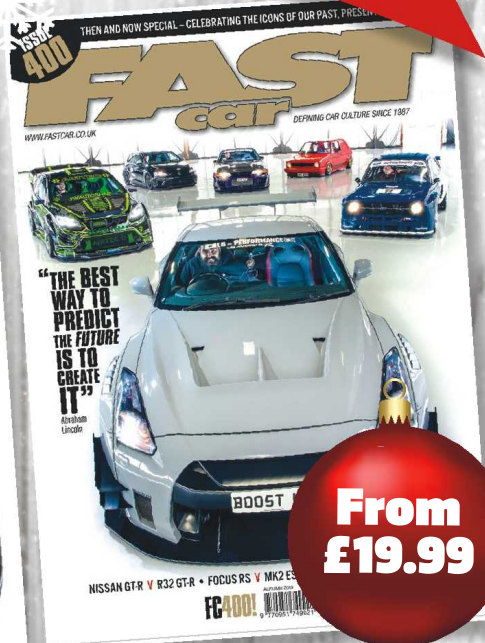
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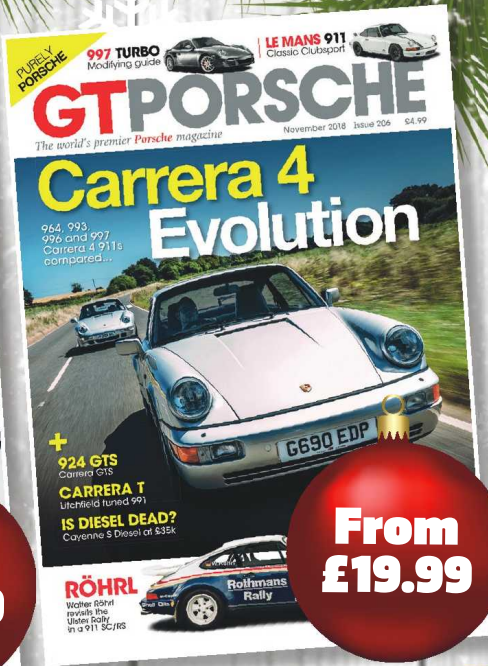
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THE DIFFICULT SECOND ALBUM

How do you follow a world-beater like the McLaren F1?
It wasn't easy, but 2011's MP4-12C raised as many
pulses as eyebrows...

WORDS: DANIEL BEVIS







he curse of excellence is that you leave yourself with a lot to live up to. When McLaren launched the F1 in 1993, they rewrote

the supercar rule book in one fell swoop. While the previous decade had been characterised by the established old guard of sports cars - Ferrari, Jaguar, Lamborghini, Porsche - releasing a string of supercars seemingly just to outdo each other in a tit-for-tat race for the halcyon 200mph barrier, it was as if McLaren had simply been biding their time and watching with a wry grin. Then they pulled the covers back from their 240mph road car and suddenly everyone else in the industry was lost for words. There had never been a car like it before - central driving position, engine bay lined with gold leaf, carbon-fibre monocoque, this was all unprecedented.

So how do you follow that? Well, it took some time for McLaren to figure out the appropriate way to develop and market a road car that would inevitably be relentlessly compared to the incomparable F1, and it wasn't until 2009 that the MP4-12C peeped out of the workshop. Critics immediately pounced upon the fact that it had a conventional seating layout, but focusing on this sole detail is to entirely miss the point, and when customers started receiving the production-ready product in 2011 it was quickly apparent that the Woking dream factory had once again spun gold.

The name, not exactly catchy, can be explained thus: MP4 had been the chassis designation for all McLaren Formula 1 cars since the early-eighties; it stands for 'McLaren Project 4', owing to the merger with Ron Dennis's Project Four Racing in 1980. The '12C' doesn't mean 'twelve cylinders' (in fact, this car has a V8); no, the 12 is where the model sits within McLaren's own Vehicle Performance Index, while the C simply stands for 'carbon', of which the car has rather a lot. (It's worth noting that the name was officially shortened to 12C from 2012.)

The MP4-12C's development was deeply entrenched in contemporary supercar culture from the start, with McLaren covertly acquiring a Ferrari 360 to rework as a test mule - the 360 having roughly similar proportions to what the engineers were aiming for. This mule, named MV1, was essentially used for engine testing, with the new flat-plane-crank 3.8-litre twin-turbo V8 sitting amidships and suffering a punishing schedule of ambient extremes; MV2 came later, a test mule based on an Ultima GTR to develop the suspension and brakes. MV3 was another 360, for exhaust system

Look for:

Gearbox seals can leak oil - it's not common, but if it does happens it'll require an entire transmission replacement as it's a sealed unit



“The MP4-12C should, on the whole, be a remarkably reliable and trouble-free car”



Left Make sure that the car comes with its original trickle-charger, as you can't jump start an MP4 - its fancy lithium-ion battery is hidden away where you can't get to it

Above Later cars had the option of a nose-lift system, which is desirable if you encounter a lot of speed bumps on your daily grind

Below left You might find condensation in the tail lights - they'll cost £500 apiece to replace

When it comes to performance, you're looking at a 0-62mph time of 2.8 seconds, 0-100mph in a flat 6 seconds, and a 10.2 second quarter-mile. The transmission is a seven-speed dual-clutch affair, named SSG - which stands for Seamless Shift Gearbox; it has a 'Pre-Cog' function which allows the driver to pre-select the next gear by lightly tapping the paddle. The braking is phenomenal too; the car can haul up from 124mph to zero in 5 seconds, which is enough to inflict some serious G-forces, and if you perform an emergency stop at 60mph it can stop within 7 car-lengths. In every measurable aspect, the MP4-12C's performance is utterly astounding.

A Spider version was also available. Given that the MP4-12C was designed from the outset with a convertible in mind, and that the monocoque is so remarkably stiff, there's very little weight penalty with the soft-top variant - just 40kg, accounted for by the roof and mechanism - so it's by no means a compromise. The top speed is just 3mph shy of its coupé sibling and, impressively, it's possible to do 196mph with the roof down. Although you might want to pop in some earplugs.

What to look out for

A number of engine improvements were developed and released in October 2012, taking peak power to 616bhp. Cars supplied from 2013 onwards will all have the extra power, and the option was given to upgrade existing cars free-of-charge, so check that this was carried out by the owner at the time. The MP4-12C should, on the whole, be a remarkably reliable and trouble-free car, which is reassuring given the enormous complexity of its suspension arrangement. Early cars suffered a smattering of electrical maladies, but you should find that these have been dealt with under warranty - they principally related to

development, and then McLaren built their own ground-up prototypes - CP1 and CP2 - to refine the carbon monocoque structure.

And so the testing wore relentlessly on until, on September 9th 2009, the public were finally allowed to see what McLaren had been working on. What they saw was a formidable proposition: within that so-named Carbon MonoCell tub sat a 592bhp V8, sending all power to the rear, along with all manner of F1-derived technologies - including brake-steer, whereby the inside rear wheel is independently braked under cornering to reduce understeer, eliminating the need for an LSD. What truly set the MP4-12C apart from the F1, while not having its stratospheric top speed (although its 218mph top end isn't to be sniffed at), is the fact that it was the first McLaren to have its entire drivetrain

designed and built in-house. No BMW engine blocks here, this was a pure-blood entity.

The suspension of the MP4-12C is particularly noteworthy, not least for the fact that it dispenses with the concept of traditional anti-roll bars entirely. McLaren developed a bespoke hydraulic configuration to suspend the car, the ProActive Chassis Control consisting of a variety of low and high-pressure valves which interconnect the damping side-to-side as well as fore-to-aft - the advantage of having two opposing pressure levels means that it can be extremely stiff under load and extremely soft when cruising, which means that the MP4 is equally good on track as around town. A lot of manufacturers claim this, but McLaren's unique technology is unsurpassed in its Jekyll-and-Hyde nature.





the IRIS infotainment system, which has a reputation for being rather glitchy; our recommendation here would be to interrogate the history, check that the system's currently working correctly, and take out the McLaren Extended Warranty option - this can be bought even if you've purchased a used McLaren, and covers you for all sorts of potentially expensive repairs throughout the car. The IRIS 2 hardware upgrade is favourable, as the original IRIS 1 system annoyingly can't do two things at once, and the new software can't be retrofitted to the original screen. Later cars had the option of a nose-lift system, which is desirable if you encounter a lot of speed bumps in your daily grind. And perhaps the key thing to check is whether the McLaren's power delivery suits your driving style. It's a ballistic machine at pace and a comfortable and friendly steer around town, but it's worth noting that the turbos are quite laggy, and not a lot really happens below 3,000rpm. How you feel about this will only be determined by a thorough test drive in a variety of weather conditions.

While generally reliable, the suspension system does require a little maintenance to keep it functioning as it should. Each corner has a hydraulic actuator which can trigger dash lights as they wear out - single replacement actuators are £850, or £1,800 for a full set (this is where that warranty can come in useful). You may find condensation inside the taillights, which cost around £500 apiece to replace, but again they'd be covered by the Extended McLaren warranty.

Make sure that the car comes with its original trickle-charger, as you can't jump start these cars if the battery dies after prolonged periods

without use (it's a fancy lithium-ion battery, and it's hidden away where you can't get to it).

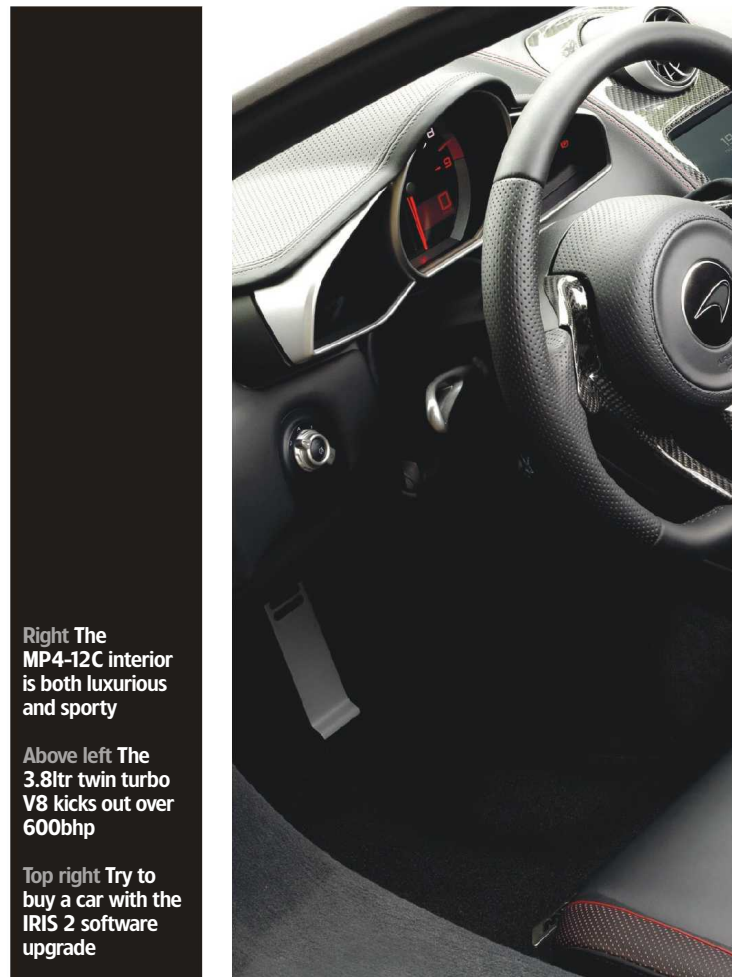
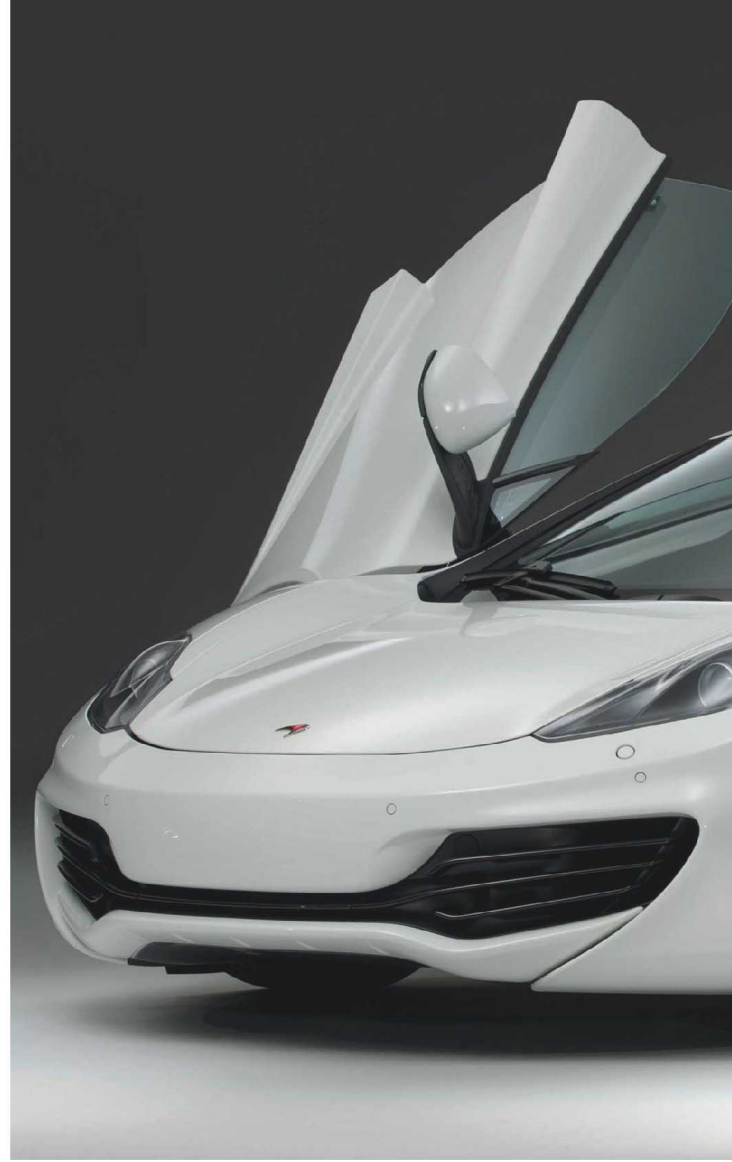
Check which brakes the car has - carbon-ceramics were an expensive option, but only around 10-percent of buyers took it up as the stock steel setup is more than good enough. Gearbox seals can leak oil - it's not common, but if it happens it requires an entire transmission replacement as it's a sealed unit. Finally, it's worth checking that the tracker system works - if the car's been in storage and the tracker subscription lapsed, the system freezes and cannot be unfrozen, so you'll be looking at close to £1,000 for a replacement unit.

How much?

The price of entry into the 12C club is currently a little over £80,000. This will buy you an early MP4-12C, and we're yet to find any on the market that don't have a full and correct service history, while mileages tend to be low as well - the highest we can see on the current UK market is 32k on a 2012 car. Around the £90,000 mark, you'll find 2013-on cars with the factory power upgrade, and £100,000 buys a newer and fully-optioned 12C, with Spiders starting around £110,000. Anything above this will be collector cars with extremely low miles, and the ceiling is currently around £140,000 - these will be one-owner 2014 coupés with lots of carbon-fibre extras, IRIS 2 and investment-grade mileage.

On the road

While the MP4-12C can be cossetting and smooth when it needs to, it never lets you forget that it's a car which prefers to be grabbed by the scruff of the neck. The engine always sounds busy, the exhaust and induction tones ever-urgent, and



Right The MP4-12C interior is both luxurious and sporty

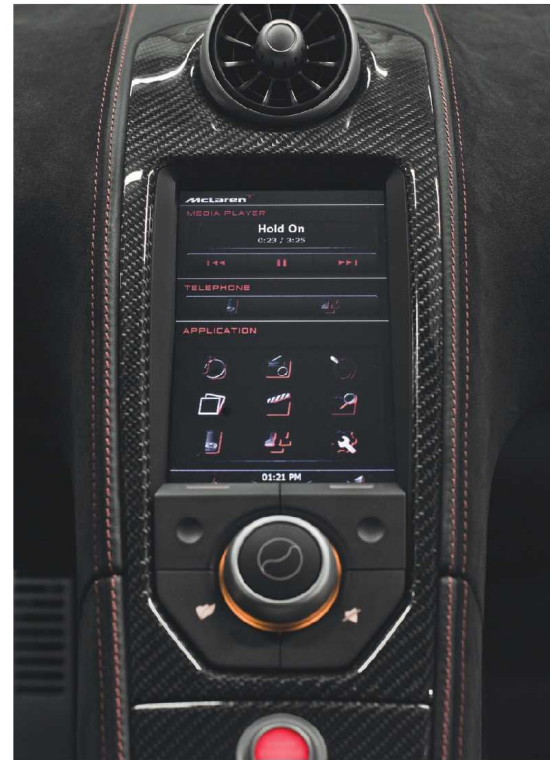
Above left The 3.8ltr twin turbo V8 kicks out over 600bhp

Top right Try to buy a car with the IRIS 2 software upgrade



Look for:

Only 2012-on cars had proper buttons to open the dihedral doors - early cars had a swipe-sensitive sensor which can be temperamental





even in the mildest of the setup options available (Normal, Sport, Track) it feels taut, as if held perilously at the end of a stretched rubber band. This, of course, is why people buy supercars, so it's wholly encouraging to note that it can do the sensible thing and the thrilling thing at the same time, and seamlessly shift through different points along that excitement axis.

The dihedral doors offer an appropriately supercar-style entry, although it's noteworthy that only 2012-on cars had a proper button to open the door – early cars had a swipe-sensitive sensor which doesn't always work brilliantly. But once inside, the McLaren has all the drama you'd hope for. The driver's seat may not be in the middle like an F1, but the centre console is extremely narrow to get you as close to the middle as possible, and the instrument arrangement reinforces the fact that this car is all about the driver. Visibility is distinctly un-supercar-like in that it's outstanding all round, although you may have to be careful not to bash the extremely wide door mirrors. The seat is positioned very low and slightly reclined, with an excellent view over the low dash, and the engine just behind your head offers a pleasingly gruff thrum backed up by plenty of wastegate chatter when you lift off the throttle. The steering is race-car quick, front-end grip feels other-worldly, and that hyper-intelligent suspension system ensures that there's zero roll through the corners; it's as firm and stiff as a racer, yet it also has the ability to mask bumps and compressions to smooth out the road, making it feel even faster than it is – which is very fast indeed. And the air-brake that raises when you jump on the brakes provides the perfect infusion of theatricality to the process. Combined with the exemplary fit-and-finish of the cabin with its high-quality materials (not to mention 24mpg potential!), you've got a premium product that serves as both track toy and daily driver in one.



Top The steering is race-car quick and the suspension system ensures that there's zero roll through the corners

Left Lots of carbon upgrades were available

Tuning and styling

The MP4-12C's performance is incredible as standard, but these things can always be improved. Hennessey Performance in the States offer a range of power upgrade options, with the HPE800 package bringing a bigger air intake, improved intercooler and turbos and a custom titanium exhaust, raising power to 800bhp. The Hennessey aero package improves engine airflow as well as increasing downforce. A less involved option is to use AMS Performance's \$2,500 remap – a simple ECU tune that takes power safely over 700bhp. Fabspeed offer a 'Sport Performance Package' which combines their X-pipe exhaust system with race cats, BMC air filters and a remap to unleash 750bhp. Or if you just want your stock 12C to sound like a race car and spit flames, the exhaust systems from Fi-Exhaust

are very highly regarded and works of art in their own right.

When it comes to aftermarket wheel upgrades, lighter is always better – the chassis is so poised and refined, you don't want to mess things up by adding unsprung weight. Forged wheels from ADV.1 or HRE are popular, or if your pockets are deep enough there's the option of custom made Dymag Boxstrom carbon-hybrid wheels.

Styling is a contentious issue with the MP4-12C, but it's commonly agreed that an upgrade to a 650S- or 675LT-style front bumper is a quality addition, while complete carbon fibre styling packages are available from companies such as Scuderia Car Parts. And for the truly ostentatious, Liberty Walk make over fenders and Mansory offer a fixed carbon fibre rear spoiler, which adds a huge amount of aggression to the tail.



“The steering is race-car quick, front-end grip feels other-worldly, and that hyper-intelligent suspension system ensures that there’s zero roll through the corners”



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Carbon-ceramic brakes were an expensive upgrade, but only around 10-percent of buyers took up the option



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DE TOMASO



Alejandro de Tomaso poses outside the Ford headquarters with his new Pantera. The relationship between the two companies was a turbulent one and the car ultimately suffered as a result

F

or many, the name de Tomaso is synonymous with the Pantera. But there is far more behind this badge. It's a story that would make a great action movie, involving politics, assignation plots,

Formula 1 motor racing, global corporations and some pretty decent beef steaks.

Alejandro de Tomaso was born in Argentina to an influential and extremely wealthy cattle farming family. His father was one time Minister of Agriculture and the young Alejandro became deeply involved in politics. He was accused of being involved in an assassination plot on the then President, Juan Perón. This led to him leaving Argentina in some haste, allegedly flying a small plane to neighbouring Uruguay with suitcases full of cash.

Arriving in Italy, the country of his father, he became deeply involved in motor racing both as a driver and later constructor, even building cars for two separate attempts at F1. Unfortunately he had mixed success in the sport, but could see there was a market for building exciting sports cars (his location in Modena probably helped influence this decision too).

If you are going to build cars, they need a bonnet badge. His competitors rolling out of Modena had their Prancing Horses and Raging Bulls and while de Tomaso was proud of his Italian roots he also wanted to remember his family's home in South America, hence the colours of the Argentinian flag as the background to this badge. The strange squiggle that looks like a very young child's attempt to write the letter T is the family ranch cattle brand, which can perhaps be seen as a less than subtle attempt to establish his cars alongside those of Lamborghini, which apart from the Raging Bull emblem, also named many of its cars after famous breeds of bull.

There have been suggestions that the central part of the image is an 'I', reflecting Alejandro's second wife, American heiress Elizabeth Haskell, who was known as Isabelle. Given that her family had a significant financial investment in the company, you can see the logic. But it seems more likely to be a coincidence, due to the shape of the cattle brand.

Names meant a lot to Alejandro, after his first concept car the Vallengunga, the first production de Tomaso in 1967 was called the Mangusta. Why? Because it is Italian for

mongoose, which kill cobras and this mid-engined V8 sports car was aimed at the American market, where the Shelby Cobra was then the king.

The Mangusta was followed by the more successful Pantera, a brute of a sports car that remained in production until 1991. Powered by a Ford 351 Cleveland V8, Alejandro persuaded Ford to invest in the project, an association that had its problems. Production quality wasn't always the best. There's a story of Elvis shooting his Pantera when it repeatedly failed to start. But Alejandro proved to be an enterprising industrialist, during his time owning Moto Guzzi, Innocenti and saving Maserati from bankruptcy, buying the brand from Citroën (with help from the Italian government).

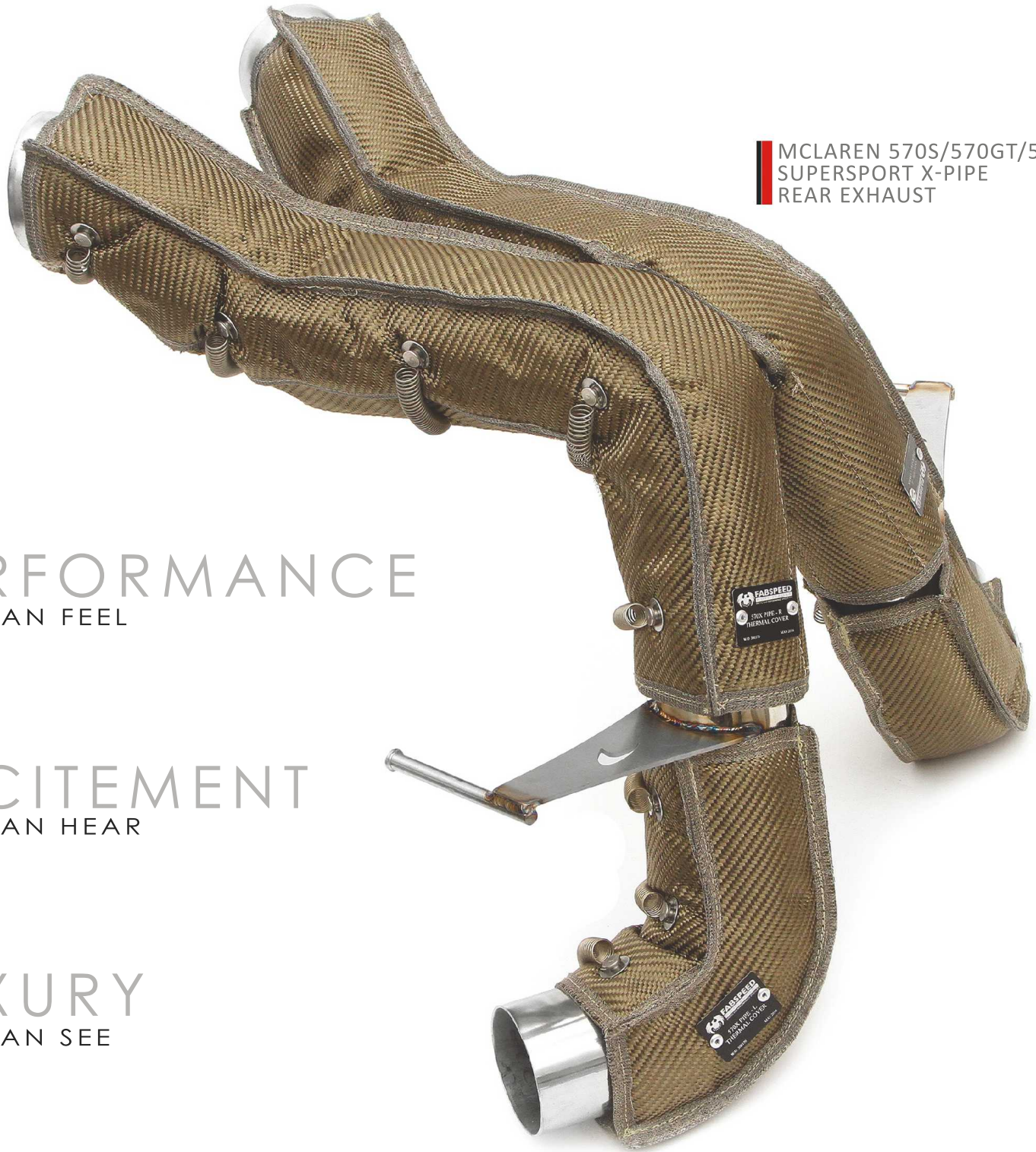
He died in 2004, leaving an amazing motor sporting history and some very special sports cars of which the Pantera is now a very desirable classic supercar.

There have been attempts to revive the brand, and one misguided attempt to redesign the logo (what part of brand value and heritage did these people not understand?) and now the name is owned by a Chinese concern. A disappointing end to what is such a wonderful story.



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