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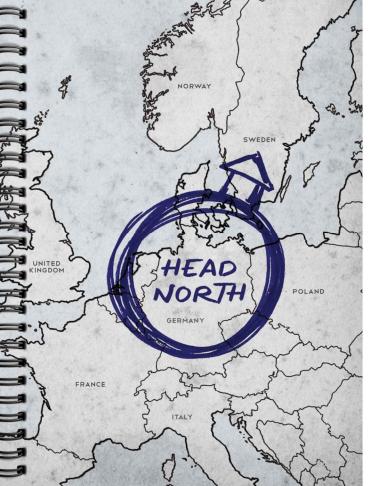
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Ed Speak

figured I'd ask him about the thrill of flying. His eyes lit up.

Editorial

Telephone 020 7907 6310 Email edsillevo.co.uk Website www.evo.co.uk 5 Tower Court, Inchester Road, Wollaston Wellingborough Northants NN29 7PI United Kingdom

Editor Mick Toott Art director Rob Gould Features editor Henry Catchpole Road tester Dan Prosser Ian Eveleigh Production editor Staff photographer Dean Smith Film-maker Sam Riley

Staff writer Stanhan Dohia Sub editor Dan McCalla Designer Will Beaumont Staff writer (website) Matthew Hayward Contributing editor Jethro Bovinadon Contributing editor Richard Meaden

Contributing editor Tiff Needell Road test contributor David Vivian Columniet Dichard Dorter Columnist Dario Franchitti

Contributors (words) Kim Adams, Simon de Burton, Peter Tomalin, David Yu

Contributors (pictures)

Drew Gibson, Gus Gregory, Malcolm Griffiths, Paul Harmer, Matt Houell David Shonhard It wouldn't have been possible without Base Performance Simulators, Stephane Cottin 1 rule Kerr Gavan Kershaw and Lotus Motorsport, Marino Franchitti

Graham King, Richard Usher and Blyton Park, and everyone at the **Advertising & Promotions**

Telephone 020 7907 6773 Fax 020 7907 6601 ISDN 020 7580 0297 Email ads.evo@dennis.co.uk

30 Cleveland Street, London WIT 4JD MD of advertising hidan I Inuri. Sugar Advertising director Sarah Perks Advertising manage Tim Deeks

Business development manager Account manager

Sales executive Inserts executive Abdul Abad Lifestyle director Sophie Kochan Content partnerships

Andy Edwards manager Group advertising manager digital Elaine de la Cruz

Production executive Marketing & events co-ordinator

Newstrade director Head of direct marketing Gary Briggs

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Licensing & syndication

International director lan Bedwell tion senior manager Anj Dosaj-Hala Licensing manager Carlotta Serantoni Licensing &

syndication executive. Nicole Adams evo Cars for Sale

Telephone 0207 907 6660 Email chris_wood@dennis.co.uk ercial director Chris Wood

Publishing

Publishing director Geoff Love Dennis Publishing Ltd

Group managing director lan Westwood Chief financial officer Double Double Group finance director | lan | eggett Chairman Felix Dennis

THIS JOB TAKES YOU TO SOME WEIRD AND WONDERFUL places and puts you in front of some quite remarkable people. A few weeks ago, it was New York and the deck of the USS Intrepid aircraft carrier, where I was bumping shoulders with the Space Shuttle, Concorde, a Virgin Galactic craft, an SR-71... and the new Land Rover Discovery Vision Concept. And Sooch - one of the most impressive people I've ever met.

Mike 'Sooch' Masucci is a Virgin Galactic pilot. You name it, Sooch has flown it. He was in New York to represent Virgin Galactic, which has recently cemented a global partnership with Land Rover. Sooch has seen the curvature of the earth, flown more than 9000 hours in over 70 different aeroplanes and is a graduate of the USAF pilot training and the USAF test pilot schools. He has also commanded USAF combat and training units. All this meant that I had absolutely no idea how to tackle him - after all, where was the common ground? Then I

'If I'm not flying for work, I fly for pleasure,' he said. 'Gliders, commercial jets, anything. I just love flying.' Could he see how our readers, for instance, may say the same about driving? 'Yes, absolutely. The freedom, the sense of being in control, the adventure - it's all the same.' He then went on to mention something that will no doubt resonate with evo readers.

The great thing about the Virgin Galactic craft is that you rely on your skill to fly them. SpaceShipTwo, for instance [the passenger-carrying rocket craft], doesn't have fly-by-wire and the key re-entry phase is entirely analogue,' explained Masucci, Indeed, such is the genius and efficiency of SpaceShipTwo's design, it can glide back into the thin upper atmosphere with very little intervention from the pilot, Hands-free, if you will,

It achieves this by turning its rudders up 90 degrees, creating a shape not unlike a badminton shuttlecock. This increases drag and creates a 'feathering' that allows it to fall back to Earth in a controlled manner until the air thickens at 70,000ft. At this point the spacecraft moves its rudder back to a more conventional gliding position, 'You control it, but with very deliberate inputs. All the pilots say it's a very responsive, very satisfying craft to fly,' explains Sooch.

So there you have it; one of the most impressive examples of modern aeronautic design is built to leverage the laws of physics and empower the pilot. Sounds like a sports car, doesn't it? Albeit one that can fly eight people into space.

Corporate partnerships often seem immaterial, but the Land Rover/Virgin Galactic tie-up goes beyond sentiment. When Phil Popham, JLR's group marketing director, said: 'We hope this will inspire young people to pursue careers in science, engineering and technology,' I for one let out a small whoop of delight. Latest numbers show that the UK sector could be 20,000 engineers short by 2020, and with many youngsters favouring media studies (oh, the irony) over engineering, we are in very real danger of squandering the UK's rich engineering heritage.

If you're reading this and thinking about a career path, check out the work that Virgin Galactic and Land Rover are doing. It's pioneering, fascinating and compelling stuff. I'm lucky to have a great job and no regrets, but oh, to be 11 again...

Nick Trott Editor (@evoNickTrott)

evo app: major update

The evo app has been improved. You can now download content for offline reading, new icons show which articles are unread, you can delete old content to free up space and we've redesigned the look. More videos, sound and interactive features are also being rolled out. Lastly, all this is available from just £1.49 for one week's access to the entire uploaded evo archive.

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Watch brand TW Steel is partnering evo's track evenings this year. Join the evo team on May 30. June 27 and August 29 for brilliant on-track action at the Bedford Autodrome. Visit: evo.co.uk/shop

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Chevrolet's latest Corvette, the Stingray, looks like being the most roads, and if the YouTube commenters are correct, it's borderline unbeatable. Its arch-rival, the Millbrook Proving Ground, a Vbox and a healthy dose of mathematics put that



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P15 BIG CARS IN THE BIG APPLE Major developments from Land Rover and Mercedes are the stars of the New

















A MERE YEAR in development, and following 'evolving

concept' appearances at the Detroit. Geneva and Beiling motor shows, Infiniti's O50 Eau Rouge is on the brink of being given the production green light. The 560bhp. Nissan GT-R-engined, all-wheel-drive supersaloon is intended to draw a line under the company's so far tentative stabs at presenting itself as a brand with performance credentials (the FX Sehastian Vettel fooled no one). This is being achieved by exploiting the full potential of Infiniti's corporate assets and motorsport links to make a highperformance luxury saloon capable of taking the fight to Europe's big hitters. not least against the clock with its

projected sub-4sec 0-62mph time.

'Why do the Germans have to be
the key players here?' asks Infiniti's
Peter Smith, who's heading up the Eau

Rouge programme. 'Japan has some of the best engineers in the world. Why aren't we using them to facilitate a global premium performance brand?' It's a question infiniti boss Johan de Nysschen felt required a definitive answer. 'And it was to make something "super special" relates Smith! "elates"

We've convened in the boardroom of Wellingborough-based RML Group, Nissan's long-time motorsport partner in BTCC and endurance racing (also responsible for building that other GT-R-engined special, the Nissan Juke R), and our location gives a clue to the nature of the O50 Eau Rouge project. 'We recognised that this was something that couldn't be done through the usual channels.' Smith concedes. 'As you can imagine: huge corporation, red tape, slowly grinding wheels within wheels, etc. So how do we keep the vision and ambition intact? A skunkworks team: Infiniti's

innovation and performance general manager lerry Hardcastle. myself and a Japanese engineer with RML. Alsou Tanaka, to implement the build. And then it was pure goodwill, gathering information to see how we could do this. The corporate parts bin aspect is very important. Working with RML we could build anything you like built is very important. Working with RML we got an Infinition Nissan part number. So it reads it is a religious to the believable of the parts have got an Infinition Nissan part number.

What to put under this Q09's bonne? The team considered a vaniety of options: infinitis own V8, possibly uthorcharged, or maybe a supercharged version of the base supercharged version of the base 3-little V6 from the G37. It would have been a lot more straightforward; admits Hardcastle. An easy way to boost the power without having to change a lot of mechanicals. But it was decided that none of these had the "wow factor" required by de Nysschem. 'Wow' was the 3.8-litre, twin-turbo V6 from the GT-R. But how to do it? 'We came up with about 50 different ways,' says Smith. 'One was to just take a Q50 upper body, cut the top off a GT-R and just put it on there. Quick and dirty, right?' This isn't the way to build a brand or a performance line.'

Clear that the Eau Rouge would be a luxury performance saloon powered by a GT-R engine and not a GT-R with a four-door O50 body, the team had to accept that the way ahead would be fraught with challenges. 'A major concern was the pure power output of the GT-R engine: this kills most transmissions,' claims Smith. 'We needed to find the transmission from within the Infiniti parts bin, and we did in our HG seven-speed auto. It can handle the torque. Moving forward. we'll take a look to see what would be ideal. We know what we have to do to compete and we want to make

Infiniti goes beyond

Up close

Under the skin of a future star car

Nissan's luxury arm prepares Q50 Eau Rouge – the high-end saloon with a GT-R engine – to take on the Germans at their own game

Words: David Vivian





'Infiniti's F1 connections have been integrated into the programme from the start'

sure that the whole powertrain is up to that task. But for now with the HG auto, the fixing points are different. the electronics are different, And when we did a quick packaging study of dropping the engine in, we could see there were interferences. The first study said: "That's OK, you can put it in there, the crossmembers fit. but you've got to extend the front by 120mm." That got the "reject" stamp straight away.

But it was just the beginning of the headaches - remapping the GT-R's VR38 engine to give 560bhp and 442lb ft of torque was the easy bit. 'We kept hearing over and over again that the electronics were never going to communicate between the engine and the vehicle, that there'd he blank screens on the dash. Then there was cooling [the GT-R engine runs hot], developing the suspension and tyres, increasing the capacity of the front and rear diffs, designing a stronger propshaft and packaging some monster brakes. This all takes time to sort. But I can say with pride that all the issues have been resolved, thanks obviously to RML's strong input and contributions from the Japanese engineers through secret channels of information, helping us get the data in order to make everything work."

Infiniti's F1 connections presented

less of a problem and have been integrated into the programme from the start. The cosmetics are clearly F1-inspired,' says Smith. 'F1 should be married to a performance brand. For the car you'll see today (at RML), we've kept the show car styling for the front with carbonfibre for the front, sills and rear. The only difference is we've kent the rear doors and rear humner standard. Inside we've got the show car's Recaro front seats and, although they're not on the car here, we plan to keep the show car's red carbonfibre trim inserts. One of the things we'd like to do going forward is work with our friends at Red Bull to refine the aero package. The front splitter, rear splitter and rear wing all work as intended but there's more to come."

Naturally, Infiniti's other Red Bull assets. Sebastian Vettel and test driver Sébastien Buemi, have been behind the wheel too, providing valuable feedback in the ongoing dynamic development. They're hypersensitive compared to us," remarks Hardcastle, acknowledging that there's a balance to be struck between on-the-limit racer observations and that kind of feel ordinary mortals will expect should the Fau Rouge reach low-volume production.

To no one's great surprise, Vettel reckons the car is right on the money in raw performance, but the exact chassis spec is still a work in progress. Hardcastle explains: 'Adaptive dampers? Going forward we can talk about that but we're not at that stage vet. The technology for us to use exists but, for the demo car, there's one spec and that's to keep it fairly simple. It doesn't have the O50's direct adaptive steering and it does have passive dampers. And the exact power split for the four-wheel drive hasn't been decided yet. Currently it's predominantly rear-drive with the excess going to the front when needed, like the GT-R. That's the current set-up, so you're always maximising the rear axle but, when it's overloaded, the power goes forwards. What it does give us at the moment is an overriding feel of a rear-drive car, particularly if you're doing any sort of sports-style driving, but obviously you have the security of four-wheel drive."

In the metal and carbon, the O50 Eau Rouge looks (and sounds) every inch and decibel the weapon capable of disrupting Germany's supersaloon hegemony and finally nailing Infiniti's ambition to be regarded as a serious performance player. As for an image upgrade, the O50 could hardly have expected this in its wildest dreams. Fingers crossed that green light for production illuminates soon.



Above: Nitschke doesn't rule out big changes to the traditional M-car formula



Technology shines in **New York**

Land Rover concept and 577bhp Mercedes S-class steal the show in the Big Apple Words: Nick Trott



THE NEW YORK International Auto Show is one of the smaller shows, but despite near-gridlock in Manhattan,

manufacturers are increasingly attracted to the bright lights of the city to demonstrate and launch new vehicles - and none more so than Land Rover.

Last year, Daniel Craig launched the new Range Rover Sport in

O&A with BMW M division boss Friedrich Nitschke

The man charged with creating the hottest BMWs talks turbos. hybrids and 4WD

Words: David Vivian



Some people say the M brand has

longer pushing boundaries for the

become diluted and that it's no

downwards, but making a special layer, and this gives us the opportunity to make the core models more sporty. more nimble. With M Performance you can have a 5-series with a diesel engine and four-wheel drive. But an eight- or ten-cylinder diesel engine would never fit a core BMW M-car. It would be too heavy. The balance between front and rear would be disturbed. That's why we have a special six-cylinder with three turbochargers.

The original E30 M3 [pictured] is often voted the best M-car ever. Why do you think this is?

I think it's because it is our core model. Our heart is beating especially for this model because we are trying for the perfect fit. We are not aiming to have the most powerful engine or the best acceleration. But the handling and the precision is what the M3 stands for. And this was our target when we started developing a new M3 and M4.

Is there a future for naturally aspirated engines within M?

Maybe. At the moment there are no naturally aspirated engines in our core M models. The advantage of a turbo in combination with high revs is, at the moment, the best solution for us. But let's see what happens.

What about four-wheel drive?

For us, with every development, the question is: 'Shall we offer four-wheel drive or not?" Or maybe have it as an option. We decided with the M3 and M4 that we wanted to develop a special lightweight car - the M4 is under 1500kg - and with four-wheel drive this car would be 80kg more. So we decided 'no'. But, maybe for the successor of the M5/M6... We haven't made a decision vet.

And hybrid tech?

That's the next 'weight devil'. It's an extra 200kg for hatteries and the electric motor. I think in the future. when the technology of the batteries improves to the extent that the weight increases by only 60-80kg, hybrid would be an alternative for BMW M.

Will there be a lighter, more hardcore M4?

Of course we are thinking, for example, that Porsche is very successful with such special models in the life cycle. We did this in the past. And I think we will do this also in the future.



New York but this year the British brand topped that by debuting the new Discovery Vision Concept, On. the Intrepid aircraft carrier on the Hudson River, The Discovery Vision Concept is a controversial design, but look beyond this and you'll see some truly fascinating technology. The next-generation Terrain Response with predictive Terrain Scanning uses infrared lasers in the fog lamps to scan the ground ahead and prepare the car for the surface by engaging the appropriate traction system.

Elsewhere, new Wade Sensing technology predicts the depth of water before the car enters, while



there's a laser guidance system that can project images onto surfaces. thus aiding navigation in fog or congested areas. Transparent Bonnet. meanwhile, uses cameras under the grille to capture the terrain ahead of, and under, the front of the car. This image is then projected on the headup display in the windscreen, allowing the driver to 'see' the front wheels and the terrain normally obscured by the bonnet.

Over on the Mercedes stand. the German manufacturer was demonstrating the stunning new S63 AMG Coupe, Fitted with a revised version of the company's 5.5-litre



twin-turbo V8, the S63 delivers 577bhp and 663lh ft of torque A 4Matic four-wheel-drive version is available in some markets (but sadly not the UK). allowing the two-ton car to sprint from rest to 62mph in 3.9sec. The most fascinating feature of the new S63 is the tilt function: using a stereoscopic camera that works very much like human eyes, the Mercedes detects curves up to 15 metres ahead and tilts. the car, like a motorcycle or a skier, into

the direction of the bend. We can't Finally, some light relief (quite literally) from all this heavyweight tech. The next-generation Mazda

wait to try it.

From far left: Discovery Vision Concept features rear suicide doors; new S-class tilts through bends: MX-5 retains familiar drivetrain

MX-5 was shown in New York, albeit in naked form, and it's all good news for the purists. It continues with an in-line four-cylinder petrol engine behind the front axle, sending power to the rear wheels. Unusually in this world of downsizing and forced induction, the engines are expected to be non-turbo 1.5- and 2-litre units. A manual gearbox is expected as standard, weight distribution will be 50:50, the centre of gravity will be lower and there's a promise of a 100kg cut in weight. Sometimes, simple is best.

See the stars of New York on video at youtube.com/evoTV or at evo.co.uk



Left: single Michelin tyre compound has to handle dry and wet weather. Below: Prost is co-chief of the e.dams.team



Formula E charges up

With big-name drivers and teams on board, the new global electric racing series is set to excite when it begins later this year words: David Vivian



EVEN BEFORE it begins on the streets of Beijing in Sentember the FIA's inaugural Formula E championship has assumed ownership

of the future. In a step-change that makes this year's greener F1 regulations look lightweight at best, the world's first fully-electric racing series anticipates a 25-year legacy that will result in an additional 77million electric vehicles being sold, the creation of 42,000 permanent jobs, savings of €35billion (c£29billion) in healthcare costs due to reduced pollution, and an 885millionton reduction in CO2 output.

Planting its flag firmly in the allelectric camp as a viable way forward for cutting-edge motorsport is a smart move by the FIA. In addition to awarding itself some serious eco credentials. Formula E has the potential to be a fast-rolling R&D test bed for electric vehicle technology, while at the same time magnifying the appeal of electricpowered transport and attracting a new, younger generation to motorsport.

When the lights go 'green' in the

Chinese capital on September 13, ten teams, 20 drivers and 40 identical Michelin-shod Spark-Renault SRT 01E Formula Ficars (two cars per driver for each race, due to range limitations) will begin a season of carbon-neutral competition, visiting ten city-circuit venues across the globe, including Berlin, Los Angeles, Buenos Aires and Monte Carlo. The final race takes place in London on June 27, 2015. The line-up of teams is a mix of the familiar and new, including Audi Sport ABT, Andretti Autosport, Mahindra Racing, Super Aguri and Virgin Racing, Sign-ups from the Formula E Drivers' Club talent pool are only just starting, but the thought of Ben 'The Stig' Collins and Alex Brundle dicing with the likes of Jarno Trulli. Bruno Senna and Nick Heidfeld to name just a

For the inaugural season, each team will run four strikingly graceful Spark-Renaults, designed by Spark Racing Technologies in collaboration with Dallara, McLaren, Williams and Renault. Sounding not unlike low-flying iets. their lithium-ion batteries and electric motors will deliver 180bhp, but with an

few is a fascinating prospect.

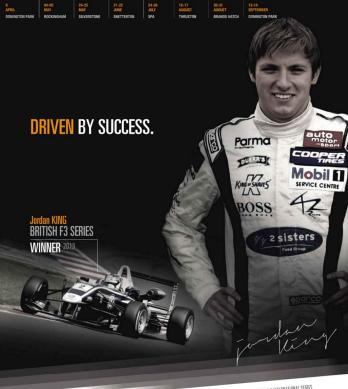
extra 90bhp available in short bursts for overtaking. The cars and teams will be based at a purpose-built central HO and workshop at Donington Park From season two, however, Formula E will become an 'open championship'. allowing teams to design and develop their own cars - within the boundaries of the FIA's technical specifications and strive for an advantage through their electrical energy innovations in a competitive racing environment.

One thing will remain the same. though. Michelin fought hard to become Formula E's sole tyre partner, but was no doubt helped by its impressive record in endurance racing, where the challenges of longevity and efficiency are much more 'real-world' than the narrow disciplines of FI and, therefore, closely aligned with the aims of Formula E. And it's thanks to Michelin that the world's media got its first real chance to see Formula E in action during a three-day test at the Issoire circuit near Clermont-Ferrand in France, where the tyre maker was to freeze the final spec of the radical low-profile 18-inch design that has to cope with all weather conditions. from bone dry to soaking wet. As Michelin's Formula E project manager, Serge Grisin, explained, time wasn't on the French company's side: 'It was logical that Michelin should be the tyre partner for FIA Formula E. There was a lot of interest for us because, clearly, it is a new concept for motorsport with a lot of opportunities regarding tyre technology and innovation. We were announced as the tyre partner at the end of March [2013]. but had to have a prototype tyre ready for the reveal of the Formula E car at the

Frankfurt show in September.

Five months is tight but we use a lot of computer simulation - it's the most efficient way to design a tyre. We have four different tyres here [at the test] with different compounds, and the target is to find the best compromise between dry and wet. The tyre has to be easy to control, very progressive. We're not going for ultimate lap times but the minimum gap between dry and wet." According to Michelin's official tester, works Porsche star Emmanuel Collard. Michelin has hit its mark in giving the driver consistent feel, wet or dry. Four-time FI champ and co-founder

of the e.dams Formula F team. Alain Prost, says Formula E is going to show the public that electric technology is making rapid progress. Time will tell but, judging by the activity on track. spectators will never have seen or heard anything like it.



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LE MANS HAS been the stage for some titanic head-to-head battles between Audi and [insert rival manufacturer of your choice here I in recent years. and Ingolstadt has mostly come out on top - it's only been beaten twice this century. But the 2014 edition on June 14/15 will be very different as Audi has to fend off not only Toyota. but Porsche as well - and on current evidence there's virtually nothing to separate the three of them.

Since re-entering prototype racing in 2012. Toyota has gradually edged closer and closer to Audi's pace, and is the form team going into Le Mans - the Anthony Davidson/Nicolas Lapierre/Sébastien Buemi entry has won both six-hour World Endurance Championship races so far this season at Silverstone and Soa. The TS040 Hybrid (3.7-litre V8 petrol with supercapacitor energy recovery) has shown relatively good reliability as well, although the team may be hampered by only running two cars compared to Audi's throa

The pace of Porsche's new 919 Hybrid (2-litre V4 engine with lithiumion energy recovery), pictured below, was proven beyond doubt with its pole position and fastest race lap at Spa. but it still seems to be suffering from reliability issues. One of the company's two 010s failed to finish the WFC opener at Silverstone and the other finished well down the order at Spa, so while a pole at Le Mans is a possibility, whether the Porsches have the durability to last the whole 24 hours at full race pace is another matter.

As for Audi, its R18 e-tron quattro (3.7-litre V6 turbodiesel with flywheel energy recovery), pictured above. only lost out to Toyota at Spa by just over a minute, so it's still very much in the hunt, although the team lost a useful chance to gain data on the car when both its entries crashed out at Silverstone. But no team that contains nine-time Le Mans winner Tom Kristensen can ever be discounted...



Eight new models for Alfa Romeo

Big changes ahead as as part of €5billion investment words: Stephen Dobie

ALFA ROMEO HAS laid out its plans for the next four years, and it's fair to say they're ambitious. Eight new models are set to join the Italian manufacturer's range, all of them based around a new rear- and all-wheel-drive platform that will distance Alfa's cars from Fiat's.

In a curious brand plan which openly criticises previous Alfa policies - as well as the lack of company DNA in even its successful models, the 147 and 156 - the stall is set. As well as the new 'hest-inclass' chassis architecture there'll be new engines - petrols and diesels with four and six cylinders, the most exciting being a petrol six that will top 500bhp.

A product onslaught between 2015 and 2018 will comprise two compact cars to replace the Giulietta, two 'mid-size' cars, perhaps including the long-rumoured Giulia saloon, one 'fullsize' car, two SUVs and a new 'speciality' model, which will likely sit above the 4C (below, front), suggesting a sports car or GT using the aforementioned potent petrol engine. The mediocre Mito will not be replaced while an Alfa Spider will no longer be spun off the new MX-5 platform a Flat convertible being created instead. The aim is to boost Alfa's annual sales from 74,000 in 2013 to 400,000 by the end of 2018.

While the plan is riddled with ambiguous marketing-speak, lines such as 'no interference from the Fiat Chrysler Automobiles "machine" except where talent is required' and 'resist the conformist pressure that a mass car producer would exert' show Alfa aims to be seen as a standalone company. How faithfully this is followed - and how wise a €5billion (c£4.1bn) investment proves - will be fascinating to follow.



News in brief



Ariel Atom 3.5R

Ariel has shown a harder-cored version of the Atom 3.5. Dubbed the 3.5R, the wick has been turned up with new Öhlins dampers, a six-speed paddleshift gearbox and Atom V8-esque styling. It retains the Honda-sourced supercharged 2-litre engine, with power upped from 310 to 350bhp, enough for a 6.0sec 0-100mph time. Prices start at £64.800



Happy birthday, M5

The BMW M5 is 30 years old and is celebrating with more power. The 592bhp 30 Jahre M5 is BMW's most powerful road car yet and it will hit 62mnh in 3.9sec I owered ride height, firmer dampers and revised spring rates are borrowed from the M5 Competition Package, while all 300 made will be painted matt silver, UK availability is unconfirmed.



Maserati Alfieri is go

Maserati has confirmed production of the Alfieri sports car. The Jaguar F-type rival was shown in concept form at the Geneva motor show in March, and will be available with rear- and all-wheel drive and a range of turbo V6 engines, the most potent producing 513bhp. It will hit showrooms in 2016, followed by a convertible version a year later.







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Fuel consumption figures for the Civic 1.6 i-DTEC SR in mpg (I/100km): Urban 70.6 (4.0), Extra Urban 85.6 (3.3), Combined 78.5 (3.6). CO, emissions: 94g/km. Fuel consumption figures sourced from official EU-regulated laboratory test results, are provided for comparison purposes and may not reflect real-life driving experience.



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Model Shown Civit 1, CTDC SS Moutal in Miles that No-Metallic at CE3,300 CT he float Term and Conditions Nor vestal Civit 1.6 CTDC SS Mousal registered from 2 January 2014 to 37 May 2014

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Jaguar XF Saloon range in mpg (I/100km): Urban 16.7-48.7 (16.9-5.8); Extra Urban 32.8-64.2 (8.6-4.4); Combined 24.4-57.7 (11.6-4.9), CO₂ emissions 270-129 (g/km), Official EU Test Figures. For comparison purposes only. Real world figures may differ.

A very different sports car

Trident Iceni has turbo V8 power, up to 1050lb ft of torque. and promises over 1500 miles on a tank - of diesel Words: Stephen Dobie

AFTER EIGHT YEARS of development. British manufacturer Trident has shown its Iceni sports car in production form. The long gestation period comes from creating something a little different to the norm; up front sits a 6.6-litre V8 turbodiesel engine usually seen in huge General Motors pick-ups. The unusually high torque-to-weight ratio this brings has called for a searbox and differential to be developed in-house

Starting at £96,000, the Iceni will

be available as a roadster, coupe and shooting brake. In basic trim, the car's V8 produces 395bhp and 700lb ft, yielding a quoted 3.7sec 0-60mph time and a 190mph-plus top speed. An £11,300 'Performance Pack' results in 430bhp and 950lb ft. while a £30.850 'Track Pack' boosts peak outputs to 660bhp and 1050lb ft and also adds carbon-ceramic brakes. Eibach springs and paddleshifters for the standard six-speed auto gearbox.

It's not the performance figures that attract the most attention, though: Trident's fuel economy claims widen the eves, with a claimed 67mpg leading to a theoretical 2000-mile range between biodiesel fill-ups. At 70mph the Iceni will tick along at 980rpm - the same engine speed at which its peak torque figure is available. With even the most open of minds the figures might not annear plausible so we spoke to Trident designer and founder, Phil Bevan,





Can a sports car be diesel and automatic?

It is 100 per cent a GT car. But I don't think you can say it's not a sports car - torque is very much addictive. Most customers that have been weaned on to diesels will never go off them simply because of the torque value. We completely fly in the face of horsepower. A Bugatti Veyron must be a loyous thing to own but I can't see any owner living

O&A: Phil Bevan, Trident MD

long enough to do 260mph in it. It's acceleration everybody wants, while

holding on to their driving licence. Can it really do 2000 miles from

The mileage quote is from Millbrook, going round the two-mile bowl; it's a non-realistic location. Fifty to the gallon is more typical, around 1550-1600 miles on a tank. The average driver who would have this as his second car would likely fill up in January then top it up in May

How are sales going?

one tank?

We are now building cars for customers. We can't make any more than 500 a year, but anything over 12 and we'll be very happy. We've got nine orders at the moment but it's growing by the hour.

Who's your typical buyer?

Most people have not a Range Rover or Mercedes that they use every day and most people have something exotic. They've owned Ferraris and Lamborghinis but have had a concern about maintenance, which becomes horrifically expensive. We have people come here in their Ferrari FFs and Lamborghini Gallardos and they all know they drive fast cars, then they realise what a really fast car is like.

Are more models planned?

Yes, most definitely. We've done eight years without selling anything so we're not pushing to have a certain amount of cars sold, but a percentage of earnings from sales will go into R&D for more projects using the same technology.

evo comment

If Trident is to be believed, the Iceni has no downsides. Supercar performance sits with supermini fuel consumption, while Bevan claims 'it handles like a Lotus Elise but rides like a nice saloon car'. It's hard not to be sceptical of such a claimed lack of all trades, while doubts linger over the efficiency of biofuel production. And with the auto 'box apparently keen to shift up at 3000rpm, we're intrigued to know how this can satisfy like the sports cars it will battle at a tough price point. SD



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III Test location: Mulholland Highway, California, USA GPS: 34.09612, -118.81359

BMW i8

The 357bhp hybrid coupe breaks cover in final production spec.

It combines 0-62mph in 4.4sec, 135mpg and a £100k price tag, but is it
a realistic rival for the likes of the R8 and 911?





Every new evo car that matters, rated

This month

Ground-breaking hybrid manages 0-62mph in 4.4sec





PORSCHE CAYMAN GTS Most powerful Cayman yet gets 335hhn (and tinted lights)





VOLVO V60 POLESTAR 345bhp estate is first Volvo to get the full Polestar treatment





SUBARU WRX STI It's coming back to the UK! And so is the big wing





AUDI S1 228bhp four-wheel-drive hot hatch. This time on tarmac





CITROËN DS3 CABRIO RACING Tuned French hatch gets the soft-top treatment



The test team

With the hybrid BMW i8 our lead Driven this month, the team name the car technology that impressed them the most when first tried behind the wheel:



NICK TROTT Editor 1 think everyone

"I think everyone should experience ABS off, then on, on a wet test track. Old tech now, but still borderline miraculous."



HENRY CATCHPOLE Features editor

'The Nissan 3702's rev-match system was so simple yet so brilliant, it made you wonder why no one had done it before."



DAN PROSSER Road tester

Road tester
'Another vote for rev-matching manuals.
First tried it on the 370Z, and it's now even better on the new Corvette and 911.'



JETHRO BOVINGDON Contributing editor

'The head-up display – first experienced in a Corvette. So simple, so intuitive. Why doesn't every car have it?'



RICHARD MEADEN Contributing editor

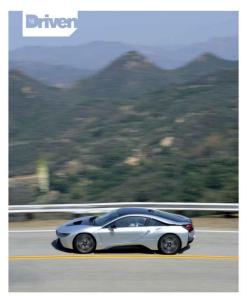
'The Ferrari's manettino: a neat, tactile interface controlling smart dynamic settings that ramp up the excitement.'



DAVID VIVIAN Contributing road tester 'True active suspension as deployed by Lotus's experimental testbed SID. Unfortunately it didn't catch on.'



nothing so predictable as a low-slung coupe with an M division V8 or V10 slung out back. Instead the 88 has a transverse mid-mounted L5-litre three-ylinder turbocharged engine that drives the rear wheels through a six-speed automatic gearbox. It has a small electric motor working on the crankshaft that acts as a starter motor but can also fill in any torque gaps in the engine's delivery. The front axle is driven separately by an electric



'The complex surfaces are a sci-fi combination that looks astounding on the public highway'



motor and two-speed gearbox to create a car of incredible flexibility and complexity.

In eDrive mode the i8 is a zero-emission, frontwheel-drive machine with a useful 129bhp and 184lb ft, a top speed of 75mph and a range of 23 miles. In Comfort mode the i8 is a plug-in hybrid that's quiet, refined, has a range of up to 310 miles and can be charged from zero to 80 per cent inside two hours. Select Sport mode by simply moving the gear selector from 'D' to 'S' and the i8 transforms again. Now the internal combustion engine and electric motor combine as effectively as possible to deliver maximum power, noise and excitement. So configured, the i8 generates 357bhp and 420lb ft. It also tightens its damping, reduces the electric power assistance for the steering and manages the car's balance by manipulating drive to the front axle for ultimate agility and engagement. The numbers say the i8 combines 135mpg and 49g/km on the one hand or 0-62mph in 4.4sec and 155mph (limited) when driven like a sports car should be. We've never seen anything quite like this and £99,895 doesn't seem like so much to ask to buy into it.

It's clear that LA has never seen anything quite like the i8, either. People love this car and I have to say the complex multi-layered surfaces, kicked-up rear arches, floating roofline and butterfly doors are a sci-fi combination that looks astounding out on the public highway. Even though it seems to be inexplicably pushing a Porsche 991 out of its bottom (look again and you'll see it forever more). It's only right and proper that the revolutionary powertrain is teamed with a structure that is an innovative mix of aluminium and carbonfibre RMW calls it LifeDrive - the 'Drive' element of it being the aluminium chassis that carries the engine. electric motor and batteries, onto which the carbonfibre 'Life' passenger cell is bonded. This pegs the weight at 1485kg, and the battery unit. which runs along the traditional transmission tunnel route, helps to ensure the lowest c-of-g of any BMW past or present, at just 460mm (a gnat's whisker higher than a Cayman's). The i8 is light, stiff and exotically low.

Rolling out of Santa Monica and towards the Malibu Canyon Road, the 18 feets spooly and fantantic. Spooly because I'm in eDrive mode and we're cruising at 55mph in near silence. Fantantic because of the airy cabin and terrific view ahead, the tangible sense of chassis rigidily, the light, accurare steering and the easy and instant performance even without the petrol engine sparking into life. Like many of you, I'm sure, my main experience of electric arcs remains at a fairground, but the unfamiliar serenity on the road is quite addictive. The real-world range seems to be more like 13 milles than 23, but you'll enjoy every one of them and not you be cause you'll enjoy every one of them and not guite because you'd in fuel.







Ask for too much acceleration and the threecylinder engine starts almost imperceptibly. Now the i8 feels genuinely muscular, especially under part-throttle loads. The six-speed auto 'box (chosen for its weight) is maybe not quite as smooth as BMW's new eight-speed, but such is the easy torque that you'll hardly notice. Later we'll also discover it's pretty damn good when you're pressing on, too. Anyway, these first few miles are about the sense of lightness that pervades the i8 experience and the relief that it feels like a proper sports car even at low speeds. That means a pretty stiff ride but also fluency to the damping and an underlying sense of agility and responsiveness. I like.

Mulholland Highway is a real test. You turn onto it from a five-lane stretch of the busy Pacific Coast Highway but within seconds you feel a million miles from that commuter rat-run. It has a coarse surface covered in zig-zagging tar repair lines, and is well sighted, challenging and fast, Night-in-a-cell fast, I suspect, Now we get to see if the i8 is a match for something like



an R8 or a 911. In some respects judging the i8 purely on its dynamics seems too shallow, but brilliant execution of a forward-thinking concept isn't enough when competition is so strong for your or my (imaginary in my case) £100k. It's BMW's ultimate sports car and it has to perform as such. We've waited too long for this, so anything less than dazzling won't cut it.

We're in Sport mode now, confirmed by the elegant digital instrument display glowing red and the 1.5-litre engine suddenly sounding like a 4-litre V6 - deep, heavy, but with a soft burr laid over the heavy metal. It's unexpected and it doesn't take long to realise it's mostly generated by an audio speaker. On balance it's not exactly a heinous crime that BMW has given its sports car a proper voice, even if it is largely digitally

Top left: Boyingdon finds steering offers good feedback on twisty Californian roads. Top right: brakes use 340mm discs all round. Above: butterfly doors add to i8's futuristic look. Left: C-pillar design contributes to a low drag coefficient of 0.26



delivered. The 18 feels like it has a high-narred V6 supway, with instant torque and power that builds and builds towards the limiter. In truth the 18 newer feels as first as something like an R8, but it's fast enough to be exciting—somewhere between a Cayman S and a Carrera somewhere between a Cayman S and a Carrera thates downshifts nice and early, too. Better yet, the brakes—just like at low speeds—swirch between regenerative braking and mechanical seamlessly. You can't feel the difference at all, which is a nice confidence-bootset.

Surprisingly the electric steering seems to have some genuine feedback, perhaps helped by the stiffness of the structure and the superb location of each axle. Body control is excellent and the impression of lightness continues even to the very limits of grip and over nasty, sudden undulations. But the i8 is somewhat hamstrung by chasing every last CO2 particle, because the narrow (but wider than standard) 215/45 R20 front tyres howl in protest when you really start to attack a road and then slowly but inexorably slip into understeer. In fact, understeer is the i8's ultimate dynamic trait. Through quick corners there's a delicious split-second where you turn and the rear seems to adopt the perfect slip angle, but as soon as you get back on the power it's replaced by understeer. In long corners you guess that maybe you can drive through the push, but staying on the throttle just builds the angle until you're forced to back off so as not to howl onto the wrong side of the road. In tight hairpins there's also a lag between full throttle and any meaningful acceleration – even with the stability systems off it's like the it's can see you're up to no good and won't give you the full beans just in case the throttle actually starts to dictate the car's angle of attack.

This lack of adjustability is frustrating. Inadrive expected a car with 31 evels of indulgence, but I had hoped for a neally agile, super-accurate front end and a neutral-to-oversteering poise on corner exit. Last year the overweight, overpriced and largely ludicrous SLS Electric Drive opened my eyes to the possibility of true torque-vectoring with a motor for each wheel, and it feels like the lis would be so much better with that flexibility on the front aske. As it is, the B is a fastisating, hugely desirable and deeply impressive car, but it lacks the uplifting excitement of the best driver's cars.

The tragedy of it is that it's not a big, rorry, thirsty engine that you crave when you step from the car. The drivetrain isn't as scintillating as a high-reving V8 or flat-six, but is own qualities are such that you rarely care. So BMW has nailed the most difficult bit and then undermined that amazing achievement with a chassis see-up too conservative to really thrill. The dinosurs, for now, still rule our roads, \$\frac{1}{2}\$ **Lettro Bowingdom (@lethroBowingdom) 'In truth the i8 never feels as fast as something like an R8, but it's fast enough to be exciting'





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如 Test location: near Gernsbach, Germany GPS: 48.76434, 8.30413

Porsche Cayman GTS

Upgrade to 335bhp makes this the most powerful Cayman to date – and puts it just 10bhp shy of a 911 Carrera. With a host of standard kit and optional sports suspension, could it be the best 981-gen Cayman yet?



Left: black splitter is unique to GTS. Below: stopwatch on dash is nart of the standard Sport Chrono package



THE THREE LETTERS stand for Gran Turismo Sport.

They were first applied to the road going (and homologation satisfying) 904 Carrera GTS of 1963, and while they might not have the kudos

of the R, RS or GT3 designations, they have brought us some of the best Porsches of recent years. The current Cayenne GTS is the pick of that particular model range and the run-out 997 GTSs were so beautifully judged that they are certainly future classics

On the surface Porsche's GTS formula isn't particularly revolutionary, it just seems to play the 'ideal spec' game very well, cherry-picking all the best bits from the options list. Yes the Cayman GTS gets power and torque increases to lift it above the Cavman S, but they're hardly earth-shattering numbers, adding just 14bhp and 7lb ft to the totals, giving 335bhp and 280lb ft. However, the end GTS result is somehow more than the sum of its parts.

Distinguishing the new car from the rest of its brethren is fairly easy. At the front there's a new black spoiler running across its chin to match the restyled black air intakes above. At the rear there is a revised lower apron and a black GTS badge on the boot. Meanwhile, the bi-xenon headlights have a black finish and the rear lights are smoked. Photographer Dean Smith and I spend a lot of time inspecting the Cayman GTS during our day with it and we can't help but think that all the changes make it look a bit cheaper than the standard car. It's entirely subjective of course, and perhaps a different body colour would help. Like black.

There is one more very important (no-cost) option fitted to our test car that significantly changes the stance of the GTS: sports suspension. The GTS gets PASM adaptive dampers as standard, but the non-adaptive sports set-up lowers the car by a full 20mm and, combined with the 35-profile tyres and

'There's just a bit more weight in your palms and the reactions either side of straightahead are more direct'

20in wheels that come as standard, it looks extremely hunkered down.

The Sport Chrono package with dynamic transmission mounts also comes as standard on the GTS, but you still have to pay extra (£4977) for the carbon-ceramic brakes that are fitted to our test car. Step inside and you'll notice lashings of Alcantara, which is something of a GTS trademark. Our car also has the optional sports bucket seats (£1914), which are great but feel like they need to be set just a smidgen lower for my liking.

After easily packing all Dean's camera gear into the two capacious boots, we trundle out of



Zuffenhausen and head west towards the Black Forest in search of good roads and possibly some sort of cake. The journey across reveals that, as you'd expect, the stiffer spring rates of the sports suspension intrude on the ride comfort a bit. Expansion joints and other road imperfections announce their presence with more of a thump than a PASM-equipped Cayman in its Comfort setting, particularly through the rear axle. The good news is that the passive damping still rounds off the harshest edge of any impact, so it stops short of being unpleasant. Although the traffic on the initial stretch of Autobahn we use to get away from Stuttgart doesn't allow us to have a tilt at the GTS's 177mph V-max, the Cayman proves enjoyably reassuring through a couple of 140mph sweepers.

Once off the multilane stuff we enter a hilly and picturesque world of pine trees and the German equivalent of chocolate-box Cotswold villages, complete with slim-spired churches and flowering window boxes. Even pottering slowly between the houses you can feel the effects of the Sport Suspension through the

'It takes more speed than I'd expected to unstick the GTS, but it's very well mannered over the limit'

steering, as there's just a bit more weight in your palms and the reactions immediately either side of the straight-ahead are more direct. Away from the villages there are some fantastic roads and here the chassis really comes into its own, Turn in and the GTS immediately leans onto its firmer springs and starts working the tyres (Goodyear Eagle F1 Asymmetric 2s), allowing you to feel the grip and then play with it. There's a lovely sense of the car's grasp on the road ebbing and flowing, giving you a wide band of adjustment before the rubber threatens to give up its grip entirely. It fills you with the confidence to carry speed into a corner, feel the front push a little and then get on the throttle to switch the balance rearwards, smearing the rear tyres round in a way that's not lairy, just very satisfying.

One road that we find is exceptionally bumpy and tight, but the GTS seems happy to tackle it at speed and never loses its composure. Then through a particular set of smoother corners the Cayman deals with quick left-right direction changes sublimely, never leaving you guessing as you load the suspension one way then the other. It will even allow you to brake deep into the corners and get the rear moving round so that you can pick up the throttle smartly as you hit the apex. We encounter a bit of rain later in the day too, and although it takes more speed than I'd expected to completely unstick the GTS (suggesting that it could easily cope with a still bigger power increase), it's as well mannered as a Downton dinner party once over the limit.

The GTS is 0.1sec quicker to 62mph than the Cayman S, taking 4.9sec with the six-speed









Top left: tinted rear lights might not be to all tastes, but there's lots to like about the GTS's handling. Above right: sports exhaust has been retuned for the GTS and gets a black finish

manual gearbox and 4.8sec with the optional PDK transmission. However, I'm pleased that our car has been left with the manual 'box, because it is a sublimely slick joy to use. I'pop it into Sport Plus mode (part of the Sport Chrono package) then it will rev-match every downchange perfectly foryou. It is 'inotic really, because the Cayman is one of the easiest and most pleasurable cars in which to execute heel-and-toe downchanges, yet the brilliance of the rev-matchine yetem makes it addictive to use.

The main reason that the downshifts are so lim is the ports exhaust that comes a standard and has been retuned specifically for the GTS. The beautiful flat-six yowl as the rever spike up seems a touch more vocal and the crackling explosions from the exhaust on a trailing explosions from the exhaust on a trailing throttle are a bit easier to instigue and seem to rumble on a little longer. The only small complaint is that the gearing remains a touch tall. Shorten the ratios and not only would you reach those spine-tingling upper reaches of the rev range more easily, but you could enjow slicing up and down the gearbox more frequently too. As it is there are some longish stretches of great road where second gear is all that is required. Perhaps a short-ratio box could be an option? I think most people would accept a slight worsening of the fuel consumption figures and you could still leave sixth as a sort of overdrive for motorways.

Nevertheless, the Cayman GTS with sports suspension is a truly wonderful thing. The feedback, involvement and precision of the handling have been tweaked to improve on on what was already a subline package and think it's worth the slight sacrifice in compliance. Combined with an even more inspiring exhaust and that lovely she-speed manual, it can leave you questioning whether this is really all the sports are you'd ever need. Unless of course you can case you'll be pleased to hear that the GTS treatment is also available on the Boxster. It was the content of the property of the prope

Engine Flat-lik, 3-13/cc

CO2 78/y/m

Floren

280 htt g-150-500 pm

Torque

280 htt g-150-500 pm

Weight

13-3g (235hp/140)

13-3g (235hp/140)

13-3g (235hp/140)

13-3g (235hp/140)

13-3g (235hp/140)

14-3g (235hp/140)

14-3g (235hp/140)

15-3g (235hp/140)

15-3g (235hp/140)

16-3g (235hp/140)

16





W

WITH THIS REBEL BLUE V60, Polestar makes its debut as Volvo's official tuning arm. The two have collaborated in motorsport since the mid-'90s,

while in more recent years the partnership has produced the odd big-power concept car for the show circuit, plus several Polestar-branded ECU upgrades for regular Volvo models, but this V60 is the first series-production Volvo to earn itself the blue square of Polestar.

The V60 Polestar is launched concurrently with the S60 Polestar saloon, which is identical in all but body style and weight, although only the estate version will reach the UK through official channels. The pair will be limited to a production run of 750 units in total, with only 125 V60's heading our way.

There's an organic and honest quality to the partnership between the two companies. Polestar was founded in 1996 as a separate concern to the big carmaker, but specifically for the purpose of running its motorsport or programmes. For Cose to two decades Polestar, now a company of 35 employees, has built and campaigned championship-winning competition cars for the factory in various touring car series around the world, but several years ago a lone voice wondered: "What would a Polestar developed Volvo road car be like" The lidea was met with approval by the bosses and so began feasibility and engineering studies.

Two concept cars and several years later, Velvo and Polestar's first joint venture for the open marker has arrived. The level of demand for those 750 Vol and 550 Polestars will dictate the future of the partnership; if they're snapped up with enthusiasm we'll no doubt see more from the collaboration. Perhaps Polestar will be absorbed by Volvo somewhere down the line, become the in-house tuning arm, and just maybe—we'll mention Polestar in the same breath as Mercedes AMG and BMW one day.

First, though, the V60 Polestar has to be good.

The base V60 is, according to its maker, the sportiest Volvo ever, which has to be promising. Its most powerful engine, the turbocharged in-line six-cylinder T6, has been uprated with a new intercooler and a revised compressor for the turbo, which runs at 50 per cent more boost than standard. Peak power is 345bhp at 5250rpm, with 369lb ft of torque available from 3000rpm. A new exhaust helps to reduce back pressure and deliver the throaty engine note that one might expect of a true drivers' car, which is exactly how Volvo and Polestar bill this V60. The auto gearbox, though, is carried over from the standard model with only software changes, while suspension upgrades are limited to springs, dampers and bushes; the suspension arms and track width are unchanged.

Given the base car's quite pedestrian nature, is there enough bespoke componentry and heavyweight engineering to turn the V60 into the 'true drivers' car' that Volvo claims it to be? And is the 1759kg kerb weight simply too hefty

for a car that aims to engage and entertain?

There are glimmers of hope in the specsteet. The huge brakes are supplied by Brembo and a great deal of calibration work has been undertaken to ensure they work effectively with the car's ABS and stability control. The dampers, meanwhile, are trick: they're for Mollins and feature patented technology that promises greater control over both high-are low-frequency road imperfections. The springs and anti-roll bars are 80 and 15 per cent stiffer respectively, with he balance shifted rearwards slightly for increased agility on turn-in. There's also a carbonfibre-reinforced strut brace to improve steering precision and the Haldes fourwheel-drive yestem has been tuned by Polestar.

As you'd expect, the Polestar rides with a sharper edge over lumps and bumps than a standard V60, but never is it crashy or unrefined. In fact, the quality of the damping is one of the things that shines brightest right from the off: individual wheel control and overall body control are both exemplary, so the Polestar can be fired along a winding, lumpen stretch of road with total confidence and precision.

The Polestar does favour its rear asle under load at corner exit, but it never feels rearled. The natural balance is towards safety
understeer at the limit, before which the car
is totally sure-footed on its Michelin Pilot
Super Sports and brilliantly controlled. The
lectrically assisted steering is at its best in the
heavies of the three selectable modes, in which
it might never be communicative but is at least
much crisper and sharper than similar systems
from BMW and Audi.

The Polestar can entertain its driver at eighttenths, but ultimately that kerb weight and its clear relation to the base car prevent it from being a thriller in the mould of a BMW M3. It is, of course, a more natural rival to a 3351 Touring or an Audi S4. The £49.775 list price is steep in comparison, but the Polestar comes fully loaded – there are no optional extras. Few 335is or \$4s will leave the showroom for much less.

The V60 Polestar is a car that gets beneath your skin—it's a fine debut. It merit scomparison with its German rivals not only for being technically competent, but also for being desirable. Here's to a long, prosperous line of Polestar Volvos. ■

Dan Prosser (@TheDanProsser)



Above: blue stitching and heavily bolstered seats are Polestar interior additions. Right: handling feels controlled on twisty Swedish forest roads. Below: estatebodied V60 is identical in power and torque to saloon-style 500



'The Polestar can be fired along a winding, lumpen stretch of road with total confidence and precision'



Engine	In-line 6-cyl, 2953cc, turbocharged
C02	237g/km
Power	345bhp @ 5250rpm
Torque	369lb ft @ 3000-4750rpm
formance	5.0sec (claimed 0-62mph), 155mph (claimed)
Weight	1759kg (199bhp/ton)
asic price	£49,775
Finance	£5000 deposit, 60 monthly payments of £879.38. No mileage limit. Oracle Finance

evo rating: ****

Excellent damping, day-to-day appeal

Still a close relative of the standard V60





Subaru WRX STI

New-generation model reintroduces railly-bred saloon to the UK market. Range of changes inside and out, 296bhp flat-four turbo retained





'The whole car is imbued with a sense of sturdiness that encourages you to grab the STI by the scruff of the neck'

MONSTROUS BOOT-BASED appendages seem to be on the wane these days, so as we catch sight of the new WRX STI for the first time in Sweden, it's

quite arresting to see the blue Subaru wearing its trademark ginormous push bar with such pride. In terms of wing-for-your-buck, this latest in this illustrious Subaru line must have few, if any, peers amongst new cars,

Get in and you realise that the wing is now so high it doesn't even interrupt your view out of the rear window - you simply look straight underneath it. To get the same level of aero acreage I think you'd need to jump all the way up to a 911 GT3 or possibly even a McLaren P1 in attack mode (I've always thought it strange, by the way, that Woking named its hypercar after an iconic Subaru). Unlike the last STI, the mobile picnic bench will come as standard on all UK cars, and although you can delete it if you so wish, I think Subarus are like angels - they just look a bit ordinary without wings.

The other big news with the new WRX STI (note that Subaru is sticking to the curious decision not to call it an Impreza any more) is the change in the roofline. With the base of the A-pillars shifted 200mm further forward, the car has a more rakish look from the outside. while cleverly feeling more airy and spacious inside. A few other dimensions have been slightly tweaked too, with the wheelbase having been let out at the seams by 25mm. the whole car being 15mm longer overall, and the roof 5mm lower. More important than all of this, however, is that the new bodyshell is 140 per cent stiffer (apparently with no weight gain) thanks to a greater use of ultra-hightensile steel at strategic points.

With this extra stiffness in the shell, it's no surprise that the suspension has been tweaked

Above: interior still lags hehind those of European alternatives. Left: new STI is slightly longer than predecessor and 29kg heavier; huge rear wing recalls Subaru WRC cars of old



to match. Spring rates are up by six per cent at the rear and 22 per cent at the front, with lateral stiffness ratcheted up by 24 per cent overall. The end result is 16 per cent less body roll, and to take full advantage the engineers have also gone to work on the steering, with a 15 per cent quicker rack installed and a steering torsion bar that is 125 per cent stiffer.

All of these numbers are noticeable as soon as you set off down the road in the STI. The steering is hydraulically assisted (a rarity these days) and feels instantly weighty, but it's the reaction to any input of lock that makes you sit up and take notice. Subarus always used to feel quite calm, even slightly lazy in their frontend response compared to pointy Mitsubishi Evos, but the new STI reacts instantly to the slightest movement of its flat-bottomed wheel. For what feels like quite a big, chunky car, it's almost unnervingly darty until you get used to it. Once you're past the initial few degrees of lock, things calm down a little as the tyres start to scrub, and with this in mind you begin throwing the car into corners more confidently, but nevertheless it's quite a change compared to the previous generation car.

The turbocharged 2.5-litre flat-four is less

of a departure, with figures of 296bhp and 300lb ft being exactly the same as before, although throttle response has been improved slightly. It's still not an engine that you want to wring the last few revs from because it feels a bit harsh and laboured right at the top, so you tend to lean on the big torquey punch of the midrange and change up early instead. Combine these early upshifts with gearing that is quite short and you're kept busy, because you're out of second gear by 50mph and third is used up by about 70mph. So, although the 0-62mph time of 5.2sec isn't anything to write home about in these days of A45 AMGs and M135is, the realworld delivery of the STI's performance makes it feel engagingly rapid.

The gearshift itself is familiarly short and mechanical, while the whole car is imbued with a sense of sturdiness that encourages you to really grab the STI by the scruff of the neck. There's an excellent piece of Swedish B-road on the launch route and I end up driving back and forth along it for several hours while Sam Riley wields various pieces of film equipment. On the inside of most of the corners there is evidence of significant 'cutting' by locals where they've gone beyond the limits of the tarmac and taken



'It feels secure even at high speed and you tend to fling it around with confidence as a result'

to the gravel to straighten the corner out. It feels quite brutal the first time I try the same tactic and on some of the corners it verges on full-on ditch-hooking, but the Subaru is happy to oblige and soaks it all up with a toughness that you can't help but admire.

As you might expect given the four-wheel drive, there is a huge amount of grip, both in the corners and under acceleration. It's not the most adjustable car until you're pushing extremely hand, but it means it feels encouragingly secure even at high speed and you tend to filing it around with confidence as a result. The familiar multi-mode centre diff is still in place with Manual, Auto, Auto+ and Auto- modes. The basic Auto mode torque distribution is 50:50, but in Auto+ it limits torque and increases stability in slippery conditions, while Auto-feels like the most enjoyable setting as it allows more torque to be sent to the rear wheels and improves throtted adjustability.

Solid is probably the kindest word to describe the interior, which remains the car's weakest area. The seats are suitably bolstered and upholstered and there is a decent level of equipment as standard (only stanw is extra) but the carbon-effect plastics are just a bit masy. There is also a lack of design cohesion that is summed up by the jarring variance in graphics and blocky fonts across three different digital display screens flour counting the stanaw). The good news, however, is that thanks to yen exchange rates that are much more favourable than they were for the old car, the list price has dropped by a whopping £4000 to £28,995.

In some ways it's a case of everything changes yet everything stays the same with the latest WRK STI. Despite the increased agility and sleeker new roofline, it remains a car that spits on its palmis, smacks them together and then gest to work in a very robust, no-nonsense sort of way — it's exactly what you would expect from a car made by a subsidiary of Fuji Heavy Industries. And while this means it is far from perfect in many respects, in an age of increasingly political and refined new cars, the big-winged STI feels quite refreshing.

Burny Catchpole (@ittern/Catchpole)



Engine Flat-four, 2457cr, turbo
CO2 242g/km
Power 2046bbp 80000mm
Torque 300b ft @ 40000mm
Enformance 5.25cc (camend 0-bamph), binmin (calamed Weight 1534g (Rebhaptron)
Basic price 528995
Finance £2000 deposit, 48 monthly payments of

evo rating: ****

Increased agility, appealing toughness
Low-rent interior, no power increase

0.88, £15,475 final payment. No mileage



Official fuel consumption figures in mpg (I/100km) for the Ford Fiesta range; urban 33.6-76.4 (8.4-3.7), extra urban 58.9-91.1 (4.8-3.1), combined 47.9-85.6 (5.9-3.3), Official CO2 emissions 138-87g/km.

The mgg figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results, are provided for comparability purposes and may not reflect your actual driving experience. Vehicle shown is the Ford fixets. Titarumin X with optional Candy Buse perferences paint and 177-bopole along wheels. Ford SYMC with Voice Control works with compatible commencted mobile phones only. See Ford could, SYM standard on Zetz, Exel. S.S.T. Titarum and Titarumin X, Disponse at van or Studied and SYME.



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Audi S1

The 228bhp quattro hatch arrives in the UK. Is it as good as it seemed in a snowy Sweden last month?





IT TAKES ONLY A SHORT drive along a typical British back road to work out on which side of Audi's incomprehensible performance road car fence the

new S1 sits. While on the one side we find the disappointing RS4 and RS7, both with unnatural steering and a lumpen ride, on the other reside such delights as the R8 and the S3 Saloon. To the latter group, we can now add the S1.

Our first exposure to this 228bhp, fourwheel-drive hot hatch (evo 196) was a little unrepresentative, for the roads of the launch venue in northern Sweden were largely covered in snow and ice, and the test car wore winter tyres. Monetheless, the S1 showed promise, particularly in its potent drivetrain and the way it dealt with surface inperfections at speed.

The broken, uneven B-roads around evo's Northamptonshire office have exposed many an over-damped performance car over the absorbs the endless lumps and bumps sweetly and without deflection, keeping sits four contact patches determinedly in touch with the tarmac. Even the firmer damper setting of the Drive Select system's Dynamic mode brings with it enough pliancy; in fact, to the forther than the contact of the care to the care to the contact of the care to the care

Combined with the unimpeachable traction of the quattro four-wheel-drive system and the frankly ludicrous 273lb for fororque from just 1600rpm, the S1 is a seriously rapid point-to-point car. In wet conditions it would certainly stick four exhaust pipes up to anything short



of a Mégane 265, leaving the likes of the Mini Cooper S and Ford Fiesta ST in its spray.

The turbocharged 2-litre engine is best driven on its table to proque curve, I pulls with a level of urgency and muscularity that comes as something of a surprise first time out, and although there are no fireworks at the top end, the final 1000rpm remains a useable part of the rev range. The six-speed manual gearbox — the most transmission option for now — is a little long in its throw, but the gate is tightly defined and the shift action is tlick.

There is never any real sense of connectivity in through the steering wheel, but it is blessedly ledevold of the unpleasant stickiness that afflicts some other fast Audis. The wheel itself could perhaps reach out an inch or two further towards the driver and the seat is mounted too high by the same amount, but these are minor criticisms of an otherwise welcoming new through the control of the although our test car is a sea of grey inside. The optional interior styling pack, with bodycoloured trim, would put that right.

If that four-wheel-drive system brings boundless traction at corner exit, it doesn't add any other dimension to the driving experience. The S1 will never take an oversteer stance under power, but it does at least limit the split of torque to the front axis and so reins in power understeer that way. The chassis itself is responsive to all fif of the throttle, making the S1 both adjustable mid-corner and entertaining in the manner of a true bot hatch.

With the premium badge comes a premium price tag, but it cannot be said that the £24,900 SI offers poor value for money. It is one of the most desirable small hot hatches on sale and further evidence that Audi is very capable of producing sporting cars that aren't upset by a demanding road surface.

Dan Prosser (@TheDanProsser)

evo rating: ***

Quick, compliant and engaging chassis
 Expensive: lifeless steering





EVEN EASIER TO HANDLE.



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MAZDA.CO.UK

The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (I/100km) for the Mazda MX-5 range: Urban 25.4 (11.1) - 28.8 (9.8), Extra Urban 45.6 (6.2) - 50.4 (5.6), Combined 35.3 (8.0) - 39.8 (7.1). CO₂ emissions (g/km) 188 - 167.

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TWENTY-NINETHOUSAND, three hundred and ten pounds. £29.310! The last time we tested

a Citroën DS3 Racing, back in 2011 (evo 154), it cost £23,100, so what's changed in three years?

For starters, this Racing is based on the soft-top DS3 Cabrio. An electric mechanism concertings the cloth roof into the rear, leaving the side rails and the overall silhouette intact. The matt 'Moondark' grey finish is appealing, the gloss black 18-inch wheels neat and modern, and Citroën has done a far better job with the forward-slanting 'floating' pillar than Land Rover has with the new Discovery (see p15). In short, the DS3 shape, aside from a few overwrought flourishes, has aged well and remains distinctive. However, the vertical gloss stripes on the flanks look like they were applied with a parcel-tape dispenser.

Underneath, the Cabrio is the same as the hard-top Racing model. The 1.6-litre singleturbo four-cylinder engine produces 204bhp (up from the 154bhp of the THP version) thanks to an ECU remap and a freer-breathing exhaust. Modified dampers are fitted, the track is widened by 30mm and the car lowered by 15mm. The braking system is uprated with four-pot Brembo calipers up front, the electric steering has been remapped, and unlike the run-of-the-mill DS3s, the electronic stability control programme can be deactivated.

So what's it like? Well, the last time we tested the DS3 Racing we had to have an audience with Citroën because they didn't adequately 'position' the car for us and thus we didn't



'understand' it. We countered that anything with a Racing moniker, co-developed by an organisation that led Sébastien Loeb to a gazillion WRC titles and fitted with a 200-plus bhp engine should be better and more thrilling than it was. It was explained to us that the car was never meant to be an extreme hatchback.

Three years later, we still don't understand the car. It is neither a tearaway hatchback in a Mini JCW vibe, nor is it a hugely chic or desirable urban cutebox. The foldaway roof adds very little to the driving experience and adds a fair degree of structural quake, and while the engine and gearshift action are real gems, the car never delivers on its promise of being a unique and enjoyable steer. This is a huge shame, because the DS3 Cabrio Racing (and the hard-top) is exactly the kind of offbeat curio evo would champion to the hilt if Citroën had invested another 10 per cent into the steering, damping and wheel control.

Yep, like the Abarth 500 Competizione we tested last month, the Racing falls short of being a decent drive because its chassis can't cope when you deploy the full horsepower.

The steering is over-light around the centre, with little feel, and while its variable gearing provides a sharp response, the only meaningful feedback is delivered via dollops of torque-steer.

The suspension offers similar characteristics. On first impressions, the Racing rides with a satisfying firmness, changes direction quickly and remains flat. But up the pace and there's a sense that the springs and rear beam are overdamped, meaning the tyres never feel fully keved into the surface, especially when crests and cambers are involved. It's here where rivals Renaultsport and Ford kick it out of the park.

You can probably sense our disappointment. There is real appeal to the DS3 - any DS3. They offer good engines, wide personalisation options, strong interiors and decent value. Used DS3s start at around £8000; a relatively standard car with an ECU tweak and subtle suspension mods would be a fascinating sleeper. Citroën Racing's version is not without appeal, but its rarity (just ten of 100 will be sold in the UK) does not justify the expense. Nick Trott (@evoNickTrott)

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1598cc, turbo CO2 149g/km 204bhp @ 6000rpm Torque 203/b ft @ 2000rpm Performance 6.5sec (claimed 0-62mph), 145mph (claimed) Weight 1265kg (164bhp/ton) Price £29.310

> evo rating: ★★★☆☆ Strong engine, sweet gearshift, unique looks Poor steering, unresolved suspension, price

Watches

Retrospective pieces recalling '70s American drivers' watches and Mille Miglia specials are joined by a tribute to Abarth **Words**: Smonde Burton



Hamilton Pan-Europ Price: £780 From: hamiltonwatch.com

Hamilton belongs to the Swatch Group but it continues to be influenced by its American roots. The brand has a history of ince drivers' pieces—including the Pan-Europ of 1971, which was among the first self-winding chanonographs. This result is self-winding chandra mechanism with 80 hours of power reserve. Grey or blue dials are available, plus a choice of textile or classic, perforate classics, perforate classics per chandra chandra mechanism.



BRM V12 Abarth Chronograph

Price: £5800 (approx) From: brm-manufacture.com

Motorcycle racer and petrolinead Bernard Richards established his which inspire BRB Natural In Fance in 2003. The noriginal GPA44 chronograph has since been pinied by a further 34 models – including the latest Abarth chrono, which pays tribute to the Blabin tuning house. The watch has a 44mm steel case which is setzensively direct for pilot programs, which pays tribute to the Blabin tuning house. The watch has a 44mm steel case which is setzensively direct for girl grints, while the crown is adorned with Abarth's Scorpion symbol and the dial gets an Abarth 595 racing stripe Black or white leather straps are available, each with red and green stitching. The movement is a trusty Valoux 753.



Chopard Mille Miglia

Price: £3560 (steel), £12,330 (rose gold)

From: chopard.com

To mark X-years as the main sponsor of the Mille Miglia Historic. Chapard has harded back to the 80s and beyond Historic. Chapard has harded back to the 80s and beyond with this new MM* chronograph. Although those early Mille Miglia pieces were quart-to powered. this one has a selfwinding mechanical movement with 30-minute, 12-hour and 60-second sub-dissi. The red center second hand, white dail and green minute track allude to the Italian tricolore, while the traditional "Yes red of strong used no previous sessions has been replaced by one made from mellow Barerial leather. A rose sold version as são available in a limited edition of 25 or minuted to the sold of the sol

Now & Then



Casio Edifice Worn by: Tom Onslow-Cole

The 27-year-old former BTCC racer, who moved to British GT for 2014 in a factory-supported Nissan GT-R Nismo, has been backed by Casio since 2008. Onslow-Cole wears a chronograph from Casio's rugged 'Edifice' range.





THEN Vertex Worn by: Ron Flockhart

Ron Flockhart, the F1 racer who won Le Mans in 1956 alongside Ninian Sanderson in an Ecurie Ecosse D-type, was given his gold Vertex watch by his father as a 21st birthday gift and wore it regularly at the wheel. It turned up at a 2001 Bonhams auction in Monaco, where if teched around £250 and



Watch tech

World timers

At the International Meridian Conference in Washington DC in 1884, the world was officially subdivided into 24 time zones and the Greenwich Meridian came to be internationally recognised as the site of Greenwich Mean Time, with each 15-degree zone east or west of the Meridian being decreed as representing one hour of time ahead or behind respectively.

It wasn't until 1937, however, that a genius watchmaker called Louis Cottier worked with Patek Phillippe to devise a watch which would show 'home time' on a conventional pair of hands while simultaneously showing the hour in 23 other capitals around the world on a numbered rotating disc.

The system is still used today by various makers, but most notably by Patek on its Reference 5130 World Time, which has a 39.5mm case and a distinctive 'ring' hour hand inspired by the one used on the 1940s models.

Operating one is simple on arriving at a new destination, just press the button positioned on the top-left of the case until the name of the relevant city – say, London – is aligned with the 12 oclock position on the inner dial. The hands automatically move from their original position and now tell the local time in London, but it is still easy to check the time anywhere else by reading the number opposite the relevant city.

In 2002, Antiquorum sold a 1946 Patek World Time with a unique platinum case for £2.5million – but you can buy a new Reference 5130 for around £35.000.











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Simulations

The latest news, kit and reviews from the world of racing sims **Words:** Matthew Hayward







Peripherals











Formats: PC, PS4, Xbox One, Wii U Price: TBC From: projectcarsgame.com





UNIVERSAL EXCITEMENT FOR an upcoming racing game is usually the sign of something pretty special on the horizon, and the internet has been alive with chatter. There's a new blockbuster

on the way, and it's called Project CARS. Slightly Mad Studios – the UK-based team behind the new title – is certainly no stranger to the genre, having produced the first two Need For Speed: Shift titles. Now the relatively small developer has taken on the unenviable task of funding and producing a new player in the market.

By using a Kickstarter-style system called World of Mass Everlopment, the team has avoided the need to have a big publisher on board. Anyone who has donated money to the production team has in turn had early access to the game in beta testing form, as well as having their opinions on the games direction head via with community forum. It sail from the community forum. It was the community forum the community for t

CARS actually stands for 'Community Assisted Racing Simulator', due to the unique way it has been funded and developed. One of the team's core objectives

is to bridge the gap between the likes of Forza and Gan Turismo, and the more advanced PC simulators such as illiading. There are a number of videos on YouTube showing off the game, all of which have received huge praise. It's clear that the graphics have the edge over everything else we've seen so far, and the team has also said that the put all of time and effort into getting the sound associately sport-on.

So, the sound and graphics are up to scratch, but what about the physics? Slightly Mad has developed its very own Madness' game engine, an evolution of the one used on the Shift series. Thanks to more modern multi-core processors, the accuracy of each car's behaviour is now supposedly even more perfect. It has also seen injunt from racing drivers, including Ben Collins, Nicholas Hamilton (Lewis Sb rother and Renault Clio Cup racer) and ELMS driver Oli Webb. The drivers have been used to feed back about the cars' handling and should help to get the cars feeling more authentic.

At launch there will be around 60 different tracks to race on, including street circuits and well-known permanent tracks such as Spa, the Nürburgring and Le Mans. There Isn't a full confirmed list of cars, but expect a good number of road and racing models, including some from BMW, Pagani, Mercedes and more.

If you're worried that this is going to be earother PC-only im, those without the budget for run a high-see gaming rig carriera. The sacriera XT-bis is a round will support the PS4, Xbox One, Steam OS (Linux), Windows and, perhaps most surprisingly, the Ninterdo Will Junchher intriguing aspect is the announced support for the Couls RRIf virtual result headset (even 194), as well as Sony's upcoming PS4 alternative. It's gaminely exciting, and we can't want to give the first version a thorough test set her in the office. 3

Price: £7000

LG's 55-inch flagship TV features OLED technology. 4K resolution and a curved screen. If you don't know what these things are, don't worry. All you need to know is that if you appreciate a nice picture, this will blow you away.



OBUTTO OZONE GAMING CHAIR Price: €399 (c£325) From: obutto.com

One of the few genuinely stylish game set-ups, the Ozone cockpit offers a customisable and nicely adjustable rig for the more serious sim racers out there







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Outside Line

by RICHARD MEADEN

Meaden reckons the ideal of owning a dream car for weekends is being diluted by classic cars serving as commodities



FOR THE LAST SIX OR SEVEN YEARS, the May Bank Holiday weekend has seemed like the appropriate moment to wake my Porsche 911 from its winter hibernation. The ritual is much

the same every year: renewed lust for its smooth, muscular shape and tiny dimensions, a surge of excitement as the flat-six engine sparks up and settles into its soft, chuntering idle, and then guilt at the fact I never drive it as much as it deserves to

Pretty much from the moment I bought it back in 2007, each new year has also brought the irksome dilemma of how much to insure it for. Prices of old 911s, and RS models in particular, have gone bonkers. This year my 964 has emerged from the garage

apparently worth at least 20 per cent more than it did when I tucked it away. That's great news for those who are selling, but it's a hassle (albeit a glite-deged one) for those of us who arent. When I bought the RS, it was the most money If ever spent on a car. Or rather the biggest chunk of finance I'd ever committed to, apart from my mortgage. Still is, actually, Now, after seven years of significant year-on-year increases in value, I'm in the slightly absurd position of owning a car that's way out of my league.

Don't get me vrong: there are worse problems to have. But no matter how hard if I'ry not to let the super-heated classic car market a matter how hard if I'ry not to let the super-heated classic car market affect my feelings towards my belowed Porsche, decisions to keep or sell no longer feel rooted in the familiar and carefree realms of irrational limpulse or long-held aspiration. Ironically, the reasons why I fully intend on on the weight is until I'm too old and feeble to wrestle with its unassisted sestering, remain broadly the same is 'the only air coded RS I can afford and it's the only one that combines old-school looks and feel with modern levels of performance.

But... while the emotional reasons for keeping are as sound as ever, the practical reasons are being seadily evockle. Finding insurance cover gets harder and more expensive and usage been protective of my cars, but never has the statement original panels and paint' weighed more heavily on my shoulders. Not because its greater value means I care about it more — Têl guard it with my life whatever it's worth — but the ramifications of a ding are usddenly far greater. I'm pleased to report none of this detracts from the driving experience (yet), but it does make the ownership experience more grown-up than I'd like.

Perhaps of more concern is how this current era of cars as commodities is affecting the rest of the market and even the way we navigate our way through the classifieds. I'm sure we all like to think we have good taste in cars, but I get the feeling where once buying decisions were made on a barge for-your-buck basts, or simply realising a long-held dream, there's a palpable sense that our choice of weekend wheels is being guided at least in part by the belief they could, maybe even should, serve as some kind of financial investment.

I can see how this works at the top end of the market, where wealth, ego and masterful auctioneering ensure no one can leave the room until a new record price has been set. I can also see how a 2.7 RS selling for \$1.4million (c£820,000) in the States might add a few quid to a black 964 RS in Cambridgeshire. What I'm less sure of, and what makes me feel uneasy, is whether I'm a

'There's a sense that our choice of weekend wheels is being guided by the belief they could, maybe even should, serve as a financial investment'

> mug for not cashing in my chips. Some of my investment-savvy friends and acquaintances think I am: 'Get out of it now, Dickie. Realise some cash and roll the rest into something else,' they say. Given they're all wealthier and more gung-ho than I am, it's doubtless sound advice, except once the car's sold and the money's spent, I'd still want a 964 Rs.

> Where will it all end? For me I suspect it? II be in an old people's home, bitter and dribbling as I muster into free space about how I could have sold a Poresche for a fortune, but instead chose to keep a lit. To be hones: It mot sure that would be such a bad thing, for for at least it would mean I'd stayed true to my lifelong lowe of cars as cans. It's a strange twist of economic face that turns them into cold commodities to be pimped and traded, and it'll doubtless be another that will have transante investors retreating and true car enthusiasts rejoicing. In the meantime, when it comes to buying and true car enthusiasts rejoicing. In the meantime, when it comes to buying and true car and most your heart suggest were preserve the sanctive for this joyous and not your head is the best course of action. It's unlikely to to make you rich, but it will make your soul soar when you open make you rich, but it will make your soul soar when you open



Richard is a contributing editor of evo and one of the magazine's founding team



Defectors willkommen

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Petrolhead

by RICHARD PORTER



New father Porter finds transporting his progeny by car isn't as easy as it may outwardly seem



A FEW WEEKS AGO, I BECAME A FATHER for the first time. Any new parent will know the heady combination of pride and raw fear that this brings and the wonder that the creation of new life, though it's been done billions of times before, can

still seem so special and unique. A few months before the arrival of my son, however, I bumped into evo's editor at a party and, after asking when the baby was due, he lobbed in a more interesting question: What are you taking him home in?

This is an interesting one. I was born at home so my dad never had to make that nervous first drive back from the hospital after, as Will Smith once rapped, taking an hour justa get the car seat in right'. But ask anyone interested in cars what brought them home

from the maternity unit and they'll probably know. So it seems somehow important. Fortunately, evo's editor had the answer. You only need three seats,' he said. So borrow a McLaren Fl. I replied: 'Um... OK. I'll look kind its 'Then I got distracted shopping for tiny, stripy clothes and neglected to harangue Rowan Aktinson or Eric Clarson until one of them asreed to lend me their care.

Clapton until one of them agreed to lend me their car.

On a more realistic note, as the due date got closer

I ordered a new family wagon and then realised that, unless the

To there is a new inamity wagon and their reasses of their measer, it is abay decided to externed its avail ruiside for a fourth rimester, it wasn't going to be ready in time. That left my shabby old Jeep Cherokee, which is ancient and smells, or our Flas 200 Twinniar, which is newer and small. The Jeep ruled listeff out immediately because it's a 1970s design built in the 90s, its brakes need advance notice in writing and if its designers had even heard of ISOFIX I'm sure they'd describe it as goddamn communism.

The Flat was a more promising option and immediately better on the grounds that it's lively to start and prompt to stop. Unfortunately it's also tiny and that's a problem when it comes to equipping it with a modern car seat. Sitting on your living room floor, these things appear to be of a perfectly reasonable proportion. Inserted into the interior of a small Italian car, you realise they are in fact the same size as a small Italian car, you realise they are in fact the same size as a small Italian car, soften gith edmost ming inside is near impossible because the Flat's front seats don't silde forward quite far enough, and then once it's in you can't silde the passenger seat back more than an inch from the dash. Getting the baby home would be possible. But not ideal.

Happilly, my little boy showed his face nine days past his due date, by which time! happened to have a press demonstrator booked in. Which was a Mercedes S-class. The new S-class is an interesting car, not only because it's packed with tech from the very pointy end of possibility but also because it's the first mainstream car from a western carmaker explicitly designed to acknowledge that China. is its most important market. Merc's own research told it that Chinese buyers wanted a bit more bling, so the chrome strips around the side windows are now thicker; they also wanted more conspicuous reminders of who made their executimo, which is why it now says Mercedes-Benz inside the headlights and indicator repeaters and in epically naff cursive script on the bottom of the steering wheel. But the S-class hasn't just been designed for people in China. I think it also could have been honed to be perfect for transporting a baby, And not just because a ruddy massive long-wheelbase limo is one of the few things that can accommodate a modern care sex viribous a strugger.

When you become a father, your interest in safety suddenly leaps by 1000 per cent. Where once you'd have happily razzed

'I think the S-class also could have been honed to be **perfect for transporting a baby**'

about in a Peugeot 106 with a carving knife taped to the airbag, spawning makes you so over-protective that you'd hesitate to stick your offspring in a Challenger 2 without checking the NCAP rating. And, in the absence of a battle tank, an S-class is about the safest thing on the roads, especially since the new one comes with tricky collision avoidance kit and active LED lights front and rear to stop someone twatting into you in the first place.

A few other things you may or may nor know about bables. First of all, they don't necessarly like to sleep in total silence. The S500 has got that cowered because, though it's very quite, there's still a distant hum from the engine and a constant whoseh of white noise from the tyres, which very tiny people seem to like. Bables also like to be nocked to sleep and, dessert being to are insuperson in advance, the S-class doesn't ride as smoother you will hope. Disappointing for adults, but a boson for infa atuliin air freshener. Peace of mind when you've experienced the carrange contained inside a bably's nagle.

Add all this together and it's as if Merc made the new S-class to transport babies rather than businessmen. I mean, obviously it's no McLaren F1. But maybe I'll try that for the second one.

■



Richard is **evo**'s longest-serving columnist and the keyboard behind sniffpetrol.com

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NURBURGRING



Champ by DARIO FRANCHITTI



Fascinated by the technology in the latest hypercars, Dario remembers the tech-heaviest cars he ever raced: the DTM Mercedes of the 1990s.

I WAS THINKING THE OTHER DAY HOW lucky we are as car fans to have the LaFerrari, 918 and P1 all coming out at once. I love my old supercars like the F40, but with these new hybrid hypercars we're undoubtedly living through

something of a high point for the car industry. It's fascinating to see how differently they're all attacking the technological problems, too. It got me thinking about the most sophisticated cars I've ever driven, which were undoubtedly the DTM Mercedes I raced in the mid-1990s.

Limited pretty much solely by the imagination of the engineers, they really were ahead of their time. In the relatively short space of time that I was with the team - just over two years - the development pace was incredible. When I first drove the C-class it just had ABS, traction control and some moveable aero.

but as it developed, the car gained ever more extreme active systems. The aero obviously got more and more advanced, but there were also experiments with active ride and there was a system where you could raise and lower the car to beat the ride-height test so we could run full ground-effect. We also ran water-cooled brakes and at one point had fully automatic gearboxes,

although I never liked them because I felt they downshifted at the wrong point. There was even a system for moving the weight distribution around in the car that was essentially a lump of tungsten on a hydraulic ram that moved backwards and forwards!

The cars ran on a distance-based system, so you would trip a beam at the start of each lap and then the car would set itself up to behave how you wanted at each part of the track. For instance, at Donington Park you would come up to turn one. Redgate, and in practice you might have felt that as you started to turn-in the car was understeering a bit. So you'd say: 'OK, I want the rear roll bar full stiff and maybe get the front bar full soft to help turn.' Then as you transitioned through the corner you'd set it up so the front bar would stiffen up and the rear bar would soften off to give you traction on the way out. As you went down the Craner Curves, you'd make it shut off the aero in the front end - actually very similar to the F12 with its brake-cooling vents - to give you less drag at that point. Once it was set up you didn't change anything, it just automatically did what it was programmed to do depending on the distance you'd travelled round the lap.

If you span, it totally screwed everything up! I think it went into a default setting but you'd have to go easy on that lap until it tripped the beam on the start/finish line again. The other problem was that as the fuel was burned off and the tyres started to wear out, what might have started as an understeering issue at Redgate would become an oversteering issue as the race wore on. To counter this you had to have different presets in the system that you could switch to to help you out. I remember the control panel to process it all was so monstrous that it took up the whole passenger side of the car.

Testing all the technology was pretty interesting, too. I remember the first time I accelerated out of the pits with the adjustable weight distribution system on the car, it detached itself and did a fair bit of damage. The DTM car also got an airbag steering wheel, which was fairly extraordinary. I had a huge shunt in a development car at Hockenheim: so big that it even ripped the trumpets out of the V of the engine and they couldn't salvage anything from the wreckage. The airbag? Didn't go off.

Compared to now, with the computing power available,

'I suppose it was all quite crude, but I think those cars really captured people's imaginations'

I suppose it was all quite crude, but I think those cars with their tech and their screaming V6s really captured people's imaginations. I absolutely loved driving them - in fact they're some of my all-time favourites - and the technology didn't take anything away from the experience at all. There were a few guys saving, 'Oh veah, these things drive themselves,' but they absolutely didn't - the technology just meant that the car's limits were that much higher.

At completely the opposite end of the scale, a mate of mine has got a pearlescent white Lamborghini Countach that he's owned for about 25 years. It's stunning and it's got no miles on it but he's decided that he's going to start using it. So, I'm going to take my old black 930 LE out and we're going to do a retro '80s, Athena poster-themed drive. It'll be the antithesis of all the tech stuff I've just written about yet I'll enjoy it just as much. That there's so much diversity out there to be enjoyed is one of the things that I think makes us so lucky as car fans, yet sometimes people seem to assume that because you enjoy one you can't enjoy the other, as though you've got to take sides. But that's just not true. It's perfectly possible to enjoy each type of car on its own merits analogue and tech-laden, old and new, F40 and LaFerrari.



Dario is a three-time Indy 500 winner (and four-time IndyCar champ

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Inbox

What's your Whole New Thing this month?



Raising the standard

I'm old enough to remember the arrival of the first Nissan Skyline GT-R and can recall the stories that abounded about its technology and its supercar-killing potential for a fraction of a supercar's price. Today, Nissan claims a warp-factor-nine lap of the Ring with its GT-R Nismo and I am still impressed, especially as the thing is as heavy as the Starship Enterprise.

However, I may be from Yorkshire so a bit tight, but at £125,000 it's now supercar money, and as good as it is, would you really spend £125k on a Nissan? Or would you buy an Aston, a Bentley or even a Porsche 911?

To be truly regarded as great, the performance should come from a 'standard' GT-R with affordable mods, not a complete bespoke package that 'any customer can have' - as long as they have a spare £50k on top of the price of the base car.

Mind you, I've driven a standard GT-R at Silverstone in the wet, and unless your last name is Picard, it's still a Ferrarikiller and all the car you'll ever need. Make it so, number 1... Dave Dunning



The Letter of the Month wins an Elliot Brown watch

This month's star letter writer receives an Elliot Brown Bloxworth 929-003 (pictured), worth £550. It features a Swiss-made 12-hour chronograph movement with split and lap timing functions, and has bold Superluminova and chrome hands and indexes.

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Magic roundabout I completely agree with Henry

Catchpole's view on roundahouts (Fast Fleet, evo 196). I used to work near a great roundabout; well sighted. wide, slightly downhill. Back then I drove my much-missed Peugeot 106 Quiksilver. It was a 1.1 with no power whatsoever but it was extremely light and the chassis was brilliant. That roundabout taught me everything about how to throw the 106 into oversteer and it was probably the most fun I had in that car!

The other good thing about roundabouts is that you don't have to go really fast to have a laugh on one: when it rained, I drifted the little Pug at 20mph. Good times... Antoine Chedozeau, France

Learn vour stripes I have just reached the back of evo 195

and read the Art of Speed article by David Vivian on racing stripes. David indicates that one of the functions of stripes was to make it easier for spectators to identify a particular team's car. I was told that stripes were indeed an aid to identification, but not just for spectators; more importantly perhaps, they helped pit crews.

Sixty years ago, Grand Prix racing was to some extent 'racing for one's country' and it was a requirement that each car's predominant colour was its country's allotted hue. So British cars (BRM, Vanwall, Cooper, etc) would be finished in British racing green, the Gordini from France was blue Ferraris Maseratis and Alfa Romeos were Italian racing red, and so on.

With no in-car radio, the only way for the pit to communicate with the driver was to hold out a pit board, so stripes were a way of helping the pit crew identify their driver. This was



Above: Antoine Chedozeau shares Henry Catchpole's enthusiasm for roundabouts

vital with several cars, all in similar colours, coming round the same corner at speed. Coopers had two white stripes up

the side of the front (which continues to this day on Mini's options list). Rob Walker's cars had a white stripe around the nose and BRMs had an orange strine around the nose

So stripes did have a practical nurnose at one time Jeffery Allen

Turn up the juice

Electric power is the future, and we should all be ecstatic. An electric motor is simply an inherently superior powertrain for a performance car: instant torque, no gears to shift or sap power and a smaller CO2 footprint are all good news. The downsides of greater weight and inconvenient charging will be overcome in time.

Electric motors also do a great job of filling in torque curves in hybrid cars, and the McLaren P1 has shown that hybrid technology really can make a supercar better than it could otherwise be. Environmental imperatives aside, electric motors are

in our future, and it's a great thing, Jay Lebo, Toronto, Canada

Whv-brid? Hoved the evoTV video on the

LaFerrari. But I don't get it (the car, that is). Why carry all that hybrid gubbins if it merely contributes to performance, not any token gesture of 'econess'? The car would be sensational without the added weight - nobody would be complaining with 750bhp and sub-1200kg. At least the McLaren P1 allows full electric running. which is surely the point of these hypercars: being entirely guilt-free. Gavin Sullivan, Newcastle, Australia



Above: Jeffery Allen says racing colours and stripes were nation- and team-specific





Electric performance cars

Last month, we put the all-electric, 416bhp Tesla Model S Performance Plus to the test over 300 miles in Norway - without spending a single penny on charging its batteries. Is electric power the future for performance cars, and would you be happy to live with an electric car?

The only real issue they have to contend with is noise. A big part of the experience of driving a performance car is the sound it makes. Rich B

The new M-cars have such good insulation that if you remove the fuse which pipes in the synthetic engine noise it would barely be audible. especially at higher speeds with the wind and tyre noise. So if you can just stick a fake soundtrack on an electric car, would it make any difference? Mito Man

The new M-cars do sound very disappointing even from the outside. However, the V8 Audi RSs. AMGs and Jags sound bloody fantastic outside and inside. You can stick a fake soundtrack in a car and some people will be happy with it. in the same way some people are happy to eat Ouorn instead of steak

Philomena Cunk

When the Nissan Leaf came out I firmly shelved the idea of ever owning an electric car. It is slow, expensive and not particularly practical or desirable. So I kept on putting my pennies away for an M5. Then I learned about the Tesla. In real-world terms a 200-300 mile range is more than enough for me (my BMW 335i will only do 300 miles on £80 of petrol), 0-60 is as quick as an M5, space is enough for the whole family, and the other half is happy as it costs virtually nothing to run!

Having previously owned a DC2 Integra Type-R that revved to nearly 9000rpm, I will miss the sound of the good old internal combustion engine. but 100 per cent torque at 0rpm. practically free refuelling costs, road tax exempt, and roughly the same RRP as an equivalent petrol luxury-barge... what's not to like? I really couldn't care less about its green credentials, but with ever-increasing petrol prices, as well as all the other financial penalties associated with owning a high displacement petrol car, my M5 fund is now a Tesla S fund.

gangzoom

Never been a fan, for now at least (and I suspect for some time, if not permanently). EVs raise more questions than they do answers They're the emperor's new clothes of the automotive world in my opinion. Robby1977

It would take something like a new GT3 RS to be fully electric in order to even ping on my radar.

Bunta

I'd have an electric car in a heartbeat as soon as the total cost of ownership gets down near to those of their fossil fuel equivalents. The BMW i3 is nearly there, but the range isn't quite enough for my needs. The Tesla is a tad too expensive. It won't be long until the technology exists to solve all of this, though. Here's to the future of driving. **FaceFirst**

Next month

This issue we've finally driven the LaFerrari. So the big guestion... which do you lust after most: 918, P1 or LaFerrari, and why? Email your thoughts to letters@evo.co.uk, or join the discussion at community.evo.co.uk

From the forums: community.evo.co.uk

Thread of the Month

Cars you wish you'd never sold

Recently I suddenly got a bit misty-eyed over the fact that I sold my old Cooper 220GT. I wish I still had that car. Then I remembered that I sold a 1971 Karmann Ghal. I wish I still had that heavy, wallowy, slow Beetle in drag. Then I remembered that I sold my AX GT to buy a five-door Golf and I am ashamed. Confessional is onen.

My last Westfield. Some seven years of modifications went into it and it was very personal to me. I also sold a Ferrari for an extension. Even if it was a Mondial T coupe, it was still my first Ferrari.

Markcopers

None. Nostalgia usually makes things seem better than they actually were. For example, I used to love my dad's Alfa 33 Vi in the late '80's and remembered it as a 'great car', then I saw one and... let's just say memories can be funny things!

Pug GTI-6. Had it 11 years and sold it to a mate. Should have kept it and garaged it. If I had a garage I would have for sure. **Ron Bursundy**

My E46 M3. What the hell was I thinking getting an X5 to replace it? Formerly M135i I regret selling my 205, mostly because it was smashed to bits by the new owner not long after he bought it. If'd held on to it and finished the restoration it would be worth a decent amount now. I needed cash at the time, though, so that was that.

I would love to have my Mégane R26 as my daily driver still. It was pretty much the perfect car for what I wanted at the time. I don't regret selling it though because it enabled me to get the Exige. which is better. dunce \$500.

My Citroën AX GT. It was unmodified, I was the third owner and according to the **evo** hot hatch test they are now worth more than twice what I paid for a five-year-old one. **Paddydadbo**



Thread of the Month wins a Road Angel safety camera & blackspot alert device worth £159.99



The originator of the best **evo** forum thread wins a Road Angel Gem+. The Gem+ automatically updates its camera database as you drive and allows users to share the locations of flive' camera vans. **ROAD ANGEL**



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COUNTDOWN!

The clock is ticking for the start of the 2014 Le Mans 24 Hours, and major technical changes this season will make the classic endurance race more of a challenge than ever, not only for the front-running LMP1H category cars, but also for the tyre company trusted to supply them all, Michelin



P

PLEASE NOTE: OTHER 24-hour motorsport events are available. But none has the same mystique, drama, romance and heritage as that of the world's oldest

that of the world's olde endurance motorsport event, the legendar French classic, the 24 Heures du Mans. This year's race has the potential to be real thriller. Major technical changes for the

real thriller. Major technical changes for the premier LMPHI category for factory teams are placing the emphasis on fuel efficiency rather than outright power and performance; as a consequence it's harder than ever to predict which of the three major players, Audi, Toyota and, as of this season, Porsche, is likely to walk away with the silverware.

Whichever team does emerge victorious, it will do so on Michelin race tyres. Competitors in the World Endurance Championship, of which Le Mans represents just one of the rounds, albeit aglamorous one, have free choice when it comes to a tyre supplier. Persche, Toyot and Andi have all choose mikhelin as their trusted partner for this most demanding of racing championships. In part, this is because of the mass of experience that has accrued at the Clermont Ferrand based specialist since it first provided tyres for the imagural Le Mans 24 Hours in 1923, and also because of the quality and depth of the working relationship Michelli meigos with its partners.

To understand why developing race tyres for the 2014 edition of Le Mans has been such an exciting and involving challenge for Michelin, you first need a brief overview of what technical changes have been instigated by the race organiser, the Automobile Club de TOuest. The Club's aim is for the technological advances in endurance motorsport to echo

what's happening in the automotive world as a whole – in other words, a fresh focus on efficiency, so that the environmentally concerned driver on the street is better able to see a link with what's happening on the track. Hence in the LMPI category, all major manufacturers' rooms must field hybrid race cars – which is why the classification is now which LMMI Box Action and Towns rooms of the con-

reace in the Lawri category, an ingor manufacturers' teams must field hybrid race cars – which is why the classification is now called LMPIH. Both Audi and Toyota were already running hybrids last season: Porsche joins them for 2014. This year, though, the stipulation is that they must use 25 per cent less fuel. That's a tough call.

But to help, the regulations have dispensed with previous restrictions covering internal combustion engine design, giving engineers free rein to create whatever they want, diesel and petrol, naturally aspirated and turbocharged, as long as it meets efficiency rules. At the same time, there's also greater freedom for the design of hybrid systems and their associated energy recovery systems - they can now be more powerful and drive all four wheels.

This is a huge simplification of an immense technical undertaking. During the 24 hours of the Le Mans race, each car will be given a "fuel energy allocation" per lap, differing slightly depending on whether the internal combustion element is fuelled by petrol or diesel.

Also contained within a car's energy allocation is the amount of energy 'recovered' by the overall hybrid system to be used for propulsion. Race stewards will monitor every car's on-board systems each lap to ensure fuel consumption and power generation stay within the prescribed limits.

In order to achieve the new fuel economy, the 2014 regulations are tailored to give valuable assistance. For instance, the cars' minimum weight has been reduced, although having to incorporate more powerful yet heavier hybrid systems will doubtless have required long hours of development by the estand's engineers. Overall body width is down by 10cm to reduce frontal area, thus improving aerodynamic nerformance.

And, critically for Michelin, tyre width is reduced by 15 per cent - almost 5cm. Narrower tyres cut aerodynamic drag, lower rolling resistance and are lighter, too. But what does that mean for grip and performance? It's not easy with less rubber on the track.' savs Pascal



MICHELIN TOTAL
PERFORMANCE OFFERS
LONGER LIFE AND BETTER
GRIP COMBINED
WITH CONSISTENCY
AND SAFFTY



Couasnon, Director, Michelin Motorsport. The secret is the right balance. The engineer can play about with the material, the architecture, the angles of ply we are going to use, and the shape of the tyre – on the sidewalls it's round, but across the tread it's more or less flat. This triangle between material, architecture and shape is what's going to get the maximum performance out of the car.'

Tyre life is absolutely critical, too, explains Pascal. 'A tyre change is about 20 seconds, so here we have to try to come up with a tyre that's very quick, very consistent, and which can cover the most kilometres possible. That's the perfect combination.'

Unlike IT, there are fewer pit stop team members and only one airgun to change all four wheels after a fill-up or possible mechanical intervention. As a result the pit stops may be longer. So it's crucial to preserve the life of the tyre over several stints. At Le Mans it is well known you can win the race in the pits, but you can also lose it there too. Of course.

supplying all three contenders for outright victory at this year's Le Mans 24-hour race, as well as many other competitors in other classes, might elicit suggestions of a conflict of interests, but because of the way Michelin nurtures the relationship with its partners, each team has a dedicated group of tyre engineers working intimately with them.

Furthermore, every team is invited to test the tyre versions developed with the other teams and each is then given the opportunity to choose whichever suits them best.

Lessons learned by Michelin in the punishing environment of the Le Mans 24 Hours - how to maintain high levels of grip and predictable handling characteristics for lap after manic lap, hour upon gruelling hour - inevitably feed back into the Michelin road tyres you can buy for your own car.

And what of the prospects for this year's Le Mans 24 Hours? The only certainty is that with the changes to the regulations, it really could be anyone's race...

The 2014 edition of the 24 Heures du Mans takes place on June 14 and 15. Subscribe to youtube.com/michelinpassion to watch exclusive Le Mans footage.





by RICHARD MEADEN

HOTOGRAPHY by DEAN SMITH

Ruby Max

Look out, 918 and P1! The Jindi contender in the three-way hybrid hypercar slugfest has entered the ring, and it might just be the best car ever to emerge from Maranello. Perhaps that's why they named it simply LaFerrari...



IT'S BEEN OUITE A POKER GAME, HASN'T

it? First Porsche showed its hand with the 918 Spyder, only for McLaren to swiftly trump it with the P1. Now, after a cool display of restraint, the highest roller - Ferrari - has placed its cards on the table.

Driving the LaFerrari, or F150 to use its prosaic codename, was always going to be the pivotal moment of a remarkable period, one that will go down in history as when the supercar became sustainable yet more extreme than ever. It's a high-stakes pursuit in which the three main protagonists have nailed their cultural, philosophical and technological colours to the mast in an effort to showcase their takes on the future of very fast cars.

All of which leads us to the hallowed Modenese town of Maranello. arriving under the cloak of darkness and delivered to the factory gates in a blacked-out MPV. Our clandestine arrival is the perfect prelude for two hours of total immersion in the secrets and dizzving intricacies of the LaFerrari. Tradition remains a cornerstone of the

21st-century Ferrari operation, but all nostalgic notions are dispelled when you walk into the heart of the factory campus and specifically the cathedral-like surroundings of the F1 team's composites facility. It's a temple of advanced engineering, a shrine to speed.

A line of huge autoclaves gently hum like incubators as all manner of precious vacuum-packed carbonfibre components cure and harden in readiness for their brief, brilliant lives attached to Fernando and Kimi's weekend wheels. It's an evocative setting in which to discuss Ferrari's ultimate road car and understand the direct connection it has to the company's sacred racers. The overall concept has been shaped by a braintrust of boffins from the road and

race sides of the business. Its genuinely beautiful carbon tub employs F1-grade materials and knowledge and is painstakingly constructed by the Scuderia's laminators. In short, it's everything Ferrari knows about road and race cars distilled into one jaw-dropping machine.

It's the same heady mix employed by McLaren in the making of the P1. It's a totally seductive approach and one that actively encourages engineers to challenge convention. This manifests itself in every area of the car. Compare the LaFerrari's tub to that of the Enzo and you'll note mass has been reduced by 20 per cent, with torsional and bending rigidity increased by 27 and 22 per cent respectively. That's down to the intelligent use of multiple types of composite material to

> Above: interior blends red leather and carbonfibre. Right: the LaFerrari is narrower and less tall than its predecessor, the Enzo

'IT'S EVERYTHING FERRARI KNOWS ABOUT ROAD AND RACE CARS DISTILLED INTO ONE JAW-DROPPING MACHINE'



ensure maximum strength where it's needed and minimal mass where it's not. This is only possible using skills and processes taken straight from F1 and therefore only suited to lowproduction volumes. This obsessive pursuit of efficiency is indicative of Ferrari's no-compromise approach in making its new flagship.

Applying F1 thinking and practice to the LaFerrari's construction also means a physical reduction in the size of the tub. Giving width where it's needed (around the seat area). but tapering inwards towards the footwells has created a passenger cell that's smaller, but no less spacious than the Enzo's. The bubble canopy

is also small and narrow, sitting directly over the occupants but not encroaching on any of the hard-won space devoted to taking airflow along the flanks into the two side intakes and channelling remaining air to the upper intakes atop the rear wheelarches. The result is a 43mm reduction in overall width and a remarkable shape that looks like the car is wearing an invisible corset.

Arguably more impressive is a 60mm gain in headroom and a 30mm reduction in roofline height compared with the Enzo. This has been achieved by reclining the driving position a little and doing away with a conventional seat frame. Instead the cushions are bonded directly to the tub, with all the adjustment being in the pedals and steering wheel. This has a knock-on effect of lowering the LaFerrari's centre of gravity by 35mm - an unprecedented gain over an already extreme starting point and something that allowed the engineers to run softer springs yet still reduce body roll. According to Ferrari, every 10mm it could drop the LaFerrari's centre of gravity shaved off 0.3sec per lap at Fiorano, 0.4sec at Monza and 2.2sec at the Nürburgring Nordschleife.

As the evening progresses and the briefings become more and more detailed, it's clear that, as with the P1 and 918 Spyder, there are far too many wonderful technical details and nuggets of information to fit into a magazine feature. Or indeed a magazine journalist's head. Nevertheless some are so compelling you'd kill me if I left them



out, so please bear with me for another paragraph or two while I furnish you with enough factoids to impress your mates.

One of the most impressive achievements is how the LaFerrari manages to package a V12 engine, seven-speed dual-clutch transmission, hybrid motor, batteries and associated dual-clutch transmission, hybrid motor, batteries and associated ancillaries within the same wheelbase as the Enzo. It's also worth mentioning that there are 22 separate ECUs. The 6265c V12 revs to 9250rpm and developes 7894bh pa 9000rpm for a specific output of 126bh per litre. Maximum torque is 516bh ft at 6750rpm. This is supplemented by an electric motor that drives directly through the differential (not the gearbox, as in the P1), spins at up to 16,500rpm and contributes a further 161bh and 199h ft. Togother with the batteries, the total weight of the hybrid system is 146kg, roughly half that of the 918 Sygder's admittedly beefire version. It more than pulls its weight, though, improving acceleration by 20 per cent and delivering a reduction in CO2 of more than 50 per cent.

Finally, in what was clearly meant as a pointed message to a certain Woking-based camaker, the priority for the Laterrari's active aerodynamics – and the troop of dancing spoilers and underbody surfaces that contantly manage the airflow—was an overall balance of drag and downforce and not maximum vertical load. At 124mph this means 560kg of downforce, compared to the P1s maximum of 600kg at 161mph. The surse someone deverer than me could calculate what the P1s figure would be at 124mph, but suffice to say Ferrari doesn't seem too flustered about not having an ultra-extreme track mode for massive downforce figures. Then again, the semi-secret Laterrari XX should have that base covered.

I WON'T LIE: DESPITE MANAGING TO GET SOME SLEEP, when I awake my brain is still buffering from the previous evening's in-depth technical briefing. I calim myself with the hope that though the LaFerari is shot through from front splitter to rear diffuser with technology of mind-loggling complexity, it is born from the same simple objective that gave us the Enzo, FSO, F40 and 288 GTO. That's to say a car that makes your heart pound just to be in its presence, and the promise of a driving experience so all-consuming you'll need a week at the Priory to be treated for adrealind dependency.

The gates to Fiorano release with a clunk before slowly whirring open. After a cursory check from the security guard we make the





short drive through the tunnel that passes beneath a section of the test track itself, before arriving in the leafy paddock immediately behind the small, immaculate pit garage. There, casually parked without ceremony, is a LaFerrari, sparkling in the glorious spring sunshine like a precious gem.

I won't bore you with the logistics of the day, but suffice to say the schedule is or sight it squeaks. As is the custom there's a lot of milling around, which I impatiently bring to a halt by getting in milling around, which I impatiently bring to a halt by getting in the unattended Laleraria and satraing it up. The splings VL2 siren does the trick and we're soon driving back out through the gates and burbling through the heart of Marantelio in the world's hotest and burbling through the heart of Marantelio in the world's hotest and most newsworthy car. We head into the hills, following in the wheel tracks of every Pertari before it and countless evo tests. The road are ragged, still bearing the scars from the ravages of earthquakes that rocked the region back in 2012, but Ferrari's test driver, Raffeede de Simone, said he wanted to demonstrate the ride quality, nimble handling and more compact dimensions. Still, the notion of unleashing a rampan 550bh phyeracru phere seems like madness





'THE NOTION OF UNLEASHING A RAMPANT 950BHP HYPERCAR UP HERE SEEMS LIKE MADNESS – AND PERHAPS IT IS'

Above: rear can get very sideways very quickly, but that's 950bhp for you. Left: huge splitter contributes towards 130kg of front-end downforce at 124mph



'THE HARDWARE MIGHT BE MODERN, BUT THE LaFERRARI'S HEART REMAINS A SCREAMING V12 ENGINE'



– and perhaps it is – but, just as Raffa predicts, the car feels at home on these rough and ready roads.

The rigidity of the structure is absolute and the damping is easy and supple over humps and bumps you expect to send thads and crashes through the car. The steering feels more measured and less cafefinanced than the 458 and 1725 - a slightly softer initial responses that feels totally intuitive. You make one input and hold it, rather than tending to make an initial input then struggling to find the han tending to make an initial input then struggling to find the obes genuinely make it easier and less intimidating to place on the road and the view out over the tops of the wheelarches is the stuff of dreams. The mirrors, hung out in the breeze on long, declient arms, create the illusion that the car is wide, but in truth they show just how shrink-warped the Laferara glasshouse is compared to the overall width of the body. It's as close to the perfect, most exciting, most special driving environment as think I've ever experienced.

The hardware might be thoroughly modern, but the LaFerraris' heart remains accessming naturally sperited VI2 engine. More like a force of nature than something man-made, it owns your senses, its pulsips bear sending all manner of sublec birotions into you not through the structure of the car. Squeeze the throttle and it grunts and bellows and howled and shelfs its way round the VS20pm ree verange, then pops and bangs and crackles as you hit the brakes and slap down through the gears.

Where the real magic happens is in the way the electric motor makes its contribution. The ultimate silent partner, it augments the V12's performance, response and delivery without ever making its presence felt. Italian 6.3-litre V12s aren't noted for their lack of grunt, or lack of willingness to respond to the flex of your right foot, ver Ferrari has used the electric motor as a means of sharpening its



Left: seat position is fixed, so the almost-square wheel and the pedals adjust out to meet the driver. Bottom left: huge paddles operate dual-clutch transmission

response and providing torque-fill in the lower and mid-range of the 112's torque curve, which then allows the pertol engine's tune to be optimised for top-end fireworks. The effect is not that of the PIS fairground-ride whumph; instead it delivers a solid wall of thrust, with no fuss or sense of multiple power sources. Rewind the years and, tronically, you'd find the LaFerrari playing the part of McLaren FI, and the PI the more visceair lode of the Ferrari F40.

On warm, dry Italian roads it all conspires to form a totally explosed writing experience, the razor-sharp throttle response and monster torque punching you out or tight corners like a buller from a monster torque punching you out or tight corners like a buller from a are extremely well judged, so you always seem to know where you are with both ends of the car. The feebone, measured steering gives seem to know where you you something to lean on, so you always have confidence in the front under and, and the stability corntrol system is so precise and dialled into the LaFerrar's dynamics that it only ever flatters your driving, even allowing you to persuade the tail lind on smooth side and letting the rear wheels spin a little before finally applying an invisible guiding and. That's very clever when you consider how much torque is































Is security shields prototype Ferraris from poying eyes. 2-Meaden acclimates to race—best surroundings. 3: mirrors stick out allong way. 4: owner's name can go here (F) star Almos set the LaFerraris 120 record star Fiorano). 5: Raffaele de Simone talks / Meaden through the LaFerraris / Amarcter traits. 6: transmission and launch selectors sit on stalk protruding from centre crosole. 7: leaving the Fiorano garage, 8: Brembo calipers clamp discs that are 398mm at the front, and the same 390mm size as the frozo's at the rear

available and how immediately it is delivered, and something you become aware of if you give the manettino a tweak to engage one of the more relaxed dynamie modes. Ask too much of the rear tyres in a tight corner and the breakaway is sharp, as you'd expect given the energy on tap. Best, then, to park your ego and trust in the technology, for you'll have more fun and get more from the car.

WE ALWAYS KNEW WE'D ONLY BE ABLE TO SCRATCH

so deep into a 950bhp hyperear's performance up in the hills, so we head back to Forman for what promises to be the full, uncensored LaFerrari experience. Like the road drive, the schedule at the track is incredibly tight. a handful of laps adongside de Simone, immediately followed by another five uninterrupted laps solo to get a handle on the car (while tailing to a camera), with whatever time fel devoted to more lapping so ewo's videographer, Sam Riley, can get some trackide video foronge fees youtubes com/veVIF for the results).

With so much riding on these precious laps, the pressure is

Below: LaFerrari is claimed to lap the Fiorano test track almost 5sec faster than the Enzo

'FOR AN INSTANT IT'S UNSETTLING, THE SHOCK SENDING A PULSE OF FEAR AND ADRENALIN THROUGH MY SYSTEM'



enough to make you feel sick. As ever, Raffa is cool, calm and superinpressive. Like all great test drivers, you can tell he knows the car and track better than anyone; one lap he's talking me through the various dynamic modes and stroking the car along, the next he's absolutely on it, wringing the LaFerrari's neck. For an instant it's unsettling, the shock sending a palse of fear and adrenalin through my system and having me pull down in the shoulder harmesses, but hen just as quickly the panic subsides and the otherworldly pace, noise and G-forces become a source of joy and wonder. After the constraints of the road, this first state of unconstrained, sustained full-throttle acceleration, ABS-threshold braking and on-limit cornering is a real-Jelyl and Hyde moment. And now it's my turn.

I've been to Fiorano on numerous occasions, but never has it felt so small. The LaFerrari literally devours the place, romping down the straights and chomping through the corners like nothing I've ever driven here. Everything is so immediate, intense and explosive, yet just as on the road the LaFerrari feels totally intuitive

and approachable. The silly steering response that made the road driving so enjoyable also feels perfect on track—quick, but not jumpy — so you can make one clean steering input from turn-in through apex to exit, rather than feeling your way in with a series of nudges. And when the tail begins to side, your corrective inputs are just as natural and measured, to the point where you can forget the value of the car and drive it purely on feel.

We've become so used to synaptic gearshifts that it's easy to overlook just how great the LaFerarty gearbots. Up and downshifts are so rapid there's no interruption, yet somehow the way the latency and inpulse phases have been finessed means you feel completely engaged with the process of changing gear. It's got to the stage where no govern the process of changing gear. It's got to the stage where no move by instinct. Likewise the brakes are sensational, and all the more so when you consider Ferrari has govern one stage generative and all the more so when you consider Ferrari has govern one stage generative energy even during a RS intervention for absolute efficiency.





As you know, McLaren decided against regen braking because it compromised brake feel, so the three marques are split on their approaches. In terms of outright feel and precision the P1 has the edge over the LaFerrari, but only in the final stages of braking, when most of the speed has been wiped off and you're deep into the corner. Then you feel - and hear - some additional non-friction retardation in the LaFerrari, but it's much more subtle than in the 918. De Simone likens it to the sharp bite you get from a high-performance brake pad in a normal fast car, which is a very good analogy. All I'll add is that whilst you do need to compensate for this non-linear uplift in braking power, it doesn't get in the way of the driving experience and rarely wrong-foots you. Yes, it means the LaFerrari's brakes don't quite have the ultimate precision or purity of the McLaren's, but considering the contribution the regen makes to the capability of the Ferrari's hybrid system, it's a compromise worth making, not least because, like all pioneering technology, it will get better.

Besides, it's all part of Ferraris total commitment to wringing the absolute maximum from what the bybrid system candeliew. We're all used to brakes being an obvious and bountiful source of free energy, but the LaFerrari also charges its batteries under power by gauging the absolute limit of traction, the using a secondary alternator to convert and feed all the energy that can't be put to the tarmac back into the batteries. It's the conjuring rick to end all conjuring tricks, and a major enabler in the LaFerrari's ability to always have battery charge available and therefore always have be that [1950bbp on call.]

Above: feelsome steering and clever stability control inspire confidence in handling. Right: butterfly doors are pure hypercar



'THE LAFERRARI IS A GREAT CAR. MORE IMPORTANTLY IT'S A GREAT FERRARI, PERHAPS EVEN THE GREATEST'

Quite how the La Ferrari manages to deploy is heroic performance with such control yet make the driving experience so approachable, exploitable and engaging is something of a miracle, as is the seamless way in which the powertrain, chassis and aerodynamics have been integrated. It sounds disrespectful to describe it as the 458's bigger. The properties of the seamless have been a superior of the properties of the properties

Just a five years ago there was a real sense that we were starting into the abyers a future where superares were at best endangered and at worst untenable. Few of us will ever be fortunate enough to own such cars, but still their very existence somehow enriches our lives. The prospect of having those derman and fantasies stolen from us was almost too unpleasant to contemplate, yet the car industry has responded—as it always does – with smart solutions. That this virtuous hybrid technology has been hijacked to create an even faster, even more excining breed of superares its bultimate swihcheroo. The LaFerrari is a greet car. More importantly it's a great Ferrari, perhaps even the greatest. And the future is no longer something to fear. B



911 v Corvett

by DAN PROSSER

PHOTOGRAPHY by DEAN SMITH

The latest generation of Corvette was benchmarked in its development against its reardrive German rival. To find out whether brawn beats brains, we put the pair head-to-head at Millbrook to pick a winner based on hard evidence





WHEN WE FIRST sampled the new Chevrolet Corvette Stingray on UK roads (evo 194) we deemed it worthy of the same star rating as a Porsche 911 Carrera S: a

near-perfect four-and-a-half out of five. The big V8 bruiser will meet with a group of its rivals at a later date, but the task on this occasion is to establish just how the Corvette compares to the benchmark European sports car on purely objective terms.

To remove as much subjectivity from this twin test as possible, we're strapping the timing gear to each car over two days at Millbrook Proving Ground to gather hard data. (You can see all the figures on page 80.) Millbrook is the UK's leading automotive research facility manufacturers use it to develop prototypes and hone forthcoming new models in secret, which means our photographers will be shadowed by minders throughout the test - and it allows us to explore a car's performance in fine detail.

The mile straight is perfect for testing standing starts and in-gear acceleration, as well as braking performance. We can find each car's peak cornering ability on the steering pad, while the narrow and undulating handling circuit allows us to compare the realworld performance of each car in a controlled environment. To further objectify the lap data, professional racing driver and friend of evo Marino Franchitti will be taking the wheel.

Neither test car is fitted with any optional extras that might enhance performance. All European Stingrays leave the showroom with the Z51 package as standard (it's an option in the North American market), which includes an electronically controlled limitedslip differential and a rear anti-roll bar. The Carrera S, meanwhile, comes with Porsche Torque Vectoring, which also includes a mechanical LSD, as standard.

The Corvette's V8 delivers comfortably more power and torque than the 911's flat-six - 460bhp and 465lb ft outplays 394bhp and 324lb ft - but, according to our scales, it also carries an extra 134kg. Both cars are fitted with seven-speed manual gearboxes.

The Stingray is suspended by double wishbones all round, with leaf springs front and rear. These leaf springs are made of carbonfibre and they're mounted transversely: they're a world away from the stacked cast iron leaf springs that might suspend an old pick-up. The Carrera S, meanwhile, uses MacPherson struts up front and a multi-link set-up at the rear. Both cars have electric power steering.



'Anything over 2500rpm is wasted as noise and tyre smoke, so prodigious is the torque and so limited is the traction'







Top: Corvette enjoys a 66bhp advantage on the Porsche, but is 134kg heavier when weighed on the day (in fact both cars are noticeably heavier than claimed). Above: Prosser uses a Racelogic Vbox to record the data Left: accomplished GT racer Marino Franchitti is strapped into the 911



Left: Corvette is slower off the line than the 911 but is quicker to 100mph. Below left: Millbrook's mile-long straight hosts the acceleration and braking tests. Bottom: shorter gearing helps make 911's acceleration stronger in higher ratios.



Standing start

THE 911 NEEDS SOORPM AND A swiftly dumped clutch to record its best standing-start time. Its engine is all about power rather than torque, but it is, of course, its location rather than its output that most influences the 911's behaviour away from the line. The Porsche generates so much traction that anything less than 5000rpm leads to the engine bogging down flactidity. The gearbox also helps to maximise the quarter-mile sprint time because it's direct and precise.

The Corvette is a much more demanding car to launch cleanly. Anything over 2500rpm is wasted as noise and tyre smoke, so prodigious wasted as noise and tyre smoke, so prodigious is the torque and so limited is the traction. The best approach is to slip the clutch a little at 2500rpm, allow the rear tyres to break traction briefly and then modulate the throctle over the first few metres. From 20mph i'll task full throttle in first gear, after which point the Corvette just tears up the strip. The second-to-third gearchange is a fraction slower than that in the Porsche, however, because there isn't quite the same precision in the throre closin the attention.

The 911 records a 4.30sec 0-60mph time after just a handful of runs, easily beating Porsche's claimed figure of 4.5sec to 62. It goes on to register 9.51sec to 100mph and a 12.54sec quarter-mile time at 115.5mph.

In the US, Chevrolet claims an impressive 3.8sec 0-60mph time for the Corvette, but that includes a 1ft roll out, a practice that comes from drag racing. The timing beams at drag strips effectively allow a car to cover 11.5 inches before the clock starts, over which distance a fast car can reach walking pace. That advantage is reckoned to be worth 0.3 or 0.4sec further down the drag strip, which means the 4.40sec 0-60mph time we record in the Corvette is just a little shy of the corrected time - and Chevrolet UK's 4.2sec claim. We give the Stingray every opportunity, but no matter what technique we use, it consistently records a best of 4.40sec on this surface. It reaches the quarter-mile marker after 12.66sec; that's a tenth of a second behind the 911, but by that point the Vette is travelling slightly faster at 116,3mph.

The 911 gets away from the line more effectively than the Corvette, but once they're up and running the Stingray begins to tear chunks out of the Carrera S. In fact, it sprints from 20mph to 100mph almost half a second quicker than the Porsche; it's that initial traction phase that costs the Corvette so dearly.

In-gear acceleration

WITH TRACTION TAKEN OUT OF THE

equation, the Stingray is clearly the quicker car—in the lower gears, anyway. The Corvette's vast torque really comes to the fore in second and third gears; the 911 takes almost a second longer to sprint from 30 to 50mph in third.

The 911 keeps the Corvette honest in the top half of fourth gear, but in fifth and sixh it simply sprints away as though the Corvette has its handbrake stuck on. Take the 90-110mph time in sixth gear, for instance; the 911 requires 77/sec compared to 13.0sec for the Corvette. The American cars's stratospheric gearing in fifth, sixth and seventh is too much even for 465lb fr of forque to pull with ease.













On circuit

MILLBROOK'S HANDLING CIRCUIT IS narrow and tight with an uneven, undulating surface. It's a little under a mile in length, but it's a stern test of a performance car's overall dynamic make-up. The Corvette stops the clock at 43.08sec, beating the 911 by more than a second (44.25sec).

The 911's engine is fantastic,' says Marino Franchitia free he Jap, 'but it doesn't have the torque of the Corvette's V8. The 971 is more about the dynamics, the whole package working together. I really liked the initial feel of the 911's setering on turn-in, but when I needed to know where the front was under full load mid-corner, it wasn't there for me. There was a dead spot. It meant I couldn't carry the speed that the car was capable of because leasn't sure what I was going to get. There was a vagueness and inconsistency in load.

Thaction, change of direction and stability were all funtastic. When I turned the electronic systems off I lost some time in stability on rurnin and some peak G in braking, but it actually helped me to find more control and some time in the middle of the corner because the car would rotate more. There's some natural understeer in the balance, but I could control it really well with the throttle because of the work they've done with the rear of the car. I could be really aggressive with my throttle applications to change the balance and to bring the front back onli inche because the rear is so stable.

"The Corvette's steering, meanwhile, seems to have an unnatural dartiness to it, especially just off-centre on initial turn-in. In the corners the car had a floaty feel to it and didn't bite into the surface. I was waiting for the rear to come into play for too long; the front would point where





Right: Porsche's power deficit sees it trailing by more than a second over a lap. Below right: racer Franchitti handles the driving duties around Millbrook's short handling circuit

I needed it, but then there was a lack of feel from the rear. That meant there was too much time lost mid-corner where I wasn't braking or accelerating. I was just waiting for the rear to tell me it was ready for all that torque.

When I got on the throttle, I was just getting single inside wheelspin. I wasn't getting a smooth drift, which was quite disappointing. It's like there was something wrong with the LSD; it fell like an open differential to a degree. The torque also takes its toll on the tyres because the rears were overheating after just a handful of laps.

The Corvette was very good on the brakes, but I really did feel the extra mass over the 911. It felt heavier and a lot of that is because of deficiencies in damping control. There was a lot more vertical movement and less body control. Any undulation or bump would set the ear off and it would take longer to recover. The Porsche felt more sure-footed; it recovered really ouickly after humps.

Thad to manhandle the Corvette to a degree and couldn't be as smooth as in the Porsche, so I was a lot busier with the steering wheel. The V8's torque is incredible; if just fires the car out of corners. There are short blasts on this track where the Corvette's torque is so effective, and that is where the difference in time between the two cars comes from.

Both gearboxes work well, with good clutch feel, but the throw and precision of the Porsche's gearbox puts it ahead for me. I really like that both cars had seven-speed manuals because it made it much easier to find the right gear for each corner. I was also impressed that there was no brake fade, even though neither car had carbon-ceramic brakes.'



'The Corvette needed another three metres to come to a complete halt from 100mph compared to the 911'

Braking

ON A COLD SURFACE, THE CORVETTE

and 911 record very similar stopping times. The heavier car, however, covers a greater distance when pulling up from 100mph and 70mph. In fact, at 92.99m the Corvette needs another three metres to come to a complete halt from 100mph compared to the 911, that 134kg weight penalty proving costly over that measurement.

Conversely, the Stingray actually pulls up in a slightly shorter distance than the Carrera S from 50 and 30mph, suggesting that its brakes actually have a little more initial bite.

Conclusion

THIS TEST HAS SHOWN THAT, WHEN it really matters, the Corvette is faster than the 911. The package is dominated by that monstrous engine, so the car is characterised by brute force.

In contrast, the dominant component in the 911 is its chassis, so the performance comes from driver confidence. There's also a greater homogeny and sense of synergy between all the major components in the 911 than there is in the Corvette. As we've come to learn, however, the 991 has lost a degree of that confidence compared to the preceding models, mostly as a result of its electric assisted power steering.

This test, though, is about objectivity. The Stingray is faster than the Carrera S both in a straight line, at least when the artifice of a launch is discounted, and around a lap. That it's also more than £20,000 cheaper simply seals a commanding victory for the Corvette.

Porsche 911 Carrera S (991)

evo rating: ****



Engine Flat-six, 3800cc CO2 223g/km Power 394bhp @ 7400rpm Torque 324lb ft @ 5600rpm Transmission Seven-speed manual, rearwheel drive ISD PTV Front suspension MacPherson struts, coil springs, PASM dampers, anti-roll bar

Rear suspension Multi-link, coil springs,

Brakes Ventilated discs, 340mm front and rear ARS FRD Wheels 8.5 x 20in front, 11 x 20in rear Tyres 245/35 ZR20 front, 305/30 ZR20 rear Weight 1395kg (1443kg as tested) Power-to-weight 287bhp/ton (claimed) 0-62mph 4.5sec (claimed)

Top speed 188mph (claimed)

Basic price £83.545

On sale Now

Chevrolet Corvette Stingray Z51 evo rating: ****



Engine V8, 6162cc CO2 279g/km Power 460bhp @ 6000rpm Torque 465lb ft @ 4600rpm Transmission Seven-speed manual, rearwheel drive, electronically controlled LSD Front suspension Double wishbones. transverse leaf spring, adaptive dampers, ARB Rear suspension Double wishbones. transverse leaf spring, adaptive dampers, ARB Brakes Ventilated discs, 345mm front, 338mm rear, ABS, EBD Wheels 8.5 x 19in front, 10 x 20in rear Tyres 245/35 R19 front, 285/30 R20 rear Weight 1539kg (1577kg as tested) Power-to-weight 304bhp/ton (claimed) 0-60mph 4.2sec (claimed) Top speed 180mph (claimed) Basic price £61.520 On sale Now

PASM dampers, anti-roll bar Track/pad data

Flying lap time 44.25sec (70.53mph average) 1/4-mile 12.54sec @ 115.5mph Steering pad (peak G) 1.21

Location Track/pad data

Venue Millbrook, Bedfordshire, UK Flying lap time 43.08sec (72.45mph average) GPS 52.04558, -0.53331 1/4-mile 12.66sec @ 116.3mph Conditions Dry, cloudy, 15deg C Steering pad (peak G) 1.18

Standing acceleration



Handling circuit Length 0.867 miles



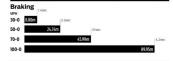
Standing acceleration



4th

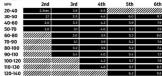
5th

6th









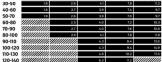


3rd

In-gear acceleration

MPH

2nd





STILL



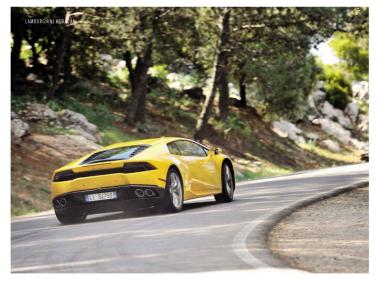
by JETHRO BOVINGDON

PHOTOGRAPHY by DEAN SMITH

CRAZY?

The Huracán LP610-4 comes with a host of new tech and the promise of being easier to drive than its predecessor, the Gallardo. But does that mean some of the old. wild Lamborehini mayic has been lost?





A

AT NO POINT IN THE next few minutes will you feel sorry for me. Even so, I'd like to give you an insight into the Lamborghini Huracán launch. It starts at 7.45am

with a coach trip from Marbella up to the Ascari Race Resort, followed by a press conference and a series of four-lap track sessions in fourcar groups behind an Aventador until 1pm. The cars used on track will then be prepped for the road drive (new tyres, fuel, a spit-and-polish), which is scheduled to begin at 2pm and finish around 4pm back at the hotel in Marbella.

Lamborghini has laid on several photographers and there is already a big archive of images to choose from. However, this is a Very Important Car to ewa, so we annut our own photographs and our own video. Photographer Dean Smith and film-maker Sam Riley have therefore flown our separately, and after blowing up one hire car will wrait impatiently in the slowest Opel Zafira in the western world for 2pm to roll around. Our mission? Three options for the cover, eight pages in the magazine and a

video. In two hours. To say it will be an intense afternoon is something of an understatement, and although we will get back to Marbella heroically late (just before 10pm, since you ask), the point is that coming to a meaningful conclusion about any car when you're in a constant state of panic and frenzied activity is very tricky indeed. Especially when it's a car as complex as the Huracán.

It's worth reiterating just how important the Huracán is to Lamborghini, too. Not just important, vital. It replaces the Gallardo, which was launched in 2003 and found 14.022 buyers. Consider that only around 30,000 Lamborghinis have ever been produced and you start to understand just what the Huracán represents. To heap yet more pressure on the new car, the model it replaces is still a mighty machine. In evo 189, David Vivian described the run-out hardcore Squadra Corse version in these terms: 'I don't think I've driven a faster car between two points than the Squadra Corse, certainly not one that distils and intensifies the supercar experience so potently... It is an extraordinary display that translates into an aura of invincibility I don't think I've ever encountered in a road car before.' At the other end of the Gallardo scale, my last and lasting memory of the old stager is of a basic LPS50-2 with a manual gearbox. It was simply breathtaking, Big boots and all that.

Emerging from the coach, blinking into the sunshine to find a V-formation of bright white Huracáns is a pretty good way to start the day. However, it's hard not to think that maybe the designers have capitulated in the face of the enormous task they were handed. The Huracán is a fine-looking car, certainly, but it's not a revolution and neither is it possessed of the same fierce brutality that seemed to sweat from every blunt line of the Gallardo. In the press conference the message is one of useability and accessibility, of a car that is easy to drive and flatters the inexperienced... Say what? I'm not suggesting that a Lamborghini should be an evil-handling monster, but it needs edge and attitude. I hope it's under there somewhere.

The Huracán's architecture does little to crystallise what it might actually deliver on road and track. An all-new chassis that's largely











aluminium, with carbonfibre utilised for the central tunnel, rear bulkhead and B-pillars, is ten per cent lighter than the Gallardo's aluminium chassis and a whopping 50 per cent stiffer in terms of torsional rigidity. This is good news. Yet the Huracán comes in at a dry weight of 1422kg – 92kg more than a McLaren 650S and 42kg more than a 45k flatla. Not so good.

Of course, the Huracán is packing more hardware than its rivals. The new electrohydraulic multi-plate clutch centre differential runs a nominal 30:70 front-to-rear torque split but can send as much as 50 per cent of drive to the front wheels or 100 per cent to the rears. It is fed information from a unique system of three accelerometers and three gyroscopes placed at the car's centre of gravity. Dubbed Lamborghini Piattaforma Inerziale (Inertial Platform'), it enables the car to adjust all of its systems in real time for ultimate response and stability. It's brain-twisting stuff, and LPI also controls the new (optional) magnetorheological dampers (£2520), the ESC system and, should you be mad enough to choose it, the variableratio Dynamic Steering, more of which later.







see if you can spot the hexagon theme. Right: 5.2-litre V10 is a development of that used in later Gallardos; it now has 602bhp. Below: 12.3in instrument panel can display most data, as well as satnay info





Camborghi

Beneath all the technology there's something we can all take comfort from: an evolution of the Gallardo's 5.2-litre V10, now with a dual injection system. Direct injection allows a high compression ratio of 12.7:1 and hence more power, while multi-point injection improves efficiency and emissions at lower loads. The numbers are sensational, but such is the evolution of the supercar that 602bhp at 8250rpm and 413lb ft at 6500rpm is merely competitive. The Huracán covers 0-62mph in 3.2sec, 0-124mph in 9.9sec and can reach at least 202mph. Again, stunning numbers, but some way off the pace of a 650S or a Speciale. Does it matter? Not to me, but trundling down the Ascari pitlane in a searing yellow Huracán, doubts are circulating. Please let it be good...

THE WEIRD THING IS THAT THIS all-new car with an all-new chassis feels instantly and unmistakably a bit like a Gallardo. What's weirder is that it's a very different car inside, with all the major controls migrated to a Ferrari-style steering wheel-cum-control centre. With no stalks to get in the way, the old gearshift paddles borrowed from an early Bentley Continental GT that were always just a stretch too far away are banished, in their place long ears of cool metal. The wheel itself is a smoothed-off hexagon and behind it there's a fantastic 12.3-inch TFT screen that can display one huge rev-counter, just the satnay screen or any number of permutations in between. It's cool and it works beautifully.

So everything you see and touch is all-new, the hexagon theme is literally everywhere and even on the smooth surface of Ascari's pitlane there's less tension to the ride than you'd experience in the board-stiff Gallardo. The new seven-speed dual-clutch gearbox, known as Lamborghini Doppia Frizione, is a revelation after the clunky old e-gear singleclutch automated manual, which evolved into something approaching acceptable but was always very compromised. LDF, by comparison, is clearly going to be dreamily effective. I've clicked the little red 'ANIMA' switch at the base of the steering wheel from Strada to Sport. Corsa can wait for now. Like Ferrari's manettino, ANIMA (that's Adaptive Network Intelligent Management, and also the Italian word for 'soul'...) adjusts the gearshift speed, suspension, stability control and the four-wheeldrive system. Should a Lamborghini draw so much inspiration from its noisy neighbour over in Maranello? I'll leave that for you to decide.

Anyway, everything looks different, the gearbox feels different and the ride is instantly and tangibly more supple. However, there's some Gallardo DNA fighting to get out. The driving position feels familiar behind that huge rake of windscreen, the optional carbonfibre sports seats feel too big and a bit uncomfortable (Lambo just cannot get seats right) and the noise is hard and ugly and beautiful. The Huracán hits hard too, leaping forward with a lightweight's agility and the suffocating squeeze of a heavyweight. That V10 is some engine, same as it ever was... only more so. The doubts and the niggles begin to evaporate.

Turn One is a downhill left, the apex falling away dramatically and the sense of familiarity going with it. It's the Dynamic Steering, a variable-ratio system that uses a motor attached to the steering column to alter the steering ratio by almost 100 per cent, from 9:1 to 17:1, depending on speed, steering angle, wheel speed and a host of other factors measured by the LPI system. It can even deliver 'countersteering impulses' at the limit. The idea is for a super-direct rack at low speeds and a much more deliberate rate at high speeds for stability. The reality is that the steering feels hyper-jumpy for that first downhill left and then changes at every corner for the entire lap. To be fair, Lamborghini has done a very good job tuning Dynamic Steering and it's way less offensive than the same system in fast Audis, but it's unnecessary and puts a layer between you and the surface. Just say no.





Above: Huracăn's preferred on-limit behaviour is understeer, but it can be overcome with determination Right: switchgear neatly mimics the ignitionbutton cover



'THE HURACÁN **HAS A RARE** DEPTH OF CHARACTER AND ABILITY'

The first laps aren't exactly banzai but they are revealing. The good stuff is very good: the creamy savagery of the engine, the sweet precision of the gearbox and the fact that Lamborghini has finally nailed ceramic brake feel and response. There are some pretty big caveats, though. Grip is strong but it's the front that lets go first and the understeer is quite determined. Under braking the Huracán feels fairly heavy and the rear jinks around like an R8's. With the ANIMA in Sport the car should be at its most entertaining as it sends less torque to the front wheels than in the lap time-optimised Corsa mode, but the gearbox will snap in an upshift rather than run into the limiter, which erodes your control and confidence when the rear does start to move around.

Things improve with familiarity and when the Aventador up front gets a move on. Suddenly the understeer doesn't seem overwhelming, the car adjusting its balance accurately if you snap the throttle shut on corner entry, the rear edging wide on corner exit when all 602bhp is ripping into the track... The Huracán starts to give me some options. The last session is a proper heartthumper, the car floating through the corners, the four-wheel-drive system obviously shuffling the torque around and settling the car into neutral four-wheel drifts. It feels terrific and I suspect on the optional P Zero Corsa tyres it would up its game still further. I could stay here all day, but the road is calling.

There's a lovely stretch of tarmac near Ascari that zigs and zags through trees and rock faces, edged by little pools of dusty rock fall, sometimes heaving and then falling rapidly downhill, framed by bright silver Armco. It's a little too narrow to be a true supercar road. but it's a real challenge and the only other cars we see on it today are an orange Huracán and a wrung-out hire car rattling with camera gear, just like Sam and Dean's deathly Zafira. Perfect.

If the track initially exposed the Huracán and then slowly succumbed to its capabilities, the road seems easily and immediately at its mercy. Once again, the ferocious engine and punchy 'box are the stars of the show, backed up by the excellent damping, fantastic ceramic brakes and the sheer grip and composure of the chassis. Even here on the road the Corsa setting has become my default. I like the engineered-in but authentic-feeling snap of the gearchange, the fact that it allows total control of the ratios, the extra heft of the steering and that the ride never descends into harshness despite being on its stiffest setting. I'd say the Huracán is a little stiffer in ride quality than the light-footed 458 Italia and the smooth 12C (I haven't tried the 650S as yet), but it's a great compromise and dials in the edge that I feared might be missing.

The Huracán rips through the landscape and if you're prepared to push hard, the rewards in terms of pure speed are fairly surreal. Traction in particular is freakish, almost undefeatable. and that means that as soon as the car is turned in you can give the V10 everything and you'll exit with just a hint of understeer and a whole heap of speed. For a while the feeling of invincibility it exudes is reward in itself. It doesn't matter that you're not hustling the Huracán like vou would a Speciale.

And then, it does matter. Slowly you become



acclimatised to the speed and crawe more interaction, a from end of greater resilience and the feeling of the car dancing to your tune. And the feeling of the car dancing to your tune. And like on those first play of Ascari, it starts to feed a little reluctant, a little disappointing. It takes a little reluctant, a little disappointing. It takes a little reluctant, a little disappointing. It takes a little reluctant, a little disappointing. It is a widtle to even recognise you're feeling that way. It's a wildly fast, bright yellow Lamborghini and the sum is shining on a road that seems to exist solely for our enjoyment... How can it be anything other than spectacular?

Never in one day have my feelings about a car changed so drastically. A first I hated the steering and was frustrated with the understeer on track, but quite soon I felt like for untack, but quite soon I felt like for unlocked the car's secrets and started to really enjoy its procise adjustability. A different fishorout to the scalpel-sharp and always oversteery Speciale, but one with unique rewards. On the road I initially loved that it seemed to capture and surpass the drama and sheep points-to-point speed of the hardcore Gallardos, but soon after had a creeping sense of disappointment.

Then it happened: the mad half-hour you get on any of these smash-and-grab launches where

Specification

LAMBORGHINI HURACÁN I P610-4

Engine V10, 5204cc
C22 20g/km
Power 602bhp @ 8250rpm
Torque 413lb ft @ 6500rpm
Transmission Seven-speed dual-clutch gearbox, four-wheel drive

Front suspension Double wishbones, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar Rear suspension Double wishbones, coil springs.

dampers, anti-roll bar Brakes Carbon-ceramic discs, 380mm front, 356mm rear, ABS, EBD Wheels 8.5 x 20in front, 11 x 20in rear Types 245/30 R20 front, 305/30 R20 rear

Weight (kerb) 1532kg
Power-to-weight 399bhp/ton
0-62mph 3.2sec (claimed)
Top speed 202mph+ (claimed)
Basic price £186,760
On sale Now

evo rating: ***

caution is dispensed with and you finally learn what a car is all about. The Huracán peeled back its layers in revelatory style, shedding the cloving understeer and serving up a breathless mix of brutal grip and ever-changing balance. As on track, the chassis gets better the harder you push and soon it's right in the sweet spot. The Huracán is not an entirely natural car at its limits but it is fascinating. Turn in on the brakes to kill the understeer, feel the rear edge wide, pin the throttle and the torque first hits the rear axle and then migrates to the front until the car is perfectly balanced under power, four wheels driving and slipping in perfect unison. It's an elusive sensation but that makes it all the more exciting and satisfying when it comes.

My last miles in the Huracán are superb. How will we feel about it on familiar roads and in the company of its fiercest rivals? It's tricky to say. But the Huracán has a rare depth of character and ability, and although it takes time to feel like you're intrinsic to the experience, once it lets you in you'll have a proper party. It's a Lamborghini and no mistake. B



When DC Shoes co-founder

Ken Block took up rallying and stunt driving, he wasn't content to stay a mere amateur. Several

WRC points finishes and successful Gymkhana videos later, he reveals the story behind his devotion to cars



KEN BLOCK DIVIDES opinion. Not least mine. I watched his first Gymkhana video, or Gymkhana Practice as it was called, and loved

it. Who didn't? I loved Gymkhana Five too - the shots of the Fiesta leaping around San Francisco's iconic streets remain some of the most extraordinary I've ever seen on YouTube. What's niggled me over the years, though, is the perception which has become prevalent amongst some of the population that Block is somehow the greatest driver ever to walk the planet.

The driving is fun and theatrical, but can these people not see that the car also does quite a lot of the work and that quite a bit of the driving really isn't that precise? (He clips a lot of barriers.) The idea that he would somehow show Sébastien Loeb a thing or two when he went into WRC was preposterous, yet that's

by HENRY CATCHPOLE

PHOTOGRAPHY by DREW GIBSON

what people thought and it irritated me. Of course, the man himself might not have had any such delusions, and I still hoped that he was just a proper car guy that had found a cool way to promote shoes, but it was hard to tell behind the lurid liveries and tyre smoke.

So, when Castrol invited us out to Spain to watch Ken and some footballer called Nevmar filming a promotional video called Footkhana, it seemed like a good opportunity to go and see what the real Ken Block is like. Obviously I did due diligence in my research and looked up Kenny from the Block on Wikipedia, but sadly this wasn't very revealing. According to the font of all internet-based knowledge, the only thing that happened to Block before 2005 was that he was born in November 1967, making him 46 today and 35 when he began rallying. So. the first thing I ask Ken (once he and his latest set of overalls emerge chameleon-like from their hiding place in front of the Fiesta) is what happened car-wise in his life before 2005...

I grew up loving rally for some reason, I wasn't interested in American motorsports, he says. I grew up in southern California, so I was skateboarding and riding dirtbikes and eventually snowboarding, and although rally came along later in my life, it was sort of a perfect mix of what I liked as a kid but in motorsports. Being able to jump and slide and race a car in all sorts of different conditions from the desert to the snow... it was just a perfect fit for me.



For the Gymkhana videos, Block needs rubber that gives good acceleration, slides progressively and is consistent throughout the life of the tyre. He also needs something that creates a lot of smoke, too. As he says: "It's furny how much technology is in there for something you want to destroy."

TYRES

ENGINE/PERFORMANCE This is the 2-litre Focus WRC engine rather than the

current 1.6-litre Fiesta WRC engine. For rallycross itruns a bigger restrictor and puts out about 650bpb, but for Gymlkhana it's detuned to 'just' 550bp, 0-60mph is dispatched in a barely credible 1.8sec.

HANDBRAKE

There's no mistaking the handbrake for the gearlever—the handle reads 'Hoonigan'. It's just a litt of fur,' says Block. The gearbox is a six-speed Sadev unit that's been strengthened to cope with the power, and the transmission tunnel has been widened accordingly, too.

BLOCK'S FIESTA IN DETAIL



WHEELS Block cites his background in

industrial design for inspiring the wheel covers and says they're also an horage to the front wheels on a Landa Delta. S4. Apparently as a happy accident, the small turbine-like fins between the covers and the actual alloy (made by a small company called lifteen S2) also do some very cool things with the tyre smoke when it comes pouring out.



FRACE RAMPS



His voice is slow and quite gravelly – pleasant to listen to and quite calming. It's certainly more laconic and his whole demeanour is more laid-back than you might expect from someone whom an energy of rink sponsors and whom most people would class as something of an adrenalin junkie. The facial hair is somewhere between stubble and a beard and his expression remains fairly impassive for much of the time, hidden behind huge sunnies. It can seem quite intimidating a first because he's certainly intelligent and I get the impression he doesn't really suffer fools. But then he'll alugh at something and suddenly his whole face will crack open into a huge smile and it's like a completely different side has appeared.

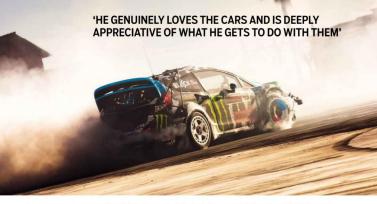
So what about his car history? 'Ooh, my first road car was pretty boring, it was a hand-me-down from my mum, like a Toyota Corolla or something. The first car I ever bought was a 16-valve Volkswagen GTI and as soon as I had that car, I was our mimicking what rally drivers did and pulling the handbrake in the snow. I didn't know what the hell I was doing but I eventually learned!

He reveals that he's also had a Mercedes 190E, but for many years he just had a truck to cart all his dirtuct around in. Then when he became a businessman he had around in. Then when he became a businessman he had executive saloons, and then in 2005 the Subaru STIO, which the first video arrived. Certainly not a bad history and it clearly bears the hallmarks of someone who has almone who had substory and it clearly bears the hallmarks of someone who has a bendering the STI, and his main cars. These days, as well as the Fiesta, it's all Ford product all the way, as you'd expect — the's got a feety of the standard in the mountains. However, there is one other Ford this know he's got in his garage and, because I own one myself, I can't resist asking him about it.

I drove a Mk2 Escort for the first time years ago at a Colin McRae memorial rally and it was extremely difficult!' he beams, 'I grew up racing all-wheel-drive cars, that's all I really do, so to go out and race a car like that, just rearwheel drive, old-school-style, was a huge challenge - and I sucked at it! I wanted to learn more, so I bought one myself but unfortunately the one that I bought was a light tarmac build. I tried to race and play with it on the gravel and it just broke every time I took it out, so I've kinda changed it now. turned it into a bit of a Gymkhana car. It'll be done later this year. But I absolutely love those cars. There's nothing like that feeling of being in control of a rear-wheel-drive rally car on the gravel. It's just extremely fun, so one day. when I get done racing and rallying all-wheel-drive cars, I'm going to just enjoy myself in some rear-wheel-drive Escorts... But that's years from now.'

Honesty, self-deprecation, an appreciation not only for historic Exorts but rear-wheel drive in general this answer endeared him to me enormously, as you can imagine. I spoke to a few of the Hoonigan Royal mechanics (many of them formerly of M-Sport) that look after his cars and the Exort is by all accounts for extraordinary, with a rear end that wouldn't look out of place on a WRG car. Should be interesting. Talking WRG, I ask Block about the differences he experienced between rallying in America and in the WRG.

'You know, when I was growing up I loved rally but I had no idea that it existed in the States at all,' he says. 'We have a couple of really good schools and that was my first step to



Above: Block's RX43 was filmed creating a football-themed video, Footkhana, ahead of this summer's World Cup

go and learn the basics. I've won a bunch of national railies and I was rookie of the year in my first year and all that sort of fun stuff, but once I figured out I had a little bit of natural talent for it, it was always sort of a dream to go to the highest level. So I went and raced in the WRC and I enjoyed it, but it was always kind of a side project for fun as opposed to trying to be world champion or something.

Coming from America we're definitely a bit handicapped: we have exceptionally good events, but it's a small championship and we don't have the same sort of recee system as a lot of other countries, so I really struggled when I went to the WRC because I was so far behind on that side of it. The thing is, a lot of top rally drivers. .. we can all get in the car and know how to set wu pand get them down the stage quiet fast, but if you're not as advanced on the notes you can be miles behind as far as the time goes.

I still enjoy it. Last year I got a seventh overall lin Mexico) and I'm still really proud of being able to race and be in the top ten in the WRC, but unfortunately a lot of other people had these really crazy expectations that I awas going to go battle Loeb or something, and believe me, I'm far off ever being able to do that But it's been great. I feel I've really been able to accomplish something with the amount of experience and understanding of where I come from... To be able to go out and finish some stages in the top five and finish overall in the top seven is a huge accomplishment for me.'

So he was always very realistic about his WRC dream and, to be fair, who wouldn't want to have a go at WRC if they had the opportunity? There are plenty of people that do, but just don't have the publicity behind them whipping the press up into a frenzy. The reason that the people expected a lot is, of course, the Gymkhana series...

I really appreciate the fact that so many people like watching this stuff; he says. For us, coming from motorsport, we were used to what all-wheel-drive rallytype cars could do, but I think to the general public, they'd never seen them represented that way. So it's been very cool coming up with unique ideas every year to go out and have fun with hish-borsepower all-wheel drive cars.'

Is there a particular video that he's enjoyed making? For me the fact that San Francisco let me do everything me the ago at the San Francisco let me do everything that we got to do is amazing. When we went up there and did the original source we weren't even souting San Francisco, we were scouting something outside the city – it wasn't even in my head that we could do all that stuff. In the end the city of San Francisco was just so great to work with and they were actually offering us things. Like the Bay Bridge. I never thought the bridge could happen, but they offered that to us. So it was really just a cool experience – I mean it's one of the most isonic cities in the world for driving, with movies like Bullit enties done there, and so to go and drive there and do the things I wanted to do was literally a dream come true.

And that's what comes over above all else during my briefit me with Ken Block: he geninely loves the cars and is deeply appreciative of what he gets to do with them. I think that's partiy because it's all come to him slightly later in life. He's certainly proud of what he's achieved and there's a steely competitive edge behind the laid-back demeanour, but he's also nicely realistic about his abilities. The reason that this sometimes doesn't come across to the wider public is that he's simply so good at the marketing side of things that the quieter sincerity of the man himself ends up getting lost in the tyre smoke.



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In the £60,000 co Jaguar's F-type V6 S has no tougher rival than the new turbocharged BMW M4. Can the British car really take on the might of M? We head to Portugal to find out by HENRY CATCHPOLE PHOTOGRAPHY by PAUL HARMER Claws out





WALKING THROUGH the cool, air-conditioned reception towards the big hotel doors, it feels a bit like approaching both Christmas morning and your first

day at a new school. There's the excitement of unwrapping a new M-car and playing with it for the first time, but there is also the knowledge that this is a car that we will probably use as a benchmark for the next seven vears, until it's replaced. Unlike a LaFerrari, this is also a car that lots of people might reasonably aspire to own one day, particularly once depreciation has had its wicked way. It is therefore a very important car and I'm nervous because I want the M4 to be good. In fact I want it to be spectacular.

As the hotel's glass doors automatically slide apart, it's like opening the bonnet on a hot engine as a wave of roasting Portuguese air hits pasty British skin. Such is the vivacity of the paintwork on the five identical M4s parked quietly outside that you might reasonably expect

Settling into the driver's seat, which looks good and has inflatable bolsters to grip your thorax snugly, it's easy to get a decent position thanks to the steering wheel's huge range of adjustability. Shame it still feels a bit fat and squishy, but the paddles fixed to the back of it fall neatly to middle and index fingers. Then, with the door open so that I can hear the engine come to life for the first time, it's just a press of the starter button and the straight-six settles, quite undramatically, into a low, throbbing idle,

The first few miles are interesting as we head inland from the Algarve coast through the quiet 'burbs of various towns, mimicking mundane everyday driving. The M4 is clearly happy to do docile. Mooching along with its twin-clutch gearbox in auto and the dampers and steering in either of their first two modes (Comfort or Sport), the ride is good and you only really notice the suspension's underlying firmness over bigger hits like speed bumps. In its efficiency setting the engine is just a distant murmur at lowish revs so the cabin has a refined air about it that would undoubtedly make the

'The M4 romps through the gears at a ferocious rate, each change dropping the car straight back into the thumping heart of the turbocharged torque'

them to be radiating the heat. The searing colour is Austin Vellow Metallic and looks like a modern incarnation of Phoenix Yellow, which was the mustardy launch colour of the E46 M3. Walking round the car you notice the way the bootlid smoothly flicks upwards, just like the E46 CSL's did. Perhaps BMW is purposely trying to hark back two generations to the last time it had six cylinders under the bonnet bulge...

Principal amongst all the anxious questions tumbling around in my head is the one that wants to know what this new 425bhp, twinturbo, 2979cc straight-six is like. Subsets of the same question wonder if it will be a match for the outgoing naturally aspirated 414bhp V8 in terms of throttle response, and what the soundtrack will be like ... All in good time.

As I open the door I instinctively look at the transmission tunnel to see what sort of gearbox we've been given. A six-speed manual comes as standard (and saves 40kg) but unsurprisingly there's a stumpy little lever like an upside-down teardrop in our car, indicating that we've got the seven-speed Dual Clutch Transmission that most buyers will no doubt plump for.

M4 a fine long journey or everyday companion.

Coming out of a roundabout with the mildest bit of enthusiasm, two things happen: the amber DSC light flickers an admonishing warning and, as the needle strays into the midrange, the soundtrack morphs into something that sounds curiously like a big sporty diesel. Odd. I have a play with the button that controls the engine and put it into Sport. Instantly the sound is engorged as the flaps open in the exhaust system and more woofle is pumped into the cabin. There's definitely a straight-six edge to it, but with a lot of bass, and there's also something a bit synthetic about it.

What's not in doubt is just how fast the M4 is. We're heading towards a small village on a road called the N2, and as the Portuguese national speed limit signs appear, an empty straight unfurls in front of the yellow nose. Holding the throttle wide open, the M4 romps through the gears at a ferocious rate, each change dropping the car straight back into the thumping heart of the turbocharged torque and sustaining the surge. The 0-62mph claim is 4.1sec for the DCT car, quicker than that for any previous M3













is grabbed by the M4, much to Catchpole's amusement. Below: ontional (£6250) carbon-ceramic brakes on M4 come with slightly clashing gold calipers

'The silver Coupe pulls up at the junction and then prowls slowly towards us past the dazzling bright white houses. It looks like an absolute knockout'



(including the GTS) and even the current M6. It certainly feels that quick too.

The disconcerting thing is that when I hit the brakes there isn't quite the brick wall effect I was anticipating. Our car is fitted with the optional carbon-ceramic brakes and it's not their performance which feels weak; instead it's the weight of the car that they're being asked to slow down that seems to be the issue. It's the same on the way into the corners too - the M4 just feels a bit heavy and reluctant to get to the apex. Odd given BMW's claim that this car is 80kg lighter than an equivalent-spec E92 M3.

Out of the corners the DSC is flashing ever more insistently so I press the 'M2' button on the steering wheel, which has been programmed with the M Dynamic mode. This in theory allows more slip, but the M4 still feels shackled and the DSC light continues flickering whenever I get on the power out of corners. I wonder what it would be like in the wet...

YOU'RE PROBABLY WONDERING WHEN I'm going to mention the Jaguar that you can see in the pictures. The answer is now. As I reach the village of Barranco do Velho I get a call from David Vivian saying that he and the F-type Coupe are lost. After diving into the excellent iDrive (why did we ever hate it? Much better than touchscreens) I manage to dig up some GPS coordinates for him and then settle down to wait on a bench in the sunshine. Various small pelotons of cyclists cruise past. freehubs clicking like crickets when they catch sight of the car and stop pedalling.

After about half an hour I hear the V6 S in the distance and look down the quiet street expectantly. The silver Coupe pulls up at the junction a couple of hundred vards away and then prowls slowly towards me past the dazzling bright white houses. It looks like an absolute knockout. Everyone has said it already, but there is not a bad line on the Jaguar and there is part of me that thinks the test is over before it has begun. As Viv comments over a post-breakfast, pre-mid-morning Marlboro: 'It's the difference between a car that's designed to look good and a car that's trying to look good.'

The fundamental architecture of the Jaguar's interior has more flair too, with the big flying buttress of a grab-handle arching out from the dash and the high transmission tunnel snugly cocooning the driver. However, the BMW's cockpit feels more solid and the materials more expensive, with fillips of carbonfibre, tricolour stitching and pewter-coloured metal inserts lifting it nicely. The satnay seems better, too...

I stick with the BMW for the next few miles up the N2 and decide to turn DSC off





'You feel like you're wringing the neck of the Jag's engine and extracting every last drop of performance from it' completely. The first slide is a little tentative because it seems to initiate so easily that I'm worried it might get quite big quite quickly, but not so. And once you know how easy it is, literally every corner on the N2 seems to become an opportunity to get the rear wheels over-rotating. Load up the outside-front, then with the revs somewhere in the monstrous midrange torque plateau (1850-5500rpm), simply press the throttle. There's no need to stamp or mash the pedal deep into its travel because the M4 is already balanced in such a way that it's just waiting for a nod of approval from the 406lb ft to tip itself into a slide. You'll feel the rear go light and hear the revs rise as the tail steps out of line, but catching it is easy and the brilliant Active M Differential means your right foot is then the master in deciding how long the black lines behind you are going to be.

Turning around and driving back down the road. I'm slightly shocked at just how many corners I seem to have tattooed with two long stripes of melted rubber. There's one particular slide through an uphill right-hander that I'll remember for some time, because it just seemed to go on and on and on. I turned in early and almost immediately had the car oversteering, but sweetly rather than luridly. It felt totally in control all the way through the corner, right foot keeping the slide going but in check on my side of the road, just an eighth of a turn of opposite lock dialled in and the razor-sharp throttle managing the rear axle every bit as precisely as in the V8 E92. All the time the M4 was accelerating through the corner feeling both balanced and infinitely more balletic than I would have believed possible after the initial drive this morning.

Back at base camp. Vivian and I switch cars and I head off in the Jaguar for what turns out to be one of the most surprising drives I think I've ever had. Flitting down the same bit of road in the F-type, it feels like I've jumped into an Elise. That last sentence sounds like ridiculous



Left: cash only at local filling station.
Below: Jag's brace of exhaust pipes sound gorgeous on the overrun. Bottom: M4 and F-type are closely matched on the road



hyperbole but I'm really not exaggerating. The whole car feels so light, responsive and direct that you'd swear it was about half the weight and half the size of the BMW. I checked afterwards and the F-type Coupe is actually slightly wider and about 60kg heavier according to the official figures, yet it feels the opposite and then some.

The steering is lighter and less connected that the M4S, but it is accurate and the way and the whole car changes direction, particularly the whole car changes direction, particularly can be set in the striffness in the car and the consequent englity means you can place it so much more confidently within your side of the road. In fact, after the BMW you don't so much feel like you've placing the car as flinging it between the constant corners. Wy initial nagging doubts about the BMW feeling a bit lardy on the brakes suddenly seem entirely instiffed.

With 50hbp and 67lb ft deficits, the Jaguar's supercharged V6 inevitably feels a little thin and torque-light after the thumping BMW, but the upside of this is that you feel like you're wringing the neck of the engine and really extracting every last drop of performance feel like you're wringing the neck of the engine and really extracting every last drop of performance from the car. The eight-speed ZF gearbox is good for and unto too, although its shifts cartle radium the crispness and alacrity of the BMW's DCT. Dox. The noise's Well, there's more rasp and it sits at a higher register than the BMW's note, so if a vigule different. It seems to get carried away in the slipstream behind you a bit more, too. If



Jag is for you because it is constantly crackling like a line of firecrackers on the overrun.

The downside to a road as good as the N2 is that both cars are glugging fuel. BMW claims 34mpg on the combined cycle while Jaguar reckons on 32.1mpg, but unsurprisingly we're not getting that today. Fortunately after a decent strop in the F-type we reach a small village with a petrol station. Even better, it has super-unleaded, and although the place looks deserted, the pumps are on, Just as I'm opening the fuel cap, a small, wizened man appears from the shop opposite and hurries across the street prattling Portuguese and waving his hands like an allegro Sir Simon Rattle. More from the gestures than the words. I gather that we can only pay by cash, but handily there is a machine if I turn left at the phonebox, then go right, then shimmy up a street for a bit. Sure enough, there it is, so I extract enough to pay for the fuel and then buy ice creams from the shop for lunchtime sustenance.

As Viv comments over a second luncheon cigarette: 'Stepping from the F-type to the M4 is almost surreal. The BMW feels ponderous, slow-witted and heavy by comparison. The steering is much, much meatier but seems to require 50 per cent more lock to get the nose to turn in.' I concur between mouthfuls of chocolate Feast and wonder whether the M3. which adds just 23kg to the kerb weight and is meant to be dynamically identical, might feel more impressive because it will be approached and compared as a saloon rather than a coupe. Something to be answered in a future test...



Right: Jag feels more agile on twisty Algarve roads. Below: F-type's 20in wheels are an option, as are the tested M4's 19s. Bottom: Active M Differential makes sliding the M4 a relative doddle







I GET BACK INTO THE M4 AFTER LUNCH

and instantly select what I think is the perfect set-up: Sport steering, Sport throttle/engine, Sport dampers (although the N2 is smooth enough for Sport Plus). DSC off and the gearbox shift speed in the middle (it's impressively aggressive in the quickest setting, but a bit too brutal for the road). Although there is a definite lethargy on the way into corners with the M4. you nevertheless enjoy the feedback you're getting from the front end compared to the Jaguar. Lean hard on the outside tyre and you can feel just when the sidewall of the Michelin Super Sport is starting to wilt.

And of course, once you've pushed the front grip to its limits you know that the rear grip is also ready to be loosened. Normally you'd give a little lift just to restore some grip to the front and avoid any power understeer when you get on the throttle, but most of the time the M4 doesn't seem to require this, instead naturally tucking its nose in, eager for the oversteering to start. If you're watching from a chasing F-type, this is the point you see two black lines magically materialise from the rear tyres, which is rather fun. And if you listen very carefully you'll hear the nearest Michelin dealer rubbing his hands with glee.

The M4's engine is curious. The torque and mid-range punch are not in doubt. However, BMW's claims that it still revs like a naturally aspirated engine are open to a bit more debate. If you accelerate hard down a long straight from the mid-range and hold on until the floating rev counter in the head-up display is glowing yellow and red before flicking the right-hand paddle, then acceleration seems unabated and the noise improves. However, there is certainly no final rush to the red line and the actual substance behind the last 1500rpm feels a bit thin. Instinctively you feel like you want to change up before you even start tickling the top end, and coming out of a corner you know that you want to be in the meat of the torque rather than at the peak of the power.

It's certainly a very different experience to the E92, where the best drives I had were when the needle seemed to be living permanently above about 6000rpm. The engine's performance is, however, more accessible in the M4 and

'Once you've pushed the M4's front grip to its limits you know that the rear grip is also ready to be loosened'

settle at eight-tenths and get into a fast flow of light, incisive turn-in followed by good drive early through the corner, all just nibbling at the edge of grip rather than teetering over it.

So where does that leave us in terms of choosing between the M4 and the F-type Coupe? For some it will be a done deal even before driving the cars, because on the one hand you have the presence of two useful rear seats and on the other you have the sort of good looks that make sensible people do irrational things. Either of these could be deal-breakers one way or the other. In pure driving terms it's quite clear-cut as well, but the decision as to which is better is hard to call. The agile Jaguar excels all the way up to the point where grip is lost and then becomes a touch scrappy, while the BMW only really sparkles when you're right on or over the limit of grip. This means that to make the best decision you've got to be very honest about the way you drive and how you enjoy driving. For some, the five per cent of the time that the BMW is in its oversteering element will outweigh anything the Jag can do the rest of the time, but for others the fact that the agile Jaguar is more enjoyable more of the time means it is the obvious choice.

We, as ever, puts it very succincity: 'If your enjoyment of each ear could be illustrated on a grid, there would come a point where the graph lines of the Jag and BMV cross over. Thing is, the first talent curve is much fatter than the M45, which is why it's the one flahwe.' He's right, of course, and I know that unless you're extremely lucky, engry stretches of tarmac nirvana like the N2 aren't constantly available for playing on. But I did enjoy what the M4 dli in that long right-hander. I think I'll rather enjoy doing that for the next seven years.

'To make the best decision you've got to be very honest about the way you drive and how you enjoy driving'

the throttle response is phenomenal for a car with forced induction – helped perhaps by the reductions in rotating mass thanks to a forged crank and a carbon propshaft. But there is just a tingle of disappointment that there's not much reward for hanging on to the gears.

We've been gradually working our way north up the N2 all day, snatching photography as we go, and once we reach Almodôvar we decide to turn back south and head for home. I hop into the F-type and set off with Vivian in my mirrors in the scowling M4. What ground the Jaguar ekes out into the corners the BMW just about claws back down the straights, so it's an even match on the road. With grip largely outweighing grunt in the Jag, you don't casually instigate slides on the exit of bends like you do in the Beemer. You can have some fun on the brakes into corners but when you reach the limit of the Pirelli P Zeros at the front, the breakaway is quite abrupt, with the nose instantly washing wide. The subsequent oversteer if you get on the throttle provocatively tends to be slightly scrappy, with the LSD leaching away more power through the unloaded inside wheel than it should. Much better to step back a notch,



Left: robust BMW interior includes superior satnav. Below: Catchpole and Vivian discuss the coupe duo over an ice-cream and a ciego respectively.







by DAN PROSSER

PHOTOGRAPHY by DEAN SMITH

S U PLE R

As a youngster, evo's Dan Prosser worshipped TVR. On a memorable night in London, he drives the legendary Sagaris for the first time. Should you meet your heroes?



CRACK THE WINDOW OPEN A COUPLE of inches and it begins. The much-promised exhaust

note had been absent until now, lost among the tuneless thrashing of the engine up ahead! With a window lowered some and one of those cannon-tube exhaust cans firing point-blank at whatever solid object might

be alongside, the Sagaris instantly finds its voice. Now, rather than floating away in the car's truthulent wake, the fined Blackpool drawl risches for it the tunnel wall and back into the cabin. From 3000rpm the TMRs voice is uncultured, a staccato bark, and as the throttle pedal is eased over its long are the bark gets louder and angier. It builds to a filtily, lumpy smal at the top end; it's oppressive, like monsoon rain on a int noof. Britinging the pedal book into the foothwell ignites an unevervolley fire of racks and pops on the overrun, disturbing the late-night peace of London's unknown tunnels and until back streets.

As of last summer, the linimiable British ports are manufacturer has new curvedinar and a new lease of life, too, Premises have been acquired, so suggests the rumour mill, and in 18 months or so we'll get the first glimpse of its new sports car for the modern age. With the prospect of a evitalised TVR on the horizon, we shought it was high time to revisit the manque and remind ourselves of what a low-volume carmaker with a team of single-minded entineers and a low of followine is caused.



There is also, I must confess, a personal reason for returning to the Sagaris a decade after it first arrived. As a teenager, TVR was, to me, without equal. At the core of my jingoistic infatuation with the brand was its Britishness, but I also loved the styling, the interiors, the sound of the

things. The numbers in the back of magazines suggested, too, that they had enough raw performance to make a mockery of the established mainstream competition. For a brief time I did, I hesitate to admit, carry a photograph of a TVR in my wallet. So this is an opportunity, wise or not, to explore that infatuation from a more informed and objective viewpoint.

To both contemporary road testers and impressionable adolescents, the Sagaris was the pick of the last-of-the-line TVRs. Like its stablemates it was built around a steel spaceframe, wrapped in fibreglass bodywork and had an in-house straight-six at its core. Suspended by double wishbones all round, it weighed less than 1100kg at the kerb. The 4-litre powerplant delivered 406bhp through a five-speed BorgWarner gearbox. TVR quoted performance figures of 3.7sec to 60mph and 185mph flat-out.

The Sagaris was originally conceived with endurance racing in mind. but TVR soon reimagined and re-executed it as a road car. The open slashes

Above: Prosser lives out his TVR dream: 'axe marks' in the front wings reflect the Sagaris name, which is derived from an ancient weapon

over the wheelarches of the outlandish concept car, first shown in 2003, were deemed impractical for road use; for the 2005 production car they were filled, but the axe marks remained for styling purposes and, one presumes, to set the tone. Between then and the 2006 collapse, somewhere

in the region of 200 units would roll out of the production shed. In the years since, many have been shipped overseas, and today fewer than 120 remain registered in the UK. As they become fewer and further between, used values are soaring.

Both then and now, it was the way it looked and the way it sounded that commanded my affection. We've come to London, therefore, to celebrate those qualities; the Sagaris will surely look its best beneath the bright lights and against the spectacular night-time backdrops of the capital, not to mention sound its rawest in the city's network of tunnels.

IT'S AROUND MIDNIGHT. PHOTOGRAPHER DEAN SMITH HAS

bagged his tracking shots in this secret, deserted tunnel, which doesn't lead anywhere and seems to start nowhere. With my window halfway down and the straight-six worked out through first and second gears,



barking exhaust note bouncing off the concrete wall, I'm glad we've given the Sagaris this stage. In here it sounds unhinged. My affections deepen.

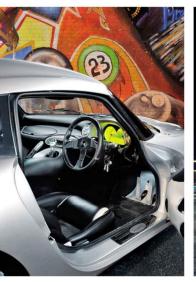
We move back overground to Southwark for the stunning view towards glistening Canary Wharf, Beneath sodium lights the Sagaris begins to show its best side. The aesthetic is, of course, dominated first by the wild styling - that unique rear wing and the wheelarch slashes - and secondly by the road-hugging stance. In this soft light, though, I can begin to pick out some of the subtler, more refined design cues. There's a beautiful line up front that completes the shape of the headlight and then reaches over the wheelarch; there's another that dissects the flanks and takes weight out of the profile view. Far from being a shock-and-awe one-trick pony, the Sagaris has depth to its design.

TVR cabins always did look as though they'd spilled from the mind of a science-fiction graphic novelist. Inside, the Sagaris is all organic curves and milled-from-solid aluminium minor controls, always cool to the touch. Soft leather tightly and perfectly wraps the dash and transmission tunnel, the signature odour of resin having long since faded beneath the fragrant hide. There are fit and finish issues and ergonomic irritations try to adjust the angle of the seat back whilst on the move - but for the most

'THE AESTHETIC IS DOMINATED FIRST BY THE WILD STYLING AND SECONDLY BY THE ROAD-HUGGING STANCE'

part the cabin feels of a much higher quality than I'd have given credit. It is a near-perfect driving environment, With so much glass, visibility is very good indeed, the clear plastic spoiler affording a slightly distorted view out behind, at least until it gets covered in road grime. The lightly dished steering wheel pulls out close to the chest and with the centre cushion torn out of the base of the seat, the driver sits low and feels in tune. Only the pedals frustrate, as they're offset to the right with the clutch in line with the centre point of the driver's body.

With the wheel held in a natural quarter-to-three position, my elbows





fall inside the transmission tunnel to my left and the little armrest on the door card to my right. It feels completely natural, until I reach to shift to a new gear and realise that I have to lift my entire left arm over the top of the transmission tunnel just to grab the lever. You never forget whilst driving a TVR that it is something so far out of the ordinary.

The Sagaris sounds and looks just as I'd hoped it would, and the cabin is completely charming, too. Tonight, as it was back when I first laid eyes on the Sagaris in the pages of magazines, it's enough to bowl me over. I scarcely dare to hope that the driving experience can live up to the rest of the package.

From cold, it needs to be coaxed into life with care. The engine fires at the first turn of the key, but it then settles into a rough and unwilling idle. The brakes squeak a little and the gearbox wants a deliberate action to slot in new gears. Having cycled through the digital dash display using the small buttons on the dark side of the steering wheel spokes to find the engine oil temperature readout, I stay within 2500rpm and watch the numbers slowly rise.

Sixty degrees C is the point at which the engine can be unwound, but with the readout flicking around the mid-40s even 15 miles down the road,

'PEDESTRIANS AND OTHER DRIVERS LOOK ON AGAPE AS THOUGH THE SAGARIS HAS ARRIVED FROM A FAR-FLUNG GALAXY'

it seems as though it'll never come. The numbers climb with agonisingly slow progress, two forward and one back. With abundant cool air hitting the engine at motorway speed, it just won't get up to temperature, so I wind it around a little further to 3000rpm. It's like a striptease; a 20-minute courtship. The Sagaris doesn't give itself up easily.

The reaction from onlookers is quite unlike anything else I've experienced. Exotic cars will always provoke expressions of joy and excitement from some, or determined ignorance and hostility from others. In the Sagaris, though, you can actually detect the non-recognition, the





brief sense of confusion. Pedestrians and other drivers look on agape as though it has arrived from a far-flung galaxy, unable to rationalise the otherworldly styling.

Perhaps it's the long gearing, or maybe the engine falls a little short of as claimed 4069hb, Ir could just be the level ell continued to the continued to th

Around the straight-ahead and through sweeping corners, the powerassisted steering is light, a little aloof for total confidence. The level of trust does build, however, and with the chassis loaded up mid-corner, the steering takes on a near-perfect weighting, the wheel writhing faithfully in the palms.

Above (from left): high gearstick means changes require effort; passing the London Eye; rumbling through the Limehouse Link

Mk high
As in the way the engine needs to be coaxed up to
charges
singthe
clurk
singth reputation and as in the way the steering
showly reveals its inherent quality, so the chassis needs to be
approached with patience. There are no electronic safety
approached with patience. There are no electronic safety
is not even ABS. Initially find myself pouring the car

into familiar corners at completely pedestrian speeds, perhaps anxious that the Sagaris will violently sang it I so much as trouble the front tyres on turn-in. Its unfounded reputation precedes it. A few corners further on, I build my pace and the Sagaris finds its balance, leaning on each axle equally hard with no safety understere windowt owork through.

There is infinite body control in vertical motions, so tauty damped is the chassis, but i comes at the expense of plaincy. The Sagaris does skip along an uneven road surface, lacking the finesse and suppleness of the very best modern sports cars. That does translate to complete precision on smoother roads, but that stiffness – combined with a tendency to follow ruts, cambers and the crown of the road – means the process of guiding a Sagaris down a demanding stretch of blacktop is a frantic one.

Nothing comes for free here. There is no performance without effort, no reward without investment. This TVR is diametrically opposed to,



Above: 4-litre straight-six peeks out from beneath the (closed!) bonnet. Right: side-angled twin exhausts amplify engine roar say, a 911 Turbo, a car that serves up the totality of its performance at the mere depression of a pedal. The driver is the weak link in a Turbo, the failible fleshy bit that can't be controlled by systems and programmes. In the Sagaris, the driver is responsible for every facet of the car's behaviour. There is considerable performance on

offer, but only if the driver is first willing to invest the effort. That must make this deranged TVR one of the most absorbing performance motoring experiences of recent times.

There are many of you out there, I've no doubt, who will find less appeal in the immaculate overall polish and readily accessible performance of a 911 or Cayman than in the sense of occasion and two-way engagement of the Sagaris. Day by day my mind changes as to whether I count myself among you, but I am, at the very least, quite content that my boyhood infatuation has been upheld.

With special thanks to TVR specialist Str8six (str8six.co.uk) for providing the Sagaris for this feature. This particular car is currently for sale.

Specification

TVR SAGARIS

Engine In-line 6-cyl, 3996cc CO2 406g/km

Power 406bhp @ 7500rpm Torque 349bhp @ 5000rpm

Transmission Five-speed manual, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip diff Front suspension Double wishbones, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar Rear suspension Double wishbones, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar Brakes Ventilated discs, 322mm front, 298mm rear

Wheels 8.5 x 18in front and rear Tyres 255/35 ZR18 front and rear Weight (kerb) 1078kg

Power-to-weight 383bhp/ton 0-60mph 3.7sec (claimed) Top speed 185mph (claimed) Price new £49,995 (2005)

Value today £40,000-60,000

evo rating: ****







BHOTOCRABHY by DEAN SMITH

DOWN FORCE

DEMYSTIFLED

Armed with a Lotus Exige V6 Cup R, a track and a team of technicians, we study exactly how downforce keeps cars glued to the road at seemingly impossible speeds





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THE CAR: LOTUS V6 CUP R



THE DOWNFORCE CONFIGURATIONS



Splitteron Wingoff Nogurney



Splitter off Standard wine No gurney



Splitteron Standard win Nogurney



Splitteron



Splitteron lavimum wine 20mm gurney

THE TRACK



HETHEL WAS CREATED TO CHALLENGE all major aspects of vehicle dynamics, with a varied mix of low-speed, high-speed and tricky transient corners linked by long straights. Recently resurfaced and upgraded to FIA safety standards, it's more than a match for the legendary Fiorano and Weissach test facilities in driving challenge and rich history. Here we're using the full 2.2-mile circuit, including the fearsome Windsock Corner and the demanding sequence named after illustrious Lotus F1 world champions Jim Clark and Graham Hill.

THE LAP

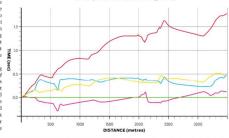
HETHEL IS A CHALLENGING PLACE TO

try and master, but the Exige V6 Cup R is a fast, physical and forgiving car in which to try. The early section of the lap (turns one to five) is the most technical, rewarding a clean, accurate line and punishing greedy attempts at carrying too much speed too soon. The approach to Andretti is tricky, being slightly angled to the right, with a bump right in the heart of the heavy braking zone. Patience is the key here, so go deep, get the car stopped and turned, then try to punch it out cleanly for the flat-out shimmy through the left-right-left-right Senna Curves.

By now you're really motoring, approaching the daunting Windsock kink at upwards of 120mph. You want to carry as much speed as you can through here, but spotting the right place to dab the brakes is difficult. Too early and you lose your momentum, too late and you'll be fighting for control all the way through. And most likely soil your trousers. Survive Windsock and you've got half a mile of straight to power along, before trying to nail your braking for the

LAP TIME COMPARISON

Differences in time over the course of a lan of Hethel, in comparison to the time recorded by the fastest set-up combination (green line)







Above: running no rear wing costs 1.88sec per lap; removing front solitter makes little difference to overall lap time, but has a perceptible change to frontend's rate of response

very tight second-gear chicane. From here it's a squirt to the Rindt Hairpin, then a charge down the Fittipaldi Straight before another awkward offset braking area and the ballsy right-left at Clark to complete the lap.

We completed a structured test running with five different aero set-ups. The same number of timed laps were done in each set-up with the best lap taken from each. Of these set-ups, two represent the upper and lower extremes. The highest downforce setting (pink in our data) is achieved with a front splitter, the rear wing at its maximum angle of attack plus a 20mm Gurney flap on its trailing edge. At the opposite end of the scale (red) we left the front splitter on but removed the rear wing completely! In between we have three intermediate set-ups: a baseline combination of front splitter and rear

wing set to its standard angle (yellow), the same rear wing with no front splitter (blue) and a third option featuring the front splitter and the rear wing at its minimum setting but fitted with that 20mm Gurney (green).

It's the last of these aero configurations that achieves the fastest lap time. In the graph above it is represented by the horizontal green line. which forms the datum by which the remaining four set-ups can be compared. Basically, any trace that dips below the datum is faster at that particular moment in the lap. Any line that sits above the datum shows time being lost.

The red trace charts the 'widowmaker' set-up, i.e. no rear wing. It makes for a slow but lively lap, the Exige struggling for traction, inspiring less confidence under braking and requiring corrective lock to control oversteer through the high-speed Senna Curves and Windsock.

By contrast, the maximum downforce setup makes meaningful time on the optimum set-up through the technical medium-speed sections, but loses time down the straights. It's actually 0.7sec up at one stage in the lap, but that advantage gradually bleeds away over the remainder of the lap to finish 0.12sec slower. The vellow and blue traces are most intriguing, for they show how different set-ups can achieve almost identical times by gaining and losing time in different areas of the lap. I certainly wouldn't have predicted a difference of just 0.02sec between front splitter on and off as subjectively they felt totally different, but as we'll see over the following pages, downforce isn't just about raw grip.



IF DOWNFORCE IS THE DRIVER'S

friend, then drag is the enemy. The best illustration of this comes on the run between Windsock and the chicane three-quarters of the way down the main straight. In a car with no aerodynamic devices, your minimum speed through Windsock would be the deciding factor in your V-max immediately prior to braking for the chicane, but once wings - and drag - enter the equation, things aren't quite so simple.

With the rear wing removed, you can feel the Exige accelerate harder down the straight, as the steepness of the red trace below shows. It gains almost 41mph from the minimum speed (102.2mph) at Windsock (just off the left of the graph) to the point I hit the brakes for the chicane. Compare this with the pink trace representing the maximum-downforce setting and while my speed out of Windsock is higher (106.1mph), it gains less speed down the straight and attains a slower V-max, adding 33mph to peak at 139.2mph.

Above: the rear wing that improves corner sneed increases drag and therefore inhibits the Evige's acceleration down the straights

One thing to emerge from this test is the effectiveness of the Gurney flap. An apparently crude device, it has an enormous effect on the amount of downforce produced. Originally devised and used by American racer Dan Gurney, the simple right-angled spoiler works by generating more downforce from a given size of wing, because it enables them to be run at higher angles of attack. In race series with tightly regulated wing sizes, the benefits far outweigh the additional drag the Gurney generates. Trivia geeks amongst you will also like the fact that the Gurney flap was the first aerodynamic development made in racing to be transferred to aircraft design.

BRAKING

LOOK CLOSELY AT THE BRAKING results and you can also see the effects of downforce and drag. I consistently braked later and spent the least amount of time on the brakes when running the higher downforce set-ups featuring the additional Gurney flap (green and pink). Of course, some of this is due to braking from a lower V-max, but it's also due to the added stability downforce brings and the simple additional braking effect of drag. You have the confidence to hit the brakes later, and

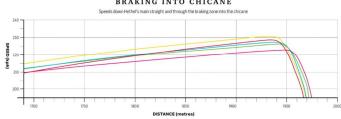
With the rear wing removed (red), there was no sense of braking through lifting off alone and the Exige felt as though it was working its ABS system harder to control the car. It really did feel a struggle to get it slowed, and the margin for error was smaller. There's very little to choose between the intermediate set-ups.

the car stops better when you do.

As an aside, the data tells us I was braking 16.5m later with the highestdownforce set-up than the lowest setting. That sounds like a lot, and is in terms of creating an overtaking opportunity. It also distinctly felt like I was consciously braking later, but at the speed the Exige was travelling, that extra 16.5m equates to braking just 0.26sec later!



BRAKING INTO CHICANE



RACERS' STORIES



ANDY WALLACE

Driving the Toyota TS010 through Signes corner at Paul Ricard, I knew it should be flat (at c200mph), so larrived flat-out in top gear, fully intent on not lifting. Just before turning in, my foot moved 10mm off the throttle stop. Bugger! Shouldn't have lifted! Next lap: I'll do it this time... Damn it! Lifted again! Next lap: YES! FLAT! I couldn't hold my head up all the way through the corner, but I did it! Next lap I was sweating on the run down the Mistral Straight and I lifted again. Eventually I did it flat every lap, but I'll never forget the feeling of grip in that car around that corner.



DARIO FRANCHITTI

The biggest example of downforce I've ever felt was in my IndyCar at New Hampshire a few years ago. It's a one-mile oval, with no real banking and essentially a hairpin at each end. We managed to run just flat-out round it in practice. Then in qualifying I persuaded my engineer to take some wing out as I reasoned that if I could go faster with less drag, I'd produce more downforce than before. After an hour or so of psyching up, I managed it and it all worked as planned! Sustaining 5.5G mid-corner was almost beyond belief.



TIFF NEEDELL

Downforce made commitment more important than feel. In my ground-effect Ensign F1 car, you just turned in and hoped you had the strength to hold on. I also remember racing a Porsche 962 in Mexico City. The last corner - Peraltada - was a monster, with a bump before the exit. It was fourth gear in the Porsche and the steering was unbelievably heavy at high speed. So you'd be clinging on for dear life, and it'd be all you could do just to hold the required lock. Then you'd hit that effing bump! At the end of a stint, your arms would be hanging off. It'd get to the point where it was tempting to crash just so the pain would stop!





Above: Exige V6 Cup R exceeded 140mph down the main straight at Hethel in its minimumdownforce trim. Left: rear wing angle is easy to adjust with simple tools. Below left: Gurney flap is held in place with industrial tape. Below: flo-viz paint gives visual evidence of the airflow across the Exige's body





THIS IS THE MOST SUBJECTIVE AREA of downforce, because it's where aero is used to build driver confidence by adjusting the handling to suit a driving style, or compensate for a car's inherent dynamic behaviour.

Without the rear wing attached the Exige feels incredibly edgy through high-speed corners. Windsock in particular needs continual small, nervous nudges of lock to float it through the corner. It's knife-edge stuff and costs bundles of time. Conversely, the high downforce settings have the greatest sense of grip through the heart of the corner, but it's hard to feel you've made the best use of that grip because it's easy made the best use of that grip because it's easy to over-brake and not carry enough speed, or 130 to be too confident and throw the car into the

corner which de-stabilises it as you turn in

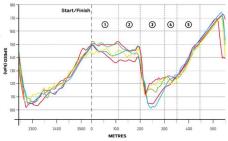
The big surprise is when running a standard rear wing with, and then without, the front splitter. With the splitter on, the front end is very responsive, which combined with my driving style (one the Lotus Motorsport boys judge to be a bit too aggressive for a car with aero) translates into a darty corner entry. This upsets the rear, which means I then waste time letting the car settle before getting on the power. Removing the splitter seems like a recipe for disaster, or at least terminal understeer and a grassy excursion or two, but it feels fabulous on the entry to Windsock. With less downforce on the front end it can't react as rapidly to my initial steering input, and this calming effect on the rate of the front end's response ultimately asks less of the rear, so the car feels more balanced and 'as one' from the moment I turn in. The result is that I carry more speed in and get on the throttle sooner than with the splitter on.

It's a different story through the more technical turns one to five (shown in the graph above). These require successive direction changes, the later corners needing greater steering angle for a more sustained period of time. That 'splitter off' set-up (the blue trace) that feels so good through Windsock works reasonably well through turns one and two. But as the front end is asked to work harder for longer, with that loading punctuated by quick direction changes, the lack of front-end bite and fast-twitch agility translates into not being able to get the nose tucked in, so I run wider and wider of my desired line.

For confidence through the transient sections you can't beat the maximum downforce set-up (pink), which feels totally hooked up through the direction changes and gives you a tremendous sense of stability and confidence. The difference is marked: 95mph versus 89 with no splitter and a less aggressive wing (blue) at the transition from turn one to turn two.

SPEED THROUGH TURNS ONE TO FIVE

The speeds of each individual set-up, as tested on the twisty first section of the Hethel track





Left: more flowiz Below: front splitter provides more stability and therefore greater speed through trickier direction changes. Far right: Meaden examines the data with the experts from Lotus Motorsport



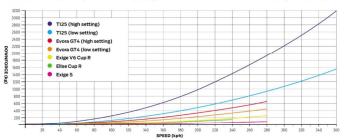
RELATIVE DOWNFORCE

There's been also for talk recently about the amount of downforce the McLern's Igerment in his smot aggressive Race mode. At roughly 600kg, it's firmly in purpose-built race car territory, but what does that mean in the grand scheme of things? This graph libutates the relative downforce between everythings from the Lotus Exge Sroad card to the F1-style Lotus TLZS single-seath. As you can see, the Eviger road car generates enough positive downforce to cancell fit and provides stability, but not enough to feet. The

track-only Exige V6 Cup R more than doubles the maximum downforce, with meaningful levels of aerodynamic assistance arriving at lower speeds and an ability to tweak

your neck muscles through high speed corners.
The next step up is the Evora GT4, which manages to pluck more downforce from the air at 130kpt (80mph) than the Exige S finds at 270 (168mph), and then goes on to delive P1-rivaling aero at higher speeds. However, all these cars are last playing at downforce compared to the T125.

One book at this extraordinary machine's high downforce cover lesh your play practed brown ordious what it must be like to drive it through a high-speed comer. Indeed, the trace could also illustrate commitment, such is the extraordinary amount of dare ppi in generates. When travelling at the Exige S S V-max, it delivers 20 times more downforce (roughly 2000kg, the cure continuing by skyroket as speed increases. It really is true what they say about downforce the faster you can go, the faster you will go...



CONCLUSION

THIS EXERCISE WAS ALWAYS GOING to be a measured and tentative foray onto the nursery slopes of downforce, rather than a gung-ho attempt to throw myself down the equivalent of a black run. Nevertheless, a day spent pounding round Hethel in the Exige V6 Cup R has provided some insight into the complexity, subtlety and almost infinite flexibility of this blackes of black arts.

Even at this basic level, downforce is that most generous of entities; one that demands a certain level of commitment, yet immediately rewards with a level of confidence that exceeds your upfront investment. Beyond that, it's a tool that can be used to tune everything, from the responsiveness of the front and stability of the rear, to straight-line speed and braking stability. It can also provide tactical set up that optimise pace in the sector of a lap most likely to yield an overtakine manouver in another.

When taken to extremes you can immediately feel the difference – the black and white, if you like. Yet when you explore the intermediate settings – the subtle shades of grey – you can't necessarily put your finger on precisely what

has changed, or why you feel so much happier to carry more speed through a certain part of the lap. But the data doesn't lie.

We tend to think of aerodynamic downforce as a neat trick that exists only to augment mechanical grip and reduce lap times, yet it's surely no coincidence the latest breed of hybrid hypercars – complete with sophisticated active aerodynamics – are so sweetly balanced and exploitable to drive to their limits on track. You only have to watch video footage of the P1 and LaFerrar's rear unings continuously dancing in the slipstream to appreciate the positive effect.

If advances in brake and tyre technology were the game-changers towards the end of the 20th century and electronic traction control and stability management the defining dynamic advances of the 2000s, then the manipulation and mastery of active aerodynamics looks set to be the key to unlocking an unprecedented breadth of handling balance that spans all speed ranges. When it comes to road car aerodynamics, the downforce story has only just begun.





by RICHARD MEADEN

PHOTOGRAPHY by MALCOLM GRIFFITHS

ULTIMATE FORCE

Having experienced downforce in a mild form, Meaden now gets strapped into a championship-winning sportscar to find out what it's really capable of – if he dares push hard enough...



WINGS. EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK ON this Alpine A450 LMP2 car there are wings. And flips and flaps and fences and dive planes and Gurnevs and diffusers and venturis and every

kind of aerodynamic device you can think of. All are precisely positioned to nudge, tease, cajole and persuade the air to flow under, around and over the car with maximum effect. Paint it in camouflage and it could pass as a weapon, such is its obvious— and intimidating—singularity of purpose.

Last year, this very car won the European Le Mans Series (ELMS), taking led Alpine name back to the forefrost of endurance racing. The LMP2 class is somewhat overshadowed by the mighty LMPI factory efforts from Audi, Toyou and Porusche, but bein mo doubt that the cars are fabulous, (relatively) affordable and footen timense battles. The driver lines upon feature wealthy amateurs, which makes it the most accessible route to up-off arcing and major-league downforce.

Constructed by Oreca, the A450 is built around a strong, lightweight carbonfibre tub and requires ballast to hit the minimum class weight of 900kg. Propelled by a Nismo-built VK45 4.5-litre V8 race engine – the motor to beat in LMP2

is has \$50bhp and 428lb ft of torque. That makes for an impressive, but not head-scrambling power-to-weight ratio, at least in the context of road-legal hypercans like the LaFerrari and McLaren PI. However, where an LMP2 car gets really serious is in its emphasis on downforce and a deliberate surfeit of aerodynamic grip over grunt.

As a driver, I fyou can't make thist critical leaps of futth or which unlocking the secrets of downfore relies, you have no business sixting in an LMP2 car. Unless you're a journalist, in which case, you simply have to commit as much of The Rucing Divers's Book, of Excuses to memory as fittingally possible. At least thing's what Leep reliffer myself as the Signatech mechanics youl' down the shoulder strappe of my harness and wave me out-one office featureless strange of the journal of the June 1-jewistest rared.





'CONTRARY TO **EVERYTHING** YOUR BRAIN IS SCREAMING AT YOU, THERE'S PALPABLY MORE GRIP TO LEAN ON'

Situated in a swampy field in central France, the track is defined by a long runway and a hairraising, apparently endless right-hander that tightens until it coils back on itself, plus a tricky hairpin and some ballsy transient curves. There are no barriers to hit, which is good, but a wild ride (and the guillotine!) still awaits should turn-in speed exceed talent. So, while it's one of the better venues to boldly go in search of big downforce, it's not without risk. And as Excuse Number One concisely states: Journalists are not expected to go fast, just not to crash.'

At 4.6m long, 2m wide and a little over 1m high, the dazzling blue and orange A450 looks like a huge, flat tropical fish. Mercifully, once you climb over the sidepod, step onto the seat and wriggle your way down into the open cockpit, that intimidating sense of size diminishes with your peripheral vision. With your chin on your chest, shoulders and pelvis clamped into the moulded seat and your forward view dominated by the yoke steering wheel and exposed arcs of carbon bodywork, it's an utterly no-nonsense driving environment. As is the norm these days

there are buttons and switches everywhere, though this being an endurance racer the labelling and ergonomics are spot-on. The most frequently used controls are located on the steering wheel, the rest within easy reach on the dashboard. The only hint to how much car you're sitting in comes when you glance in the big mirrors mounted aft of the front wheels.

The sun is shining but the weather is cold, meaning the wide Michelin slicks need a lap or two to warm to the task of delivering proper grip and traction. There's no ABS, but there is a finely adjustable traction control, though the team says it's still possible to spin the car on cold rubberso I can't just floor it and let the electronics take care of things. No matter, for I defy anyone new to a car like this not to want to spend the first few laps taking it steady and soaking up the experience, from the resonant noise and vibrations that tingle through the tub from that big Nismo V8 to the perfectly weighted power steering and rifle-shot pneumatic gearshifts delivered by the six-speed Xtrac transmission. It all feels so immediate, so precise and totally devoid of slack that the responses of any road car are a bit woolly by comparison.

Speak to any seasoned driver of LMP2 cars and they'll tell you there are three things you need to go quickly: commitment, commitment and commitment. That's fine if you're being paid - or as is more likely, paying - to race, but when you're invited to have a go for a magazine story the balance of risk versus reward is equally unappealing for race team and journalist. And so begins the uneasy battle between tickling it round for the allotted laps, or taking a deep breath and pushing beyond your comfort zone. which in this case means putting trust - and approaching £400k of carbonfibre and exotic allovs - in your ability to find and harness an invisible force plucked from thin air.

It's about now that I'm glad I had a session at Base Performance Simulators before flying to France. It's hard to explain how weird it is to arrive somewhere you've never been to drive a car you've never sat in, and for both car and circuit to look and feel familiar, but that's how good modern simulators are. As a result I feel prepared to push harder sooner than Lever have before at similar tests, but this confidence is tinged with the knowledge of how many times I fired the virtual Alpine into the turnips.

It takes one full-blooded approach to the crazy corner at the end of the straight for me to know I lack the requisite testicular mass to even contemplate attempting for real what I tried and eventually succeeded at on the sim. Yet as soon as I brake (hard) and downshift (two gears) I can sense the car has so much left to give that I'm embarrassed for myself. Next time through, I try lifting earlier to use the aerodynamic drag as a brake, before having a confidence squeeze on the middle pedal, then downshifting one



Above: French test track is clear of obstacles to hit. Right: mounts for rear wing can be adjusted to alter its angle, and therefore downforce. Far right: A450 carries inboard spring/damper set-up on all four wheels





gear and gently getting back on the power. Just as you'd hope, but contrary to everything your brain is screaming at you, there's palpably more grip to lean on. Yet still there's the very real sense there's so much more to come.

And so it continues, each lap spent marvelling at the braking, traction, appetite for direction changes and sheer driveability through the technical bends, but all the while haunted by the spectre of that terrible, wonderful rush towards the corner I've come to call Courbe des Grosses Boules. Shouting at myself to be brave seems to help a little, but the absolute best I can manage is a quick dab on the brakes, downshift to fifth and the briefest of pauses before peeling into the corner and squeezing back on the throttle. My neck tells me it's the most committed effort vet and the Alpine concurs by feeling more hooked up than ever, which suggests - you guessed it -I could carry vet more speed...

I could give you a dozen carefully crafted excuses as to why I never manage to take the corner flat in sixth. Or fifth, for that matter, I could also tell you that immediately after the test the Signatech data engineer tells me that in these temperatures on these well-used tyres even the car's regular driver didn't take the corner flat. That makes me feel a little better. but the tantalising, taunting truth is that even if I'd been on fresh rubber in perfect conditions, brimming with confidence and in possession of a signed damage waiver from Signatech, I'm not sure I could ever turn in without a lift. Yet I also learned enough to know that if I could summon the cojones to do it once, just once, I could do it again. Therein lies the high-speed, high-stakes dilemma that is downforce.

I always suspected it, but now I know for sure: if this challenging, humbling exercise has shone a light on anything, it's that the true wonder of big downforce isn't so much that it exists or what it enables a car to do, but that there are drivers who are prepared to swap feel for faith and power headlong into the void to find it.

Thanks to Base Performance Simulators for the invaluable LMP2 training. For more information visit baseperformance.net

Specification

ALPINE A450-NISSAN

Engine V8, 4494cc Power 550bhp Torque 428lb ft Transmission Six-speed sequential gearbox. rear-wheel drive

Front suspension Double wishbones, inboard spring and damper unit, anti-roll bar Rear suspension Double wishbones, inboard spring and

damper unit, anti-roll bar Brakes Ventilated carbon-ceramic discs. 380mm front, 355mm rear Wheels 12.5 x 18in front, 13 x 18in rear Tyres 30-65 R18 front: 31-71 R18 rear

Weight 900kg (with ballast) Power-to-weight 621bhp/ton 0-62mph n/a Top speed 205mph (claimed) Basic price c£370,000 (estimated)



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AUDI R8 V10 PLUS by Richard Meaden Contributing editor

VAUXHALL VXR8

by David Vivian

Meaden explains why he's chuffed with the spec he chose

SEAT LEON CUPRA by Ian Eveleigh

Production editor One of the hot-hatch highlights of 2014 has joined the fleet and in '280' spec too. Ev won the fight for the red key fob. Carely.

NISSAN GT-R by David Yu

Contributor Yu puts his now-4WD-again supercoupe to the test on track, and discovers something is slightly amiss...



Road tester



PORSCHE 911 3.0 SC by Nick Trott Editor

RPM Technik for a post-winter check-up, and Trott gets a



by Dan Prosser Road test contributor OUT

VAUXHALL CORSA VXR Road tester We've never had a Corsa VXR on our fleet. Prosser puts that right with this 202bhp









for a car photographer.



JAGUAR F-TYPE V6 S by Jethro Bovingdon

Contributing editor pays a visit to the drop-top Jag.



IAGUAR X IR-15 by SSO

Contributor With a PI on the way and garage space in short supply, the Secret Supercar Owner has (reluctantly) let the XJR-15 go.

TOYOTA GT86 by Henry Catchpole Features editor

Catchpole's been back on track with the Japanese coupe, and this time managed to keep the drama to a minimum.



PORSCHE 996 by Jethro Bovingdon Contributing editor

The marcon 911 has had an argument with a deer during



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Coming soon: BMW M235i









IT DIDN'T START well.
When the BMW M6 Gran
Coupe arrived back in
September, every discussion in the
office centred on the price. Not the
styling or the performance – no, the
price. At £118,050, mouthfuls of tea
were sprayed across the room.

Our car was optioned with, well, everything. The Tanzantie Blue weetything, The Tanzantie Blue weetything, The Tanzantie Blue metallic paint was both beautiful with the term of the transport of

cool of an Aston Martin interior, or the bold charm of a Bentley's, but ergonomically it was exceptional. A dose of leather cleaner halfway through the loan lifted some denim dye from the seats, but in terms of wear not once did the M6's cabin materials squeak or creak.

Of the options, the four zone air con (659) was fantastic, as were the multi-function seats (1865). I wouldn't spec the BWW Individual. Welrino leather (5503) but acts but I absolutely would pick the surger of my least but I absolutely would pick the surger of my least but I absolutely would pick the surger of my least but I absolutely would pick the surger of my least but I absolutely would pick the surger of my least but I absolutely would pick the surger of my least but the work of the remaining outpose, I pick the keyless entry and start (5655) and retered service (565) but IT apas on the soft-close doors (550) and and sensel time (1666).

Now the important stuff, if an age where hot hathes can crack 5-5 seconds to 60mb, it's easy to become immune to accelerative forces, especially if, like us jammed become immune to outget act as all the time. Yet the goes especially if the use is made to display so, and to study a class the study of the

Road condition, road width, surface adhesion and weather – everything had to be in perfect alignment otherwise you'd headbutt the stability control and your orogress would abruptly stall, I plyidly recall one particular moment. at full throttle in fifth gear when resulted in sudden DSC intervention and a startling spike in BPM. 'Maybe it's time to slap xDrive on the M5 said one Bimmerpost member of the model that shares the M6 GC's drivetrain. 'What's the point of owning an M5 if any car that has approximately 400bhp but is fourwheel drive will demolish my M5?" BMW does not yet offer a true M model with 4WD, but with rivals Audi and Mercedes matching Munich for bhp but offering 4WD as well (in most markets), how long before e'll see an xDrive M5 or M6

on those rare occasions when the Mo planets did align, or when the Mo found itself on a circuit, it offered found entertainment.





diffs, was a thing of wonder, finely metering power across the axle and giving true control via your right foot. Brilliant.

I rarely adjusted the M DCT's gearshift speed, invariably leaving it in D4 (out of 5), which offered fast, punchy changes, Indeed, that raises a curious point - BMW has seen fit to offer the driver a variety of driving modes, from Comfort to Sport Plus, all of which affect the steering weight, damping, throttle response and gearshift time. How much time did I spend investigating the options? About 20 minutes. then I stuck with Sport, D4 for the remainder of my time with the car. with the occasional prod of the M button when I was feeling slidey.

I never bonded with the M Servotronic steering, It offered very little feel during that crucial initial bite into the corner, and no discernable increase in feel when scrolling through the modes. Lots of extra weight - but no more feel. The optional (£7395) carbon-ceramic brakes were sensational, however. Worth the price? Only if your commute involves an Autobahn. And perhaps a racetrack. You can probably tell that in dynamic terms Ladmire what the M6 Gran Coupe can do, and lament the number of occasions it's possible to exercise it

Last month Lasked M5 and M6 owners to get in touch about oil consumption and it would appear I wasn't the only one getting through a litre every 1000 miles. 'I'm glad I bought the extended warranty' said one M5 owner from Florida, which perfectly summarises the point - there may be no issue with the twin-turbo 4.4 V8's thirst for oil, but it does play on your mind.

Finally, back to cost, 'I achieved over £30k discount,' said one evo reader, 'List with options was £111.000. I paid £80k for it.' 'My dealer said no-one was paying list so they had to offer massive discounts to be able to sell any," 'It's no surprise that year-old cars are at the £70k mark - they're being sold new for not much more than that 'Our M6 GC's £53.050 depreciation figure is shocking, but rather inconclusive because it would appear that nobody is buying them for list and

most, I'd wager, are on finance. The BMW M6 Gran Coupe is a very good car waiting for its time to come. That time isn't now, but it will be soon. It's rare (around 120 on UK roads), fast, stylish and not an M5. For me personally, would I buy this M6 Gran Coupe at £118,050? Great car, but not on your nelly, I'd be looking at Rapides or Bentleys or even the Tesla Model S (saving a packet). Would I buy it for £80,000 via a big dealer discount? Perhaps. With a very good finance offer, And I'd certainly pick it over a similarly priced RS7 or CLS63 AMG. Would I wait another year and buy a used M6 Gran Coupe for £60,000 or less? Now you're talking.

Nick Trott (@evoNickTrott)

Date acquired September 2013 Duration of test 7 months Total test mileage 7949 Overall mpg 18.8

Costs £53.98 (oil) Purchase price £118,050 Trade-in value £65,000 Depreciation £53,050



Below: twin-clutch transmission was superb, as was the twin-turbo V8. Below left: little to fault in the interior, either - if you like cream leather





'The Active M Differential was a thing of wonder. giving true control via your right foot'





I'M ALREADY ONE month into my six of vicarious R8 ownership and I have to say I'm loving every single moment of it. It's such a special car, vet so painless to live with I never hesitate to grab the keys and use it. The Meaden household fridge has rarely been so well stocked with milk.

After the euphoria of the customer collection and an epic drive back from Germany, the feelgood phase refuses to fade. The fit and finish is fabulous and I'm really chuffed with the Daytona Grey paint. for it suits the R8's assured styling to a tee. Hove the simplicity of the interior and the added support of the sports bucket seats, and while the satnay screen and interface

mean the R8 is showing its age compared to the latest-gen Audis, it all functions well.

I suspect some of you think I'm mad for ignoring the excellent S-tronic DSG transmission, but I'm really glad I went for the manual box. I'm still amazed Audi let me spec one, especially as I've managed to get confirmation that 'UK orders for manual V10 Pluses have not yet reached double figures,' making KY14 BKV amongst the rarest of the rare and a sure-fire future collectors' car.

Perversely, while there's no question a stick denies you those final few per cent of outright pointto-point pace, the fact you have to interact with the car on a more physical and cerebral level makes

for a richer and more multi-faceted driving experience. It's fabulous to wind the mighty V10 motor through to its howling 8500rpm red line in the lower gears, but it's also hugely satisfying to slot fourth and feel it flex its prodigious mid-range muscle and be squeezed into the seat with seamless and ever-increasing insistence. Of course, you can do that with the paddleshift too, but in my experience you're always more inclined to make more up- and downshifts than is strictly necessary. Having dusted off my heel-and-

toe technique I've noticed the response of the R8's big carbonceramic brakes can be a little sharp. which means you have to be very precise with your pedal inputs if

you're to effect a downshift that smoothly matches engine and road speed. I still fail more than I succeed. but the satisfaction of nailing a sweet succession of downshifts - accompanied by sharp stabs of revs and the clink-clink of the lever slotting through the open metal gate - never fails to make me smile, nor cherish the fact that Audi still makes (for now, anyway) a drivers' car you actually have to drive. Richard Meaden

(@DickieMeaden)

Date acquired March 2014 Total mileage 2947 eage this month 832 Costs this month £0 mpg this month 19.8





Nissan

GT-R

Now restored to 4WD, Stealthzilla is put through its paces at Donington

AFTER THE IMPRESSIVELY quick and efficient repair by Litchfield to Stealthzilla's AWD system (detailed in ewo 195), it was bliss being able to use full throttle again without the attendant rampant wheelspin that running RWD-only had entailed. The GT-R's greatest strength is its ability to put allits power down and

it was a visceral delight to have that capability restored. Or at least I thought it was restored...

My first track outing this year was at a very rare 'noisy' day at Donington Park organised by RMA. Despite being literally next door to an international airport, Donington is normally subject to one of the strictest noise limits for trackdays. but this early March event was completely unlimited (so people aren't harmed/maimed/killed by distant trackday noise until April?). I drove up the night before to stay at a lovely little B&B in Castle Donington (the Church View, if you're ever round that way) and met up with some old Ferrari Owners' Club chums to reminisce about the good of days when I could still afford a Ferrari.

The next day was bright and dry,

but that didn't stop quite a few numpties spinning off in the first couple of hours (some race teams were taking advantage of the lack of noise limit and were treating it like a test day). I took it easy, but the first time I did push, I was astonished at the lack of grip my previously superb

Michelin Pilot Super Sports had,

particularly at the rear.

On one early lap, what should have been a playful moment exiting the Melbourne hairpin nearly resulted in a spin as the rears kicked out way further and for far longer than they normally should. Even much faster corners taken in a higher gear were a far more nerve-shredding affair than they used to be, with Stealthzilla constantly dancing on the edge of violent ower oversteer.

There was still plenty of tread on

the rears, sol could only assume that the few months of running as 'Skidalla' in RYO mode had cooked them, leaving a surface finish like Telfon. Once I realized this, I adapted my driving and nursed the GT-R out of corners, paling with the balance as if the entire circuit was a skid-pan, which was great fur but also slightly frustrating, as other cars that would normally have been easy prey danced past in an annoyingly grippy would now may be a suffer a state of the state of the sum of the

David Yu (@Auto_Journals)

'IT'D BE A very tough call between the Cupra 280 and the Performance Pack Golf GTI, but we'd give the Leon the nod.' Yes, we really did say that in our hot hatch spectacular in evo 195; a SEAT hot hatch that beats the benchmark Volkswagen. I hadn't driven a new Cupra at that point, but suffice to say that after reading those words from Dickie Meaden, my interest in running the long-termer that would soon be

arriving was more than piqued.

Said long-termer first rolled into the evo car park in the middle of March. In rather stark contrast to the three-door with a matt orange wrap that appeared in the aforementioned group test, KU14 WWB is a white five-door. I'll admit this combination probably wouldn't have been my first choice. but after eight months running an attention-grabbing Mini GP, driving something a bit more 'under the radar' does hold a certain appeal.

I'm sure it'll be fun taking people by surprise. And that shouldn't be too much of a problem as our Cupra is in '280' spec (the only choice in five-door form), meaning its turbocharged 2-litre engine has 276bhp (280 PS), up from the 261bhp of the standard Cupra. Our car also has the DSG gearbox (a £1285 option), which trims the

Left: full LED headlights are standard Right: cabin is well equipped: leather seats are an option



0-62mph time down to 5.7sec - a tenth quicker than the manual 280's time, two-tenths quicker than the basic Cupra's.

Standard kit on the Cupra includes snorts seats, full LED headlights, auto wipers, dual-zone climate control, DAB, threestage adaptive dampers and a mechanical limited-slip diff (oh ves...), while the 280 also gets satnav and 19-inch titaniumfinish wheels. Options on our car include leather (£755), a Safety Pack (tiredness warning and rear seatbelt reminders; £115), a Driver Assist Pack (auto high beam and lane assist; £295), adaptive cruise control (£500), an upgraded hi-fi (£250) and a space-saver spare wheel (£95). With the metallic Nevada White paint (£495), the total price of our car is £31,030.

First impressions? Hike the new Leon's sharp-edged styling. especially when its arches are filled with those 19in wheels. And it seems I'm not alone, either - the car has already received its first compliment at a petrol station. (Perhans a white five-door isn't quite as subtle as I think...) The interior is certainly a pleasant place to spend time, looking and feeling a distinct step on from the old Leon's slightly-too-budget cabin, But it's on the move when the Cupra impresses the most because, as that group test suggested, this is undoubtedly one of the most entertaining, if not the most entertaining road-going SEAT ever.

But more on that next time. Date acquired March 2014 Total mileage 2139

Ian Eveleigh

age this month 1646 Costs this month £0 mpg this month 30.1

Nissan GT-R

GOD2 LLA



Porsche 911 SC.

I TOLD MYSELF I'd drive the 911 whenever the opportunity arose and the roads weren't covered in salt. In reality, the SC spent the winter in a barn under a dust sheet.

Trickle charger? No. Jacked up to prevent the tyres squaring off? No. Drain the fluids? No. I did at least leave the handbrake off, but other than that the SC was borderline abandoned for four months. But when it was time to dig the car out, a quick visual check revealed nothing, so I stuck the key in the dash and... four slow churns later, it fired up. Everything worked fine and the gearshift and clutch felt OK, so I drove it out and it growled up the road feeling as fresh as it did when I stored it.

After a full detail from Perfection Valet (issue 196), thoughts turned to a mechanical check-up. When I bought the car from RPM Technik, it made a point of showing me its service area and workshop, Immaculate and packed with new equipment. I decided that despite having two Porsche specialists on my doorstep, I'd let RPM fettle the car.

RPM suggested the bushes were looking tired and recommended a set of new dampers. Powerflex makes a full set of polyurethane bushes for the SC in both Road Series and more track-focused Black Series versions, so I need to decide which to pick. Bilstein dampers were OE for SCs fitted with the Sport pack, and although my car wasn't originally specced as a Sport (hence the lack of an LSD, rear wing or front spoiler). a previous owner had fitted the Bilsteins and I'm going to stick with the brand.

With the bushes and dampers, this will be the closest it's felt to being new since it left the factory. I can't wait, Nick Trott (@evoNickTrott)

Date acquired	March 2013	
Total mileage	89,212	
eage this month	208	
costs this month	£0	
mng this month	n/a	



NEW ARRIVAL

Vauxhall Corsa VXR Clubsport

Prosser receives his first evo long-termer - a 202bhp griffin-badged pocket rocket

THIS VAUXHALL CORSA costs £22,400 and I'll be running it on the Fast Fleet for the next six months, I want to address that rather hefty list price as a matter of priority so as to avoid every complimentary comment over the coming half-year being caveated by: 'Yeah, but it costs £22,400!' It is a lot of money, particularly given that the brilliant Ford Fiesta ST starts at just £17,250, but now that we've

addressed it up top, let's move on.

This is the latest version of Vauxhall's rapid Corsa VXR. The 'Clubsport' badge promises a lot - I had hoped for bucket seats. harnesses, perhaps a roll-cage - but in truth this edition is little different to the VXR Nürburgring of 2011; the new Remus exhaust is the only notable upgrade.

Like a mountain bike with a high-quality finishing kit, the Clubsport is littered with top-notch components; the seats are by Recaro, the brakes are Brembos and the dampers are from Bilstein. What leans off the spec sheet though, is the Drexler limited-slip differential Small hot hatches rarely come so well equipped from a performance point of view.

The engine is the same 1.6-litre turbocharged four that has powered the Corsa VXR since its 2007 debut, but here its peak output is 202hhp (up from 189hhp). The quoted peak torque of 184lb ft. seems rather light compared to the 214lb ft of the Fiesta ST, but on the road the difference isn't so marked.

I'll hold back from offering a definitive verdict on the driving experience until I've spent more time behind the wheel on some proper roads, but there are certain first impressions, positive and negative, that are worth sharing now. That limited-slip differential. for instance, gives the Clubsport a raw and exciting edge on the exit phase of corners that nothing else in its class can match, and it allows the driver to feed the power back in when a Fiesta ST or Renaultsport Clio 200 Turbo would still be traction-limited. On the flip-side. though, the steering is a touch remote and the gearshift action is woolly: when you're really stirring around the 'box you do sometimes wonder if you've missed the sear.

The Clubsport will prove its worth, or otherwise, when it has an audience with the Fiesta ST (four references in 400 words - not bad) in the next couple of weeks. On first impressions. I don't think it'll fare too badly. Dan Prosser

(@TheDanProsser)

Date acquired April 2014 Total mileage 886

fileage this month 406 Costs this month £0 mpg this month 24.8



JUST AFTER BIG Blue returned to Walkinshaw Performance to be desupercharged and sold on to its next lucky owner (and I suspect possibly driven back to Walkinshaw to be resupercharged), I booked in an Audi RS6 Avant for a week's stay.

I never got to drive Mike Duff's long-termer and felt guilty that, throughout the VXR8's Fast Fleet tenure, I'd constructed a narrative that promised a drag race between the two Labrador-worrving V8 estates at Bruntingthorpe's twomile runway. For reasons beyond my pay grade, that never happened and morphed, perhaps more intriguingly. into a track battle at Bedford Autodrome's West Circuit in which, despite Dickie Meaden's best efforts. to stick Big Blue's 610bhp and 586lb ft to the tarmac, it got thoroughly dusted by the heavier, less powerful but four-wheel-drive Audi.

Before I jumped back in to drive home, unaware at the time of the





margin by which the Vauxhallhadged Holden had been thrashed Linspected the rear tyres. They looked as if they had melted and re-solidified with a sort of granular, bobbly texture resembling the rubber laid down by dragsters in the staging area at Santa Pod. I wondered then, and became more convinced when furnished with the lap times (see youtube.com/eyoTV for the result), if at least 100 of the supercharged Corvette-sourced V8's 600-odd bho had simply gone up in smoke, and that even if it had 700 or 800bhp it wouldn't have gone significantly faster.

In a way, it was a comforting thought that cemented the idea that a YXR8 with £7500 of WP supercharger installed wasn't really a relate to the R56 Avants and Menc £63 wagons of this world at all, but just a raw, unreconstructed American muscle car masquerading as an absurdly voluminous estate. From this jest zanolated that had the

Bruntingthorpe drag race ever taken place. Big Blue would have been similarly humbled from a standing start and crossed the finishing line at the half-mile or even the kilometr a good few car lengths behind. But from a rolling start at 50mph (much more 'real-world', let's face it), it might just have wowed the Audi.

Perhaps trying the RS6 wasn't such a good idea. Its roll-on pace left every bit as swage as the VXR8's, if not more so. On top of that, it was simply better at everything, to the extent that it could have been the product of some advanced alien technology. By the end of the week, I was genuinely shocked by the reach and breadth of its abilities and better able to appreciate why many top-drawer racers choose it for everydar and it transit duries.

Even with the blower fitted, the Vauxhall notionally undercut the Audi by £20k; 'notionally' because it was a one-off imported from Down Under to add tail-end variety to Vauxhall's press fleet in the run-up to the new VXR8 GTS, which comes with a supercharger as standard and comprehensively upgraded underpinnings to make it more Euro-compatible and competitive. Ihope it hasn't lost the compelling character of the old car, though.

As a single-sentence summation, I'll stick with 're-clothed old-school American muscle car', but there was still more to like about Big Blue. Despite the rudimentary interior build and finish (I'd be reaching back to the '80s to find a meaningful comparison) the whole car felt robust and bomb-proof. The hugely bolstered but curiously squishy seats were superbly comfortable on long trips and, with its long wheelbase and magnetic dampers, so was the ride on the whole. though pitted road surfaces could send shudders and shimmies back through the structure. As a loadlugger, it was enormous, capable of swallowing things other so-called

large estates wouldn't even look at. And even if the touchscreen satnav didn't work (configured for O2), the Electronic Driver Interface (EDI), with its menu of performance parameter monitoring functions, was a bit of diversionary fun, though I usually left it on the ever-fascinating real-time power and torque output readings.

My abiding memory of Big Blue, however, will be the constantly entertaining relationship between its enormously powerful, fabulously vocal V8 and a well-balanced reardinve chassis that tried and usually failed to contain it. A 19mgg thirst? I have to say it was worth it.

September 2013
6 months
4958
19.6
£7500 (supercharge
£49,500
n/a



Renaultsport Clio 200 Turbo

The divisive French hatch has been tested on track at the legendary Spa

A MAN FROM Renault will come to collect the Cilip and full farewell sono, but it should be pretty clear by now that for its west of the service of the collect the Cilip hasn't lived up to the reputation of its Renaults port hadge. To give the car one last chance to redeen itself, I asged adarge one one of Renaultsport's trackdays to get beneath the Cilip Sosi man dreally understand what it's all about. As If a joily to Spa needs any justification.

Soa is three hours from Calais, and as a long-distance machine, the Turbo sits at the other end of the spectrum to the previous Clio 200 Cup that we so adore. Whereas that car was noisy, fligety and tiresome on a long strop, the new model is much more refined and relaxing. That doesn't augur terribly well when the destination is a racetrack.



Ean Rouge's probably the most hyped corner in the world. In the Clin it's taken in fifth with all the fore turn-in. Run the flul width of the car over the yellow and red kerbing at corner entry, turn in just before the compression then power on as soon as you dare. Let the car straighten up and rattle over the kerb at the top of the hill to carry as much speed as possible onto the Remmel straight. The difference between railing Eau Rouge and not is 4-smiph at the end of Kemmel, which must be worth a big chunk of lap this glorul with a contract of the contract of the summer which must be worth a big chunk of lap this glorul with a long than the contract of the co

I've never known a comer to be so challenging and absorbing. It's brilliant. In fact, Spa is such a superb circuit – Pouhon and Blanchimont are just as fun – that the Clio was reduced to playing a supporting role. Some colleagues reckon the new car's chassis isn't as playful as the old Curys. but frankly I was so caught up in getting Pouhon just right that I barely noticed.

To be diligent for a moment, it's worth noting that the paddleshift gearbox is more effective on track because you know exactly where the

shift points are, so you don't curse the slightly lethargic change times as you do on the road. On reflection, the older car would have been more thrilling on track, but the new one was much less punishing on the Brussels ring road. I know which I'd rather have from Renaultsport... 20 Pan Prosser (@TheDan Prosser)

Date acquired	August 2013	
Total mileage	15,080	
age this month	2430	
osts this month	£562.28 (tyres)	
npg this month	23.8	

Ford Focus ST Estate

Ford Focus ST Estate

The Focus's merits as a camera car are assessed

PART OF MY day-to-day are well staff by the photographer involves wedging my large frame into the rear of various cars to take tracking pictures of other cars following behind. This is not always the easlest thing in the world to do (and it's certainly not something for recommend you trying at home) but it does make for a good test of an estate car's practicality.

I've used the Focus for tracking now and again and found it extremely good in some areas but wanting in others. The first plus point is the large tailgate aperture, which makes for easy ingress and egress. There's also plenty of space



inside when the rear seats are folded flat. The seats are 'spilt', so I often have the passenger side down on its own, as this ideal for carrying a ladder. But for tracking I tend to have both sides folded so I can use the anchoring points on the C-pillars to connect my safety harness to, just to make sure I don't fail out and get run over by this month's cover starl Reassuringly, said ancher points fell Reassuringly, said ancher points fell strong and secure.
One downside is that in order to fold the rear seats down fully, the driver's seat has to be moved quite a way forward. This isn't too much of a problem for me at tend to sit in an 'idd biddy' position when I'm driving — and if I'm taking a tracking shot, I'll be in the back anyway— but it would be an issue for anyone who prefers to sit further back, or who is taller

than me (m of tin).
Another issue is the ride. It feels excellent and comfortable when you're at the helm but is a lot bouncier over bigger bumps when you're strapped nover the rear ask. The ST Estate is a performance car, and one designed to carry large and potentially heavy loads, so ablt of firmness in the rear suspension is to be expected, but when you're trying to keep a steady hand to take a cracking photo, It's an added and unwelcome complication.

So the Focus is a decent tracking car, but it isn't in the same league as something smoother, bigger and more adaptable, like, for example, a Range Rover. Dean Smith (@evoDeanSmith)

Date security August 2012

Total mileage	20,687	
Mileage this month	3696	
Costs this month	£0	
mpg this month	28.8	



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EVO magazine June 2014

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MY LAST RUN out in the Jaguar XJR-15 was sadly back in December, shortly before the Thames Valley did its Atlantis imitation over the Christmas holidays. As space in the home garage has been at a premium, the XJR-15 was put into storage for winter, sitting under a cover and

plugged into a battery conditioner. With spring finally here, garage space still in scarce supply and a P1 coming in 2015, we have made the decision to part with the Jag after three-and-a-half years. Don Law Racing, the UK's foremost expert on Jaguar supercars, will be handling its departure. Looking back, having this rare supercar has been terrific. The XJR-15 is the gold standard for raw, focused and analogue, and it has to be one of the most visually stunning cars ever designed. It redefined the idea of race car for the road and is the closest you can come to driving a Le Mans car down the M4.

Its list price in 1991 was £500,000, and when you take the engine cover off and look at the craftsmanship of the engineering and the carbonfibre tub, it's easy to understand why. The lack of any sound deadening also allows you to enjoy the full orchestra of mechanical interactions.

In many ways, the XJR-15 has made me a better driver. It was born before the era of multiple electronic nannies and relies solely on the driver's skill to keep it on the road. With over 450bhp and only 1050kg to push, getting things wrong will end very quickly, and badly for the wallet. As the XJR-15 is much more race car than road car, the same driving principles you would use on a track need to be adapted to the road. Keeping all inputs smooth and progressive is critical - it wants to flow quickly down the road and only really begins to come alive as you near the national speed limit

Of all the cars I've owned, the X IR-15 has been a clear favourite. It will definitely be missed. Secret Supercar Owner (@SupercarOwner)

Date acquired	July 2010
Duration of test	3 years 7 months
Total test mileage	1050
Overall mpg	
Costs	£14,600 (inc. fuel cel
Purchase price	
	expensive XJR-15 on sale at the time

Tovota GT86

Toyota GT86

Catchpole has given the Japanese coupe a thorough track workout with some passenger laps at Donington



THE LAST TIME I went on track with our GT86 was during Jethro Boyingdon's tenure with the car. Bedford Autodrome was wetter than The Poseidon Adventure and I had

possibly the biggest spin the West Circuit has ever seen. So it was with trepidation that I drove out of the pits at Donington last month for a Mission Motorsport event.

I was primarily at the circuit to

gather anecdotes and information for last month's MM feature, but Major Jim Cameron asked if the GT86 could give a few passenger laps while it was there. In comparison to some of the other machinery present, the little (dirty) grey Toyota probably wasn't the first car people were going to queue up for, However, every single passenger got out saving how impressed they were. The GT86 hasn't really got the grunt for a circuit as quick as Donington, but it certainly has the chassis balance and corner speed to make things interesting and it was genuinely good fun trying to put smiles on people's faces.

Braking was the only real issue. with everything getting a bit hot and lengthy after a few runs. But to be fair to the '86, Donington's fast and flowing layout does allow you to build up quite a bit of momentum before asking you to wipe it all off in big chunks, so it's not entirely

surprising the stoppers wilted a bit. Our car's stickier Dunlop rubber also puts more load through the pads and discs at the limit of braking, so probably didn't help. Anyway, after a bit of cooling off, normal middlepedal service was resumed (they squeaked a bit beforehand and still squeak occasionally now), so no long-term harm was done.

Beaumont borrowed ERO as he was keen to compare it with a 1.8 MX-5 we had at the office. His observation about their respective interiors was thus: 'The Mazda's feels basic. whereas the Toyota's feels cheap.' Succinct yet perceptive. I thought. Henry Catchpole (@HenryCatchpole)

Since then, evo designer Will

Date acquired	May 2013
Total mileage	14,031
Mileage this month	1017
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	32.4





Jaguar F-type V6 S Convertible

Exposure to the new F-type Coupe has taken the shine off the drop-top version for Bovingdon I HAVE A deep loathing for wotbly comertitles. Any shimmy or fauzy rear view due to a studdering windszeen immediately takes the shine from even the most polished dynamic package. The F-type Convertible has always felt pretty infallible in this respect. Until the moment I drove the new Coupe. You can see just how gorgeous and what a hooligan the F-type RC ouce just a youthbe com/evoTV. Suffice to say frout either the present of the present in the present of the prese

I wanted one even more when I touched down at dreary Heathrow upon returning from the Coupe's launch in glorious sunshine near Barcelona, then jumped into my V6 SConvertible it still looked great (though nothing like as jaw-dropping as the Coupe, Sill sounded great, and I hardly missed the It's big-Siller V6 (reach of the Silbhph 1398 lb for the V6 Sis the optimum package). but suddenly it fet a bit, well, wobbly, lexpected the sensation to subside with time, but it hasn't. My-Ftype experience has been tamished by another-Ftype!

tarnished by another F-type! Of course those compromises bring with them benefits, namely the joys of open-top motoring. People tell me this is amazing. Ah, the sights, smells and sounds of a proper open sports car. To be honest, I'm not so sold. I've had some amazing drives in Caterhams and the like over the years, but for every one of those there have been a thousand drives blighted by iellified steering columns. creaking structures and chassis undone by the lumps and bumps of the sort of roads I love to drive on. In absolute terms the F-type is an admirably rigid roadster, but I'm still feeling a bit of an old humbug. A green-eyed humbug, at that.

list include new tyres (still) and a trip to a dealership: the passenger-side electric window switch is broken and the glass stays down when the roof is lowered or raised until coaxed up by the second switch on the driver's side. It's the car's first glitch in eight very satisfying months.

Jethro Bovingdon (Weltho Bovingdon)

In other news, things on the to-do

ate acquired	September 2013
Total mileage	13,459
e this month	1405
ts this month	£0
og this month	24.8

Porsche 996 Carrera

Porsche 996 Carrera

The GT3 wannabe gives Bovingdon a late-night drive to remember, and has also had its suspension fine-tuned

I HAD A fantastic Laternight of the property o

As well as the shreds of raw venison clinging to the underside of the car, the lasting impression of the run was one of satisfaction. This car is so quick and just loves to rev, the steering is oh-my-god brilliant

compared to pretty much anything and the adjustable Blictiens feel better for the pretty well-sorted, too. It's got some understeeb, but that's just the entry point to a whole world of options. On those empty roundabouts! it would push a little, a deliberate lift would look the front on line and loosen the rear, and then it was just a matter of jetning the pretty of the way on the here straight. It's moments like these that made me want a 91% so badly for so long.

Even so, a chance to get the car corner-weighted and lowered for the full GT3 look was too much to resist. So while on a visit to Litchfield to see its latest monster GT-R creation, we had a play with the Bilsteins. Well,



we tried. It seems that road grime has made the adjustable rids helpht platforms a bit less adjustable. A refurb is in order by Blistein UK. Even so, Litchfield got the weights almost perfect and played with the alignment, too. A Carrera doesn't have the range of adjustment of a GT3 so new arms and top mounts may be required, but the car feels sharper, changes direction all little

better and has retained the creamy transition into oversteer that made that late-night journey so special.

Jethro Bovingdon
(@Jethro Bovingdon)

Date acquired	May 2013	
Total mileage	142,303	
Mileage this month	301	_
Costs this month	TBC	
mpg this month	24.7	

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Lamborghini Murcielag

LHD Titanium Hercules Alloys Yellow Brake Calipers Lifting Gear 12,000 miles 2008 £134,990

Lamborghini Murcielago Roadster Lifting Gear Egear 9,000 miles 2005 £114,990





Lamborghini Diablo Magnesium Wheels Jota Edition Unique Limited



Lamborghini Diablo VT Wheels, SE30 limited edition 24,000 miles 1996 £129,990

Lamborghini Murcielago V12 Coupe HIGH SPEC

Hercules Alloys Egear Lifting Gea 17,000 miles 2005 £106,990

Lamborghini Gallardo Branding Pack Matt Black Cassiopea Allovs



Lamborghini Gallardo Cordelia Alloys Qcuitura Stitching Lifting Gear





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Lamborghini Gallardo LHD Reverse Camera Calisto Aloys 8,000 miles 2008 £72,990



Lamborghini Gallardo

Lifting Gear Reverse Carnera Egear 21,000 miles 2008 £79,990

Lamborghini Gallardo V10 Coupe LHD HIGH SPEC Lifting Gear, Clear Engine Bay Cover, Yellow Brake Calipers, 14,000 miles, 2005, £59,990



Porsche Carrera GT Carbon Racing Seats Ceramic Brakes Full Carbon Fibre option 16,000 miles 2004 £279,990



Rolls-Royce Phantom Starlight Option Front and rear cameras 21 Inch alloys 7,000 miles 2009 £149,990



Ferrari 599 HGTE Alloy Wheels Ceramic Brakes Bose 27,000 miles 2007 £85,990

BUYING OR SELLING LAMBORGHINI AUTOMOBILE'S

Market Watch

Knowledge

Insights into the used-car market



Market watch

Z-CAR IS HIDDEN STAR

BMW's Z8 is gaining value – but finding one to buy is tough



BMW'S Z8 WAS nothing if not an oddball. Launched in 1999, it was intended to simultaneously evoke the ultra-rare 507 of

the 1950s and mark the arrival of the new millennium. Designer Henrik Fisker did a brillant job of making the Z8 look retro but not old-fashioned, and despite its 'touring' appearance, the car packed the E39 MS's 4000hp V8, while its chassis and bodywork were made from lightweight aluminium.

The result was a high-performance convertible that, even though it was slightly disappointing on the dynamics front, was undoubtedly desirable. Add the fact that just 5703 ZBs were produced worldwide (and that one featured in the Bond movie The World Is Not Enough) and you suddenly have the makings of a modern classic.

By the time production ceased in 2003, the LHD-only 28 cost around £80,000 in the UK. Values dipped briefly, but within four or five years they had started to creep back up and low-mileage cars were fetching roughly the same as they sold for when new. Fast-forward to 2014, and the 28 is proving itself to be a cast-iron (well, aluminium) investment, with the best, most original cars now commanding £150,000 plus. But finding those cars is not easy as many have been squirreled away in private collections to accrue in value.

Gary Rubert of classic BMM specialist Hexagan readils the cars selling for between 560,000 and £80,000 in around 2007. but says they have since been on a seeming unstoppable rise. One customer we sold one to returned to us about four years ago having covered 20,000 miles in the car's says Rubert. "We bought it back from him for exactly what he paid for it."

'The problem now is finding immaculate, low-mileage examples. The type of people who are interested in a Z8 today don't want anything that isn't in perfect condition. We scour Europe for them,

but they are getting rarer all the time and the entry-level price has now risen to around £125,000 for a 30.000-miler.'

Simon de Burton



Auction watch

A pair of '80s classics stand out amongst the lots at Historics at Brooklands sale

On June 7, Historics at Brooklands will be hosting one of its eclectic sales at the auction house's Mercedes-Benz World base. It will include a number of interesting cars, from the early 1960s right up to the late '90s.

Among the many Mercedes and the usual raft of MGS, averylate MIV (Moseyme Off Off 1 stands proud in the autotion catalogue. If you'veread our hot hatch feature in such cost adoption, and the stands of the stands

Next us is an oif favourite, the Lamborghini Countach. It is been a while insol a Countach was lest seen in Auction Watch, so 17s time we addressed the situation. Particular with, with with when which seed and that he agree respoire that divides opinions on strongly, the countries in they stumming ment, that been registers and the situation of the countries of

Matthew Hayward (@evoMatthew)



Top: late Mk1 Golf GTI should fetch over £4000. Above: all-white Countach expected to go for £120,000-160,000

Market Watch

Knowledge

Insights into the used-car market



I read your recent hot hatch feature (evo 195) with great interest. I've owned a Focus TDCI Sport for the past four years, but now I'm over the 25 barrier I'm looking to get my first full-on hot hatch. I have a £5000 budget and a thing for Fords, but I'm open to suggestions, as long they're not French or of equal unreliability! I'd appreciate your suggestions **Gray Higgins**



Assuming your mistrust of the French doesn't extend across the border into Spain. I'd recommend a look at SEAT's Leon Cupra R. If you had a bit

more cash to hand I'd say start hunting for a post-2005, second-generation version (pictured), which had a 261bhp 2-litre TSI engine. But with the available £5k you ought to be able to secure a late-model first-gen Cupra R. which will still give you 222bhp from its 1.8 20v engine and a licence-losing top speed of around 140mph. That said, I recently spotted an immaculate but high-mileage 2007 TSI for sale at exactly £5k... It's all down to whether or not you're prepared to risk buying a well-travelled car. If you are, look for motorway miles and a full service history and you should be OK. Email your question to experts@evo.co.uk



Martin Dooner, MX-5 City mx5citv.com

Early spring is always one of the busiest times of the year for us, but we are currently finding it difficult to get enough good quality stock. There are normally 30 to 40 cars available for sale, but that's down to around 20 right now

The MX-5s that are selling really well at the moment are the MkI versions with pop-up headlights. There has been a considerable amount of media interest around this year's 25th anniversary of the MX-5 and that, combined with the fact that people now perceive the early cars as classics rather than simply cheap old bangers, has led to a rise in values. A really nice Mk1 now fetches around £4000 and they seem to be holding their value

"Unfortunately, many have rusted out - and it ceased to be financially viable to import cars from Japan in 2008 when the pound suddenly plummeted against the yen. The most unloved MX-5 is the Mk2 due to bad rust problems, and the Mk3 is a much larger, heavier car that lacks the Lotus Flan-style character of the first models. But the word is that the Mk4. due out next year, will be more faithful to the original concept."

Just looking

The pick of the classifieds this month



R26.R £16,495 K-Tec Racing, Dorset k-tecracing.com 01202 820800

It may seem like a British season can't pass without seeing a plastic-windowed Renault in evo. but there's a reason for this: it's an outstandingly good car. Were we to commission a Hollywood-style Drive of Fame outside the office, this would surely be one of our first stars laid down It's a GT3 RS for the real world: razorsharp dynamics and an off-the-dial visceral

experience without shouty supercar styling

or credit card-melting fuel costs. And for those seeking slightly tougher components for trackdays, K-Tec Racing offers an array of enhancements. This 43.000-mile 2009 example has a

Renaultsport Mégane

beefed up intercooler and braking system, but it has yet to set foot on a circuit. This could be the ultimate front-driven road and track package currently on sale. Stephen Dobie (@evoStephenDobie)

BMW Z3 M Coupe £12.995 Munich Legends, East Sussex munichlegends.co.uk

01825 740456



If you're a regular car magazine-flicker you may be well weary of 'now's the time to buy!" hyperbole. But in the case of the BMW Z3M Coupe, it really could be true

We've highlighted the virtues of this curio numerous times in evo. and proclaimed it a bargain when prices dropped below £10,000. It looks like they're comfortably on the rise now, however - this 76.850-mile example at Munich Legends is as cheap as

specialist dealer examples get in the LIK So what makes the Z3 M Coupe so special? It's 2.7 times stiffer than the M Roadster, while up front is M's creamy 321bhp 3.2-litre straight-six. With no electronic nannies, we described it as 'great.

fun in a decidedly rear-wheel-drive way.

millions, this is perhaps the best value

'breadvan' sports car you can buy.

With Drogo Ferrari 250s costing many

Fantasy garage: £150,000 challenge

Our market guru Simon de Burton picks out three cars featured in James Bond movies for a total budget of £150,000 - all from the listings at forsale eyo, co.uk



Lotus Esprit Turbo SE £11,500

It's not submersible like the one seen in The Say Who Loved Me, but it's still an Esprit Turbo, it runs and it's chean.



Aston Martin DBS £115.000

Very close in appearance to the one spectacularly rolled a record seven times by stuntman Adam Kirley, this 7700-mile DBS hasn't got a mark on it. Yet.



Range Rover £17.495

The wrong colour and not a convertible like the one Bond uses in Octopussy but that's nothing an angle grinder and a tin of paint couldn't sort out.





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Ferrari 360 Spider 2006 28.800 Miles

6 speed Manual Nero Daytona with Crema hide and black stitching. Black carpets £54.995

Ferrari Testarossa LHD 1986 29500 miles

Rosso corsa with Nero hide and red carpets

£59,995



Ferrari 360 Modena F1 LHD 2002 21,500 Miles

6 speed paddle shift Argento Nurburgring with Grigio hide

£43.999



Ferrari F430 Coupe 2005 13,000 Miles

6 speed manual Rosso Scudria with black hide, stitched red with black carpets

£72,995



Ferrari F430 Spider 2006 10.135 Miles

6 speed manual Rosso Corsa with Nero Daytona hide, stitched red with Bordeaux carpets

£74.995

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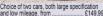
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Choice of fo	ur motor cars in sto	ick,

Bentley Arnage T, 2002/02, 34,000 miles, Morrocan Blue, Stratos Grey Quilted leather£27,999 Rolls-Royce Corniche Convertible, 1981/W, 83,000 miles, Seychelles Blue, Cream leather£45,000 Bentley Continental GTC Speed, 2009/09, 24,000 miles, Onyx Black, Black, Convenience spec £76,999 Range Rover 3.0 TDV6 Vogue, 2014/14, Delivery miles, choice of 3 from ... Bentley Azure Final Series, 2003/03, 21,000 miles, Black, Black, Black wood, Red stitching£74,999

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Buying Guide

Knowledge

Your indispensable resource when buying used

Jaguar XFR 2009-present



Jaguar's 503bhp supercharged M5-worrier can now be had for as little as £20k. Tempted? Here's what you need to know Words: Peter Tomalin

THE XFR WASN'T the first supercharged XF, of course. The SV8, which appeared in the spring of 2008, was effectively a replacement for the old S-type R and had a slightly more powerful version of that car's blown 4.2-litre V8 (410bhp. 413lb ft), enough for a 0-60mph time of 5.1sec. With the subtlest of body kits, it was a genuine Q-car. But the full-fat 'R' model was already on the way. Consequently the SV8 remains one of the rarest of all cats, and well

worth seeking out today if you enjoy surprising BMW drivers. The main event arrived just a year later, in April 2009. Jaguar's fastestever saloon was designed to take on BMW's omnipotent M5. It had a new 5-litre supercharged V8 (shared with the XKR coupe) developing 503bhp and 461lb ft of torque, the new Eaton 'Twin Vortex' charger being more efficient and less whiny than the old blower. It also had 30 per cent stiffer spring rates, continuously variable damping and a trick new electronic locking diff, though the gearbox was the familiar ZF six-speed auto with paddles. On the outside there was a bit more attitude - extra ducts and vents, deeper bumpers, four exhausts, handsome 20in wheels - but it was still pretty understated. Nothing understated about the way it went, though: we recorded 0-60mph in 4.8sec and 0-100mph in just over 10sec.

The spring of 2011 brought the launch of a special edition, the XFR 100 (because only 100 were made), with a swankier cabin, black exterior trim and dark grey 20in 'Draco' alloys with red brake calipers. More significant was the MY2013 round of upgrades, most notably the new eight-speed gearbox, while the optional 'Speed Pack' (£2750) raised the limited top speed from 155mph to 174mph, with a new front splitter and rear wing to aid high-speed stability. And in summer 2013, the 542bhp XFR-S came along with even wilder aero, a 0-60mph time cut to just 4.4sec, a top speed of 186mph and a stonking price tag of £80k

We're looking at the cheaper end with this guide. As with all forcedinduction cars, the XFR has tank- and wallet-draining potential if you're heavy of hoof, but right now a used example looks spectacular value.

Checkpoints

Engine, transmission

The 5-litre supercharged AJ-V8 Gen III engine is proving pretty much bulletproof provided it's serviced regularly. Officially that's every 15,000 miles. though specialist Tom Lenthall (tliaguar, co.uk) recommends every 10,000 miles or annually. The 105,000-mile service is the big one as it includes new plugs and supercharger belt. TL charges £512, but it'll be a lot more at a Jaguar dealer.

If the V8 soundtrack is a little too muted for your taste, the likes of Spires and Quicksilver offer more vocal exhaust components. TL Jaguar also offers a tuning package - supercharger pulley, K&N filters and a remap, which gives an extra 80-90bhp for £1400.

The automatic 'boxes rarely give oblems - Lenthall recommend changing the oil and filter at 60,000 miles - but the e-diff can suffer 'issues', with fault codes usually traced to the diff-locking motor. A replacement costs £536.40 and takes around an hour to fit.

Suspension, steering, brakes Unsurprisingly for a big, hefty, powerful

rear-wheel-drive car, the XFR is heavy



on tyres, brakes and suspension components. A set of tyres will cost around £900 so it's well worth factoring that into your price negotiations Excessive wear on the inside edges of the tyres points to the need for a geometry check. The tyre pressure monitoring system occasionally throws up fault codes, but it's usually just the valve that needs replacing

Listen out for clonks and knocks from the suspension on the test drive. Lower damper bushes are prone to wear - replacements are £22.50 each, plus around an hour per corner to fit. At higher mileages, the lower suspension arms, both front and rear, may also need replacement; hudget around £250 for a front arm, £350 for a rear, including fitting.

Body, interior, electrics

No XFR should be experiencing serious corrosion issues, so any signs of resprayed panels could point to accident repairs. The first-generation touchscreen control centre is a bit of a faff, but generally reliable. The standard hi-fi, meanwhile, isn't great; the Bowers & Wilkins upgrade is well worth holding out for





1: 503bhp and over 1800kg take their toll on the brakes, 2: R badging is discreet. 3: supercharged V8 has good reputation for reliability, but regular servicing is recommended

What we said

eCoty 2008 issue



Toe to the floor, the XFR feets almost shockingly rand, the previously subdued, soft-edged V8 buttle acquairing a napering large of the party of the previously subdued, soft-edged V8 buttle acquairing a napering large party of the party significant soft and to take acceleration starts to bury my spine into the barryl yielding backrest. Meanthes, for electrifying shift speeds at maximum chat, which is just what you need when you're calling the shots via the soft-touch shifters behind the wheth's brotzontal spokes.

The faster we travel, the more remarkable the chassis becomes. The XF SV8 had two-stage dampers with a soft and a firm setting. The new system on the XFR is continuously variable between those two extremes. Also new is the electronic differential, which an divert torque to the outside rear wheel if the tail benine so. Lies.

Whereas the SVB's chassis felt safe, plant and progressive, the XFR's, with its quicker steering and stiffer springs, is significantly sharper and quicker-witted. It can be placed with pinpoint accuracy and turns in with a lightness of touch unupdated and turns in with a lightness of touch unupdated and turns in with a lightness of touch unupdated and turns in with a lightness of touch unupdated and turns in which are also and weight. (evo 129)



Above: ride benefits from continuously variable dampers, although bushes wear quickly



Above: interior is as well appointed as you'd expect, although touchscreen can be fiddly

I bought one' Garry Wilson

In October 2012 I spotted a late 2009
XFR listed on Auto Trader. It was garaged
with a full Jaguar service history and
clearly well loved, so I bought it. It had
65k on the clock but I wasn't worried
about a high-mileage car.

about a nign-mueage car.

"I've done over 40,000 miles in it
now and it's comfortable and refined
at any speed - though for some reason
my wife finds the front passenger seat
uncomfortable - and it's an awesome

cruiser, sitting quietly at 70mph doing 30mpg. The average is around 25mpg. The tank's not huge, but I can get over 300 miles between fill-ups on a long run.

The performance is awesome and it can be real fun. The DSC perhaps intervenes too much when you're pushing on, but the XFR is an animal in the wet without it. All that DSC action polished off the rear brakes pretty quickly, and it's heavy on rear tyres too.

The first two services, both around two warms are supported to the control of the

In the classifieds



2010 XFR
90,000 miles
Black with tan leather
One owner © FJSH
Exceptional condition
Caralot.co.uk

caralot.co.ul £19,950



2009 XFR

46,000 miles

Metallic Lunar Grey

Warm Charcoal leather

B&W hi-fi S FJSH

dorsetsportscars.co.uk

£23,990



£29,950

The rivals

BMW M5 (2004-10)
With 500bhp from its naturally aspirated
5-litre VIO, the E60 M5 is properly
hardcore. Wide choice for c£20-23k.

Audi RS6 (2008-10)
Twin turbos boosted the C6-gen RS6's
5-litre V10 to 572bhp. More common as
an Avant, few are below £30k.
Maserati Quattroporte

(2004-08) 'Only' c400bhp from 4.2-litre V8, but

seductive looks and fine chassis. Earliest QPs can now be had for as little as £15k.

Specification

Jaguar XFR

Engine V8,5000cc, supercharger Max power 503bhp @ 6000-6500rpm Max torque 46lib ft @ 2500-5500rpm Transmission Six-speed automatic, rear-wheel drive

Weight 1816kg Power-to-weight 281bhp/ton 0-60mph 4.8sec (claimed) Top speed 155mph (limited) Price new £59,900 (2009)

Parts prices

(Prices from tijaguar.co.uk. Tyre prices from blackcircles.com. All prices include VAT but exclude fitting charges)

Tyres (each) £195.76 front, £236.04 rear (Dunlop Sport Maxx) Front pads (set) £82.56 (aftermarket), £175.20 (Jaguar)

Rear pads (set) £55.08 (aftermarket). £111.99 (Jaguar)

Brake pad sensors (axle set) £35.28 Exhaust (cat back) £2160 Free-flow cat £1068

Servicing

(Prices from tljaguar.co.uk, including VAT)

Recommended 10,000 miles/12 months (whichever sooner) Basic £254.46 Intermediate £304 Major £512.42

What to pay

The cheapest XFRs - early 2009 models and particularly high-milers - have just started to dip below £20,000. High mileage isn't necessarily an issue as these cars have often racked up largely motorway miles and been companymaintained - check the car's history £22-25k gives you a wide choice of low-to-average-mileage '09-'10 cars in a decent range of colour combinations, while £30k will buy you a low-mileage 2011 car with just one or two previous owners. Popular options on all models include iPod connectivity, the reversing camera and particularly the excellent 440W Bowers & Wilkins hi-fi.

Useful contacts

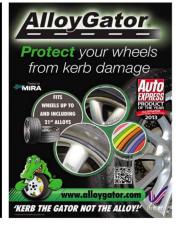
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Essentials

Knowledge

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Model BMW M3 GTS c£57.50 gts-models.com

BIMW built just 250 examples of the M3 GTS, and it's widely considered to be the best version of the E92. In 138 model form, the combination of vivid Orange Fire paint with contrasting carbon roof and spoiler looks as sturning as ever. For anyone who justs after the real thing, this is a must.

Modification Milltek Ford Focus

Milltek Ford Focus ST250 exhaust

From £1028.40 millteksport.com

Milltek says this cat-back exhaust delivers power and torque gains without the drone often found when tuning high-compression engines with relatively small turbos. It's made from 76mm stainless steel and is also available as a full system with an EC-compliant Euro S catalyst for £1993 20 in total.

Modification

Tarox disc and pad upgrade for VW Golf Mk7 £225 (discs, pair), £79 (pads) tarox.co.uk

Tarox says this brake upgrate offers improved stopping power and cold-wealther bite without jeopardising warranty cover. There's a choice of four disc designs and you can also choose between two pad specs - Corsa for road and track use or Track for circuit driving. The upgrade also fits Audi A35, SEAT Leons and Skoda Octavias.

Book

Ayrton Senna: All His Races

£40 amazon.co.uk

This book has been released to mark the 20th anniversary of Senna's tragic death at Imola (on May 1). It charts every race of his career, from his formative years in karting right through to FL, with memories from those Senna worked with and raced asairst.

Speakers

DBA Envy 3 From £4999 demandbetteraudio.org.uk

These speakers feature carbon/ Kevlar drivers inside hand-made carbon spheres that are mounted to aeronautical-grade aluminium collars. DBA stands for Demand Better Audio, so they should sound as good as they look.









Tried & Tested

Knowledge

The best motoring products, put through their paces by the **evo** team



Autodromo Prototipo From £492 pageandcooper.com

Nothing says 'drivers' watch' like a 1970s chronograph, but the trouble with 1970s chronographs is that good examples are hard to come by and, invariably, priced accordingly, That's why Autodromo's Prototipo caught my eye. It was launched late last year, but its retro design perfectly captures the look of those vintage chronos.

In the metal, the finsh of the brushed and polished surfaces on the tomeau-shaped case in pressive, while the dail is perfectly understated (there are several different colour schemes available, Beinhoft de dail six an unusual hybrid 'meca-quartz' movement. As its name hints, this is esentially a quart thas envolvent with a mechanical-style chronograph stiting on top. This enables the chronograph's second hand to's weeper around the dail (rather than jumping a second at a time (Bei on on a fully mechanical watch, allowing accuracy of 1958 of a second mechanical watch, allowing accuracy of 1958 of a second mechanical watch, allowing accuracy of 1958 of a second mechanical watch, allowing accuracy of 1958 of a second mechanical watch, allowing accuracy of 1958 of a second mechanical watch, allowing accuracy of 1958 of a second mechanical watch, allowing accuracy of 1958 of a second mechanical watch, allowing accuracy of 1958 of a second mechanical watch allowing accuracy of 1958 of a second mechanical watch.

and usefully confusing anti-quartz watch snobs. The only slight negative l've found with the Prototipo is that the pulsometer/fachymeter digits around the edge of the dial are unusually small and border on illegible to the naked eye. But perhaps this reflects how often a chronograph's timing functions really get used.

Otherwise, this Autodromo is hard to fault. If you want a chronograph with classic styling, but without the price or potential pitfalls of an older watch, look no further. Ian Eveleigh

Belkin Universal Car Microcharger £14.99 belkin.com/uk

Smartphones are thirsty beasts. They have to play music, stream video, browse the internet, make and take calls and texts, and perform countless other functions. They are also indispensable to our modern lives, so it's never been more painful to have yours run out of battery.

This miniscule, good-value device solves that problem. A tiny plug goes into your car's 12V socket, and into that plug goes a USB lead that can be fitted into most resystems. [Phones exceeded]

Tested in my Skoda Citigo (yes, I know. I'm sorry), my BlackBerry Z5 (again, sorry) charged up as fast as it would if plugged into the mains. Over my half-hour commute to the **evo** office the BlackBerry received about an extra 35 percentage points of charge, and even sucked in 25 over the same timeframe when simultaneously playing Duran Duran or Nik Kershaw (once again, very sorry). Things aren't completely rosy with

It, however, as you have to give careful consideration to where you put the phone when it's charging, especially lift is strike an lot of some of when it's charging, especially lift is strike in a loide or nourt. With my phone charging and mounted on the centre console, the feed adapted chargerously close to the gearth one. Of the console, the leaf adapted chargerously close to the gearth one will be a larger than the last thing if one ed while trying to change up from third to bottom it to sharp the will be a larger than the consoleration of the co







Farécia G3 Professional Body Prep Clay Mitt £12.99 g3pro.com

Claying your car has become much more mainstream, but going over an entire car with a clay bar little bigger than the average key fob is still a laborious process. So for the doubters or those who can't spare the time to give the perfect base for a wax, this new mitt is worth looking at.

The clay is embedded into a foambacked, microfibre mitt that slips easily over the hand, and while it is flexible enough to tackle curved panels, it's also easy to keep flat. Just spray on a lubricant like G3's Bodyshop Detailer and wipe the mitt over the panel. You can feel the 'clay' working and you get that same reduction in friction as with a conventional bar when the contaminants are lifted away.

The obvious advantage is you're covering around ten times the area you would with a bar, making the job much quicker. That extra working area also means it removes contaminants faster, as if found when trying it alongside a bar, it doesn't appear that the impregnated surface is more aggressive either, as I ould see no sits of paint marring.

When you are finished, you just rinse the mitt and leave it to dry, supporting G3's claim that it lasts five times as long as a clay bar. Competitively priced, this is a quick and viable alternative.

Kim Adams (@cargadgetguru)





Trips & Travel

Knowledge

The best destinations to visit in your car

Great drives: Road to the Isles Start point: 56.83472, -5.07588 (junction of A830 with A82, Fort William) The road: A830 to Mallaig Great for: Impreza STI Spec C. VX220 Turbo. Clip V6 225 ('McCoty' top 3)



'IF YOU EVER find yourself in the western Highlands, get vourself on the A830 that runs west from Fort William towards Mallaig. The first part's just fast and open, but then you go under a bridge and the road goes sharp right and all heaven breaks loose. Mile after mile, the road just gets better and better and the scenery well, if you're a soft old sod like me, it'll move you in a way.

that you'll probably not want to admit to your mates." Those are the inimitable words of Peter Tomalin that I remember

reading way back in issue 063 while I was still at university. They came midway through the 'real-world' first part of eCoty 2003 (or McCoty as it was jocularly christened) and inspired me to go forth and seek out the road on a subsequent trip north in my beloved Mini. Its 40 or so miles were just as heavenly as promised and I seem to remember driving up and down them several times. I went back there in 2007 in a Vanguish (evo 110) but since 2009 the A830 has arguably got even better. The reason is that until five years ago the last section was predominantly a single-track road with passing places. Now, however, it's two-lane all the way to Mallaig. from whence you can catch the ferry across to the Isle of Skye. In fact the other name for the A830 is the rather more romantic 'Road to the Isles'.

If you dislike ferries, you could turn south at Lochallort and follow the A861. This will lead you on a huge 65-mile loop through some breathtaking and remote landscapes (Loch Shiel, which runs through the middle, was the setting for the Black Lake in the Harry Potter films). The 861 is predominantly (though not exclusively) single-

track, so it's not as good as the 830 in terms of pure driving and you might want to think twice before taking an Aventador down it. Nonetheless, in all the world there can be few better ways to spend a couple of hours.

> **Henry Catchpole** Features editor



M The route



Start Sinish Distance: 40 8 miles Time: 59 minutes

Where to stay

The Lochallort Inn is about 25 miles along the A830. Twins or doubles cost £44.50 per person per night, but that includes a cooked breakfast in the morning and Wi-Fi is available throughout the hotel. The single-occupancy rate is a very reasonable £50 per night and, according to the website, well-behaved pets are welcome for an extra £10. If you want to go over the sea to Skye then we'd recommend the Uig Hotel where we stayed during eCoty 2009.

Q Watch out for

The wildlife is to be avoided, as it's frequently large and possessed of antiers. Take particular care at night when the deer roam closer to the roads (the first indication you'll get are two gleaming dots of yellow as their eyes are picked out by your headlights). Check your fuel level before leaving Fort William, and remember to stop when the road runs out at Mallaig or you'll end up in the drink.

Reader road trip

Manchester to Milan

When I bought my 1971 Alfa Romeo GTV, just driving it home felt like a decent trip. However, when my wife said 'we could drive it home to Italy' (admittedly after a few glasses of wine), I could hardly book the ferry fast enough.

After a thorough once-over by my local specialist and arranging some very comprehensive breakdown cover, we set off for our two-week trip. On the first day we stayed in Épernay to sample some champagne, after visiting the old Reims circuit. The next day, towards the end of a long jaunt down to Annecy, the scenery started to get interesting as we gained altitude

After a few days letting the Alfa rest, we headed across the Alps to Milan, travelling over the Little St Bernard Pass up past Bourg-St-



through the trees around the numerous hairpins, enjoying every double de-clutch and listening to the classic raspy Italian exhaust note. The combination of 35dex Cheat and at least as many hairpins on the way down took their toll on the brakes, and as we came into Milan, the middle pedal went to the floor, but we still had fluid and a few pumps on the pedal had the pressure back As we left the campsite at Lake Como after

a few days' relaxation, it was like a scene from a Herbie film as my wife bade Italy farewell and the old Alfa randomly popped its bonnet open in agreement. After a dash through Switzerland and stop-offs in Metz and Bruges, we made it home. Looking back, it was a fantastic trip we'll remember for many years, and much to the amazement of my friends, not one recovery truck was needed!

Steffan Eldred

Email your road trip story to henryc@evo.co.uk

Events calendar

MAY May 22-25

Monaco Grand Prix, Monte Carlo

acm.mc May 25-26 Motorsport At The Palace, Crystal Palace Park motorsportatthepalace.co.uk

evo track evening. Bedford Autodrome

evo.co.uk/trackdays

ILINE June 14-15 Le Mans 24 Hours 24h-lemans.com

Ratings Thrill-free zone ★ Tepid ★★ Interesting ★★★ Seriously good ★★★★ A truly great car ★★★★

Database

© = new entry this month, * = grey import. Entires in Italica are for cas no longer on sale. Issue no. is for our most back recent major test of the cat (0 = 1 heart 18 = 1 heart test or group test. ↑ = 1 enture). Cat 004.6 ± 0.039 to order a back issue. Please on other each nativity of Variand fellery fellery. Entire is the cart in ammontor on y = solicitional hybrid test has at 3 when Verlight is the cat 3 when Verlight is the cat 3 when Verlight is the cat 5 when Verlight are manufacturers' claims. CO2 g/km is the official EC figure and EC mpg is the official 'Combined' figure or equivalent.

Knowledge

Superminis / Hot Hatches

		Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	php/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	4dm09-0	0-100mph	Махтр	C02g/km	ECmpg	evo rating	
	Abarth Punto Supersport		£17,805	4/1368	178/5750	199/2750	1225kg	148	7.5		134	142	463	Attractive and fun - Needs more power	*****
0	Abarth 595 Competizione	196 D	(38,960	4/1368	158/5500	170/3000	1035kg	155	7.4		130	155	435	Spirited engine, still looks great - Favours fun over finesse	*****
٦	Alfa Romeo Mito Cloverleaf	149 R	£18.870	4/1368	168/5500	184/2500	1145kg	149	75		136	139	471	Great MultiAir engine, impressive ride - Not as feisty as we hoped	****
	Alfa Romeo Giulietta Cloverleaf	366 D	\$25,530	4/1742	232/5500	251/1900	1320kg	179	6.8		150	177	372	+ Shows signs of deep talentbut should be more exciting	****
	Alfa Romeo 147 GTA	187R	123-726	6/3179	247/5200	2214600	1360kg	185	6.0	15.5	153		23.3	Mkl Focus RS pace without the histrionics - Slightly nose-heavy	****
	Audi Al quattro	187.0	73	4/1984	253/6000	258/2500	1420kg	187	5.7		152	100	32.8	Polished 253bhp all-wheel-drive AI - Just 19 for LIK, Porsche Cayman price	****
	Aud S1	188 R	630,640	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1395kg	216	5.4	12.5	155	16.2	40.4	. Lots of grip and one of the best-sounding four-pot turbos - Still a little too clinical	****
	Audi S3	106.R	106-12	4/1984	261/6000	258/2500	1455kg	183	5.6	13.6	155	198	33.2	Very fast, very effective, very , err, quality - A little too clinical	****
	Aud RSJ Sportback	156R	78-72	5/2480	335/5400	332/2600	575kg	216	45		85	212	no	Above, with added five-pot character - Again, see above	****
	BMW12SIMSport	176 D	\$26,020	4/1997	218/5000	228/1350	1420kg	156	6.4		155	154	428	+ Performance, price, running costs - Dull four-pot soundtrack	****
	BMW MI3SI	195 R	\$30,835	6/2979	376/5800	332/1300	1425kg	225	4.8	12.9	155	188	35.3	+ Powertrain, noise, chassis, price - M235illooks nicer, and has an LSD on its options list	****
	BMW123dMSport	122 R	107-17	4/7905	2014400	295/2000	1420kg	144	6.5	17.4	148	138	54.3	Economical and no slouch - Doesn't feel special enough	****
	BMW130/M Sport	106.R	105-70	6/2996	261/6650	232/2750	1450kg	183	6.1	15.3	155		34.0	Fantastic engine - Suspension can still get a little bolney	****
	Citroën Cl/Peuseot 103/Toyota Aygo	126 R	£8095+	3/998	68/6000	68/3600	790kg	87	16.2		98	103	614	Full of character and insurance-friendly - Insurance friendly power	****
	Citroén Saxo VTS	020 R	197-103	4/1587	120/6600	107/5200	935kg	130	7.6	22.6	127		34.9	Chunky, chuckable charger - Can catch out the unwary	****
	Citroen AX GT	195 R	787-192	4/1360	85/6400	86/4000	722kg	120	9.2		110			Makes terrific use of 85bhp - Feels like it's made from paper	****
	Citrolin DS316THP	142 R	£17,475	4/1598	154/6000	177/1400	1240kg	126	7.2		133	155	42.2	A proper French hot hatch - Petrolheads might find it too 'designed'	****
	Citroën DS3 Racing	153 D	71-72	4/1598	204/6000	203/2000	1240kg	167	6.5		146	149		+ Faster, felstier version of above - Not as hardcore as its 'Racing' tag suggests	****
	Flat Panda 100HP	132 R	'06-'77	4/1368	99/6000	93/4250	975kg	103	9.5		115	154	43.5	 Most fun per pound on the market - Optional ESP can't be turned off 	****
	Fiat Punto Evo Sporting	MID	£13,355	4/1368	133/5000	152/1750	1155kg	117	8.5		127	129	50.4	Great engine, smart styling - Dynamics don't live up to the Evo name	****
	Ford Sportka SE	084 R	703-708	4/1597	94/5500	100/4250	934kg	102	9.5		108		37.2	Big funin a little package - Could handle even more power	****
	Ford Flesta ST	196 D	\$17,250	4/1596	179/5700	214/1500	1088kg	167	7.4	18.4	137	138	479	Chassis, price, punchy performance - Not as powerful as key rivals	****
	Ford Flesta ST Mountune	195 R	\$17,894	4/1596	212/6000	236/2750	1088kg	198	6.6		140	138		One of the best mid-sized hatches made even better - Badge snobbery	****
	Ford Flesta Zetec S	123 D	108-13	4/1596	718/6000	TI2/4050	1045kg	75	9.9		120	134	48.7	Genuinely entertaining supermini - Grown up compared to Twings/Swift	****
	Ford Flesta Zetec S Mounture	132 R	106-13	4/1596	138/6750	125/4250	1080kg	130	7.9		120	134	48.7	* As above, with a fantastically loud exhaustif you're 12 years old	****
	Ford Fiesta ST	075 D	105-108	4/1999	148/6000	140/4500	1137kg	132	7.9		129		38.2	Great looks, decent brakes - Disappointing chassis, gutless engine	*****
	Ford Fiesta ST185 Mountaine	IIS.R	708	4/1999	885/6700	147/3500	1137kg	765	6.9		129			Fiesta ST gets the power it always needed - OTT exhaust note	****
	Ford Fiesta Zetec S	020 R	100-102	4/1596	102/6000	1024-000	976kg	106	10.2		113		38.2	Better than you'd ever believe - No-one else will believe it.	****
	Ford Focus 16T Zetec S	165 D	£20.595	4/1596	179/5700	199/1900	1333kg	136	7.8		138	139	471	The fastest, keenest Mk3 Focus yet - The MkI's spankle is still absent though	****
	Ford Focus ST	188 R	£21,995	4/1999	247/5500	265/1750	1362kg	184	6.5	16.8	154	169		All-round cracking hot hatch. Good value, too - There's a bit of torque-steer	****
	Ford Focus ST Mountune	187 D	\$23,220	4/1999	271/5500	295/2750	1362kg	202	5.7		154+	169		Great value upgrade - Steering still not as feelsome as that of some rivals	****
	Ford Focus ST	199.8	105-70	5/2522	222/6000	236/1600	1392kg	162	6.7	16.8	150	224	30.4	Value, performance, integrity - Big engine compromises handling	****
	Ford Focus ST Mountaine	137R	108-77	5/2522	256/5500	295/2500	1392kg	187	5.8	14.3	155	224		ST takes extra power in its stride - You probably still want an RS	****
	Ford Focus RS (Mk.2)	395 R	109-71	5/2522	300/6500	324/2300	1467kg	208	5.9	14.2	163	225	30.5	 Huge-performance, highly-capable FWD chassis - Body control is occasionally clumsy 	****
	Ford Focus RSS00	181 R	70-77	5/2522	345/6000	339/2500	1467kg	239	5.6	12.7	165	225		More power and presence than regular RS - Pricey	*****
	Ford Focus RS (MkI)	195 R	02-03	4/1998	212/5500	229/3500	1278kg	169	5.9	14.9	144			Some are great - Some are awful (so make sure you drive plenty)	****
	Ford Escort RS Coswarth	157 R	122-196	4/1993	227/6250	224/3500	1304kg	176	5.8		143		24.5	The ultimate Essex hot hatch - Liltimate trophy for tea leaves	****
	Ford Puma LT	095 R		4/1679	123/6300	116/4500	1041kg	120	8.6	27.6	122		38.2	Everything - Nothing. The L4 is worth a look too	****
	Ford Racing Purna	128 R	10-00	4/1679	153/7000	119/4500	Make	132	7.8	23.2	137		34.7	Exclusivity - The standard Puma does it so well	****
	Honda Civic Type-R	102 R	107-31	4/1998	198/7800	142/5600	1267kg	758	6.8	17.5	146	215	31.0	+ Looks great, VTEC more accessible - Steering lacks feel, inert balance	****
	Honds Civic Type-R Champ'ship White	126 D	109-10	4/1998	198/7800	142/5600	1267kg	158	6.6		146		310	 Limited-slip diff a welcome addition - it's not available on standard car 	****
	Honda Civic Type-R Mugen	195 R	109-71	4/1998	237/8300	157/6250	1233kg	195	5.9		155			 Fantastic on road and track - There's only 20, and they're a tad pricey 	****
	Hands Civic Type-R	075.R	101-105	4/1998	19377400	145/5900	1204kg	166	6.8	16.9	146		31.7	Potent and great value - Looks divide opinion, duff steering	****
	Kia Proceed GT	186 D	£19,995	4/1591	201/6000	195/1750	1448kg	141	7.4		143	171	291	Good chassis, appealing price - Thrashy engine	****
	Lancia Delta Integrale	194 R	388-193	4/1995	207/5750	220/3500	1300kg	162	5.7		137		23.9	One of the finest cars ever built - Demands love, LHD only	****
	Mazda 21.5 Sport	132 R	£13,495	4/1498	102/6000	101/4000	1030kg	107	10.4		107	135	48.7	Fun and funky - Feels tinny after a Mini	****
	Mazda 3 MPS	137 R	106-13	4/2261	256/5500	280/3000	1385kg	188	6.3	14.5	155	224	29.4	Quick, eager and very good value - The steering's iffy	****
	Mercedes-Benz A250 'by AMG'	173 D	\$29,355	4/1991	208/5500	258/1200	1370kg	154	6.5		149	148	46.3	Mercedes builds a proper hot hatch - But denies it a manual gearbox	****
	Mercedes-Benz A45 AMG	194 R	£37,845	4/1991	355/6000	332/2250	1480kg	244	4.3	10.6	155	161	40.9	Blisteringly quick everywhere - Not as rewarding as some slower rivals	****
	MG3Style	190 D	19999	4/1498	104/6000	101/4750	1155kg	91	10.4		108	136	48.7	Decent chassis, performance and price - Thrashy engine, cheap cabin	****
	MG Metro 6R4 Clubman	181 R	84-87	6/2991	250/7000	225/6500	1000kg	254	45		140			The most extreme hot hatch ever - Engine noise, heat soak, five mog.	****
	Mini Cooper (F56)	194 D	£15,300	4/1499	134/4500	162/1250	1085kg	125	7.9		130	105	62.8	Punchy three-cylinder engine, good chassis - Tubby styling	****
0	Mini Cooper S (FS6)	196 D	£18,665	4/1998	189/4700	206/1250	116Ckg	166	6.8		146	133	49.6	Still has that Mini DNA - Expensive with options; naff dash displays	****
п	Mini John Cooper Works Coupe (RS8)	164R	\$23,805	4/1598	208/6000	206/2000	1175kg	180	6.3		149	165	39.8	The usual raucous Mini JCW experience - But with a questionable 'helmet' roof	****
	Mini Cooper (R56)	185 F	109-74	4/1598	120/6000	784250	1075kg	73	9.1		126	127	52.3	Brilliant ride and composure; could be all the Mini you need - You'll still buy the S'	****
	Mini Cooper S (R56)	149R	05-74	4/1598	AB1/5500	177/1600	1140kg	167	7.0		142	136	48.7	+ New engine, Mini quality - Front end not quite as direct as the old car's	****
	Mini Cooper SD (RS6)	158 D	31-74	4/1995	1414000	225/1750	TISOkg	125	8.0		134	194	65.7	+ A quick diesel Mini with impressive mpg - But no Cooper Salternative	****
	Mini John Cooper Works (RS6)	184 R		4/1598	208/6000	206/2000	716Okg	182	7.2	16.7	148	165	39.8	A seriously rapid Mini - Occasionally just a little unruly	****
	Mini John Cooper Works GP (R56)	195 R	73-74	4/1598	215/6000	206/2000	1160kg	188	6.3		150	165	39.8	Brazenly hyperactive - Too much for some roads and some tastes	****
	Mini Cooper S (RS0)	077R	702-106	4/1598	168/6000	55/4000	7140kg	143	7.8	19.9	135		33.6	Strong performance, quality feel - Over-long gearing	****
	Mini Cooper S Works GP (R50)	144.8	106	4/7598	215/7100	184/4600	3290kg	200	6.5	-	160		32.8	Storming engine, agrity - Tacky styling 'enhancements'	****
	Mitsubishi Colt Rallart	132 R	108-13	4/1468	142/6000	155/3500	1060kg	147	7.4		131	167	409	Price handling performance - its looks are a little odd	****
	Nissan Juke Nismo	184 R	\$20,495	4/1618	197/6000	184/2400	1306kg	153	7.7	19.5	134	159	409	More than the sum of its parts - Not enough to add up to a pukka hot hatch	****



Defectors willkommen

The Volvo V40 R-Design

Finance subject to status. 5.9% finance available on all V40 models registered by 31st July 2014. "At participating dealers. Example based on mileage of 8000 per annum, excess mileage charge 14.9p per mile. At the end of the Personal Contract Purchase there are three options: (i) pay the Final Payment/GFV (Guaranteed Future Value) to own the vehicle; (ii) part exchange the vehicle, where equity is available; or (iii) return the vehicle. Further charges may be made subject to the condition of the vehicle. Terms and conditions apply. 18s or over. Guarantee/Indemnity may be required. Volvo Car Credit RH1 1SR.





Our Choice Ikswagen Golf R. A flagship Golf to get really excited about, the new R offers immense pace and a truly engaging driving experience in a compromise-free package with class and quality



Best of the Rest

an enticing rear-drive alternative to the Golf R, although the Mégane 265 Cup pips both for absolute tactility and involvement. The Fiesta ST (left), meanwhile, is the default. affordable hot hatch choice. We'd have ours Mountuned.

Superminis / Hot Hatches

Car	ssue no.	Price	Engine	php/rpm	b ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	-100mph	Maxmph	C02 g/km	ECMPE	EVO rating	
Nissan Sunny GTI-R		92-93	4/7998	220/6400	1974800	D69kg	176	61		134		25.1	Nissan's Escort Cossie - Make sure it's a good one	****
Peugeot X16 Rallye (Series 2)		107-198	4/1587	103/6300	97/3500	865kg	121	8.8		121		34.0	Bargain no-frills thrills - Not as much fizz as original 1.3	****
Peugeot 106 Rallye (Series II)	0958	194-196	4/1294	100/7200	80/5407	826kg	121	9.7		IM.		35.6	Frantic, thrashy fun - Needs caning to extract full potential	****
Peugeot 106 GTI Idv	0348	107-136	4/587	170/6600	107/5/200	950kg	128	7.4	22.2	127		34.9	Fine handing supermini - Looks its age	****
Peugeot 208 GTI	184 R	£18.895	4/1598	1977/5800	203/1700	TI60kg	173	6.8	17.9	143	139	479	Agile chassis works well on tough roads - Could be more involving.	****
Peugeot 205 GTI19	195 R	785-197	4/7905	130/6000	1994/50	930kg	145	7.0		124		36.7	Still scintillating after all these years - Brittle build quality	****
Peugeot 306 GTI-6	020 R	193-101	4/1998	167/6500	142/5500	1225kg	139	7.2	20.1	140		30.1	One of the great GTIs - They don't make them like this any more	****
Peugeot 306 Rallye	095 R	199-199	4/7998	367/6500	142/5500	10000	14.7	6.9	19.2	117		30.1	+ Essentially a GTI-6 for less dosh- Limited choice of colours	****
Renaultsport Twingo 133	175 R	106-73	4/1598	131/6750	JIS/4400	3050kg	127	8.6		125	150	43.5	Renaultsport experience for pocket money - Optional Cup chassis gives bouncy ride	****
Renaultsport Clio 200 Turbo	184 R	£18.995	4/16/8	197/6000	177/1750	1204kg	166	6.9	17.9	143	144	44.8		****
Renaultsport Clio 200 Cup	395 R	109-13	4/7008	197/7100	59/5400	1204kg	166	6.6	16.7	361	190	34.5	The hot Clio at its best - They don't make it arrumore	****
Renaultsport Clio 197 Cup	IIS.R	207-109	4/7998	194/7250	158/5550	1240kg	167	6.9		134		33.6	Outck, polished and capable - Not as much sheer fun as 182 Cup	****
Renaultsport Clin 182	066R	104-106	4/7008	380/6500	148/5250	TROKE	765	6.6	17.5	110		36.0	Took hot hatches to a new level - Flawed driving position	****
Renaultsport Clio 182 Cup	187R	104-106	4/7998	180/6500	148/5250	1090kg	168	6.5		139		34.9	+ Full of beans, fantastic value - Sunday-market uphoistery	****
Renaultsport Clio Trophy	395 R	205-126	4/2298	150/6500	148/5250	3290kg	266	6.6	17.3	140		36.0	+ The most fun you can have on three (sometimes two) wheels - Just 500 were built	****
Renaultsport Clio 172 Cup	048R	102-104	4/7998	170/6250	147/5400	105%g	177	6.5	17.7	138			Bargain old-school hot hatch - Nervous in the wet, no ABS	****
Renaultsport Clio V6 255	057R	703-705	6/2946	255/7150	221/4650	1400kg	182	5.8		753		23.0	Supercar drama without the original's edgy handling - Uninspired interior	****
Renaultsport Clio V6	029R	99-02	6/2946	230/6000	221/3750	1335kg	175	5.8	17.0	145		23.0	Pocket supercar - Mid-engined handling can be tricky	****
Renault Clio Williams	195 R	193-196	4/1988	148/6100	126/4500	98%g	753	7.6	20.8	121		26.0	+ One of the best hot hatches ever - Can be fragile	****
Renault 5 GT Turbo	395 R	37-37	4/1397	118/5750	122/3000	855kg	140	7.3		120		28.4		****
Renaultsport Mégane 265 Cup	195 R	£25,990	4/1998	261/5500	265/3000	1387kg	191	6.4	14.8	158	790	34.4	A hot hatch benchmark - Not a lot.	****
Renaultsport Mégane 250 Cup	130R	109-12	4/7998	247/5500	251/3000	1387kg	197	6.1	14.6	156	190	34.4	Fantastic chassispartially obscured by new-found maturity	****
Renaultsport Mésane dO 175 Cup	119.8	107-109	4/1995	173/3750	265/2000	1470kg	779	8.3	23.5	137		43.5		****
Renaultsport Mésane Trophy	087R	725	4/1008	222/5500	221/3000	1355kg	166	6.7	17.3	167		32)	Mesta grip and traction - Steering needs a touch more feel	****
Renaultsport Mégane 230 F1 Team R26	195 R	207-109	4/7998	227/5500	229/3000	1345kg	171	6.2	16.0	147			The car the R26 R is based on - F1 Team stickers in dubious taste	****
Renaultsport Mégane R26 R	195 R	108-109	4/1998	227/5500	229/3000	1220kg	189	5.8	75.7	147			One of the true hot hatch heroes - Two seats, plastic rear windows	****
SEAT Ibiza FR 2.0 TDI	144R	\$17,445	4/1968	141/4200	236/1750	1245kg	15	8.2		130	123	60.1	. More fun than the petrol FR, manual gearbox option - The Cupra's not much more	****
SEAT Ibiza Cupra	183 D	£18.765	4/1390	178/5200	184/2000	1259kg	144	6.9		142	139	479	Punchy engine, unflappable DSG - Lacks engagement	****
SEAT Leon FR TDI184	184 D	522,255	4/1968	181/4000	280/1750	1350kg	136	7.5		142	TI2	64.2	Performance, sweet chassis, economy, comfort - Boorish engine	*****
SEAT Leon Quora 280	195 R	£26.940	4/1984	276/6000	258/1/50	1320kg	212	5.8		155	169	441	Serious pace and ability for Golf GTI money - The Mk7 Golf R	****
SEAT Loon FR+	163 D	73-72	4/1984	208/5300	206/1700	1334kg	158	7.2		145	1717	38.7	+ As quick as a Golf GTI five-door but lots cheaper - Misses the VW's completeness	****
SEAT Leon Cupra R	1998	70-72	4/7984	262/9000	258/2500	1375kg	322	6.1	14.0	755	197	34.0	Bold car blinding engine - Lacks the character of its rival mega-hatches	****
SEAT Leon Cupra	105 R	127-17	4/1984	237/5700	221/2200	1375kg	175	63		153	190	34.0	Great engine, composure - Doesn't have adjust ability of old Cupra R	****
SEAT Leon Cupra 20v T	020 R	200-206	4/1781	178/5500	173/5000	1322kg	137	7.7		142		33.2	Terrific value - Lacks sparkle of very best hatches	****
SEAT Leon Cupra R 225	067R	773-776	4/1781	222/5900	206/2200	1378Ag	264	6.9		150		32.1	Cross-country pace, practicality, value - Not as thrilling as some	****
Skoda Fabia vRS (Mk2)	146D	£17.150	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1218kg	148	7.3		139	148	45.6	Well priced, well made, with great engine and DSG box - Dull steering	****
Skoda Fabia vRS (Mkt)	077R	104-107	4/1896	130/4000	229/9900	1315kg	100	9.6		127		55.4	Fascinatingly fun and frugal hot hatch - A little short on steering feel	****
Skoda Octavia vRS (Mk3)	187 D	£23,260	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1350kg	163	6.8		154	142	45.6	Ouick, agile, roomier than a Golf - Ride is harsh for what could be a family car	****
Skoda Octavia vRS (Mk2)	163 R	106-13	4/7998	197/5100	206/1700	1395kg	143	7.3		149	175	37.7	Drives like a GTI but costs much less - Green brake calibers?	****
Smart Fortwo Brabus	110 D	\$15,375	3/999	97/5500	104/3500	780kg	126	9.9		96	119	54.3	Telling people you drive a Brabus - Them realising it's not a 720bhp S-class	****
Subaru Impreza STI CS400	H6R	70-72	4/2457	395/5750	400/3950	1505kg	267	4.6	10.7	155			. Cosworthkudos. One of the fastest hatches we've tested - Pricey. Lifeless steering	****
Subaru Impreza WRXS	125 D	108-10	4/2457	251/5400	288/3000	1395kg	180	5.5		130	270		An improvement over the basic WRX - Still not the WRX we wanted	****
Subaru Impreza STI 330S	124R	108-10	4/2457	325/5400	347/3400	1505kg	239	4.4		155			A bit quicker than the STL but not better	****
Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk2)	175 R	£13,749	4/1586	134/6900	118/4400	1045kg	130	8.7		129	147	443	The Swift's still a great pocket rocket - But it's lost a little adjustability	****
Suzuki Swift Sport	132 R	105-77	4/1586	123/6800	109/4800	A230kg	121	8.9		224	165	39.8	Entertaining handling, well built - Lacking in steering feedback	****
Vauxhall Corsa VXR	154 R	£18.995	4/1598	189/5850	192/1980	1166kg	165	6.8		140	172	38.7	Looks snazzy, punchy engine - Lacks feet uncouth compared with rivals	****
Vauxhall Corsa VXR Nürburgring	164 R	71-73	4/1598	202/5750	206/2250	7166kg	176	6.5		143	178		VXR sets more power and a limited-slip diff - But it's over £3K more expensive	****
Vauxhall Astra VXR (Mk2)	195 R	€27.260	4/1998	276/5500	295/2500	1475kg	190	5.9		155	189		Better than the car it replaces; loony turbo pace - Lacks RS Mégane's precision	****
Vauxhall Astra VXR (MkJ)	102 R	106-71	4/7998	237/5600	236/2400	1393kg	173	6.7	16.7	752	221	30.7	Fast and furious - Lacks a little composure and precision	****
VW Up/SEAT Mi/Skoda Otigo	171 R	£7990+	3/999	59/5000	70/3000	854kg	70	16.1		99	105	628	Accomplished city car is dynamically soundbut predictably slow	****
VW Pole GTI	154 R	£19,730	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1184kg	153	6.8		142	139	479	Modern-day mk1 Golf GTI gets twin-clutch DSG - It's a little bit bland	****
VW Golf GTD (Mk7)	188 D	\$25,565	4/1968	181/3500	280/1750	1377kg	134	7.5		143	109	67.3	Pace, fuel economy, sounds good for a diesel - Lacks the extra edge of the GTI	****
VW Golf GTI (Mk7)	195 R	\$26,125	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1357kg	163	6.5		152	138	471	Brillantly resolved - Mégane 265 beats it as a pure drivers' car	*****
VW Golf R (Mk7)	195 R	629,900	4/1984	297/5500	280/1800	1476kg	204	51		155	165	40.9	+ Time to take the R brand seriously - Mégane 265 just edges it as a pure drivers' car	****
VW Golf GTI (Mk6)	172.8	109-13	4/9984	207/5300	207/7700	1308kg	160	6.4	16.5	148	170	38.7	Still a very accomplished hot hatch - 207bhp isn't a lot any more	****
VW Golf GTI Edition 35	15GR	22-73	4/1984	232/5500	221/2200	LSIBNE	1/9	0.5		104	109	34.9	Mkb GTI gets the power it craves - Expensive compared to the standard car	****
VW Golf R (Mkb)	1400	70-73	4/1984	266/6000	258/2500	1529kg	178	55		155	199	33.2		****
VW Golf GTI (Mk5)	195 R	104-109	4/1984	197/5100	207/1800	1336kg	150	6.7	17.9	145			Character and ability: the GTTs return to form - Lacking firepower?	****
VW Golf R32 (Mk5)	087R	106-109	6/3189	246/6300	236/2500	2530kg	765	5.8	15.2	155		26.4	Traction's great and you'll love the soundtrack - We'd still have a GTI	****
VW Golf R32 (MR4)	0538	102-104	6/3189	2326250	236/2800	1677kg	263	6.4	26.7	154		24.6	Charismatic- Boomy engine can be tiresome	****
VW Golf GTI 16v (MR2)	195 R	788-192	4/1781	138/600	124/4600	960kg	347	7.9		129		26.6		****
VW Golf GTI (MkJ, 18)	0958	787-784	4/1781	112/5800	109/3500	840kg	125	BI		112		36.0		****
Volvo C30 75 R-Design	122 R	108-12	5/2521	227/5000	236/1500	B47kg	165	6.6	16.9	160	203	325		****

- Adaptive Digital Display
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Official fuel consumption for the Volvo V40 D2 R-Design (manual) in MPG (I/100km): Urban 74.3 (3.8), Extra Urban 91.1 (3.1), Combined 83.1 (3.4), CO₂ Emissions 88g/km, MPG figures are obtained from laboratory testing intended for comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect real driving results.

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Our Choice

BMW M5. The turbocharging of BMW's M-cars met with scepticism, but the current M5's 4.4-litre twin-turbo V8 feels a perfect fit. It's a brutally fast car, and there are clever (and useable) adjustable driving modes. It looks cool, too. The best big saloon is



Best of the Rest

department is on a roll right now: the 6.2-litre C63 is superb as either saloon or estate, likewise the E63. Jaguar's showy XFR-S (left) has a particularly impressive chassis, while the latest Alpina D3 Biturbo is not only the world's fastest diesel production car, but a great handler too.

> **** **** **** **** **** **** **** **** **** ****

Saloons / Estates / 4x4s

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine	htp/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	4dm09-0	0-100mph	Мах трh	CO2 g/len	ECmpg	evo rating
Alta Romeo 156 GTA	045R	102-106	6/3179	247/6200	221/4800	1410kg	190	63		155		23.3	Noise pace and individuality - Front-drive chassis can't keep up
Alona D3 Biturbo (F30)	192 D	846.950	6/2993	345/4000	536/7500	1510kg	232	4.6		173	139	533	173mph from a 3-litre diesell Brilliant chassis, too - Auto only
Alpina B3 Biturbo (F30)	188 D	£54,950	6/2979	404/5500	442/3000	1535kg	267	4.2		190	177	37.2	Understated appearance, monster performance - E90 M3 is better on the limit.
Albina D3 (E90)	120 R	108-12	4/1995	251/4000	332/2000	1495kg	143	69		152		52.3	Excellent chassis, turbodiesel comph - Rather narrow powerband
Alpina RS Riturbo	149 D	\$75,150	84395	533/5200	538/2900	1845kg	293	45		198	244	26.9	Big performance and top-line luxury - Driver not really involved
Albina 85 S	118 D	107-10	84398	523/5500	535/4750	1720kg	309	4.5		197	-	23.0	Ouicker and more exclusive than the E60 M5 - Suspension has its limits
Alpina B7 Biturbo	134 D	698,800	84395	533/5200	538/2900	1965kg	276	4.6		194	230	28.5	Massive performance and top-line luxury - Feels its weight when hustled
Aston Martin Rapide S	182 D	£146.035	12/5935	550/6000	457/5000	1990kg	281	49		190	332	100	+ Performance, soundtrack, looks - Small in the back, brakes lacking
Aston Martin Rapide	141 R	30-77	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	7990kg	260	52		169	355		Better than its DB9 sibling - More a 2+2 than a proper four-seater
Audi S3 Saloon	192 D	£33,240	4/7984	296/5500	280/1800	1430kg	210	5.3		155	162	26.4	On paper a match for the original S4 - In reality much less interesting
Audi S4 (B8)	166 D	639.020	6/2995	328/5500	324/2900	1685kg	198	49		155	790	36.9	Great powertrain, secure chassis - The new RS4 is here now
Audi S4 (87)	073.0	105-108	84363	339/7000	302/3500	1700kg	206	5.4		155			Effortless V8, agile handling - Lacks ultimate finesse of class leaders
Audi RS4 Avant (B8)	192 R	£56.525	8/4163	444/8250	387/4000	1795kg	251	4.5	10.5	174	249	26.4	+ Looks and sounds the part, thunderously fast - Harsh ride, unnatural steering
Aud RS4 (87)	ORR R	126-128	84557	414/7800	312/5500	1650kg	255	4.5	10.9	155			+ 4H4bhp at 78O0rpml And there's an estate version too - Busy under braking
Aud R34 (83)	MZR	00-07	0/20/7	3/3/0/00	3/5/2500	MUTAG	230	4.8	12.1	110		170	Effortiess pace - Not the last word in agility, Bends wheel rims
Audi RS2	XXIR	94-95	5/2226	315/6500	302/3000	1595kg	201	4.8	13.1	162		18.0	+ Storming performance (thanks to Porsche) - Try finding one
Audi S6	OND	106-77	10/5204	429/6800	398/3000	19tOkg	228	52		155	299	22.4	Even faster, and discreet with it - Very muted V10
Audi RS6 Avant (C7)	193 D	£76,985	8/3993	552/5700	516/1750	1935kg	290	3.6	8.2	155	229	28.8	. Performance, foolproof powertrain, looks - Torque converter gearbox, gloopy steering
Auch RS6 Avent (C6)	136 R	108-10	10/4997	572/6250	479/1500	2025kg	287	4.3	9.7	155	333	20.2	+ The world's most powerful estate - Power isn't everything
Audi RS6 Avant (CS)	052 R	702-104	8/4772	444/5700	473/1950	1865kg	242	4.8	77.6	155		19.3	The ultimate estate car? - Numb steering
Audi RS7	190 D	£83,495	8/3993	552/5700	516/1750	1920kg	292	3.9		155	229	28.8	Stonking performance, great looks - Numb driving experience
AudiS7	1710	662,330	8/3993	414/5000	406/1400	1945kg	216	4.6		155	225		Looks and drives better than S6 it's based on - Costs £8000 more
Audi S8	164 D	£79,900	8/3993	513/5800	479/1700	1975kg	264	4,1		155	237	277	Quicker and much more economical than before - But still underwhelming to drive
Audi RS Q3	194 R	£43,000	5/2480	306/5200	310/1500	1655kg	138	5.5		155	206	32.1	. More enjoyable than many RS Audis - Used Cayennes and ML63s are similar money
Audi 07 VI2 TDI	124 D	108-12	12/5934	493/3750	737/1750	2635kg	790	5.1	12.2	155	298	25.0	Undeniably quick, relatively economical - A tad ostentatious
Bentley Continental Flying Spur	185 D	£350,900	12/5998	616/6000	590/1600	2475kg	253	43		200	343	19.0	More power than old Flying Sour Speed - Feels its weight; engine sounds dull
Bentley Continental Flying Sour Speed	141 R	108-12	12/5998	600/6000	553/1750	2440kg	250	4.6		200	396	35.6	+ 600bhc: surprisinaly fun handling - Could look a bit more like it goes
Bentley Mulsarme	178 F	£225,900	8/6752	505/4200	752/1750	2585kg	198	5.7		184	393	16.7	Drives like a modern Bentley should - Shame it doesn't look like one too
BMW 320d (F30)	168 R	£28,775	4/1995	181/4000	280/1750	1495kg	123	7.4		146	120	61.4	Fleet-friendly new Three is economical yet entertaining - It's a taid noisy
BMW 328I (F30)	165 D	£29,765	4/1997	242/5000	258/1250	1430kg	172	5.8		155	149	44.8	New-age four-pot 328i is great all-rounder - We miss the sk-cylinder soundtrack
BMW 330d M Sport (F30)	180 D	£30,975	6/2993	254/4000	413/2000	1540kg	108	5.6		155	129	57.6	Great engine, fine handling, good value - Steering confuses weight with feel
BMW M3 (E90)	123 R	108-77	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1605kg	262	4.9	10.7	165	290	22.8	Every bit as good as the E92 M3 coupe - No carbon roof
BMW M3 CRT (E90)	179 R	11-12	8,4367	444/8300	324/3750	1580kg	285	4.4		180	295		+ Saloon chassis + weight savings + GTS engine = best E90 M3 - Just 67 were made
BMW 335/M Sport (E90)	134 R	105-77	6/29/9	302/5800	295/1300	1535kg	200	5.6		155	196	32.0	+ Stunning drivetrain, controlled chassis - Looks a bit steady
8MW 528i (F10)	164 D	£36,565	4/1997	242/5000	258/1250	1710kg	144	6.2		155	152	41.5	+ Four-pot 528 is downsizing near its best - You'll miss the straight-six sound effects
BMW 535i (F10)	141 D	£44,555	6/2979	302/5800	295/1200	1685kg	182	6.1		155	185	34.9	 New 5-series impresses But only with all the chassis options ticked
BMW M5 (FIOM)	165 R	£73,940	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1870kg	300	4.3		155	232	28.5	Twin-turbocharging suits all-new M5 well - Can feel heavy at times
BMW M5 Touring (E60)	105 R	107-10	20/4999	500/7750	383/6100	1780kg	285	4.8		155		19.3	Brilliant at ten tenths - Feels slightly clumsy when pottering
BMW M5 (E60)	129R	104-10	23/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1755kg	289	4.7	10.4	155		19.6	 Close to being the ultimate supersaloon - SMG gearbox feels old-tech
BMW M5 (E39)	110 R	99-03	8,4947	394/6600	369/3800	1795kg	223	4.9	11.5	155			+ Magnificent VS-engined supersaloon - We'd be nit-picking
BMW M5 (E34)	1108	92-96	6/3795	340/6900	295/4750	1653kg	209	5.9	13.6	155			The Godfather of supersaloons - The family can come too
BMW M5 (E28)	182 R	86-88	6/3453	282/6500	251/4500	1433kg	200	62		157			+ The original storming saloon - Understated looks
BMW M6 Gran Coupe	190 D	£98,125	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1875kg	299	42		155	232	28.5	 Enormous performance, stylish looks - Price tag looks silly next to rivals, M5 included
BMW X5 MSOd	191 D	£63,715	6/2993	376/4000	546/2000	2190kg	155	5.3		155	177	42.2	Straight-line pace - Driving experience identical to standard X5, despite the M badge
BMW X6 xDrive 50i	118 D	558,880	8/4395	408/5500	442/T/50	2190kg	136	5.4		155	292	22.6	+ Stunningly good to drive - Will you want to be seen arriving?
BMW X6M	134 D	£86,680	8/4395	547/6000	502/1500	2305kg	241	47		171	325	20.3	+ Fast, refined and comfortable - But it definitely lacks the M factor
BMW750I	174 D	£71,505	8/4395	449/5500	480/2000	2020kg	226	4.7		155	199		+ Well specced, impressively refined - Lags far behind the Mercedes S-class
Brabus Bullit	119 R	c£330,000	12/6233	720/5100	811/2100	1850kg	395	3.8		217			Seven hundred and twenty bhp - Three hundred thousand pounds
Cadillac CTS-V	148 R	£67,030	8/6/62	556/6100	551/3800	1928kg	293	3.9		190	365	18.1	It'll stand out among M-cars and AMGs - But the novelty might wear off
Ford Mondeo ST220	043D	102-07	6/2967	223/6/50	204/4900	7550kg	146	6.8		157		277	Muscular engine, fine chassis - Hotted-up repmobile image
Ford Sierra RS Cosworth 4x4	341 R	90-93	4/1993	220/6250	214/3500	1305kg	159	6.6		344		24.4	Fast and furious - Try finding a straight one
Ford Sierra RS Cosworth		86-90	4/1993	204/6000	204/4500	1220kg	169	6.2		143			+ Roadgoing Group A racecar - Don't shout about the power output!
Handa Civic Type R *	108 D	107.10	477700	233/8000	58-6100	253kg	180	5.9		150			- Screaming engine, razer sharp chassis: Specialist import only
Honda Accord Type-R	012 R	199-103	4/2/57	209/7200	158/6700	1306kg	163	6.1	17.4	142		29.4	One of the finest front-drivers of all time - Lack of image
Infiniti Q50S Hybrid	195 D	\$40,000	6/3498	359/6800	402/5000	1750kg	208	5.1		155	144	45.6	Good powertrain, promising chassis - Lacklustre steering, strong rivals
Jaguar XF 3.0 V6 Diesel S	W5D	146,610	6/2993	271/4000	443/2000	1695kg	162	5.9		155	159	473	+ Sweet handling plus diesel economy - But we'd still have the R
Jaguar XF Sportbrake 3.0 V6 Diesel S	177 D	£49,110	6/2993	271/4000	443/2000	1695kg	153	6.1		155	163	46.3	+ Looks and drives better than the saloon - Pity there's no Sportbrake R
Jaguar XF 3.0 V6 Supercharged	178 D	£48,495	6/2995	335/6500	332/3500	1695kg	201	5.7		155	224	29.4	+ Fast, comfortable, refined - Bland engine, poor economy compared to diesel V6
Jaguar XFR	181 D	£65,415	8/5000	503/6000	46V2500	1800kg	284	4.8	10.2	155	270	24.4	Brilliant blend of pace and refinement - Doesn't sound as special as it is



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Saloons / Estates / 4x4s

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine	mqr/qfd	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	нашо 9-о	0-100mph	Махтр	C02 g/km	8d m og	PVO rating	
Jaguer XFR-S	107R	£79,995	0/5000	542/6500	502/2500	1912ke	200	44		105	270	26.6	XF gets turned up to 12 - Except for the soundtrack	****
Jaguar XJ 3.0 V6 Diesel	148 D	£56,865	6/2993	271/4000	442/2000	1700kg	162	6.0		155	167	46.3	A great Jaguar - But not as great as the X.R	****
Jaguar XJR	191 D	£92,370	8/5000	542/6500	502/2500	1805kg	302	4.4		174	270	24.4	Hot-rod vibe, fine cabin - Opinion-dividing looks	****
Jaguar XJR	054 R	103-109	8/4396	400/6100	408/3500	1665kg	244	5.0		155		23.0	+ Genuine 7-series rival - 2007 facelift didn't help middle-aged image	****
Lamborghin/LM002	016 R	86-89	12/5167	450/6800	369/5200	2700kg	169			130			+ Craziest 4x4 ever, Countach V12 - Craziest 4x4 ever	****
Lexus IS-F	151 R	£58,416	8/4969	417/6600	372/5200	1714kg	247	4.7	10.9	173	270	24.4	+ Shockingly good Lexus - The M3's available as a (second hand) four-door too	****
Lotus Cariton	TOR	31-33	6/3615	377/5200	419/4200	7658kg	230	4.8	10.6	176		17.0	The Millennium Falcon of saloon cars - Every drive a work-out	****
Maserati Ghibli	186 D	£52,275	6/2979	326/5000	406/1750	1810kg	183	5.6		163	223	29.4	Bursting with character; good value compared to Quattroporte - It's still a big car	****
Maserati Quattroporte S	184 D	£80,095	6/2979	404/5500	406/1750	1860kg	221	5.1		177	244	26.9	+ Tempting afternative to V8 - Feel-free steering, secondary ride lacks decorum	****
Maserati Quattroporte GTS	179 D	£108,160	8/3798	523/6800	479/2250	1900kg	280	47		190	274	23.9	+ Performance, sense of occasion - Lacks the charisma and edge of its predecessor	****
Maserati Quattroporte S	137 R 141 R	108-12	8,4691	425/7000	3614750	1990kg	216	5.1	12.1	177	365	18.0	+ A QP with the bhp it deserves - Grille is a bit Hannibal Lecter	****
Maserati Quattroporte Sport GTS	341 R 085 R	108-12	8/4691	433/7000	3614750	1990kg 1930kg	221	5.1	-	177	365	18.0	+ The most stylish supersaloon - Slightly wooden brakes, unforgiving ride	****
Maserati Quattroporte	113 D	107-108	8/4244	396/7000	3394250	N30kg N30kg	207	5.5		167		17.9	Redefines big-car dynamics - Don't use auto mode	****
Maserati Quattroporte Sport GTS Mercedes-Benz 190E 2.5-16	185 E	380.102	4/2408	201/6750	177/5500	1366kg	147	72		142		24.4	Best Quattroporte chassis so far - More power wouldn't go amiss M-B's M3-alternative - Not as nimble as the Beemer	****
Mercedes-Benz CLA45 AMG	186 D	\$42.265	4/1998	355/6000	332/2250	TSTOKE	239	46		155	161	30.0	Strong performance, classy cabin - Pricey compared to A45 AMG hatchback	****
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG	151 R	\$57,275	8/6/208	451/6800	442/5000	1655kg	277	4.4	9.7	160	200	23.5	Monstrous pace and extremely engaging - M3's just a little better	****
Marrarias Renz (55 AMS	088 R	194-198	8/5430	367/5250	376/4000	MTSke	228	52	7.1	155	200	23.3	Furiously fast, commendably discreet - Overshadowed by M3 and RS4	****
Mercedes-Benz F63 AMG	187 D	£24.095	8/5461	549/5500	531/1750	1770kg	315	42		155	230	28.8	+ Power, response and accuracy in spades - A little lacking in originality	****
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG	165R	73-13	8/5467	518/5250	516/7750	Diske	298	42		155	230	28.8	* Turbo engine doesn't dilute E63 experience - Sometimes struggles for traction	****
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG	096 D	106-109	8/6/208	507/6800	464/5200	1765kg	292	4.5		155		19.8	Brilliant engine, incluisent chassis - Vasure steering, speed limits	****
Mercedes-Benz E55 AMG	052 R	123-126	8/5439	476/6100	516/2650	Dicke	271	4.8	10.2	155		71.0	M5-humbling grunt, cosseting ride - Speed limits	****
Mercedec-Benz ESS AMG		199-102	8/5-(39	254/5500	390/3000	16-42kg	210	5.5		155		22.0	- Dragster disguised as a limo - Tyre bills	***
Mercedes-Benz S63 AMG L	191 D	£119,575	8/5461	577/5500	664/2250	1995kg	294	4.4		155	237	27.9	+ Monster pace - Average steering feel	****
Mercedes-Benz S63 AMG	148D	70-73	8/5467	536/5500	590/2000	2040kg	267	4.5		155	244	26.9	Massive torque, massively reduced emissions - Massive car	****
Mercedes-Benz S65 AMG	098 R	106-13	12/5980	604/4750	737/2000	2185kg	281	4,4		155	334	19.8	God's own supersaloon - Unholy price and thirst	****
Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG	178 R	£81,930	8/5461	518/5250	516/1700	1795kg	293	4,4		155	231	28.5	+ Monster performance, 549bhp an option - Not as desirable as a Bentley or Aston	****
Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG	099 R	106-11	8/6/208	500/6100	464/2650	NO5kg	270	4.5		155	345	19.5	Beauty, comfort, awesome performance - M5 has the edge on B-roads	****
Mercedes-Benz ML63 AMG	176 R 172 D	£84,125	8/5461	518/5250	516/1750	2270kg	232	47		155	276	23.9	Great engine, surprisingly good dynamics - E85K buys a Boxster and an ML350	****
Mercedes-Benz G63 AMG	172 D	£123,975	8/5461	537/5500	560/2000	2475kg	220	5.4		130	322 256	26.2	+ It exists; epic soundtrack - Ancient chassis, silly price	****
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-300 SST	118 R	£31,349 £38,550	4/1998 4/1998	290/6500	300/3500	1590kg	231	5.2	13.9	155	378	19.9	Evo gets twin-clutch transmission - Not as exciting as it used to be	****
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-360 Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-330 SST	134.8	138,339	4/1998	354/6500	363/3500	1560kg 1590kg	207	4.1		155	256	14.9	Rediculously rapid new Evo - A five-speed gearbox?! Great engine and gearbox combo - it still lives in the shadow of the Evo IX.	****
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-400	181 R	109-12	4/1998	403/6500	387/3500	1560kg	262	3.8		155	328		Most powerful factory Evo ever about X grand too much when new	****
Mitsubishi Evo (X FQ-340	088 R	725-107	4/1007	345/6800	321/4600	1400kg	250	4.3	10.9	155	360		Gives Porsche drivers night mares - Points, Lots of	****
Mitsubishi Fuo IX MR FO-360	181 P	205-107	4/1907	366/6887	363/3200	1400kg	266	20	10.9	157			Welf-executed engine upgrades - Prison food	****
Mitsubishi Evo VIII	055.R	103-104	4/1997	276/6500	289/3500	1410kg	100	51		157			The Evo grows up - Brakes need beeling up	****
Mitsubishi Evo VIII MR FO-300	057R	723-725	4/7907	305/6800	289/3500	1400kg	221	4.8	-	257		20.5	Extra pace, extra attitude - Extra money	****
Misupishi (so VII	ONE	702-723	4/1907	275/6500	282/3500	Dischur	206	5.0	13.0	140		20.4	Terrific all-rounder - You tell us:	****
Mitsubishi Evo VII RS Sprint	0410	102-103	4/1997	320/6500	327/6200	1260kg	258	4,4		150			Ruthlessly focused road weapon - For the truly committed	****
Mitsubishi Evo VIRS Sprint	ONR	399	4/1997	330/6500	323/3000	1255kg	267	4.5	77.8	145			+ Lighter, keener, quicker than regular Evo - A little uncompromising	****
Mitsubishi Evo VI Mäkinen Edition	IST R	100-101	4/1997	276/6500	275/2750	1365kg	205	4.6		150			+ Our favourite Evo - Subtle it is not	****
Porsche Panamera 4S	186 D	£85,721	6/2997	414/6000	383/1750	1870kg	225	4.8		177	208	31.7	 Strong performance and typically fine Porsche chassis - Misses character ful V8 of old 'S' 	****
Porsche Panamera GTS	168 D	\$93,175	8/4806	430/6700	383/3500	1920kg	228	4,4		179	251	26.4	Sharper chassis; more urgent and vocal V8 - A BMW M5 is £17K less	****
Porsche Panamera Turbo	137 R	£107;903	8/4806	493/6000	516/2250	1970kg	254	3.6	8.9	188	270	24.6	+ Fast, refined and dynamically sound - It still leaves us cold	****
Porsche Panamera Turbo S	159 D	73-13	8/4806	542/6000	590/2250	1995kg	276	3.7		190	270	24.6	+ Place, excellent ergonomics - Steering feet ride	****
Porsche Macan Turbo	194 R 173 D	£59,300 £68,117	6/3604	394/6000	406/1350 380/3500	1925kg 2085kg	208	4.8		165	208	30.7	+ Doesn't feel like an SUV - Still looks like one	****
Porsche Cayenne GTS (Mk2)	144 D	5.89,324	8/4806	493/6000	586/2250	2080kg	231	47		173	270	24.6	Dynamically the best SUV on sale - At two tons, it's still no sports car Greener, faster, better - Odd rear styling, numb steering	****
Porsche Cayenne Turbo (Mk2)	184 D	5307284					231			173				
Porsche Cayenne Turbo S (Mk2) Porsche Cayenne Turbo (Mk8)	104 D	106-32	8/4806	542/6000 494/6000	553/2250 586/2250	2215kg 2355kg	213	4.7	11.4	177	270	24.6	Near-identical power and torque to a Zonda Ct25 - In an SUV Appears to defy physics - Still cracks mirrors at 50 paces	****
Range Rover Evoque Coupe Si4	160 D	£46,650	4/1999	237/6000	25V1900	2355Kg 1670kg	144	7.0	11.4	135	100	PKU	Appears to dety physics - Soil cracks mirrors at 50 paces Striking looks, sporting dynamics - Hefty price, and petrol version is auto-only	****
Range Rover Sport V8 Supercharged	186 D	£80,550	8/4999	503/6000	460/2500	2335kg	719	50		155	298	221	Deceptively quick and capable sports SUV - It's still got a weight problem	****
Range Rover Sport V8 Supercharged	135.D	109-12	8/5000	503/6000	461/2000	2590kg	200	5.0		140	348	12.0	Thumpingly fast and hugely comfortable - It's no Cayenne in the corners	****
Range Rover SDV8	180 D	£78.120	8/4367	334/3500	516/1750	2360kg	164	6.5		140	229	32.5	+ Lighter, more capable, even more luxurious - Diesel V6 model feels more alert	****
Range Rover VB Supercharged	134 D	109-12	8/5000	503/6000	461/2000	2710kg	200	5.0		140	348	19.0	Fast, comfortable, lawrious - Big, heavy, thirsty	****
Rolls-Royce Ghost	186 D	£170.250	12/6592	563/5250	575/1500	2360kg	242	47		155	317	20.8	+ It's quicker than you think - It's more enjoyable driven slowly	****
Rolls-Royce Phantom	054 R	\$276,275	12/6749	453/5350	531/3500	2560kg	180	5.7		149	377	18.0	+ Rolls reinvented for the 21st Century - The roads are barely big enough	****
Subaru WRX STI	1510	70-73	4/2457	296/6000	300/4000	1505kg	200	5.1		158	243	26.9	+ Fast Subaru saloon returns - Without the blue paint and gold wheels	****
Subaru Impreza WRX GB270	109 D	207	4/2457	266/5700	310/3000	1410kg	192	5.2		143			Atting final fling for 'classic' Impreza - End of an era	****
Subaru Impreza 571	090 R	'05-'07	4/2457	275/6000	289/4000	1495kg	188	5.3		158		25.9	Stunning to drive - Not so stunning to look at	****
Subaru Impreza STI Spec C *	084 D	705-707	4/2994	320/6730	311/3500	1350kg	240	4.3		757			+ Lighter, faster, flercer - The need for self-restraint	****
Subaru Impreza R9320	105 R	W	4/2457	316/6000	332/3750	1495kg	215	4.8		155			+ Fitting tribute to a rallying legend - Too hardcore for some?	****
Subaru Impreza WRX STI PPP	073R	703-705	4/1994	300/6000	299/4000	1470kg	207	5.2	12.9	148			A Subaru with real edge - Bit too edgy in the wet	****
Subaru STI Type RA Spec C*	067R	103-105	4/1994	335/7000	280/3750	138Gkg	247	4.3	11.1	160			+ Best Impreza since the P1- Lost its throbby flat-four voice	****
Subaru Impreza WR1	067R	704-705	4/1994	316/5800	370/4/000	1470kg	218	5.3	13.1	155			+ Most powerful official UK Impreza until RB320 - Spec C is better	****
Subaru Impreza Turbo	ONR	98-100	4/1994	2/5/5600	214/4000	1235kg	177	5.4	14.6	344		27.2	Destined for classic status - Thirsty	****
Subaru Impreza PT	067R	100-101	4/1994	276/6500	260/4000	1283kg	219	4.9	13.3	150		25.0	Littimate old-shape Impreza - Prices reflect this	****
Subaru Impreza R95 (PPP)	187R	99	4/1994	237/6000	258/3500	1235kg	395	5.0	14.1	143			Perfect blend of poise and power - Limited numbers	****
Subaru Impreza 228	188 R	98-99	4/22/2	276/6000	265/3200	1270kg	220	5.0	13.1	150	-		The ultimate Impreza - Doesn't come cheap	****
Tesla Model S Performance	196 R	£69,080	310kW	436	442/0	2100kg	201	42		130	0	n/a	+ Intoxicating performance, soothing refinement - Generic styling, charging limitations	****
Vauxhall Insignia VXR SuperSport	199 D	629,749	6/2792	321/5250	321/5250	1825kg	179	5.6		170	249	26.6	A 170 mph Vauxhall - Should be a more engaging steer	***
Vauxhalf Vectra VXR Vauxhalf VXRR GTS	1020	106-109	6/2792	276/5500	262/1800	1580kg	177	6.7		161		27.4	+ Great engine, effortless pace, goodvalue - Numb steering, Lumpy ride	****
	187 D	£54,499	8/6/62	576/6150 425/6000	545/3850 406/4600	1981kg 1831kg	311 236	4.2		155	363	18.5	Brawn, pace, character - Frustrating chassis settings; it's nearly C63 money Oversteery and character ful. Available as a pick-up too! - Nearly MS saloon money	****
Vauxhall VXXB GTS Vauxhall VXXB Bathurst S	160R	11-13	8/6162	564.65000 564.65000	577/(A00	1966kg	207	46	10.7	166	360	2009	A tauter VXR8. Ronkers pace, brilliant noise - Gearchange still rubbish	****

POCKET buying guide

Lamborghini Gallardo Years 2003-13 Engine VIO, 4961cc Power 493thp @ 7800rpm - 60mph 4.4sec Top speed 192mph (spec is for MY2004)



WHY WOULD YOU?

The Gallardo's taut lines pack supercar presence into a usefully compact shell. Its V10 engine delivers a top speed over 190mph, while fourwheel drive ensures 911 Turbo-like all-weather ability. What's not to like?

WHAT TO PAY

High-mileage early cars start at £55k. £60k gives you a decent choice of '04/'05 manual coupes.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR The V10 is almost bulletproof if maintained

correctly foll-change every year, or 7500 miles upfor sooner), but check the gauge for low oil pressure it could mean arebuild is required. Listen for rattles from the exhaust—cat failures can be catastrophic if chanks of honeycomb are sucked back into the engine. On e-gear cars, check for leaks from the hydraulic system, (full guide, ewo 193.)

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Our Choice

Audi R8 Spyder. The Spyder boasts supercar looks, presence and performance, yet you really could drive one every day. The V8 has a sweet engine and great dynamics, but if money's no object, we'd be seriously tempted by the equally brillant V10.



Best of the Rest

The mk3 Porsche Booster S is a brilliant all-rounder, while the Lotus Exige S Roadster counters with a more focused driving experience. Jaguar's F-type also impresses in both S (left) and V8 S forms. Macda's MX-5 is best for budget rear-drive fun, but for the ultimate thrills, get a Caterham 620R or Ariel Atom.

Sports Cars / Convertibles

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	php/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2g/km	ECmpg	EVO rating	
Alfa Romeo BC Solder	161 R	109-11	84691	450/7000	3544750	1675kg	273	45		187			Beauty meets beast. They hit it off - Boot is useless for touring	****
Ariel Atom 3.5 Supercharged	180 D	£38,000	4/1998	310/8400	169/7200	550kg	573	2.7		155			As mad as ever - Rain	****
Ariel Atom Mugen	165 R	£55,000	4/1998	270/8300	188/6000	550kg	499	29		150			+ Perfect engine for the Atom's chassis - Only ten being made	****
Ariel Atom V8 500	165 R	£146,699	8/3000	475/10,500	284/7750	550kg	877	3.0	5.8	170			An experience unlike anything else on Planet Car - £150K for an Atom	****
Ariel Atom 3 245	IBD	108-12	4/1998	245/8200	155/5200	500kg	498	3.2		150		33.0	+ The Atomjust got a little bit better - Can still be a bit draughty	****
Ariel Atom 3 Supercharged	138 R 121 R	103-109	4/1998	300/8200	162/7200	550kg	554 554	33		155 155		28.0	It's brilliant - It's mental	****
Ariel Atom 2 300 Supercharged Ariel Atom I	123 R 015 R	99-111	4/1998	300/8200 175/5500	162/7200	550kg 496kg	256	3.3	18.0	155		28.0	Makes your face ripple like Clarkson's	****
Aston Martin V8 Vantage Roadster	130 R	695.080	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1710kg	250	47	18.0	180	328	20.4	Amazing styling, huge fun - As practical as a chocolate teapot Sportiest, coolest drop-top Aston in years - Starting to feel its age	****
Aston Martin VB Vantage S Roadster	161 R	£95,080	8/4/33	430/7300	361/5000	1690kg	258	4.5		199	200	20.4	Sportness, codess drop-top Aston in years - starting to feel its age Sounds amazing, looks even better - Still not the best drop-top in its class	****
Aston Martin VI2 Vantage Roadster	175 R	£151,080	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1760kg	294	4.6		190	2.77	247	As good as the coupe, with amplified V12 rumble - Just a smidgen shaker	****
Aston Martin DB9 Volante	150 D	6363.080	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1815kg	263	46		190	3/48	18.2	Consummate cruiser and capable when pushed - Roof-up wind noise	****
Aston Martin DBS Volante	133.0	709-72	12/5935	510,6500	420/5/50	DROkg	286	43		391	388	17.3	A feelgood car par excellence - It's a bit of a heavyweight	****
Audi TTS Roadster	122D	£38,025	4/1984	268/6000	258/2500	1455kg	187	5.6		155	189	34.9	Effortlessly quick - Long-term appeal open to question; not cheap either	****
Audi TT RS Roadster	133 D	£48,140	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1510kg	225	47		155	212	31.0	+ Terrific engine is the best thing about it	****
Audi TT Roadster (Mk1225bhp)	016 R	00-06	4/1781	225/5900	206/2200	1395kg	164	6.9	20.0	150		30.4	 Winner on the King's Road - Trails Boxster on the open road 	****
Audi SS Cabriolet	130 D	£46,500	6/2995	328/5500	325/2900	1875kg	178	5.6		155	199	33.2	Gets the S4's trick supercharged engine - Bordering on dull	****
Audi RSS Cabriolet	179 D	\$68,965	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1920kg	235	4.9		155	249	26.4	+ Pace, looks, interior, naturally aspirated VB - Not the last word in fun or involvement	****
Audi RS4 Cabriolet	094 D	106-108	8.4163	414/7800	317/5500	1845kg	228	4.9		155			That engine - Wibble wobble, wibble wobble, jelly on a plate	***
Audi R8 V8 Spyder Audi R8 V8 Spyder	186 D 185 D	£101,360 £122,460	8/4163	424/7900 538/8000	317/6000	1660kg 1720kg	259 306	4.8		187	337	19.6	More delicate and subtle than the V10 - The V10 sounds even better	****
Audi R8 V10 Spyder BAC Mono	185 R 180 P	£101,940	4/2261	280/7700	206/6000		527	2.8		170	349	19.0	Sensational for the money - Not quite a rival for the 458 and 12C Spiders	
BAC Mono Bentley Continental GT V8 Convertible	189 R 168 R	£10(940	8/3993	500/6000	206/6000 482/1700	540kg 2670kg	207	2.8		170	254	25.0	The most single-minded track car available – That means no passengers	****
Bentley Continental GT V8 Convertible	794 D	£152,900	8/3993	571/6000	502/1700	2470kg	254	45		167	254	25.9	One of the world's best topless GTs - Still no sports car	****
Bentley Conti GT Speed Convertible	187 D	£168.000	12/5998	6/6/6000	590/1700	2410kg 2495kg	251	4.1		202	347	19.0	A true drivers' Bentley - Excessively heavy, feels like it could give more Effortless performance, style - Running costs a tad on the high side	****
Bentley Continental Supersports	1470	70-72	12/5996	621/6000	590/2000	2395kg	263	20		202	347	27.3	Fast, capable and refined - Coupe does the Supersports thing better	****
Bentley Continental GTC Speed	DILD	109-12	12/5998	600/6000	590/7/50	2393kg 2485kg	245	45		200	.196	170	Agreat convertible just got better - Optional carbon brakes a necessity	****
BMW Z4 sDrive 35i (Mk2)	186D	639935	6/2979	302/5800	295/1300	1505kg	204	52		155	219	301	Looks, hard-top versatility, drivetrain - Clumsy chassis is upset by ragged surfaces	****
BMW Z4 3.09 (MKI)	0940	106-109	6/2996	265/6600	232/2750	1310kg	205	57		155	219	37.0	+ Terrific straight-six - Handling not as playful as we'd like	****
BMW Z4 M Roadster	0910	106-109	6/3246	338/2902	25072750	1410kg	364	48		155		23.3	Exhibitanating and characterful, that engine - Stiff suspension	****
BMW M Roadster	007E	196-107	0/3246	325/7400	235/9900	DF75kg	260	5.3		155		25.6	Fresh-air M3, that motor, hunky looks - M Coupe drives better	****
BMW 43Si Convertible	794 D	£45,970	6/2979	302/5800	295/1200	1740kg	176	5.6		155	190	34.8	+ Impressive chassis, smart looks, neat roof - Extra weight, not as composed as coupe	****
BMW M3 Convertible (E93)	1190	108-13	8/3999	434/8300	295/3900	1800kg	232	5.3		155	297	22.2	M DCT transmission, pace, slick roof - Extra weight blunts the edge	****
BMW M3 Convertible (E46)	035.D	90-10	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1655kg	207	5.3		155		23.3	That engine - Gets the wobbles on British B-roads	****
BMW M6 Convertible	0980	106-70	10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1930kg	264	4.8		155	352	19.2	Composure, grip, power, comfort - Steering lacks feel at low speed	****
BMW ZB	026 R	200-233	84947	400/6600	369/3800	1585kg	256	4.8	11.1	155		34.4	M5-powered super-sportster - M5's more fun to drive	****
Caterham Seven 160	190 R	£17,995	4/660	80/7000	79/3400	490kg	166	6.5		100			+ The fabulous Seven formula at its most basic - Gets pricey with options	****
Caterham Seven Roadsport 125	105 R	£22,995	4/1595	125/6100	120/5350	539kg	235	5.9		112			Niew Ford-engined model is just great - Bigger drivers need SV model	****
Caterham Seven Roadsport SV 175	140D	£30,995	4/1999	175/7000	139/6000	555kg	321	4.8		138			The Caterham for everyday use, R300 engine - Loses intensity of R300	****
Caterham Seven Supersport R Caterham Seven Supersport R	165 R 180 D	£24,495 £27,995	4/1595	140/6900	120/5790	520kg 535kg	273	4.9		120			One of the best Caterhams is less than £20K if you build it yourself The best road-and-track Seven yet - Impractical noisy, uncomfortable	****
Caterham Seven Supersport R Caterham Seven Supersight R600	105 R	£27,995 £35,995	4/1999	290/7900	152/5250	535kg 525kg	406	3.8		140			The best road-and-track Seven yet - Impractical, noisy, uncomfortable R400 reborn with (lots of) Ford power - Slightly hesitant low-rev pick-up	****
Caterham Seven Superlight R500	123 R	£42,495	4/1999	263/8500	177/7200	506kg	528	2.9		150			Better power-to-weight ratio than a Veyron - Until you add the driver	****
Caterham Seven CSR 260 Superlight	094R	\$44,995	4/2261	256/7500	200/6200	565kg	460	3.8		155			Brillant for high-days, holidays and trackdays - Wet Wednesdays	****
Caberham Seven 620R	187 D	£49.995	4/1000	311/7700	200/0200	565kg	580	2.8		155			Banzai on track, yet still relevant on the road - £50k for a Seven?	****
CaterhamLevante	131.8	109-70	8/2398	550/70000	300/8500	520kg	1074	4.8	8.2	150			Twice the power-to-weight ratio of a Veyrorf - Not easy to drive slowly	****
Caterham Seven Superlight R300	SOR	709-72	4/1900	175/7000	139/6000	535kg	345	4.5	-	160			Possibly all the Caterham you need - They're not cheap	****
Caterham Seven R300	068R	102-106	4/1796	160/7000	130/5000	500kg	325	47		130			Our 2002 Trackday Car of the Year - Not for wirnes	****
Caterham Seven R400	068R	703-706	4/1796	200/7500	150/5750	490kg	48	39		140			Race-car with a number plate- Your missus will leave you	****
Caterham Seven R500	068R	99-06	4/1796	230/8600	155/7200	460kg	500	3.6	8.8	146			Fine for the Nürburgning - Hard work around the Bullring	****
Caterham Seven RS00 Evolution	069R	704	4/1998	250/8000	790/4000	460kg	552	3.9	8.1	150			Madder than Mad Jack McMad - Er, it's a bit mad	****
Chevrolet Corvette (C6)	083D	104-13	8/6162	430/5900	424/4600	1460kg	300	43		186	316	212	+ Corvette performance - Convertible dynamics, electronics	****
Donkervoort D6 GTO Performance	185 R	000,0072	5/2480	375/5500	350/1750	COSING	548	2.8		168			There's nothing else like it - Pricey for a car with a five-cylinder engine	***
Ferrari California	1710	\$152,154	8/4297	483/7750	372/5000	1705kg	290	3.8		193	299		+ Revised with sharper performance and dynamics - We'd still take a 458 Spider	****
Honda S2000	118.0	199-109	4/1997	237/8300	153/7500	1260kg	191	62		150		28.2	An alternative and rev-happy roadster - The Boxster's better	****
Jaguar F-type Convertible	186 R	£58,520	6/2995	335/6500	332/3500	1597kg	213	5.3		161	209	31.4	Beautiful, enjoyable, responsive - Noticeably junior to the V6 S	****
Jaguar F-type S Convertible	183 R	£67,520	6/2995	375/6500	339/3500	1614kg	236	49		171	213	31.0	Better-damped and more rounded than the V8 S - A Boxster S is £20k cheaper	****
Jaguar F-type V8 S Convertible	183 R	£79,985	8/5000	488/6500	46V2500	1665kg	298	43		186	259	25.5	Wilder than the V6 S - Could be too exuberant for some	****
Jaguar XX 5.0 Convertible	130 R	£71,465	8/5000	380/6500	380/3500 461/2500	1621kg	238 296	5.3		155	264	25.2	Basic XX gets extra powerbut loses some of its GT refinement	****
Jaguar XXR Convertible Jaguar XXR-S Convertible	130 R	£84,965 £103,465	8/5000	503/6000	502/2500	1725kg 1725kg	790	4.6		196	292	23.0	Gains Jag's fantastic new V8 - Loses sporting ground to its main foes	****
			8/5000		303/4300			66			292		Loud and mact most exciting Jag in years - It's also the most expensive in years	
Jaguar XX Jaguar XXX	099R	106-109	84396	294/6000 494/6250	303/4100 413/4000	1635kg 1705kg	183	5.0		155 155		25.0	Every bit as good as the XX coupe - 294bhp still only just enough First law sports car for wears - Overwooselst detailing	****
Jaguar XAX Jaguar XAR	004 P	105-109	8/4996	370/6/50	387/3600	1705kg 1750kg	215	5.4	12.8	155		15.6		****
Agoar ANY KTM X-Bow GT	383 D	CET4.000	4/1984	281/6400	310/3200	875kg	326	5.4	12.8	144	189	34.0	Hurricane-in-the-hair motoring - A danger to toupes everywhere Extraordinary ability, now in a more road-friendly package - Price	****
KTM X-BOW GT	165 D	£64.850	4/1984	296/5500	295/3300	818kg	368	3.6		144	109	34,0	Sharper handling, more power - Pity it's not even lighter, and cheaper	****



Studio Torino Ruf RK Coupe Issue 111, December 2007

Can a tuned Cayman better a 911? Jethro Bovingdon found out on Italy's Trento Bondone hill climb Coachbuilt at Alfredo Stola's Turin workshop, the RK Coupe looks sturning. Ruf fits a 3.8-litre engine from a 997 Carrera S, bolstered by a supercharger, Downer jumps to 4.54/bip.

Dump the clutch and it fires off the line. The rear tyres light up and it needs a good twist of corrective lock to keep it pointing straight. Once into its strike the RK feed 6.67-auck.

"The steering is weightier than a standard Cayman's. There's detailed feel as you wind on lock, but it's less informative than a Bit rack. Even so, it's supremely accurate and and there's no turn-in understeer at all. The RK Coupe is a kivsh, indulgent car, but dynamically it's pure efficiency."



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Ratings Thrill-free zone ★ Tepid ★★ Interesting ★★★ Seriously good ★★★★ A truly great car ★★★★

Sports Cars / Convertibles

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60трh	0-100mph	Махтр	C02 g/km	EC mpg	evo rating
Lotus filme Lo	366D	129,050	6/1095	136/8800	105/4400	876kg	155	0.0		127	169	45.0	New Lt Bise is light and fantastic - Smaller engine could put some off
Lotus Elise 1.6 Club Racer	183 R	\$28.450	4/1598	134/6800	118/4400	857kg	160	6.0		127	149	45.0	Even lighter, even more focused - A touch pricely for a stripped-out Elise
Lotus Bise S	172R	£37,150	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	924kg	239	42		145	175	37.5	New supercharged Elise boasts epic grip and page - £37K before (pricey) options
Lotus Elise S Club Racer	189D	£35,600	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	905kg	244	42		145	175	37.5	Purist approach intensifies ability - Lightest, option-free spec requires commitment.
Lotus Exige S Roadster	186 R	\$52,900	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	TI66kg	301	40		145	236	28.0	Like the hard-top Exige S, but more road-friendly - Boxster S is a better all-rounder
Lotus Elise R	068R	234-20	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	860kg	223	5.6	13.9	150	196	34.4	Most thrillsome Elise yet - Blaring engine note
Lotus Elise SC	131R	108-71	4/1794	218/8000	156/5000	870kg	254	4.5	11.4	148	199	33.2	All the usual Elise magic - Supercharged engine lacks sparkle
Lotus Bise S18	104.8	106-70	4/1794	134/6200	127/4200	860kg	158	6.3	18.7	127		372	Brillant entry-level Elise - Precious little
Lotus Elise S2 IIIS	049R	102-104	4/1796	156/7000	129/4650	860kg	197	5.1		131		40.9	* A genuinely useable Elise - Air-con? In an Elise?
Lotus Elise S2 Sport 135	040 D	203	4/1796	135/6200	129/4850	726kg	189	5.4		129			One of our fave S2 Elises - Brakes need more bite and pedal feel
Latus Elise S2 Sport 190	044R	223	4/1796	190/7800	128/5000	710kg	272	4.7	12.1	135			Fabulous trackday tool - Pricey
Lotus Elise SI	126 R	'96-700	4/1796	118/5500	122/3000	73%g	764	6.1	18.5	126		39.4	+ A modern classic - A tad impractical?
Lotus 2-Beven Supercharged	123 R	107-17	4/1796	252/8000	179/7000	670kg	382	3.8		150			+ Impressive on road and track - Not hardcore enough for some
Lotus 2-Eleven GT4	138 R	109-11	4/1796	266/8200	179/7200	670kg	403	3.7		155			+ evo Track Car of the Year 2009 - It's a 76-grand Lotus with no roof
Lotus 2-Beven	126 R	107-17	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	720kg	267	4.3		140			Not far off supercharged car's pace - Pricey once it's made road-legal
Lotus 340R	126 R	100	4/1796	190/7800	146/5000	658kg	293	4.5	12.5	126			+ Hardcore road-racerthat looks like a dune buggy from Mars
Lotus Elan SE	095 R	39-95	4/1588	165/6600	148/4200	1022kg	764	6.7		137		21.0	+ Awesome front-drive chassis - Rather uninvolving
Lotus Blan Sprint	126 R	71-73	4/1558	26/6500	113/5500	720kg	178	6.6		122			Sensational chassis, properly quick - Affording a mint one
Maserati GranCabrio	142 D	£98,315	8/4691	434/7000	332/4750	1980kg	223	5.3		176	358	18.3	+ As good to drive as it is to look at - Lacks the grunt of some rivals
Maserati GranCabrio Sport	161 D	£103,510	8/4691	444/7000	376/4750	1980kg	228	5.1		177	377	19.5	Looks, performance, cruising ability - Brakes could be sharper
Maserati GranCabrio MC	185 D	£111,710	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1973kg	234	4.9		179	337	19.5	 Most powerful GranCabrio yet - The GranCabrio is starting to show its age
Mazda MX-51.8/SE (Mk3.5)		£18,495	4/1798	124/6500	123/4500	1075kg	117	9.9		121	167	39.8	+ Basic MX-5 offers plenty of fun - But you'll probably want the 2.0's power
Mazda MX-5 R'ster Coupe 2.0i (Mk3.5)	170 R	\$23,095	4/1999	156/7000	139/5000	1173kg	137	7.9		136	101	36.2	- Handles brilliantly again - Less than macho image; no soft-top-option with 2-litre engine
MardaMX-51.8i (Mk3)	091R	105-109	4/1798	124/6500	123,4500	7755kg	108	9.3		122			Gearchange, Interior - Lost some of the charm of old MX-5s; dubious handling
MazdaMX-51.8i (Mk2)	CN7R	98-05	4/1839	146/7000	124/5000	1065kg	140	8.6		123		32.5	Affordable ragtops don't get much better - Cheap cabin
MazdaMX-51.6 (Mkl)	131 R	89-97	4/1597	115/6500	100/5500	97%g	120	9.0		334			+ The original and still (pretty much) the best - Less than rigid
Mercedes-Benz SLK350 Sport	161 R	£44,600	6/3498	302/6500	273/3500	1465kg	209	5.5		155	167	39.8	Best non-AMG SLK yet - Still no Boxster-beater
Mercedes-Benz SLK55 AMG	186 R	£55,335	8/5461	416/6800	398/4500	1615kg	262	4.6		155	195	33.6	+ Quicker and more economical than ever - Needs to be sharper, too
Mercedes-Benz SLK55 AMG	087R	105-10	8/5439	355/5750	376/4000	1575kg	229	4.9		155		23.5	+ Superb engine, responsive chassis - No manual option, ESP spoils fun
Mercedes-Benz SLK55 AMG Black	110 R	107-108	8/5439	394/5750	383/3750	1495kg	268	4.9	11.2	174			+ AMG gets serious - Dull-witted 7G-Tronic auto box, uneven dynamics
Mercedes-Benz SL500	169 D	\$83,490	8/4663	429/5250	516/1800	1710kg	255	4.6		155	212	31.0	Wafty performance, beautifully engineered - Lacks ultimate sports car feel
Mercedes-Benz SL63 AMG	171 D	£110,785	8/5468	530/5500	590/2000	1770kg	304	4.3		155	231		+ Monster performance, lighter than before - Still heavy, steering lacks consistency
Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG	183 D	£168,285	12/5980	621/4800	737/2300	1875kg	336	4.0		155	270	24.4	+ Chassis just about deals with the power - Speed limits
Mercedes-Benz SL63 AMG	1170	708-73	8/6208	518/6800	464/5200	1970kg	278	4.6		155	328	20.0	+ More focused than old SLSS AMG - Lost some of its all-round appeal
Mercedes-Benz SL55 AMG	070 R	102-107	8/5439	493/6100	516/2650	1955kg	256	4.6	10.2	155			+ As fast as a Murciélago - Not as much fun
Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG	0710	104-70	12/5980	604/4800	737/2000	2035kg	302	4.1		155			Gob-smacking-performance - Gob-smackingly-pricey
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG Roadster	167 R	£276,985	8/6208	563/6800	479/4750	1660kg	345	3.7		197	308	214	+ Loses none of the coupe's talents - But (understandably) loses the gullwing doors
Mini JCW Convertible (RS7)	130 R	124,950	4/1598	208/6000	206/1850	1230kg	172	6.9		146	169	38.7	+ A maniler Mini cabrio. As hardcore as the hatchwhich is still better
Morgan 3 Wheeler	196 D	£31,000	2/1976	82/5250	103/3250	525kg	334	6.0		155	215	30.3	Quirky, characterful, brilliant - Can become a two-wheeler if you push too hard
Morgan Plus 8	ITIR	£85,200	8,4799	362/6300	370/3600	1100kg		4,4					Hilarious mix of old looks and new mechanicals - Refinement is definitely old-school
Morgan Aero SuperSports	145 R	£126.900	8,4799	362/6300	370/3600	1180kg	312	4.2		170		-	+ As above, with a V8 and targa top - It's proper supercar money
Morgan Aero 8 Nissan 370Z Roadster	105 R 143 R	102-108	8/4799 6/3696	362/6300	361/3400 269/5200	1100kg 1554kg	334 213	5.5		170	262	25.2 25.2	Gibrious sound, view over bonnet, dynamics - Awkward-looking rear The Zed's old-school character remains intact - Its ourposeful looks don't
	143 H	136,495									262		
Nissan 350Z Roadster			6/3498	309/6600	264/4800	1600kg	796 202	5.8		155		24.8	+ Drives just like the coupe - But doesn't look as good
Porsche Boxster (981)	172R	638,237	6/2706	261/6700	206/4500	1310kg		5.4		164	192	34.5	Goes & looks better, cleanest Boxster ever - Steering now electric to help out CO2
Porsche Boxster S (961)	186R	£45,384	6/3436	311/6700	265/4500	1320kg	239	5.1		173	205	32.1	+ Boxster steps out of 9TTs shadow - But gets 9TTs less appealing new steering
Parsche Baxster (987)		105-12	6/2893	252/6400	214,4400	1335kg	192	5.9		163	221	30.0	+ Second-gen Boxster's as brilliant as ever - It's a typically Porsche redesign
Parsche Boxster S (987)	161 R	105-12	6/3436	306/6400	265/5500	1355kg	229	5.3		170	223	29.7	As above, but with more power - Lighter steering than before
Parsche Baxster Spyder (987)	188 R 049 R	70-72	6/3436	396/7200	273/4750	1275kg	252	5.0		155	221	29.1	+ Lighter, more driver-centric Boxster - Collapsed-brolly roof not the most practical
Parsche Baxster (986)	049 R	199-104	6/2687	228/6300	192/4700	1275kg		63		155		26.9	Still an impeccable sports car - Very little
Parsche Baxster S (986)	183 R	682.072	6/3179	260/6200 345/7400	228/4700	1320kg	200			178	217	30.7	Added power is seductive - As above
Porsche 911 Carrera Cabriolet (991)						1450kg	242	5.0					Brilliant engine - Doesn't quite have the 'magic at any speed' character of previous 9fls
Porsche 911 Carrera S Cabriolet (991)	TTIR	£92,108	6/3800	394/7400	324/5600	1465kg	305	4.6		187	229	29.1	+ All-new open SRI drives just like the coupe - Which means the same artificial steering
Parsche 917 Turbo Cabriolet (997)	139 D		6/3800	493/6000	479/1950	1645kg		3.8			275	24.1	+ Absurdly quick and capable drop-top - We'd still take the coupe
Parsche 911 Turbo Cabriolet (996)	060 R	103-105	6/3596	414/6000	413/4600	1700kg	250	4.7		185			Faster than you'll ever need it to be - Just the image thing again
Radical SR3 SL	134 R	£69,850	4/2000	300/6000	265/4000	795kg	383	3.0		161			+ Our 2011 Track Car of the Year, and it's road-legal - You'll need to wrap up warm
Radical SRBLM	138 R	709-72	8/2800	460/10,500	260/8000	680kg	687	3.2		168			Fastest car around the Nordschleile - Convincing people it's road legal
Renault Sport Spider	183 R	96-99	4/1998	148/6000	136/4500	930kg	157	6.5	-	131			+ Ranity, fabulous unassisted steering feel - Heavier than you'd hope
Tesia Roadster	131.0	708-72	185kW	248/4500	273/0	1283kg	196	5.0	14.3	120	0	17/3	If this is the future, it's going to be fun - Limited range, high price
Toyota MR2	187R	100-106	4/1794	138/6400	125/4400	975kg	141	7.2	21.2	130		38.2	+ Tight lines, taut dynamics - Minimal luggage space
TVR Temore	OTOR	100-107	6/3605	350/7200	290/5500	2050kg	.238	4.5		360			Wiell-content coff-top TVR - Awkward ctyling
TVR Tuscan Convertible	091R	05-07	6/3996	365/6800	3/5/6000	HOOkg	337	3.8	8.7	195+		-	Spirit of the Griff reborn - Over 195 mph? Really?
TVR Chimaera 5.0	007R	93-03	8,4988	320/5500	320/3750	1060kg	307	4.6		167		26.4	Gorgeous noise, tarmac-rippling grunt - Details
TVR Gnfflah 4.3	068 R	92-93	8/4280	280/5500	305/4000	1060kg	268	4.8	11.2	148			+ The car that made TVR. Cult status - Mere details





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Our Choice Porsche 911 GT3. You might think the GT3's win at evo Car of the Year 2013 was a foregone conclusion, but neither of the last two GT3s (the 997.2 and 997.1) claimed an eCoty title. Yet the 991 managed it, and in a vintage year



Best of the Rest

Aston's V12 Vantage S (left) is a deeply well-sorted drivers' car. Porsche's second-gen Cayman S is a truly great all-rounder, or for similar money the Lotus Exige S is a proper road racer and was our joint 2012 Car of the Year. BMW's M235i, meanwhile. could be the perfect real-world M-badged car.

Coupes / GTs

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/tc	bhp/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Maxmph	CO2 g/km	ECmpg	EVO rating	
Alfa Romeo Brera 3.2 V6	120 R	108-77	6/3195	256/6300	2374500	1532kg	170	6.9		155	260		+ Brera made better for UK roads - Steering lacking some feel	****
Alfa Romeo 4C	190 R	£45,000	4/1742	237/6000	258/2200	895kg	269	4.5		160	157	41.5	Carbonfibre tub, mini-supercar looks - Hot hatchengine, clunky gearbox	****
Alfa Romeo &C Competizione	120 R	107-109	8,4691	450/7000	354/4750	1585kg	288	4.1		181			Looks, exclusivity, noise, balance - They're all sold	****
Alpina 83 Biturbo (E92)	108 R	107-13	6/29/9	355/5500	369/3800	1570kg	230	4.8		177		29.1	Alpina's M3-alternative - Too refined for some	****
Alpina 83 GT3 (E92)	176 D	72-73	6/2979	402/6000	398/4500	1535kg	266	4.4		186	224		Alpina's M3 GTS alternative - Auto gearbox frustrates when pressing on	****
Aston Martin V8 Vantage	169 D	586,080	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1630kg	262	4.7		180	328	20.4	+ 2012 upgrades keep the V8 Vantage on song - Starting to feel a little dated, though	****
Aston Martin V8 Vantage S	168 R	196,080	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1610kg	271	4.5		189	299	21.9	Keener engine, V12 Vantage looks - Slightly sluggish auto only	****
Aston Martin V12 Vantage S	190 R	£138,000	12/5935	565/6750	457/5750	1665kg	345	3.7		205			+ The best car Aston Martin currently makes - Old-school automated box	****
Aston Martin V12 Vantage	146 R		12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1680kg	308	4.4	9.7	190	388	17.3	+ The car we hoped the V8 Vantage would be - Erm, a tad thirsty?	****
Aston Martin VI2 Zagato Aston Martin DB9	178.R	5333,080	12/5935	510/6500 510/6500	420/5750	1680kg 1785kg	308 290	4.2		190	368	18.2	The looks, the noise, the way it drives - It's several times the price of a V12 Vantage Better than the old DB9 in every respect - Automatic gearbox could be quicker.	****
Aston Martin DB9	1/8R	30.72	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1760kg	277	4.6		103	368	18.2	Better than the old Delylin every respect - Automatic gear box could be quicker Aide & handling improved for 2010 model - Rapide makes 2+2 seating pointless	****
Aston Martin DBS	142R	107-12	12/5935	530,6500	420/5250	Medika Medika	277	4.0		191	358	17.3	Stupendous engine, grantous brakes - Pricey, Can bite the unwary	****
Aston Martin DB7 Vantage	010 R	100-105	12/5935	420/6000	400/5000	1770kg	241	4.9	11.2	185	300	18.6	DBT with near-supercar pace - Handling lacks edge	****
AudiTT 2.0 TFSI	955 D	627700	4/7004	208/4300	258/3600	1205kg	363	6.3	15.7	752	154	62.0	Front-driver loses nothing to quattro TTs - Steers like a computer game	****
Audi TTS	1918	636,065	4/1984	268/6000	258/2500	1395kg	225	54		155	194	35.8	+ Usefully quicker TT: great drivetrain - Still steers like a computer game	****
Audi TTRS	158 R	£46,300	5/2480	335/5400	332/3600	1450kg	235	4.4	11.1	155	209	30.4	+ Sublime 5-cylinder turbo engine - Rest of package can't guite match it	****
AudiTTRS Plus	185 D	£49,385	5/2480	355/5500	343/1650	1450kg	249	4.3		174	209	30.4	Stonkingly fast cross-country - Shockingly expensive for a TT	****
Audi TT Sport (Mkl)	081D	105-106	4/1781	237/5/00	236/2300	1390kg	173	57		155		30.3	Deliciously purposeful interior, crisp chassis - Numb steering	****
Audi \$5	189 D	£43,395	6/2995	328/5500	325/2900	1675kg	199	4.9		155	190	34.9	+ Supercharged V6 makes S5 cleaner and faster - Poor body control	****
Audi RSS		£59,350	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	17/5kg	245	4.5		155	246	26.9	+ Brilliant engine and improved chassis - Still not as exciting as you'd hope	****
Audi R8 V8	168 R	£93,710	8/4163	424/7900	3174500	1560kg	276	4.1	9.9	188	332	19.9	+ Finally, a true 90 alternative - Exclusivity comes at a price	****
Audi R8 V10	181 D	£114,810	10/5204	518/8000	391/6500	1620kg	325	3.9	8.4	194	346	19.0	+ Real supercar feel - The V8 is £20k less, and still superb	****
Audi R8 V10 Plus	190 R	£126,810	10/5204	542/8000	398/6500	1570kg	351	3.8		198	346	19.0	+ An R8 fit to take on the 458 and 12C - Firm ride may be too much for some	****
Audi R8 GT	169 F	10-12	20/5204	552/8000	398/6500	1520kg	369	3.6		199			 Everything we love about the R8 - Not as hardcore as we wanted 	****
Audi Quattro 20v	194 R	30-31	5/2226	220/5900	228/1950	1329kg	168	6.2	18.2	143		39.1	Modern classic - The game has moved on	****
Bentley Continental GT V8	178 R	£123,850	8/3993	500/6000	487/1700	2295kg	221	4.6		188	246	27.0	A proper drivers' Bentley with decent economy - W12 suddenly seems pointless	****
Bentley Continental GT	152 D	£135,760	12/5998	567/6000	516/1700	2320kg	248	4.6		198	384	17.1	+ 200mph in utter comfort - Weight, thirst	****
Bentley Continental GT Speed	177 D	£151,100	12/5998	616/6000	590/2000	2320kg	258	4.0		205	338	19.5	+ 205mph in utter comfort - Feels nose-heavy in slow corners	****
BMW1-series M Coupe BMW1190 M Govert	188 R	73-72	6/2979	335/5900	369/7500	1495kg 1455kg	228	4.8		155	224	717	Character, turbo pace and great looks - Came and went too quick Fast, fun lots chapper than an MT - You mally want the 1-series M Coupe	****
BMW M235i Coupe	196 R	£34.250	6/2979	321/5800	332/1300	1455kg	224	5.0		155	189	34.9	Fact, fun lots cheaper than an MT - You really want the I-series M.Coupe Powertrain, chassis, looks, size - Limited-slip diff is an option, not standard.	****
BMW 435i M Sport Coupe	169 D	£41,435	6/29/9	302/5800	295/1200	1510kg	203	5.6		155	169	35.8	Better balance than 3-series saloon - Can feel characteriess at lower speeds	****
BMW 435d xDrive M Sport Coupe	195 D	£45,040	6/2993	309/4400	465/1500	1675kg	193	47		155	146	50.4	Pace, grip, economy - Not the sharpest steer; slow-responding gearbox	****
BMW 335i M Sport Coupe (E92)	095.D	106-73	6/2070	302/5800	295/1300	1525kg	201	5.2	12.2	155	796	33.6	+ Easer engine, exploitable chassis - Slightly unadventurous styling	****
BMW M3 (592)	196.6	107-23	8/3000	414/8300	295/3900	1580kg	266	4.3	10.3	155	290	22.8	Fends off all of its rivalsexcept the cheaper I-series M	****
BMW M3 GTS (E92)	171 R	70-77	84367	444/8300	324/3750	7530kg	295	43		193	295		. Highly exclusive, one of the most focused M-cars ever - Good luck trying to find one	****
BMW M3 (E46)	066 R	100-107	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1495kg	230	5.7	12.3	155		23.7	+ One of the best BMWs ever - Slightly artificial steering feel	****
BMW M3 CS (E46)	058 R	105-107	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	J495kg	230	5.1		155		23.7	+ CSL dynamics without CSL price - Looks like the standard car	****
BMW M3 CSL (E46)	060 R	173-104	6/3246	355/7900	273/4900	1385kg	260	5.3	12.0	155			+ Stripped-down road-race M3 - Standard brakes barely adequate	****
BMW M3 (E36)	148R	93-98	6/3201	321/7400	258/3250	1460kg	223	5.4	12.8	157		25.7	+ Performance, image - Never quite as good as the original	****
BMW M3 (E30)	165 R	'86-'90	4/2302	212/6750	770/4600	R65kg	185	6.7	17.8	147		20.3	+ Best M-car ever! Race-car dynamics for the road - LHD only	****
BMW 24 M Coupe	097R	106-109	6/3246	338/7900	269.4900	1420kg	242	5.0		155		23.3	+ A real drivers' car - You've got to be prepared to get stuck in	****
BMW M Coupe	005R	788-703	6/3246	325/7400	258/3250	1375kg	240	5.1		155		25.0	+ Quick and characterful - Lacks finesse	****
BMW 640d	165 D	563,125	6/2993	309/4400	465/7500	1790kg	175	5.5		155	144	514	+ Great engine and economy, excellent build - Numb steering, unsettled B-road ride	****
BMW M6 (Mk2)	191 D	£94,605	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1850kg	303	4.2		155	232	28.5	 Mighty ability, pace, technology - You'll want the Competition Package upgrade too 	****
BMWM5 (MKI) Chevrolet Camaro	106 R 168 R	105-100	8/6162	500/7750 626/5900	384/6000	7635Ag 1769kg	317	4.8	10.0	155	342	20.0	Awesome GT, awesome sports car - SMG gearbox now off the pace Looks like a Transformer made real - We'd prefer it in robot mode	****
Chevrolet Carnaro Chevrolet Corvette Stingray (C7)	194 D	£35,320 £61,695	8/6/62	425/5900	420/4600	1769kg 1496kg	309	3.8		100	329	20.0	Looks like a Transformer made real - We'd prefer it in robot mode Performance, chassis balance, supple ride - Body control could be better	****
Chevrolet Corvette Stingray (C1) Chevrolet Corvette (C6)	794 D	101,495	8/6862	433/5000	476/6600	1496kg	309	3.8		190	756	212	Performance, chassis balance, supple ride - Body control could be better A Corvette with no apolopies needed - Still left-hand drive only	****
Chevrolet Corvette 206	0000	105-73	8/0/02	505/6300	459,4500	HONG HISkg	363	3.0	8.5	100	350	10.2	A Corvette with no approgres needed - Sciniert-hand onve only 8.5 to 100, brakes, price - Not quite the road-racer we expected	****
Ford Shelby GT500 *	178 R	c£60,000	8/5812	662/6500	631/4000	1747kg	385	3.9	0.0	202	330	1912	Huse performance for the money - Putting it to use takes nerve	****
Ginetta G40R	165 P	£29.950	4/1999	175/6700	140/5000	795kg	224	5.8		140			A race-compliant sports car for theroad - Feels too soft to be ahardcore track toy	****
Ginetta G60	165 D	\$68,000	6/3721	310/6500	288/4500	1080kg	292	49		165			Reborn Farbio GTS boasts great engine and good looks - The ride still needs work	****
Honda CR-Z GT	164 R	\$23,275	4/1497	122/6100	128/1500	T98kg	303	9.9		124	117	56.5	+ The first hybrid with sporting intent - No match for a good diesel hot hatch	****
Honda Integra Type-R (DC2)	095 R	96-00	4/1797	187/8000	131/7300	Mong	173	6.2	17.9	145		28.9	Arguably the greatest front-drive car ever - Too raw for some	****
Handa NSX	188 R	90-705	6/3779	276/7300	224/5300	1410kg	196	5.5		168		22.8	+ 'The useable supercar' - 270bhp sounds a bit weedy today	****
Honda NSX-R*	051R	102-103	6/3779	276/7300	224/5300	1270kg	221	6,6		168			+ evo Car of the Year 2002 - Honda never brought it to the UK	****
Hyundai Veloster Turbo	176 D	£21,995	4/1591	184/5500	195/1500	1313kg	142	8.2		133	157	40.9	+ The usual Hyundai value, with added fun - Styling might be too quirky for some	****
Infiniti G37S Coupe	127R	109-73	6/3696	316/7000	265/5200	1706kg	188	5.8	13.8	155	246	26.9	+ Softer 3702 delivers sharp-driving swing at the Germans - Bland looks	****
Jaguar F-type S Coupe	195 D	660,235	6/2995	375/6500	339/3500	1594kg	239	4.8		171	213	31.0	. Exquisite style, more rewarding (and affordable) than the roadster - Steering lacks feel	****
Jaguar XX	1300	£65,465	8/5000	380/6500	380/3500	1585kg	244	5.2		155	264	25.2	+ Fine car for the likes of us - Jag buyers may not like the harder edge	****
Jaguar XXR	168 R	578,965	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1678kg	305	4.6		155	292	23.0	+ Fast and incredibly rewarding Jag - The kids will have to stay at home	****
Jaguar XXR-S	168 R	197,465	8/5000	542/6000	502/2500	1678kg	328	4.2		186	292	23.0	Faster and wilder than regular XXR - The F-type R Coupe	****
Jaguar XXR-S GT	193 R	£135,000	8/5000	542/6000	502/2500	1638kg	336	3.9		186	292	23.0	+ The most exciting XXR ever - It's £135,000, and a very limited edition	****
Anguar XXX		98-706	8/496	400/6100	408/3500	1735kg	234	5.2		155		22.9	+ Extra grunt of 4.2-litre motor - Lacks feedback	****
Lotus Exige S (V6)	171 R	£53.850	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1176kg	298	3.8		170	236		 Breathtaking road-racer; our joint 2012 Car of the Year - Doubts over Lotus's future 	****



Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk1) Years 2005-2011 Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1586cc Power 123bhp @ 6800rpm Torque 109lb ft @ 4800rpm 0-62mph 8.9sec Top speed 124mph



WHY WOULD YOU?

Because it's one of the best junior hot hatches of recent years. While 123bhp at 6800rpm is hardly the stuff of dreams, with just 1030kg to punt along, it feels plenty feisty enough, while the chassis has an addictively playful streak WHAT TO PAY

£3500 will get a tidy '06/'07 car, while £4k-5k opens up a decent choice of '08/'09 examples.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR The engine is bomb-proof; just check for an

engine management light, which could mean a duff O2 sensor, or may mean the cat is breaking. down. A new manifold with cat is around £600. Gearboxes are a weak point. Check the gears engage smoothly and listen for whining. An ESP warning light probably means the ABS pump has failed; a refurb costs £165. (Full guide, evo 192.)

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Ratings Thrill-free zone ★ Tepid ★★ Interesting ★★★ Seriously good ★★★★ A truly great car ★★★★

Coupes / GTs

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine	php/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Махтр	C02 g/km	ECmpg	gyo rating	
Lotus Exice V6 Cup	100 R	562.994	6/3456	345/7000	295/6500	100kg	335	37		170			Half a roll-case short of being a race car - Regular Exise S is better for road work	***
Lotus Exige S	105 R	106-77	4/1796	218/7800	158/5500	930kg	238	4.5		148	199	33.2	Lightweight with a hefty punch - Uninspiring soundtrack	***
Lotus Exige Cup 260	1390	70-77	4/1796	256/8000	174/6000	890kg	293	4.0		152	199	31.1	+ Feels like a race car, yet works on the road - Pricey for a four-pot Exige	***
Lotus Exige (series 2)	068 R	104-108	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	875kg	219	4.9		147		321	 Highly focused road and track tool - Lacks visual impact of SI 	***
Lotus Exige (series 1)	067D	100-101	4/1796	192/7800	146/5000	780kg	247	4.6		136			+ Looks and goes like Elise racer - A tad lacking in refinement	***
Lotus Evora	138 R	£52,500	6/3456	276/6400	258/4700	1382kg	203	5.6	13.6	162	217	30.3	+ Sublime ride and handling. Our 2009 car of the year - Pricey options	***
Lotus Evora S	168 R	£61,500	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1430kg	245	4.6		172	229	28.7	A faster and better Evora - But one which spars with the Porsche 9ft	***
Lotus Esprit Sport 350 Masserati GranTurismo	005 R	99-00	8/3506	350/6500 399/7100	295/4250 339/4750	7299kg 1880kg	274	4.3 5.5	9.9	175	330	22.0	Designed for track work but brilliant on the road - Limited edition Striking, accomplished GT - Doesn't spike the pulse like an Aston or 911	***
Maserati GranTurismo Sport	188 R	£90,785	8/46/91	454/7000	383/4750	1880kg	245	4.8	12.7	185	338	19.0	The best everyday Granilurismo yet - Starting to get long in the tooth	***
Maserati GranTurismo MC Stradale	193 R	£310,703	8/46/91	454/7000	383/4750	1800kg	256	4.5		188	337	19.5	Brillant blend of road racer and GT - Gearbox takes a little getting used to	***
Maserati Coupe	064 R	103-107	8/4244	390/7000	333/4500	1680kg	237	4.8		177		17.6	Glorious engine, improved chassis - Overly sharp steering	***
Maserati GranSport	073 R	104-107	8/4244	400/7000	333/4500	MBOkg	239	48		160			Maser Coupe realises its full potential - Very little	***
Mande RX-8	122.8	103-77	28/3308	228/8200	156/5500	1429kg	162	6.5	16.4	146	200	24.6	Never mind the quirkiness, it's a great drive - Wafer-thin torque output	***
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Coupe	162 R	\$58,475	8/6208	451/6800	442/5000	1655kg	277	4,4	10.3	186	280	23.5	Mercedes makes a proper two-door M3 rival - C63 saloon looks better	***
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Black	171 R	12-13	8-6208	510/6800	457/5200	1635kg	317	42		186	286		* The C63 turned up to 11 - Too heavy, not as fiery as Black Series cars of old	***
Mercedes-Benz CLK63 AMG	092 D	106-109	8/6208	481/6800	464/5000	1755kg	278	4.6		155		19.9	+ Power, control, build quality - Lacks ultimate involvement	***
Mercedes-Benz CLK63 AMG Black	106 R	107-109	8/6/208	500/6800	464/5250	1760kg	289	42		186			+ AMG goes Porsche-hunting - Dull-witted gearshift spoils the party	***
Mercedes-Benz CL63 AMG	150 D	£118,865	8/5461	536/5500	590/2000	2010kg	271	4.5		155	244	26.9	Presence, pace, monster engine - Stiff ride, stiff competition	***
Morgan AeroMax	120 R	108-109	84799	362/6300	370/3600	HSONg	312	4.1		170		-	Weird and utterly wonderful - Only 100 were made	***
Nissan 370Z Nissan 370Z Nismo	180 R	£26,995	6/3696	326/7000	269/5200	1520kg 1535kg	218	5.4		155	248	26.7	Quicker, leaner, keener than 350Z - Not quite a Cayman-killer	***
Nissan 3502 Nismo	107.8	103-109	6/3498	309/5800	264/4800	15,32kg	205	5.5	13.0	155	218	26.0	More controlled, more poliched, more fun - More expensive Huge fun, and great value too - Honestly, we're struggling	***
Nissan GT-R (2012MY/2013MY/2014MY)	196 R	678.020	6/3799	542/6400	466/3200	1740kg	316	3.2	7.5	196	275		GT-R is quicker and better than ever - But over £20K more than its launch price	***
Nissan GT-R (2010MY)	152 R	10-12	6/3799	523/6400	45V3200	1740kg	305	30	1.0	194	279		More powerful version of the original - But they're not worlds apart to drive	***
Nissan GT-R (2008MY)	125.8	138-712	6/3/99	473/6400	434/3200	1740kg	276	3.8		793	217	200	Our 2008 Car of the Year, now from Just £35K - You won't see 20mag often	***
Nissan Skyline GT-R (R34)	1968	199-102	6/2568	276/7000	289/4400	1560kg	180	4.7	12.5	165		201	Big, brutal, and great fun - Needs more than the standard 276bits	***
Nissan Skyline GT-R (R33)	196 R	197-199	6/2568	275/6800	271/4400	1540kg	182	5.4	14.3	155		22.0	Proof that Japanese hi-tech can work (superbly) - Limited supply	***
NobleM400	089 R	704-106	6/2968	425/6500	390/5000	1060kg	407	3.5		185			Devilishly fast - Demon Tweeks interior	***
Peugeot RCZ 1.6 THP 200	155 R	£26,895	4/1598	197/5500	202/1700	142kg	141	7.3	18.1	147	155	421	Distinctive looks, highly capable handling - Could be a bit more exciting.	***
Peugeot RCZ R	193 R	£31,995	4/1598	266/6000	243/1900	1355kg	199	5.9		155	145	44.8	The best RCZ yet - 1.6-litre engine needs to be worked hard	***
Porsche Cayman (981)	185 F	539,694	6/2706	271/7400	214/4500	1310kg	210	5.7		165	192	34.4	. Very enticing for the money in basic spec - You might still want the power of the 'S'	***
Porsche Cayman S (981)	190 R	£48,783	6/3436	321/7400	273/4500	1320kg	247	5.0		176	206	32.1	The Cayman comes of age - Enm.,	***
Porsche Cayman (987)	131 R	71-73	6/2893	261/7200	221/4400	1330kg	199	5.8		165	221	30.1	+ Extra power, just as involving - Still lacks the desirability of other Porsches	***
Porsche Cayman S (987)	132R	106-73	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1350kg	237	5.2		172	223	29.7	+ Still want that 9117 - Yeah, us too	***
Porsche Cayman R (987)	158 R	711-733	6/3436	325/7400	273/4750	1295kg	255	4.7		175	228	29.1	+ Total handling excellence - Styling additions not to all tastes	***
Porsche 911 Carrera (991) Porsche 911 Carrera S (991)	168 R 168 R	£73,413	6/3436	345/7400	288/5600	1380kg 1395kg	254	47		179	212	30.4	991 becomes cleaner and cleverer - But some of its character's gone AWOL As above, but with supercar pace - Electric steering robs it of some tactility	***
Porsche 911 Carrera 4 (991)	177 D	£78.269	6/3436	345/7400	288/5600	1430kg	245	45		177	219	30.4	A touch more engaging than 2wid 991 - Still stand-offish compared to 997	***
Porsche 911 Carrera 4S (991)	179 R	£88,304	6/3800	394/7400	324/5600	1445kg	277	45		185	234	28.5	The best 991-generation Carrera - Choose your spec carefully	***
Porsche 911 Carrera (997.2)		108-77	6/3614	342/6500	288/4400	1425kg	245	4.0		180	225	29.4	+ Faster and greener than the mkl 997 - Lost a little of the 911 magic	***
Porsche 90 Carrera S (997.2)	121R	108-77	6/3800	380/6500	310/4400	1425kg	271	4.7		188	242	27.4	Asise, precision, blinding pace - Feels a bit clinical	***
Porsche 9/1 Carrera S (9973)	070 R	'04-'08	6/3824	350/6600	295/4600	1420kg	246	4.6	10.9	182		24.5	evo Car of the Year 2004; like a junior GT3 - Tech overload?	***
Porsche 911 Carrera (996.3.4)	008 R	10-88	6/3387	300/6800	258/4600	1320kg	230	4.6		173		28.0	+ evo Car of the Year 1998; beautifully polished - Some like a bit of rough	***
Porsche 91/ Carrera (993)		194-197	6/3600	285/6100	251/5250	1372kg	217	5.2		168		25.0	+ More character than 996 - Harder work at speed	***
Porsche 911 GT3 (991)	190 R	£100,540	6/3799	468/8250	324/6250	1430kg	332	3.5		196	289	23.0	+ evo Car of the Year 2013 - At its best at licence-troubling speeds	***
Parsche 9(1 GT3 (997.2)	182 R	779-77	6/3797	429/7600	317/6250	1395kg	312	4.2	9.2	394	303	221	Even better than the car it replaced - Give us a minute	***
Parsche 9(1 GT3RS (997.2)	152 R	70-77	6/3797	444/7900	317/6750	1370kg	329	4.0		193	314		+ evo Car of the Year 2010 - Looks and noise are slightly OTT	***
Parsche 911 GT3 RS 4.0 (997.2)	187 R	70-12	6/3996	493/8250	339/5750	1360kg	368	3.8		193	326		+ evo Car of the Year 2011 - Unforgiving on-road ride	***
Parsche 911 GT3 (9971)	182 R	107-109	6/3600	409/7600	298/5500	1395kg	298	4.3	9.4	192			Runner-up evo Car of the Year 2006 - Ferrari 599 GTBs	***
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (9977) Porsche 911 GT3 (996.2)	105 R 082 R	107-109	6/3600	409/7600 375/7400	298/5500	1375kg 1380kg	302	4.3	9.2	190			evo Car of the Year 2007 - A chunk more money than the brilliant GT3 evo Car of the Year 2003 - Chassis is a bit too track-focused for some roads	***
Porsche 9(1 GT3 RS (996.2)	068R	103-105	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1330kg	286	4.3	9.2	190			Frack-biased version of above - Limited supply	***
Parsche 9(1 GT3 (996.1)	182 R	199	6/3600	360/7200	273/5000	1350kg	277	4.5	10.3	190		21.9	+ evo Car of the Year 1999 - Porsche didn't build enough	***
Parsche 968 Club Sport	ON R	123-125	4/2990	240/6200	225/4100	1335kg	183	6.1	15.7	140		209	One of the all-time greats - Lots have been driven very hard	222
Renault Alpine A610	187D	91-95	6/2975	247/5750	258/2900	1420kg	177	5.4	13.8	166		21.0	Overlooked banaain-price French 911. Try one - RS Interior	***
Rolls-Royce Wraith	189D	6237711	12/6592	624/5600	590/1500	2360kg	269	4.4		155	327	20.2	Brillant at wafting quicker than you'd expect - Not the most ensaging drivers' car	***
Subaru BRZ	170 R	£24,995	4/1998	197/7000	151/6400	1230kg	163	7.6		140	181	36.2	+ Fine chassis, great steering - Weak engine, not the slide-happy car they promised	***
Toyota GT86	174 R	\$24,995	4/1998	197/7000	151/6400	1275kg	157	76		140	181	36.2	+ More fun than its cousin (above) - Same lack of torque, poor interior quality	***
Toyota Celica GT-Four ST205	187 R	194-199	4/1998	239/6000	223/4000	1496kg	162	5.2		143			Criminally overlooked homologation special - Finding one	***
TVR T350C	057R	103-107	6/3605	350/7200	290/5500	1100kg	398	4.7	10.0	175			+ Looks, engine - Unsupportive seats; chassis lacks ultimate polish	***
TVR Sagaris	099 D	705-707	6/3996	406/7500	349/5000	1078kg	383	3.7		185			+ Looks outrageous - 406bhp feels a touch optimistic	***
TVR Tuscan S (Mk2)	076 R	105-107	6/3996	400/7000	315/5250	1100kg	369	4.0		185			Possibly TVR's best ever car - Aerodynamic 'enhancements'	***
TVR Cerbera Speed Six	004 R	198-104	6/3996	350/6600	330/5000	1130kg	315	5.0	11.4	160+			Accomplished and desirable - Check chassis for corrosion	***
VW Scirocco GT 2.0 TSI	155 R	£26,760	4/1984	207/5300	207/1700	1373kg	753	6.1	15.8	149	172	38.2	Golf GTI price and performance - Interior lacks flair	***
VW Sciences P	161 P	£31 Q85	4/1984	261/6000	258/2500	1357kg	196			155				

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Our Choice

Ferrari 458 Speciale. The regular 458 Italia is amazing enough in itself – in fact it used to occupy this very space - but the Speciale follows in the tradition of the 360 Challenge Stradale and 430 Scuderia and makes the car it is based on even more, well, special. The supercar to buy.



Best of the Rest
Pagani's awesome Huayra (left) was our joint Car of the Year
in 2012, while Ferran's incredible FIZ was runner-up in 2013. Lamborghini's Aventador is right up there for true supercar drama, and then there's McLaren's Pl, which manages to stir the emotions in a way the 12C didn't.

Supercars

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Мах трһ	C02 g/km	ECmpg	evo rating	
9ff GT9R	127 D	c£450,000	6/4000	1120/7850	774/5970	1346kg	845	2.9		260			+ Above 100mph eats Veyrons for breakfast - Eats M3 dust at traffic lights	****
Aston Martin Vanquish (Mk2)	182 R	£189,995	12/5935	565/6750	457/5500	1739kg	330	43		183	335	19.6	+ A much better car than the DBS it succeeds - Shame it looks little different, then	****
Aston Martin Vanquish S (MkI) Aston Martin One-77	110 R	105-107	12/5935	520/7000 750/6000	425/5800 553/7600	1875kg	282	4.9	10.1	200			Vanquish joins supercar greats - A tad intimidating at the limit	****
ASCON MARTIN UNIE-77 BMW MI	110 R	78-187	6/3500	277/6500	239/5000	1740kg 1303kg	216	5.8		161	-		The engine, the looks, the drama - Gearbox hates manoeuvring; only 77 were made Early supercar icon - A bit under-endowed these days.	****
Busatti Vevron Super Sport	151 R	c62.0m	16/7993	1183/6400	106/3000	18.38kg	654	25		268	539	12.2	+ The world's fastest supercar - Limited to 258mph for us mere mortals	****
Bugatti Veyron Grand Sport Vitesse	185 R	c£1.7m	16/7993	1183/6400	1106/3000	1990kg	604	2.6		254	539	12.2	+ The world's fastest convertible - Limited to 258mph for us mere mortals	****
Bugatti Veyron 16.4	134 R	105-17	16/7993	10000/6000	922/2200	1950kg	521	2.8	5.8	253	596	11.4	Superbly engineered 4WD quad-turbo rocket - Ec lacks luggage space?	****
Bugatti EB110	078R	91-95	12/3500	552/8000	451/3750	2566kg	358	3.4		212			+ Superbly engineered 4WD quad-turbo rocket - It just fizzled out	****
Caparo TI	138 R 133 R	£301,975	8/3499 8/68/2	575/10,500	310/9000	689kg	848 434	3.8	6.2 7.6	205		18.8	+ Absolutely staggering performance - Absolutely staggering price tag	****
Chevrolet Corvette 2911 Ferrari 458 Italia	133 R	6178 576	8/6/62	562/9000	398/5000	7528kg 14.85kg	184	3.2	6.8	205	355	20.6	Huge pace and character - Take plenty of brave pills if there's rain An astounding achievement, looks fantastic - There'll never be a manual	****
Ferrari 458 Spider	185.8	£1100,020 £108,071	B/L497	562/9000	398/6000	1530kg	373	33	0.0	108	275	23.9	+ A 458 that sounds and feels more organic - Er, 4mph slower than the Italia?	****
Ferrari 458 Speciale	191 R	£208,000	8/4497	597/9000	398/6000	1395kg	435	3.0		202+	275	23.9	+ Makes the regular 458 feel outmoded - If you don't own a regular 458, nothing	****
Ferran F430	163 R	104-707	84308	483/8500	343/5250	14-49Ng	339	4.0		790		15.0	Just brilliant - Didn't you read the plus point?	****
Ferxari 430 Scuderia	121R 133.D	107-10	84308	503/8500	347/5250	1350kg	378	3.5	7.7	198 196		15.7	+ Successful F1 technology transplant - Likes to shout about it	****
Ferrari Scudenia Spider 16M Ferrari 360 Modena	163.0	199-104	8/4308 8/3586	304/8500	347/5250	1440kg 1390kg	355	3.7	90	195	360	18.0	A hardcore soft-top Ferrari - Earplugs recommended Worthy successor to 355 - Not quite as involving as it should be	****
Ferrari 360 Challenge Stradale	DURR	177-104	8/3586	420/8500	275/4/30	1280kg	317	43	9.0	183		100	Worthy successor to 300 - Not quite as involving as it should be Totally exhilarating road-racer. It's loud- It's very, very loud	****
Ferrari F355 F1 Berlinetta	163 R	107, 100	8/3496	374/8250	268/6000	1350kg	281	47		183		167	Looks terrific, sounds even better - Are you kidding?	****
Ferrari F12 Berlinetta	190 R	5239,736	12/6262	730/8250	509/6000	1630kg	455	3.1		211	350	18.8	+ 730bhp isn't too much power for the road - Super-quick steering is an acquired taste	****
Ferrari 599 GTB Florano	JOIR.	106-12	12/5999	611/7500	448/5600	1688kg	368	3.5	7.4	205	485	5.8	+ evo Car of the Year 2006 - Banks are getting harder to rob	****
Ferrari 599 GTO	161 R	73-72	12/5999	661/8250	457/6500	1605kg	478	3.4		208			+ One of the truly great Ferraris - Erm, the air con isn't very good	****
Ferrari 575M Florano Handling Pack	169 R	102-106	12/5748	508/7250	434/5250	1730kg	298	4.2	9.6	202		12.3	+ Florano pack makes 575 truly great - It should have been standard	****
Ferrari 550 Maranello Ferrari Testarossa	169 R	197-102 184-101	12/5474	485/7000	475/5000 361/4500	1716kg	287	4.3 5.8	10.0	199		12.3	+ Everything - Nothing	****
Ferrari FE	194 R	6227162	12/4942	585/8000 651/8000	504/6000	1506kg 1880kg	260	3.8		208	360	15.4	The ultimate '80s supercar - Intimidating handling: needs big roads Four seats and 4WD, but a proper Ferrari - Looks divide coinion	****
Ferrari 612 Scapletti FI	0908	104-77	27/5368	533/7250	434/5250	1840kg	294	4.3	9.8	100	470	118	+ Awesomely capable grand tourer - See above	****
Ferrari Enzo	156.0	102-104	12/5008	651/7800	485/5500	1365kg	485	3.5	67	717e	410		Intoxicating, exploitable - Cabin detailing falls short of Zonda or FI	****
Ferrari F50	186 R	96-97	12/4699	513/8500	347/6500	1230kg	424	39		202			+ Still the best drivers' Ferrari - The F40 looks better	****
Ferrari F40	186 R	37-92	8/2926	471/7000	426/4000	moong	437	4,1		201			Brutally fast - It's in the dictionary under 'turbo lag'	****
Ferrari 288 GTO	064 R	84-85	8/2855	394/7000	366/3800	1160kg	345	4.9		189			Painfully beautiful, rarer than the F40 - You are joking?	****
Ford GT	188 R	104-106 6275.000	8/5409	550/6500	500/3750	1583kg	353	37		205 220±			+ Our 2005 Car of the Year - JC had one. Reckoned it didn't handle	****
Gumpert Apollo Hennessev Venom GT	110 R	£900,000	8/4163	1244/6500	675/4000 TISS/4000	1200kg 1244kg	1016	2.5		220+			Stupendous performance, 'Apollo' - High price, 'Gumpert' 0-200mph in 14 Ssec, and it handles too - Looks like an Exise	****
Januar X1220	160 R	102,104	6/3498	542/7200	475/4500	1470kg	375	2.7		203			Britain's greatest supercar until McLaren built the FI	****
Koenigsegg Agera R	180 R	c£1.09m	8/5032	1124/7100	885/2700	1435kg	796	2.8		273			+ As fast and exciting as your body can handle - It's Veyron money	****
Koenigsear CCX	094 R	106-70	84700	806/6900	678/5700	TIBONS	694	3.9	7.7	247			+ Sweden's greatest supercar - Sweden's only supercar	****
Koenigsegg CCXR Edition	138 R	108-70	8/4800	1004/7000	796/5600	1280kg	797	2.8		254+			One of the world's fastest cars - Spikey power delivery	****
Lamborghini Gallardo LP560-4	180 D	106-73	10/5204	552/8000	398/6500	1410kg	398	3.7		202	325	35.0	+ Still a missile from A to B - Starting to show its age	****
Lamborghini LP570-4 Superleggera Lamborghini Gallando	152 R 094 R	10-13	10/5204	562/8000 513/8000	398/6500 376/4250	1340kg 1520kg	426 343	3.5	9.4	202	325	20.6	* Less weight and more power than original Superleggera - LP560-4 runs it very close	****
Lamborghini Gallardo Superleggera	394 R	107,118	10,4967	522/8000	376/4250	1620kg	343	1.0	9.4	196			On a full-bore start it spins all four wheels. Cool - Slightly clunky e-gear Lighter, more agile - Grabby carbon brakes, clunky e-gear	****
Lamborghini Aventador LP700-4	194 R	5260,040	12/6498	690/8250	509/5500	1575kg	445	2.9		217	370	127	Most important new Lambo since the Countach - Erm., expensive?	****
Lamborshini Aventador Roadster	194 R	5294.665	12/6498	690/8250	509/5500	1675kg	410	3.0		217	370	12.7	+ Sensational engine and styling - A wee bit on the thirsty side	****
Lamborghini Murci Hago	089 D	50-50	12/6192	570/7500	479/5400	1650kg	357	4.0		205			Gogeous, capable and incredibly friendly - VI2 feels stressed	****
Lamborghini Murciellago LP640	093 R	106-77	12/6496	631/8000	487/6000	1665kg	385	3.3		211		21.3	+ Compelling old-school supercar - You'd better be on your toes	****
Lamborghini Murciellago LP670-4 SV	186 R	109-17	12/6496	661/8000	4876500	1565kg	429	3.2	7.3	212			A supercar in its truest, wildest sense - Be prepared for stares	****
Lamborghini Diablo 6.0	019 R	100-102 304-101	12/5992	550/7100 455/7000	457/5500 369/5200	1625kg 1449kg	343	3.8	10.0	200+		137	+ Best-built, best-looking Diablo of all - People's perceptions	****
Lamborghini Countach 5000 QV Lexus LFA/LFA Nürburgning	MIR	70-72	10/4/805	552/8700	354/6800	1480kg	379	37	10.0	202		137	Still the definitive supercar - Visibility pract- oh hell, who cares? Absurd and compelling supercar - Badge and price don't quite match.	****
Maserati MC12	030 P	134-105	12/5998	621/7500	481/5500	1445kg	427	2.0		202			+ Rarer than an Enzo - The Ferrari's better	****
McLaren 660S	196 R	6795,250	8/3799	641/7500	500/3000	1330kg	490	3.0		207	275	24.2	Better brailes, balance and looks than IDC: more power too. Costs an extra CFM.	****
McLaren I2C	187 R	73-34	8/3799	616/7500	442/3000	1434kg	435	3.1		207	279	24.2	+ Staggering performance, refinement - Engine noise can be grating	****
McLaren PI	194 R	6866,000	8/3799	903/7500	664/4000	1395kg	658	2.8		217	194	34.0	+ Freakish breadth of ability - We don't know its exact Nürburgring lap time	****
McLaren FI Mercedos-Renz SL65 AMG Black	186 R 131 R	194-198	12/5064	627/7500	479/4000	1137kg 1876ke	560 358	3.2	6.3 8.1	240+		19.0	Still the most single-minded supercar ever - There'll never be another	****
Mercedes-Benz SLEO AMU BILICK Mercedes-Renz SLS AMG	TIGR	6368.395	8/6208	563/5400	479/4750	1620kg	335	4.0	8.4	197	308	21.6	Bonkers looks, bankers speed - Bonkers £250K price Great engine and chassis (gulfwing doors too!) - Slightly tardy gearbox	****
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG Black	190 R	£229.985	8/6208	622/7400	468/5500	1550kg	408	3.6	0.4	106	321	20.6	Stunning engine, superb body control - Appetite for expensive tyres	****
Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren	073 R	104-107	8/5439	6729/500	575/3250	160 kg	377	3.7		208	361	2010	Zonda-pace, 575-style drivability - Dreadful brake feel	****
Noble M600	186 R	c£200,000	8/4439	650/6800	604/3800	1798kg	551	3.8	7.7	225			Spiritual successor to the Ferrari F40 - It's a bit pricey	****
PaganiHuayra	185 R	c£lm	12/5980	720/5800	737/2250	1350kg	542	3.3		224			+ Our joint 2012 Car of the Year - Engine isn't as nape-prickling as the Zonda's	****
Pagani Zonda 760RS	170 R	£1.5m	12/7291	750/6300	575/4500	1210kg	630	3.3		217+			The most extreme Zonda ever - The last Zonda ever (probably)	****
Pagari Zonda CI2S	096 R	D1-D5	12/7291	555/5900	553/4050	1250kg	451	3.6		197			+ evo Car of the Year 2001 - Values have gone up a fair bit since then	****
Pagani Zonda F	186 R	105-106	12/7291	602/6/50	575/4000	1230kg	497	3.6		254			Everything an Italian supercar ought to be - Looks a bit blingy next to a Carrera GT	****
Pagani Zonda Cinque Roadster Porsche 911 Turbo (1991)	147D	6118 340	12/7291 6/3800	669/6200 533/6000	575/4000 534/2000	1400kg	485 327	3.4		207+	227	201	+ The best Zonda ever - Doesn't come up in the classifieds often	****
Porsche 911 Turbo (991) Porsche 911 Turbo 3 (991)	194 R	£360,837	6/3800	332/9300	524/2100	1595kg 1003kg	327	3.4		195	227	29.1	Incredible pace, whatever the weather - More involvement would't go amiss Still unrivalled as an everyday supercar - At times disputoes the thirlib it can offer	****
Parsche 917 Turbo (997.2)	MOR	109-73	6/3800	493/6000	479/1950	1570kg	319	3.2	7.3	193	272	24.4	The Turbo at the very top of its game - The GT3's cheaper	****
Parsche 911 GT2 RS (997.2)	157R	70-13	6/3600	611/6500	516/2250	1370kg	453	3.5		205	284		More powerful than a Carrera GT. Handles, too - Erm	****
Parsche 917 Turbo (997.1)	094 R	'06-'09	6/3600	472/6000	457/1950	1585kg	303	4.0	8.7	193		22.1	+ Monster cornering ability - A bit woolly on its standard settings	****
Parsche 911 Turbo (996)	OUR	200-06	6/3600	420/6000	413/4600	1540kg	272	4.1	10.0	199		21.0	+ evo Car of the year 2000; the 911 for all seasons - We can't find any reasons	****
Porsche 911 GT2 (996)	072 R	104-106	6/3600	475/5700	457/3500	1420kg	339	4.0		198			Later revisions made it even more of a star - Care still required	****
Parsche 911 Turba (993) Parsche 911 GTZ (993)	066 R 003 R	95-98 96-99	6/3600	408/5/50	398/4500	1502kg	276 339	37		180		19.4	+ Stupendous alf-weather supercar - It doesn't rain enough	****
Porsche 918 Soyder	992 R	26-99 C\$649.000	8/4593	825/R500	944/9600	1290kg 1674kg	531	26		234	72	911	Hairy-arsed homologation special - Harry won't buy one Blistering performance, sophisticated hybrid tech - Added weight and complexity	****
Porsche Carrera GT	192 R	134-136	8/4593	604/8000	435/5750	1380kg	645	3.8	7.6	205	12	901	Still feels ahead of its time - Needs modern tyres to tame its spikiness	****
Porsche 959	192 R	87-90	6/2850	444/6500	369/5000	1450kg	377	3.7	7.0	197			Soli feels alread on its time - Needs modern tyres to tame its spikiness Tech showcase, still a great drive - Limited choice of colours?	****
Ruf Rt 12	097R	c£155.000	6/3746	641/7000	641/3500	1530kg	426	3.3		219			Beautifully executed car with truly immense power - Needs care	****
Ruf CTR3	126 R	c£357,000	6/3746	691/7600	656/4000	1400kg	500	3.2		235			The best 9II that Porsche never made - But not the best looking	****
Ruf CTR Yellowbird'	097R	87-89	6/3366	469/5950	408/5100	MORE	345	4.1		211			+ A true legend - We can't all drive like Stefan Roser	****
Spyker C8 Alleron	141 D	6391,000	8.4163	400/5800	354/3500	1425kg	285	4.5		187			Most convincing Spyker yet - Its rivals are quicker	****

Track Times



= new addition this month. Red denotes the car is the fastest in its class.

Car	Lap time	Peak mph	issue no.	Conditio
Radical SRBLM (fastest car)	1:33.6	127.8	138	Dry
Caparo Ti (fastest supercar)	116.8	130.9	131	Dry
Ferrari 458 Italia	119.3	120.0	159	Dry
Gumpert Apollo S	199.6	120.4	119	Dry
McLaren MP4-12C (Corsa tyres)	119.6	121.2	159	Dry
Caterham Levante V8	119.6	118.0	131	Dry
Porsche 997 GT2 RS	119.9	122.3	158	Dry
Lotus 2-Eleven GT4	120.1	113.2	138	Dry
Caterham Superlight R500	120.2	115.7	119	Dry
McLaren MP4-12C	120.6		159	Dry
Noble M600 Porsche 997 GT3 RS 4,0 (fastest coupe)	1:21.0	121.8	159	Dry Dry
Lamborghini Murciélago LP670-4 SV	121.3	1711	134	Dry
Ariel Atom 3 Supercharged	121.5	113.6	110	Dry
KTM X-Bow (300bhp)	121.5	10.7	138	Dry
Ferrari 430 Scuderia	1217	17.2	121	Dry
Porsche 997.2 GT3 RS (3.8)	121.9	116.8	150	Dry
Lamborghini Gallardo LP560-4	122.5	119.1	122	Dry
Brooke Double R	122.5	113.2	119	Dry
Lamborghini Murciélago LP640	1229	116.7	143	Dry
Porsche Carrera GT	123.3	115.2	119	Dry
Porsche 997.2 GT3	123.3	114.5	138	Dry
Porsche 997 Turbo S	123.5	107.5	346 119	Dry
Porsche 997 GT2	123.5	115.1 113.1	119	Dry
Nissan GT-R (2006MY) Porsche 991 Carrera	123.6	113.1	182	Dry
Porsche 991 Carrera Cabriolet	123.9	112.3	183	Dry
Mercedes-Berg SL63 AMG	1239	HE-3	YouTube	Dry
Porsche 997 Turbo	1261	B3.5	136	Damp
Lotus 340R (190bhp)	124.2	110.0	135	Dry
Porsche Boxster S (981)	124.2	109.3	183	Dry
Caterham Superlight R300	124.3	101.5	138	Dry
Maserati Granifurismo MC Stradale	124.5	115.1	160	Dry
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG	124.6	115.7	146	Dry
Porsche Boxster Spyder (987)	1247	107.7	167	Dry
Caterham 7 Supersport	124.8	101,6	YouTube	Dry
Ferrari California	125.0	TIL8	134	Dry
KTM X-Bow	1:25.0	105.0	123	Dry
BMW E92 M3 Coupe	125.1	109.1	162	Dry
Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG Black	125.2	108.6	131	Dry
Jaguar F-type VB S Audi RSS	125.2	TIL2 108.8	183	Dry
	125.4	108.8	167	Dry
Audi R8 Spyder V8 Porsche Cayman R	125.5	107.0	157	Dry Dry
Aston Martin V8 Vantage Roadster	125.6	1091	183	Dry
BMW M5 (F10) (fastest saloon)	125.7	112.0	165	Dry
Jaguar XXR-S	1257		YouTube	Dry
Aston Martin VI2 Vantage	125.8	110.9	146	Dry
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-400	125.9	107.5	138	Dry
BMW1-series M Coupe	1259	106.4	158	Dry
Mitsubishi Evo X RS 360	126.1	106.6	153	Dry
Renaultsport Mégane 265 Trophy (fastest hot hatch)	1:26.1	105.3	166	Dry
AudiTTRS	126.3	107.2	149	Dry
Aston Martin DBS	126.4	109.5	143	Dry
Porsche Panamera Turbo		109.2		Dry
Audi RS6 Avant (C7) (fastest estate) BMW MI3Si	126.5		YouTube YouTube	Dry
Jaguar X.IZ20	1:26.7	10.7	131	
Porsche Cayenne Turbo S (fastest 4x4)	126.8	106.1	YouTube	Dry
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG	126.8	104.9	165	Dry
Porsche Cayenne Turbo	126.9	107.4	158	Dry
Lotus Evora	1271	104.2	145	Dry
Nissan 3707	1271	104.0	158	Dry
Jaguar F-type V6 S	1272	105.0	YouTube	Dry
Porsche Panamera S	1:27.3	102.4	165	Dry
Mercedes-Berrz C63 AMG Coupe	1:27.7	W.0	162	Dry
Lotus Elise SC Audi S3	1277	104.6	131 YouTube	Dry
Vauxhall VXR8 Bathurst S	127.8	106.1	131	Dry
BMW E46 M3 CSL	1278	105.4	153	Dry Dry
Renaultsport Mégane R26.R	127.8	103.4	133	Uty
Audi RS6 Avant (C6) (fastest estate)	127.9	TII.0	121	Dry
Jaguar XFR	1:27.9	108.1	137	Dry
Lens IS-F	128.1	106.4	151	Dry
Porsche Boxster S (987)	128.1	105.4	120	Dry
Subaru WRX STI	128.3	101.6	157	Dry
SEAT Leon Cupra R	1:28.7	102.4	162	Dry
Bentley Continental Supersports	129.2	105.8	149	Dry
Lotus Elise Club Racer	129.2	95.5	162	Dry
Renaultsport Mégane 250 Cup	1299	101.4	156	Dry
Vauxhall VXR8 Clubsport Tourer	1299		YouTube	Dry
Honda NSX	1:30.1	101.3	145	Dry
Nissan 370Z Roadster	130.3	100.1	173	Dry
VW Scirocco 2.0 TSI	1:30.4	98.9	155	Dry
Ford Flesta ST Ford Focus RS (Mk2)	130.4	97.1	YouTube 131	Dry
Vaunhall Astra VXR (Mk2)	131.4	100.9	174	Damp
Renaultsport Clio 200 Cup	131.9	97.2	344	Dry
an anathra i marran coh	120.9	P1.6	-146	Lity



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Lamborghini Miura louvred engine cover

by DAVID VIVIAN | PHOTOGRAPHY by DAVID SHEPHERD

THE LAMBORGHINI MIURA. THE UNSANCTIONED project of seven young maverick engineers at Sant'Agata that became the sexiest thing on wheels anyone had ever seen, didn't just create the mid-engined template for the modern supercar, it ignited a trend for black louvred covers that can be stuck to the rear windows of any car. It's an accessory business that still thrives in some markets, most notably North America, no doubt buoyed by the fact that many subsequent Lambos had slatted rear window/engine covers as a nod to the Miura. As. indeed, does the new Huracán, if so optioned.

The functional benefits of the aftermarket variety are dubious at best. evo's Ian Eveleigh opined, of an Escort XR3i he saw thus equipped, that it might be to cool the filaments in the Ford's heated rear window. Their makers, perhaps more seriously, claim that as well as improving the 'performance look' of any car, they increase privacy (presumably if you're being tailed by an octocopter drone

packing a GoPro) and minimise cabin temperature. Heat was certainly a factor when it came to translating the two-dimensional drawings of an inspired young Bertone employee called Marcello Gandini into a three-dimensional production reality. The Miura P400 appeared first as a knock'em-dead concept car at the 1965 Turin Salon and then, thanks to the sensation it caused, as a work-in-progress prototype at the 1966 Geneva show. As seen, it had a Plexidas rear screen/engine cover through which the transverse mid-mounted V12 could be easily viewed in all its glory.

Great for a show stand, not so wonderful when development continued on the road and the big, highly strung motor quickly overheated. So it was the imperative of necessity rather than aesthetic expression that led to the rear louvres being developed, the six slats being arranged in such a way that they protected the engine and its wiring from the elements (the tiered, full-width slots vented rearwards) while allowing engine-generated heat and noise - and what a noise - to escape.

Slats featured on several series Lambos - Urraco P250, Diablo, Murciélago to mention just a few - and numerous Bertone concepts, including the 1967 Lamborghini Marzal and 1970 Lancia Stratos Zero. Their imitative presence became all but derigueur for the derrieres of US muscle cars through the '70s and '80s, too, especially tin-top Mustangs. The Miura must feel sincerely flattered.

JUNE 18







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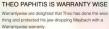












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