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How do you solve a problem like TVR?

A

A FEW MONTHS AGO

I went to the first showing of the new *Star Wars* film. It was just after midnight on the day of the release, and while I wasn't

wearing a full Chewbacca suit like the bloke next to me, I was feeling the same level of excitement as my new Wookie friend. As the lights dimmed, a voice from the back shouted, 'Don't f*ck it up, Abrams!'

TVR rescuer/boss/owner Les Edgar is a compelling interviewee. He is lucid, passionate, and while you sense a degree of media training, he does not allow 'brand message' to dominate conversation. Also, surprisingly, he's rarely guarded. For someone who is responsible for the future of one of the UK's most treasured sports car manufacturers, he's open and honest.

There's risk talking to the press at this early stage, but Edgar has given **evo** exclusive access to 'Black Hound' (an engine mule most manufacturers would hide from prying eyes) and given his engineers free rein to talk to us. Likewise, Gordon Murray gives an honest interview on page 90–even identifying some past friction (now resolved) in his burgeoning relationship with TVR.

Edgar is well aware that he needs to engage with the press and public and ensure that 'credible' and 'TVR' are spoken in the same sentence. And that's not always been the case. When old TVR finally went extinct, its reputation had been dragged through the mud and into a swamp. TVRs were magnificently flawed, and while their existence was rightly championed by people like us, it was impossible to see how the cars could evolve and brand perception be altered. And that was before Jaguar launched the F-type and Porsche turned the Boxster and Cayman into serious sports cars... Simply put, if TVR thought it had it hard at the end of the last era, it ain't seen nothing yet.

'That's true,' says Edgar before explaining that to be credible you don't have to create a Porsche or Jaguar clone. 'But we can do it in our own way. We can create a car that is everyday useable but is also a pure sports car. There's a big hole that hasn't been filled by Porsche and Jaguar, and that's what

we're here to do.' The hole, says Edgar, has been created by TVR's rivals moving away from 'the spirit of driving' and that the market is primed for it 'because people are moving away from paddles'. Also, in a brilliant bit of phrasing, Edgar says he wants to 'disengage the engine from the wheels'.

No doubt, he's saying the right things, but Edgar is also pragmatic. He realises that amplifying the positives of TVR (the noise, the looks, the purity, the oversteer...) but without the pain (the unreliability, the spiky handling, the funny smells...) won't be enough to convince sports car buyers. 'We can't rely on not being Porsche.'



And how do we feel about 'new' TVR now we've had access? Optimistic, no question. Plus excited, curious and impatient! But perhaps our feelings can be best expressed by the man in the back row of my local cinema – save for replacing 'Abrams' with 'Edgar'... The ingredients are all there, and if Edgar and Murray get it right, and all the signs suggest they will, then TVR will finally be a force to be reckoned with.

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Top to bottom: Henry Catchpole drops in at Fiorano on his way to Tuscany in Aston Martin's DB11; do adjustable Öhlins dampers solve the Alfa 4C's woes?; a new judge for this year's tyre test; Will Beaumont sizes up the Bugatti Chiron's W16 for his BMW 2002



CONTENTS

ISSUE 226 OCTOBER 2016

FEATURES

066

GROUP TEST: ALFA GIULIA QV

Giulia Quadrifoglio v BMW M4 Competition Package v Mercedes-AMG C63 S Coupe v Lexus RC F

080

RETURN OF TVR: THE CAR

We join TVR and its development team as they fire up the new Mustang V8 for the first time

RETURN OF TVR: THE HISTORY

What made TVR so special? Peter Wheeler's right-hand man gives us his view

RETURN OF TVR: GORDON MURRAY

He created the most famous supercar of them all and now he's behind TVR's revival. We ask him why 094

BUGATTI CHIRON

We've ridden in it and spoken to those building it. Here's all you need to know about the Chiron

102

ICON: MK3 MAXDA RX-7

Richard Meaden revisits the final incarnation of Mazda's rotary-powered sports car

DRIVEN: ASTON MARTIN DBII

How best to get to know Aston Martin's new 600bhp GT car? A 1500-mile road-trip should do it

2016 TYRE TEST

Looking for a new high-performance tyre? Read our independent tyre test first

Goodbye Octavia vRS, RS Q3 and Impreza, and hello RS6 Performance and 308 GTi 270

REGULARS

009 NEWS

LONG-TERM TESTS

New Porsche Panamera unwrapped; Kia's performance car goals; Tech and Tyres

> 031 151

LETTERS EVO MARKET Should manufacturers make more It's time to sell your cherished evo car, but what

hypercars so more of us can buy one?

057

COLUMNS

Richard Meaden, Richard Porter and Dario Franchitti 194

ART OF SPEED

It's a tyre to many. But to the few it's an iconic sign of unadulterated performance

options are open to you and which is the best?

DRIVEN

036

RENAULT SPORT CLIO RS16

MASERATI QUATTROPORTE GTS

042

SUTTON MUSTANG CS700

MERCEDES-AMG C63 S CABRIOLET

ALFAWORKS GT4C

054 CADILLAC CT6

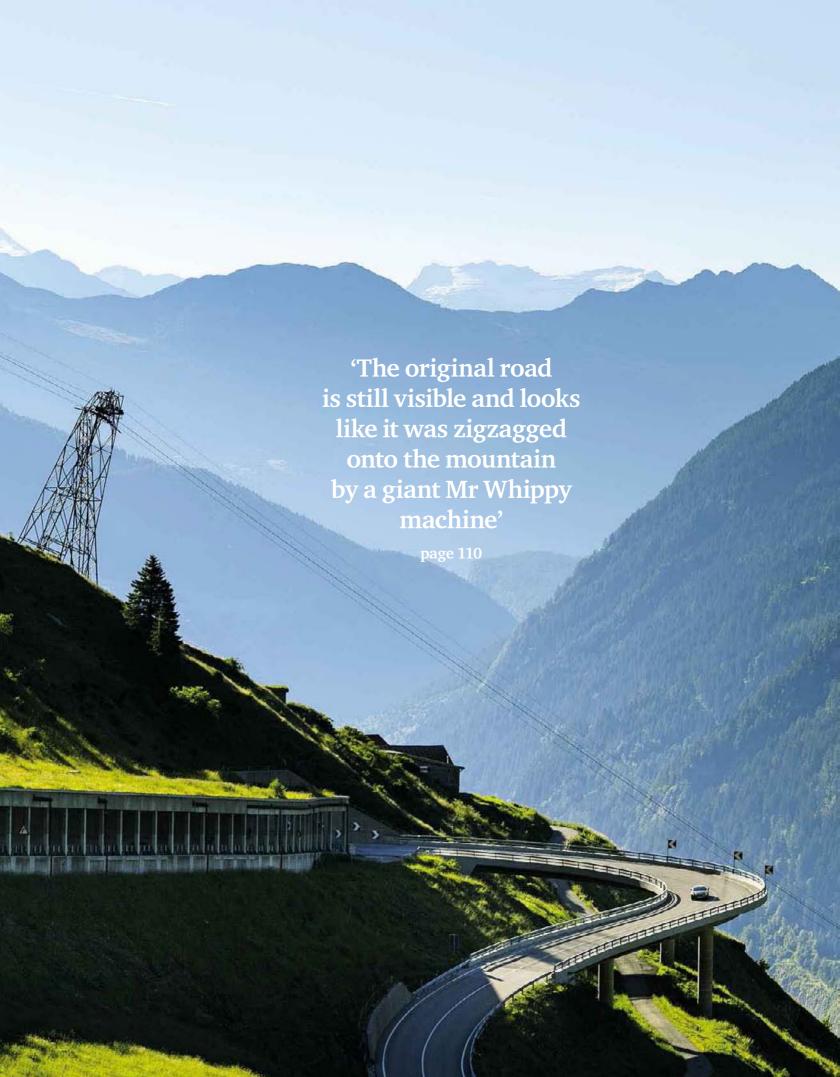








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Porsche Panamera

Porsche joins the tech race with the second-generation version of its supersaloon

by STUART GALLAGHER

F YOU'RE A LONG-TIME PORSCHE advocate, you'll know the brand hasn't always been the quickest when it comes to embracing new technologies, in particular those that have less to do with the thrill of driving and more to do with convenience.

However, in the new Panamera, Porsche has not only combined its latest dynamic technology (hot-V turbocharged engines, rear-wheel steering, Dynamic Chassis Control Sport, an eight-speed PDK gearbox with shift times as quick as those of a 991 GT3), but it has also built a car that will almost drive itself.

Additionally, the aluminium body panels are hemmed to the car's steel structure – a first in the automotive sector, Porsche believes. The car's modular MSB platform will also provide the basic architecture within the VW Group for future Bentleys (Conti GT and Flying Spur) and Audis (A8), and will allow spin-offs such as a long-wheelbase Panamera saloon, the Sport Turismo estate, a coupe (the long-anticipated 928 replacement) and an SUV-coupe.

However, it's inside the Panamera where Porsche has taken its biggest leap, effectively developing its first autonomous car. While legislation catches up with technology, though, it's still one you'll have to drive yourself.





by STUART GALLAGHER

420 mm

Diameter of carbon-ceramic front discs

Weight of the Panamera's body-in-white

CRIJE OF ALES

10:42

Number of LEDs inside the matrix headlights

Number of pistons in the optional **PCCB** calipers

A STEP TOWARDS AUTONOMY

Porsche InnoDrive is where the Panamera goes a bit autonomous. Using the camera that forms part of the radar cruise-control, InnoDrive scans the route ahead (up to 1.9 miles at a time) that the satnav has plotted. From the data available, it sets the speed within the cruise control and selects the correct gear. It's very similar to the system used by Rolls-Royce to select the right gear within the gearbox for the approaching corner.

By setting the speed and gear, and knowing the course that it is on, the Panamera could, in theory, drive itself, but until legislation allows such autonomous driving, you still need to steer. We look forward to trying it on the Nürburgring...



The twinturbo V8 benefits from cylinderon-demand tech

9.5kg 7:38

Weight saving of the new 4-litre V8 over the old 4.8-litre

Ring time for the Turbo – quicker than a 997.2 GT3

SPECIFICATION (PANAMERA TURBO)

Engine Power Torque 0-62mph V8, 3996cc, twin-turbo 542bhp @ 5750-6000rpm 568lb ft @ 1960-4500rpm 3.6sec (claimed)

190mph (claimed) Top speed Weight 1995kg Power-to-weight 276bhp/ton £113,075 Basic price







THE ENGINE LINE-UP

Two all-new petrol engines have been developed for this Panamera - a 2.9-litre twin-turbo V6 and a 4-litre twin-turbo V8. Both feature new hot-V turbo tech (where the turbos are positioned within the V of the cylinder heads, reducing heat losses to maximise exhaust gas velocity and therefore the effectiveness of the turbos) and are more powerful and efficient than before. The V8 also benefits from cylinder-on-demand technology, enabling it to drop a bank of cylinders under light loads.

Alongside the petrol units, a 4-litre twin-turbo V8 diesel is borrowed from VW Group (Porsche's new V8 petrol will also find its way to Crewe and Ingolstadt) and is the first time such an engine has been available in the Panamera.

All models are to be fitted with a new eight-speed, double-clutch PDK gearbox. Designed and developed in conjunction with ZF, it features twice as many input shafts (four) as before, features shiftby-wire, and frictional losses are down 28 per cent.

When the new Panamera launches in November, only four-wheel-drive powertrains will be available at first.

Left, from top: new petrol engines get hot-V tech; a new eight-speed PDK gearbox has been developed with ZF; lighter body-in-white offsets weight of the new technology being added







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Continental GT Speed fuel consumption – EU Drive Cycle in mpg (I/100 km): Urban 13 (21.8); Extra Urban 27.4 (10.3); Combined 19.3 (14.6). $\rm CO_2$ Emissions 338 g/km.

edited by STUART GALLAGHER

INTERVIEW



How Kia plans to build a sports car



AVING TURNED THE mass motoring sector on its head with a range of mid-market cars that make most of Europe's established offerings look like cheap knock-offs when it comes to quality and reliability, Kia and Hyundai are now embarking on a series of new performance cars that plan to do to the Golf GTI what the Ceed did to the Focus. What's more, they are being developed by BMW M's former vice president of engineering, Albert Biermann (pictured above).

Biermann doesn't pull any punches on his former employers. 'At Kia and Hyundai I spend more time actually driving and discussing cars with engineers than I did at BMW M. There it was all meetings and arguing about money with accountants,' he says. But he's equally tough on his new paymasters, who have tasked him with developing Kia's current GT line of models, bringing a new sports saloon to market in 2017 (previewed in 2011 with the GT Concept,

pictured above) and delivering Hyundai's N Performance models to market. 'When I joined Kia I was given an Optima to drive to a meeting in Germany,' he says. 'It was about the future of the GT-brand models, to hear about the strategy. They told me that the car I had driven to the meeting was an Optima GT, I said: "No it isn't!"

This view delayed the Optima GT's launch until Biermann was satisfied the company had an acceptable base to start from. A more powerful engine and some badges didn't make a GT in Biermann's eyes, so what does?

'For every Kia the handling has to be precise, but for the GT customer they know what they are buying and expect better response from the chassis and engines. The [Kia] GT models are going to be focused on road driving, they can't be too harsh or noisy, but with [Hyundai] N Performance we can clearly focus in a way that works better on track.'

Kia's European models receive

special chassis tuning compared with models destined for the American and Asian markets – Kia/Hyundai has a test centre at the Nürburgring – but Biermann wants to take this further for the performance brands: 'We're doing a large amount of chassis tuning in Europe, and are spending some time in the UK, too, but maybe not enough.'

So what are Biermann and his team working on? There's Kia's first dedicated performance car, due early in 2017; they are also working on a high-power all-wheel-drive car ('but only for research purposes'), and unrelated to any existing Hyundai model will be the new range of N Performance cars (much promoted with concepts such as the N 2025 Vision Gran Turismo, pictured below).

With Kia and Hyundai having successfully taken on and beaten Europe's established volume manufacturers, there's no reason why they shouldn't turn the performance sector on its head, too.

Antony Ingram



BIG NUMBERS

\$467m

2016 second-quarter profit by Ford of Europe. Globally Ford lost \$1.97bn due to flat sales in North America and it recorded a loss in Asia 1400

The number of engineers Porsche will employ to build its Tesla-beating electric saloon car

£20m

Investment made by Jaguar Land Rover in its new SVO special vehicles centre 1654

Number of cars sold by McLaren Automotive in 2015

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EXHILARATION BUILT IN

PEUGEOT RECOMMENDS TOTAL Official Fuel Consumption in MPG (I/100km) and CO2 emissions (g/km) for the 208 GTi by PEUGEOT SPORT Range are: Urban 40.9 (6.9), Extra Urban 61.4 (4.6), Combined 52.3 (5.4) and CO₂ 125 (g/km).

MPG figures are achieved under official EU test conditions, intended as a guide for comparative purposes only and may not reflect actual on-the-road driving conditions. Model shown is 208 GTi by PEUGEOT SPORT 1.6L THP 208 S&S in Coupe Franche from £23,610 OTR. On The Road price includes delivery to the Dealership, number plates, 12 months' Government Vehicle Excise Duty and £55 Government First Registration Fee. Information correct at time of going to press. Visit peugeot.co.uk for further information.

by STUART GALLAGHER

New Arrivals

From an upgraded lightweight to a pair of British curios, meet five newcomers that have grabbed our attention this month

BRISTOL BULLET

Bristol claims its 1130kg, 370bhp, BMW V8-engined roadster will reach 62mph in 3.8sec and top 155mph. Handmade in Chichester, the Bullet will cost £250,000 when it goes on sale early in 2017.

BMW M5 COMPETITION EDITION

Missed out on the M5 30
Jahre edition and want
more power than the
current Competition
Package offers? Worry
not, because BMW's
marketing department
has announced
the £100,995 M5
Competition Edition.

With an identical 592bhp to the 30 Jahre, this limited edition of 200 examples also features the thicker anti-roll bars, firmer springs and reprogrammed electronic damper and diff settings from the M5 Competition Package.

MaTP 3068

CATERHAM SEVEN 310

A product of Caterham's motorsport department, the 310 is the result of an upgrade required for the Sigma engine used in the Tracksport race cars to allow owners to move up to the Supersport category. With new cams and a new timing belt tensioner, power increases 20bhp to 155bhp to give the road car its 310bhp per ton - hence the name. You can also retro-fit the upgrade to 270 models.



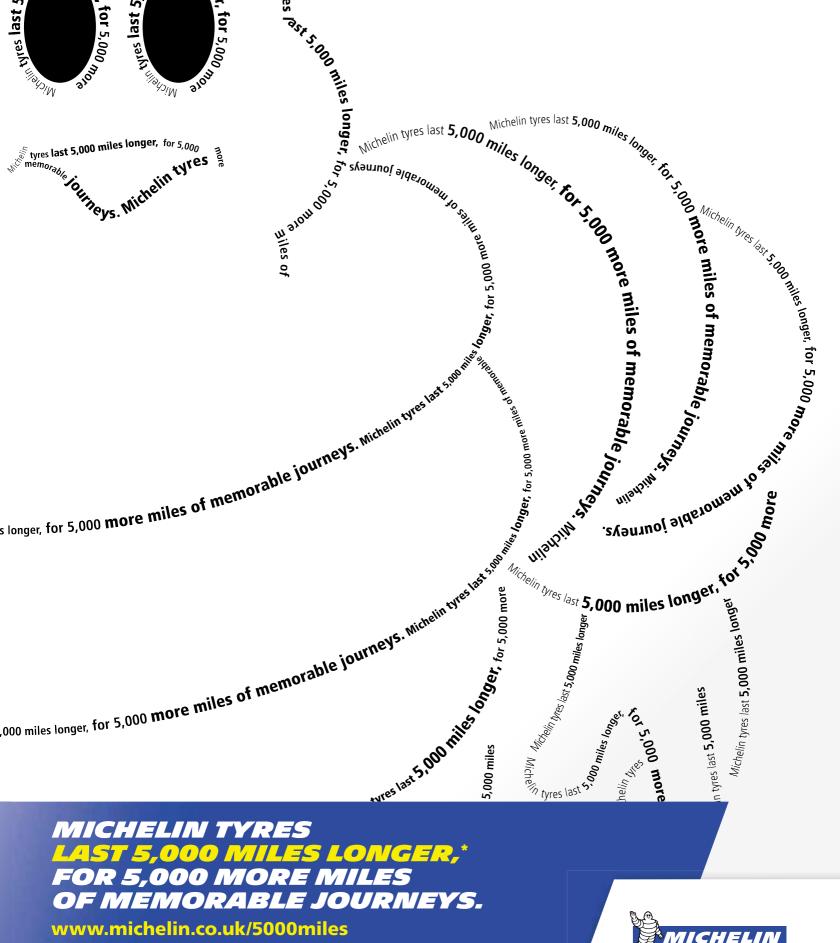
Tesla SUV ownership has got a bit cheaper with the introduction of the Model X 60D. Granted, £64,100 isn't Dacia Duster cheap, but it's cheap for a Tesla. Range on a full charge is a claimed 220 miles, 0-60mph takes 6.0sec and the top speed 130mph.



KEATING BERUS

Having claimed in 2013 that its Bolt supercar would reach 340mph+, Bolton's most famous (and only) supercar maker is now launching the Berus. It has a V8 engine (that's all they've told us about it) that will propel the car to over 230mph, passing 60mph in 2.4sec. There will also be an Electric Berus with 150-300kW (201-402bhp) and 1054lb ft of torque. Or so they say.





www.michelin.co.uk/5000miles

Tests results conducted by DEKRA TEST CENTRE at the request of Michelin, in 2014 or 2015 depending on the ranges, gap between average miles for MICHELIN ranges (MICHELIN Energy Saver +, MICHELIN Pilot Sport 4, MICHELIN Primacy 3, MICHELIN Pilot Super Sport, MICHELIN CrossClimate, MICHELIN Latitude Sport 3) and average miles for competitors' tyres: BRIDGESTONE (Ecopia EP150, Potenza S001, Turanza T001, Dueler H/P Sport), CONTINENTAL (ContiEcoContact 5, ContiSportContact 5, ContiPremiumContact 5, ContiSportContact 5P AO, ContiSportContact 5 SUV), DUNLOP (Sport Bluresponse, Sport Maxx RT, SP QuattroMaxx), GOODYEAR (EfficientGrip Performance, Eagle F1 Asymmetric 2, Vector 4Seasons Gen-2, Eagle F1 Asymmetric SUV), PIRELLI (Cinturato P1 Verde Ecoimpact, P Zero, Cinturato P7 Ecoimpact, P Zero Silver, Cinturato All Season, P Zero Rosso), HANKOOK (Kinergy 4S, Ventus S1 Evo2 SUV), VREDESTEIN (Quatrac 5), NOKIAN (Weatherproof), rounded to the nearest 100 miles. Actual calculated average = 4,977 miles.



edited by NICK TROTT

INSIGHT



Enjoy trackdays? So does Darren. But he thinks you'd enjoy proper racing even more

I LOVE TRACKDAYS. I HAVE MANY GREAT MEMORIES OF

trackday events. Minis at Combe, GT-Rs at Spa, Micras at Cadwell (really) and of course the wonderful **evo** trackdays at the Bedford Autodrome. But you really need to stop doing them. Now.

Why? You need to go racing instead. For the price of a set of boots (black round ones, not bright red racing booties) on a Porsche GT3 or R8 you can buy an old MR2 or MX-5 and actually go door-to-door with like-minded people. And you don't have to pass only on the left and use your indicator either.

It's easy to get a race licence, too. Some think the process involves witchcraft, secret handshakes and selection committees. It doesn't. You talk to those nice people at the Motor Sports Association, fill in a form, have a simple medical check, go to a track, do some hooning slower than you do at a trackday (with a friendly instructor) and you're a fully licensed racing driver.

Racing is just better than trackdays. You don't even need to race. You can just go round slowly at the back for a few races (I certainly have). But eventually it will draw you in. You will find someone around your pace and he will become your best friend off track and your worst enemy on it. Your days at work will be consumed by watching YouTube onboards of the next circuit you are racing at to find a way to beat that enemy, and at the same time having amusing 'banter' on social media about how much better he is than you. LOL. Crying Smiley Face.

A few organisations have tried to make the transition from trackdays to racing even easier. Dr Palmer's merry men at MSV have even named their product 'Track Day Trophy' to lure you into the thought that maybe this isn't even racing. You won't be up against hardened race drivers as the rules limit the level of experience of the entrants. Most race cars can find a class, and there is even the option to rent through championship partners.

As usual those chaps at Ginetta are also at the forefront of making motorsport accessible for as many as possible. Their grandly named Ginetta Racing Drivers' Club, or GRDC, is the newest addition. You send Ginetta a surprisingly small cheque, they send you a race car and hold your hand as you go through the licensing process, your first test days and four race weekends.

But buyer beware. You've seen the signs reading 'Motorsport can be dangerous'. They should also say 'Motorsport will be addictive'. You might end up trading in your road car to fund your move up the ladder. But just taking the Ginetta ladder upwards you could end up in a Le Mans support race on the morning of the 24 Hours, racing ex-F1 drivers in front of tens of thousands of fans, using the famous pits, rubbing shoulders with the 'big race' entrants. Or you could just keep overtaking on the left and showing your mates GoPro videos of you overtaking warm hatches around an empty exairfield whilst wearing those silly red boots. *Darren Cox*

Darren is the former head of Nismo and was the architect of the Nissan GT Academy

NEWS

World's quickest EV

Presenter and all round good-bloke Jonny Smith has just broken the world speed record for the fastest street-legal electric car. Smith's 'Flux Capacitor' – an electric Enfield microcar built in the '70s and converted by Current Racing – achieved a quarter-mile time of 9.87sec at Santa Pod in the UK. The



car originally produced around 8bhp but now has over 800bhp, and exceeds its original top speed (40mph) by over 80mph...

Silk Way Rally

HE SILK WAY WHAT?' we hear you cry. Well, the Silk Way Rally is a 6600-mile, two-week-long off-road rally that links Moscow and Beijing via Kazakhstan's capital Astana. It follows the route of the Silk Way – the key trade route between the Mediterranean and East Asia some 2000 years ago.

The Silk Way was an extraordinarily tough route that took in everything from mountain passes to sand dunes, and the rally's stages take place on many of the same paths.

Like the Dakar Rally, the event attracts part-time adventurers

and full-time professionals, and this year the latter group included nine-time World Rally Champion Sébastien Loeb, who competed for the works Peugeot team in a 2008 DKR.

Loeb and co-driver Daniel Elena were beaten by teammates Cyril Despres and David Castera, however. Loeb and Elena had set some phenomenally fast stage times but made a navigational error and incurred a time penalty that dropped them down to seventh overall. It was only Despres' fourth outing on four wheels, having graduated after a successful career on motorcycles.

BIG NUMBERS

£10,000,000,000

Estimated current value of the UK motorsport industry

79.5%

Spectator increase at the Silverstone Grand Prix since 2006, according to F1 industry monitor Formula Money

Fluid loss per hour in kilograms expected for drivers during the hottest F1 races such as Malaysia 65

Litres of water a full-wet F1 tyre can disperse every second at the car's top speed



HE SILVER STATE Challenge an extraordinary juxtaposition of danger and safety, and of nutters and professionals. It has a tremendous domestic following in the US and is little known anywhere else, and it attracts the most incredibly diverse collection of people and cars. Of the latter, anything can compete on the 90-mile stretch of closed public highway in Nevada – anything from NASCARs to crappy Dodge Estates. And I should know, because I competed in the Silver State Classic in said crappy Dodge Estate in 2005.

The Silver State Classic Challenge Inc. is a non-profit corporation. It is staffed by people like you and me - people who adore driving on the public highway in a safe but spirited

fashion. However, unlike you and me, they have been granted permits by the State of Nevada to close a section of State Route 318 in order to stretch the definition of 'safe but spirited' by hosting two road races – the Nevada Open Road Challenge (in May, every year) and the Silver State Classic Challenge (in September). The latter especially is a glorious event, and one that you must attend if you can.

The route, between Lund and Hiko, consists of 90 miles of fenced, two-lane highway with seemingly endless straights. There's also a short twisty section called the 'Narrows' and some crests that leave your stomach hanging in mid-air for rather too long for comfort. Cars are assigned a class based on performance, safety features and

driver experience, and providing you are over 18 with a valid driver's license and a roadworthy vehicle (and you are granted an entry), then you can compete. For obvious reasons, cars do not race against each other – they race the clock.

The cars compete in classes at five-mile-per-hour increments, from 95mph to 180mph, but much of the attention (and drama) is centred on the Unlimited Division. Pretty much anything can run in this class but it tends to be dominated by derestricted NASCARS with more than 800bhp. Vehicles leave the start line at one-minute intervals, with the 150mph class first and the Unlimited Division and speed brackets over 150mph finishing off the day's competitive driving.

The current record holder is

66 Pretty much anything can be run in the top class but it tends to be dominated by derestricted NASCARs ••

by NICK TROTT

Jim Peruto, who averaged (yes, averaged) 217.5570mph during the 2012 Nevada Open Road Challenge in a Dodge Charger NASCAR. Speeds over 245mph have been achieved in the past, on roads, remember, no wider than your average B-road.

The event has a gonzo nature, but scratch beneath the surface and you'll find a group of fantastically enthusiastic and professional competitors. In the lower classes your aim is to match your class's speed bracket. When I competed, in the 110mph class, I finished second to last because I finished the course at an average of 113.4396mph. The winner completed the course at an average of 0.0017mph above the target. So you can see, people take the event very, very seriously...

The year I took part, Japanese motorsport icon Daijiro Inada (and co-founder of the Option publishing empire) was attempting to take the outright record with a massively modified Nissan 350Z (pictured, left), but he crashed the car heavily in a pre-race test. Bad luck had followed Inada during his previous attempts at Silver State records, having run out of fuel at the 70-mile mark in an R34 GT-R in 1999, and barrel-rolled another 350Z after a tyre failure at 205mph in 2003. He

survived with no injuries.

Perhaps the best thing about the Silver State Classic is not the thrill of speed or the spikes of danger, but the camaraderie. Your time on the road may be short (the quickest will complete the 90 miles in under 30min), but your time at the event is long. It lasts four days, with practice and qualifying at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway and a high-performance driving school for rookies. Also in Las Vegas, on the Thursday morning, is registration and a technical inspection, then a press conference and lunch for all participants, crews and marshals. It's here you meet the people who might just save your life. Next up is a fantastic convoy to Ely, Nevada (240 miles north of Vegas) with a coffee stop in Ash Springs. A cocktail party finishes off the evening.

On the Friday and Saturday, competitors are invited to the 'High Noon Shootout' on a fenced section of the SR 490 in Ely. Participants can take part in as many runs as is possible during the road closure. There's also a parade of cars, with racers encouraged to give the youngsters of the town a ride.

On Saturday morning there's a pancake breakfast, car show, a BBQ and final technical inspection. A



place in the evening, and then you're asked to get an early night in order to take advantage of the high desert air on Sunday morning, which is cool and dense. Then the main event starts promptly at 8am, with dinner, cocktails and the Awards Banquet back in Vegas in the evening.

It's an event I'll visit again. It may not have the romance of an Italian Grand Prix, or the scale of Indy or the endurance of Le Mans, but it matches all three for drama and spectacle - and I've never met a nicer bunch of petrolheads in my life.







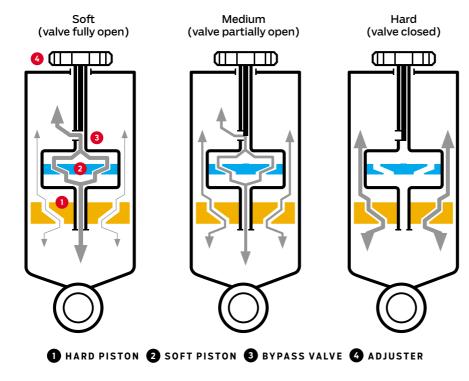
Above left: Trott's steed from a very fun trip in 2005. Right: SSC Ultimate Aero capable of well over 200mph, but competition also includes old Chevys and Dodge pickups with close to 1000bhp



by WILL BEAUMONT

FOCUS

ADJUSTABLE DAMPERS



Again a set of aftermarket adjustable dampers to those fitted by a manufacturer? Apart from the fact that instead of simply pressing a button to change their setting you have to grovel underneath the car or fiddle around under the bonnet, the answer is very little.

A conventional damper contains a piston that moves up and down inside a tube of oil. The oil passes through holes in the piston, and the speed at which the piston moves and the forces that are needed to move it are determined by a stack of shims above and below it. The shims on one side set the bump characteristics while those on the other side deal with rebound. The quantity, thickness, order, size and shape of the shims not only change the 'stiffness' of the damper, but also how quickly it reacts.

An adjustable damper that permits changes in bump and rebound characteristics has two pistons attached to the end of the piston rod, one above the other, A valve within the damper dictates which piston the oil passes through

each with a different arrangement of shims so that one is stiffer than the other. A valve within the damper can be opened or closed to allow the oil to pass through the 'soft' piston (valve open), or force the oil to pass through the 'hard' piston (valve closed). Alternatively the valve can be partially opened so the oil flow is shared between both pistons, creating an intermediate setting.

In fact an aftermarket adjustable damper may have numerous intermediate settings.

For example, the dial that adjusts the valve on a Bilstein adjustable damper has ten settings or 'clicks'. In position one, the hard piston is almost entirely bypassed and the damper mainly uses the soft piston. Position ten is the opposite, using only the hard piston. Settings two to nine, meanwhile, all use a combination of both pistons, with proportionally more of the stiffer piston employed as the number increases and less of the softer one.

Original-equipment adjustable dampers may only have two or three settings, which can be changed via a button or switch within the cabin. There may be 'comfort' and 'track' modes where only either the softest or hardest piston is used respectively, and a 'sport' mode where a combination of both is used.

An *adaptive* damper works in a similar way. However, rather than having fixed settings, servos constantly adjust the valve depending on how rough the road is or how the car is being driven.

GAME-CHANGER

ALLOY WHEELS

First application: Bugatti Type 35 When: 1924



The very first alloy wheels – the cast-aluminium pieces fitted to the Bugatti Type 35 – had integrated drum brakes. This meant the brakes could be made larger while the weight of each wheel and brake combined was lighter. The idea took off in America, too, with many cars in the '50s having steel rims with cast-alloy centres that formed part of the drum brake.

The sort of alloy wheels that we're now used to started as cast-magnesium wheels and were mostly used in racing, the original Minilite wheels being among the most iconic. Although very light, pure magnesium isn't used to make wheels any longer as it's particularly susceptible to corrosion and is incredibly difficult to put out should it catch fire.

Today most alloy wheels are made with a high proportion of aluminium and are cast. Forged wheels are lighter and stronger, but are much more expensive.

There may still be selectable modes, but that doesn't mean the valve is set to one position when a mode is selected. Most systems still continuously adjust the damper but keep it within a harder, softer or intermediate spectrum, depending on the mode selected by the driver.

It's worth noting that MagneRide dampers, as found in Audis, Ferraris and the Ford Mustang Shelby GT350, work in a different way. We'll cover that technology another time.



CITROËN C4 CACTUS RIP CURL WITH GRIP CONTROL MADE FOR ADVENTURE.



CRÉATIVE TECHNOLOGIE

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Official Government Fuel Consumption Figures (litres per 100km/MPG) and CO₂ Emissions (g/km) (Range). Highest: C4 Cactus PureTech 82 manual with 17" wheels: Urban 5.6/50.4, Extra Urban 4.0/70.6, Combined 4.6/61.4, 107 CO₂. Lowest: C4 Cactus BlueHDi 100 S&S manual with 15" wheels: Urban 3.5/80.7, Extra Urban 3.0/94.2, Combined 3.1/91.1, 82 CO₂. MPG figures are achieved under official EU test conditions, intended as a guide for comparative purposes only, and may not reflect actual on-the-road driving conditions.

CITROEN prefers TOTAL Model shown: C4 Cactus Rip Curl PureTech 110 S&S manual OTR price £19,090 (incl. Sport Red paint at extra cost of £250). Terms and conditions apply. Finance subject to status. Citroen UK Ltd is acting as a credit broker and is not a lender. Finance provided by and written quotations available on request from PSA Finance UK Limited (company registration number 01024322) t/a Citroen Financial Services, Quadrant House, Princes Way, Redhill, Surrey, RH1 1QA, UK. Citroen Financial Services is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. To finance your purchase we will introduce you to Citroen Financial Services the exclusive provider of Citroen SimplyDrive* Minimum age 18 with Telematics, otherwise 25, maximum age 75. Policyholder must have a minimum of 2 years NCD to use on the vehicle and all drivers must meet eligibility criteria including minimum 2 years' full UK licence or with Telematics drivers are required to install the Telematics Box & consent to Data capture & transmission to qualify for insurance and all drivers must hold a full UK licence. Insurance subject to cancellation if you receive four warnings for poor driving. For all drivers, limits on claims/convictions and excesses apply. 3 years motor insurance is provided and underwritten by U K Insurance Limited which is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority.

edited by WILL BEAUMONT



NEWS

PIRELLI INVESTS IN CAR CULTURE

P IRELLI HAS CHOSEN Los Angeles as the city in which to open the first P Zero World. Despite the name, however, it's no theme park but a tyre shop – the greatest tyre shop you could imagine.

A tyre shop dedicated to just one brand might seem an unusual concept, but Pirelli doesn't consider itself as just a tyre brand. Its involvement in fashion through the Pirelli Calendar has helped define it as more of a luxury brand than its competitors. Indeed, P Zero World is to Pirelli what the Apple Store is to Apple – an environment that's as much about educating people about the brand as it is about selling products.

As well as three service bays, the LA shop has a 'Luxe' waiting area and an espresso bar, plus areas that showcase Pirelli's history, its iconic calendars and the partnerships it has with premium car manufacturers. It's not just its tyres that Pirelli wants to inform people about – P Zero World is designed as a location for car lovers to celebrate all things automotive.

In recent years Los Angeles has

66 Pirelli's
P Zero World
could create
local hubs for
car enthusiasts
and small-scale
car meets

become a Mecca for car culture. The numerous 'cars and coffee' events all over the city attract a huge and diverse collection of cars; you could expect to see anything from an '80s Toyota Corolla to a LaFerrari. This has been helped by high-profile LAbased car enthusiasts such as Jav Leno, as well as an enthusiastic tuning scene, a small part of which we covered in evo 209 with Sharkwerks' Porsche 997 GT3 and a 911 modified by Magnus Walker. This is partly why Pirelli chose LA - the sheer quantity of interesting performance and luxury cars in

the region was the deciding factor.

Pirelli intends to open more P Zero Worlds in many different countries. It hasn't yet declared where the next locations might be, but considering the reasons why Los Angeles was chosen, the UK's love of performance cars and its healthy car culture mean that it must be likely to get a P Zero World soon.

The existence of another tyre shop, whether it's just for one brand or many, might not seem very significant. But if Pirelli's P Zero World concept is a success, it could create local hubs for car enthusiasts and provide more destinations for frequent small-scale car meets. The cars and coffee type of events are starting to take off in the UK; the Ace Cafe in London has long been a location for club meets, while Bicester Heritage and Goodwood's Breakfast Club have become increasingly popular. If the number of petrolheads attending these events continues to rise, we'll need more locations that are willing to accommodate them, and a P Zero World could be that place.

KNOW YOUR TREAD

According to a survey by
TyreSafe of over 340,000 tyres
in 800 tyre outlets, 27 per cent
of tyres are changed only once
they have become illegal. That
means approximately 10million
vehicles are driven on tyres
without safe tread depth.

Tread that has a depth of less than 1.6mm across the central three quarters of the tyre is illegal and could incur a £2500 fine and three penalty points. Illegal tyres are also the most common factor in accidents resulting in casualties.



WINTER IS COMING

It may still be summer but Falken is already letting us know what's on offer for when the weather turns nasty.

The Japanese brand has developed a new winter tyre, the Eurowinter HS01, with a tread design that has been inspired by origami. The thin cuts, or sipes, that winter tyres employ to bite into the snow are often just straight lines or zigzags. However, the sipes in Falken's new tyre have been cut at angles to give them greater capability.

Traditional sipes reduce the rigidity of the tread blocks and contribute to the lack of precision a winter tyre offers. Falken says that its new design allows a small amount of flex before the angled edges within the cuts lock together, improving the rigidity of the tread blocks.

It's certainly comforting to hear news of winter tyres with a greater focus on feel and steering response.





Bentley's showrooms of the future – and the past

Luxury sales experience evolves so it can be offered almost anywhere

AKING DELIVERY OF a new car is exciting — as thrilling for some as spending the next years driving it. The process of buying a new car, however, is a necessary evil, poking around your potential purchase in a characterless showroom before sitting down to sign your life away. That is unless you're ordering a new Bentley from the high-end showroom at the Conservatorium Hotel in Amsterdam.

For one, the process with Bentley has always been a little more special than signing on the line for a Nissan Leaf, but the Amsterdam outlet has also recently adopted technology from Sony to make the experience as detailed and interactive as possible, despite the hotel showroom – with its 78-square-metre lounge – being too small to house actual cars.

It starts with an interactive display programme called 'Vision Presenter', which combines inputs from multiple sources on a 3.5-metre screen through a 4K

projector. Sales staff can then use a Sony Xperia tablet to 'throw' videos, digital images, web pages and more to the projection screen, and owners can customise their potential Bentley on-screen.

All very flash, and undoubtedly suited to the confined environs of the tiny Amsterdam showroom. But for a brand such as Bentley, which trades on heritage as much as it does technology, there's still much to be said for a more traditional approach, like that offered at the brand's CW1 House facility near the factory in Crewe.

There the emphasis is on the tangible experience. Leather samples drape like curtains alongside trim components, while customers can examine hundreds of paint shades on fistsized pebbles. You can even pick up a gear selector trimmed with stingray skin - a tactile joy beyond the reach of computer projections. All the while you're sitting on sofas trimmed in Bentley leather and walking on lambswool carpets.

66 You can even pick up a gear selector trimmed in stingray skin 99

And of course, there's nothing quite like stepping into one of the cars, or checking out some of the vehicles rolling down the production line on a factory tour – a point at which some owners make paint and trim decisions they might not have considered on a computer screen, or, conversely, opt for something a little more sober having seen their preferred combination in the vivid metal.

Where the virtual experience succeeds is in being able to offer a sliver of that Bentley experience almost anywhere – and both options are a world away from drinking tepid coffee at some windswept showroom on an out-of-town commercial estate.



TECHNOLOGY Distracted young drivers

An AA Tyres poll has revealed that almost nine out of ten 'Generation Y' drivers – those born in the '80s and '90s – admit to having been distracted by technology while behind the wheel over the past 12 months.

That's against an overall figure of 72 per cent who admitted to fiddling with in-car tech while driving. And while that number does include traditional distractions such as adjusting the radio, it's also representative of an increase in using features such as satnay, touchscreens and mobile phones while driving.

Despite efforts from manufacturers to reduce the distraction potential of their infotainment systems – SEAT recently told **evo** that it limits some functions while on the move and ensures touchscreen 'buttons' are as large and clear as possible – our propensity to use them is increasing, all the while diverting attention from driving.

Not that drivers in the 25-34 age group are limited to technological distractions: 87 per cent said they 'braked hard or late', two-thirds admitted they don't indicate at the correct time (a trait shared with drivers aged 18-24), and almost half confessed to wearing shoes unsuitable for full control, such as flip-flops, high-heels or heavy boots.



Lane-keep Assist

'Lane-keep assist gets switched off as soon as I get in my car,' says Sean Mackin via Facebook. 'I really don't like the sensation of the car nudging me this way and that when I'm on the motorway.'



2010 Lamborghini Murciélago LP 670-4 SV Serial no. 269/350

1999 Lamborghini Diablo GT Serial no. 06/80

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by SIMON DE BURTON

WATCH TECH

Hybrid movement



It's not just car manufacturers that are embracing the idea of hybrid power - luxury watch brand Piaget is, too. It recently unveiled the Emperador Coussin XL 700P, which is said to offer enhanced accuracy thanks to marrying an automatic mechanical movement with a quartz 'generator'.

While this combination might not appeal to the purist, it's certainly intriguing. Housed in the hefty 46.5mm white-gold case, the 700P movement appears conventional save for its frontmounted microrotor and highly contemporary matt black coating - until you spot the small disc between the one and two o'clock nositions

Inside this disc is the generator containing a quartz chip. The movement provides energy to the generator, which in turn provides the power to work an electronic regulator that controls the rate at which the geartrain operates - thus creating a mechanical movement that offers a level of accuracy almost equivalent to that of quartz.

The question is, would you pay £56,500 iust to be a bit less late than usual?



THIS MONTH

Omologato Hesketh Racing

Price: £249

From: omologatowatches.com

We brought you news of TAG Heuer's James Hunt tribute watch in issue 225 now here's another one, this time from budget brand Omologato. The Hesketh Racing is a 45.5mm, quartz-powered steel watch replete with cues from the cars in which James Hunt began his Formula 1 career. They include the team's blue and white stripes, an image of the Hesketh teddy bear and the race number 24. Just 200 will be made.

Baume & Mercier Capeland Cobra Spirit of Competition

Price: £3200-3400

From: baume-et-mercier.co.uk

Inspired by one of the most successful racing Cobras in the history of the car chassis number CSX2128 of 1963 – two editions of of this 44mm chronograph based on CSX2128's black and yellow livery will be available, one on a leather strap (pictured), the other on a rubber strap, with 1963 of each being made. The backs are engraved 'Shelby Cobra Edition, one out of 1963' and feature the car's '15' race number.

H Moser Venturer Rolls-Royce Edition

Price: cf.15 600 From: h-moser.com

Low-volume, high-end brand H Moser has created three, 73-piece limited editions in honour of the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club, the nicest of which is pictured here. The midnight-blue dial has a subtle outline of the margue's famous radiator grille within the small seconds counter, while the handwound movement is engraved with the club's 'RREC' initials. The 39mm case is made from white gold.

CHRONO



Read more from Simon de Burton in Chrono. the interactive watch magazine for iPad and iPhone available now from the iTunes Store.





ROLEX COSMOGRAPH DAYTONA

As worn by Norbert Santos, founder of Norma Auto Concept, constructor of the winning car of the 2016 Pikes Peak International Hill Climb

'Like most people who developed an interest in mechanical things at an early age, I've long been passionate about watches. It's the mechanisms that have always appealed to me, ever since the first time I looked inside

a watch at the age of around 12. Currently, Lown eight watches. most of which have a strong connection to automobiles. My favourite is a very old. French-made aviators' watch that I picked-up about ten years ago,

but day-to-day I wear my Rolex Cosmograph Daytona, It's one of the classic motorsport watches and Luse the chronograph often when we're testing our Norma cars. Mine has the very accurate Zenith El Primero movement.'







LETTER OF THE MONTH

The invisible hypercar

ANOTHER MONTH AND ANOTHER GREAT

car I couldn't buy even if I had the £3million in the bank. I am sure the Aston Martin-Red Bull 001 will be a stunning car to marvel at, let alone drive, but with reputedly over 350 people chasing only 99 cars, will any of the cars ever be driven except for on and off a trailer on its way back to Gaydon for its annual service?

Why do manufacturers (including Porsche, Ferrari and McLaren) make so few of these iconic cars and allow the speculators to make so much profit? I thought Ferrari had the correct idea in the past to make one car less than demand. Supposedly 1315 F40s were produced, but that hasn't stopped them shooting up in value. So come on, AM-RB - make, say, 250 of the 001

and then we might see a few of them actually being driven as intended.

Chris Fox, Oxfordshire

The Letter of the Month wins an Aviator watch

The writer of this month's star letter receives an Aviator MIG-29 Chrono, worth £465. With a design inspired by the cockpit instruments of a MIG-29 fighter jet, it has a 45mm case, a Swissmade quartz movement, and SuperLuminova indexes for outstanding legibility.







In defence of the 718

I found Will Beaumont's comments about the 718 Boxster (Driven, evo 224) harsh in the extreme. I have just replaced my 987 Boxster with a 718. I owned the 987 for eleven years and did many trackdays and road-trips in it, so I knew the car very well. Having just returned from a road-trip in the new car from Scarborough to St Bees, and then down to north Wales for the evo triangle, I found the 718 excellent for covering ground fast in real-world motoring. This was in the company of two BMW M3s, a Ferrari 360, a Cayman R and a Caterham.

Spending seven hours behind the wheel for three days, I found that the new turbocharged, four-cylinder engine delivers good performance in a relaxed way. We never had a problem keeping up with the convoy. Also, why is the sound of the flatfour being pilloried when the same from an Impreza is loved?

To me the PDK did not change down too eagerly, either, and the manual override with the paddles is excellent. The handling is superb.

Obviously I am biased about the 718 having bought one, but I really feel that Will Beaumont has got it wrong. I look forward to reading the opinions of other contributors to evo in future issues.

Neil Maurer

Keeping the thrill alive

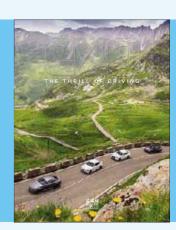
The 'Pure Fun' issue (224) compelled me to put fingers to keyboard. As a young engineer in the

E 67,000

'Even after a short drive, I know I'd have one over an M3. Mind you, I'd probably choose scurvy over an M3'

evo columnist Richard Porter

This month's







automotive sector it is an exciting time, with the availability of many new technologies. However, with so many of these being utilised to segregate the driver from their vehicle, I feel our industry is betraying my fellow driving enthusiasts.

The passionate words of Messrs Catchpole, Meaden et al reassure me that my pursuit of finding a simple and engaging solution is not misplaced. I hope it helps inspire the future generation of engineers and reminds manufacturers that those of us in search of the thrill of driving are still a market worth pursuing.

Jon Rose, Kent

Kart start

In his opening words to your 'Pure Fun' stories, Nick Trott suggests that for most of us our earliest memories of controlling a machine involved pedalling two wheels, but for me it was actually four – those of my 'Porsche Yellow' go-kart!

Yes, a go-kart is essentially a bicycle with two extra wheels, but that rear-wheel chain-driven platform, complete with forward and reverse gears and a handbrake, began my obsession with cars. My dad even fitted a sound effects engine to it that made noises for ignition, passing cars and acceleration (my favourite). It being the early '90s these sounds weren't entirely realistic, but that's far from the point I'm making here...

The point is that before I could even ride a bicycle I was totally absorbed in cars. I even had my own set of homemade ramps and used to borrow my dad's jack from time-to-time in order to mend, tweak and spray good ol' WD-40 onto the (drive)chain. My dad had a succession of Triumphs so I quickly became knowledgeable in how effective this aerosol is.

At such an impressionable age, I never could have imagined that one day – some 20 years later – I would have a couple of cars of my own to drive and would have had experiences behind the wheel of some of the most desirable performance cars around. I owe it all to my dad. And that go-kart.

Thomas Brown

Forgotten 'box

As a committed three-pedals-and-a-gearlever fan, I am delighted that Aston Martin is offering a manual 'box in the V12 Vantage S (love the dogleg seven-speed setup). In Issue 224, Stuart Gallagher writes that he hopes Ferrari follows Porsche 'and now Aston Martin' in offering 'at least one' of its products with a manual gearbox. I hope so too, but has Stuart forgotten about the V8 Vantage? It has always been available with a (six-speed) manual 'box.

Todd K. Warren, New York, USA

Why Le Mans

Why does Toyota bother, Derrick Green? ('Toy-no-ta', Inbox, **evo** 225). For the same reason Porsche bothers. And Audi. And Rebellion, Ferrari, Corvette, Aston Martin and every team that competes in motortsport whether they are winning or not.

Toyota winning at Le Mans may not make you swap your Cayman for a Prius, but it does demonstrate that it's a car company capable of taking on the toughest challenges, no matter the result.

James Blackmore (911 owner)

Le Mans mystery solved

Richard Meaden speculates about why folks name the brands that win Le Mans and not the drivers (Outside Line, **evo** 224). The answer is easy: this is the British you are talking about, and we are terrified at the prospect of trying to pronounce up to three foreign names in a row.

It's only 15 years since we got used to saying Owdy and not Ordy for Audi, although we still have trouble saying Brown for Braun. It's so embarrassing when you ask for a Braun ('brown') razor and the assistant says they only have black ones.

And you journalists don't help. You don't mind saying coopay but get all flustered about saying Porsher. Is the French ending of the former less pretentious than the German ending of the latter?

Lee Thickett, Sheffield

letters@evo.co.uk (e) @evomagazine (f) @evomagazine

TRENDING

Hot topics in our inbox this month

About that photo of the GTC4 Lusso's steering wheel...

Manufacturers must keep making pure cars!

The AM-RB 001 looks like a true game-changer



Fastest growing video at YouTube.com/evo ssan GT-R Track Edition v Porsche 911 GT3 RS drag battle.



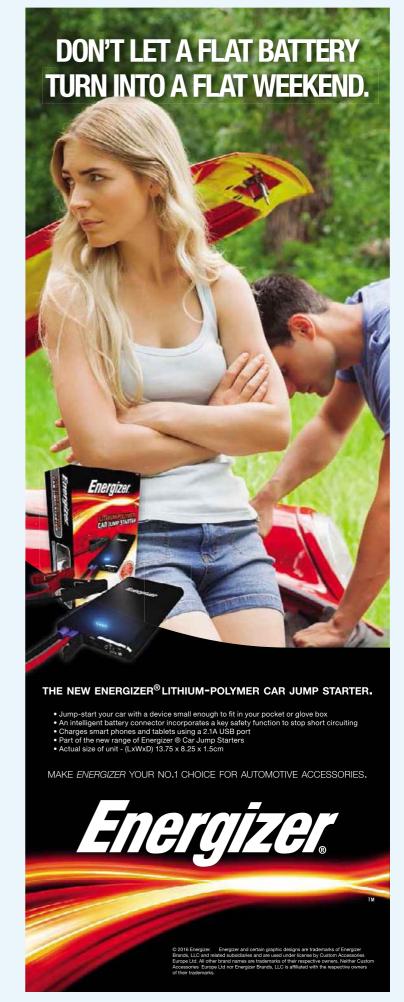
Most liked post on Instagram
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Most viewed story at evo.co.uk 'Ferrari reveals first images of 217mph drop-top LaFerrari' Twitter poll:
Who should
Ferrari have
signed instead of
re-signing Kimi?

7 August • 721 Votes • Final results

Daniel Ricciardo
Sergio Perez

32% 21%







THE TEAM

This month, we drive Cadillac's new S-class rival, the CT6, so we asked our road testers to name their favourite limo:



NICK TROTT Editor

'A slightly lowered, blackedout 1964 Lincoln Continental please.



STUART GALLAGHER Managing editor

'The best limo is the one that takes me home after a night out - normally an A8. Or a 200k-mile Mondeo'



HENRY CATCHPOLE Features editor

'The Lincoln Town Car limo that John Barker drove for a lap time of the West Circuit in issue 100. Poor thing.



DAN PROSSER Road test editor

'A wide-body Caterham with leather seats is basically a limo. So that.'



JETHRO BOVINGDON

Contributing editor

'One of those lipstick-pink stretched Hummers that hen parties use. I could see me in one of those.'



RICHARD MEADEN

Contributing editor

'Bentley Mulsanne Speed. Fabulous sense of occasion whether you're driving or being driven.'



DAVID VIVIAN

 $Contributing\, road\, tester$

'Back seat of a long-wheelbase Maybach. No urge to drive at all, as it should be in a limo.



ADAM TOWLER

Contributing road tester

'Jaguar X350 XJ. Black with black, Sepang wheels. Loved being in that car, whether driving or not.'



WILL BEAUMONT

'A long-wheelbase Range Rover. As luxurious as you'd ever need, but with better views over hedges.'

IT CAN SOMETIMES FEEL AS though fun and frivolity are being squeezed out of the car industry. Environmental concerns and matters of safety and congestion are ever more prominent, but it's heartening to know there are still people out there with a sense of humour. The **Renault Sport Clio RS16**, for instance, is the fastest (and maybe the best) small hot hatch ever, while the Sutton Mustang CS700 reminds us that with great power comes great driftability.

Also in Driven this issue we discover if the Alfaworks GT4C fixes Alfa Romeo's disappointing 4C, while in the **Maserati** Quattroporte GTS and Cadillac CT6 we also test a pair of luxury saloons.







Put another way, imagine a speed climber. He needs a certain level of strength and fitness to be able to concentrate on the rock face, whereas most of us would be far too wrapped up in the sheer discomfort of it all to even begin thinking about the technical details of the ascent.

So in a road car you think about the car; in a racing car you think about the circuit. The reason for all of this? Well, the very best high-performance road cars do actually allow you to focus on the track because they have the requisite level of dynamic ability. The Porsche 911 GT3 RS does it. Caterhams and Radicals do it. The Renaultsport Mégane 275 Trophy-R does it. You can see where this is going.

For the time being, this Renault Sport Clio RS16 is just a concept car.

Renault's racing and high-performance division rather likes building completely off the wall performance cars and we've long praised it for that. This RS16 is its latest bonkers creation and it marks 40 years of Renaultsport. It's also the fastest road car ever to wear the diamond emblem, which shows they know how to celebrate a birthday at Les Ulis. A feasibility study is on going, claims Renault Sport, but if the company doesn't eventually build a run of 250 or so units I'll stage a oneman protest outside its headquarters in just my underwear.

We first looked at the RS16 in **evo** 224, but to recap, it is a Renault Sport Clio shell fitted with the 275 Trophy-R's running gear, a heavily uprated chassis and a set of sticky Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres. The result is 271bhp in a

B-segment hot hatch – that's a first – and, given that it's lighter and smaller than the Mégane, the potential for even greater dynamic ability. The RS16 could be about to raise the bar.

Circuit des Ecuyers, an hour east of Paris, is like a big kart track: mostly second and third gear with one or two quick corners that you can really commit to. This sort of track isn't going to tell us everything we want to know about the RS16 – and I can only guess how it might cope with a bumpy road – but after this briefest of test drives there will be very good reason to believe this could be the fastest and most capable small hot hatch ever.

The engineers are at pains to point out that this car's steering system is unchanged from the standard Renault Sport Clio's and should the 'The balance is sweet and the RS16 feels agile and responsive, particularly in quick direction changes'











Top: concept has a very sparse interior, expect rear seats in a production version.

Above: 350mm front brake discs come from the Mégane
Trophy-R options list





RS16 make production the steering will be revised. There isn't much fundamentally wrong with the concept car's helm, but given how hardcore the RS16 is a touch more weight and physicality wouldn't go amiss. In certain front-wheel-drive hot hatches you can actually feel the limited-slip diff working through the suspension and the steering, which allows you to measure throttle inputs really precisely. For now, the RS16 is a touch vague in that respect.

That's the only significant criticism I can level at the car's dynamics, though. In almost every other sense the RS16 is a masterful track-going hot hatch. The bucket seats and harnesses make a huge difference - in fact that's one of the major differentiators between road and competition cars – and by being fixed in place you can be so much more

accurate with your steering inputs. A suede steering wheel would really set the cabin off, though.

Grip levels are really high but there is still a shade of understeer if you don't manage the front end into the corner by trail-braking. Do so, though, and the chassis balance is brilliantly neutral, which is where a great deal of this car's speed around a lap comes from. The RS16 doesn't have the same lurid oversteer as the 275 Trophy-R, but there's plenty of adjustability. The neat, uniform wear across the rear tyres shows how well this car works its rear axle.

The balance is sweet, then, and with good body control the car feels agile and responsive, particularly in quick direction changes. In the faster corners, meanwhile, once the front end has bitten it holds a lovely, tight line all the way through to the apex.

'The gearshift is brilliantly direct - what a pleasure it is to have a manual shifter in a quick Clio again'

The differential could be more aggressive – in one corner the unloaded inside wheel spins so furiously that I can actually see the tyre smoke out of the corner of my eye – but the engine certainly doesn't overwhelm the front wheels with its swell of torque and on this smooth surface there's no real sign of torque steer, either. The engine is strong and responsive with an eager top end and the gearshift is brilliantly direct what a pleasure it is to have a manual shifter in a quick Clio again – while the Akrapovic exhaust emits a distinctive, blast-furnace soundtrack.

The Clio RS16 is tremendously good fun to drive and, on this small circuit at least, it has enough dynamic ability that you absolutely can start to chase that perfect lap. Renaultsport, you must build this car.

Dan Prosser (@TheDanProsser)

Specification

CO2 In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc, turbo n/a

Power 271bhp @ 5500rpm 🛨 Performance, on-track dynamic ability 🗧 Just a concept for now **Torque** 265lb ft @ 3000rpm

0-60mph 159mph (est) 5.7sec (est)

Top speed

evo rating Weight

Basic price

c1230kg (224bhp/ton)







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The clue's in the name, and this is indeed one very hot 'Stang. But is Sutton's conversion kit worth the substantial cost?

A TASTE AS TO HOW FAR Ford can take its current Mustang is easy to savour with the company's own 526bhp GT350 – a car our very own Henry Catchpole feasted on back in issue 221. Head off-menu stateside and the likes of Shelby will serve current Mustang owners with a full platter of tuning options to salivate over. It's all very tantalising when you can dine at European supercar horsepower tables for the cost of a drive-thru. Although in the case of this British-made Sutton CS700, it's quite an expensive drive-thru.

Built by the 'Bespoke' division of

exotic car dealer Clive Sutton, the CS700 is the UK's specialist take on the aftermarket, all-American muscle-car dream. With a potential for as near as damn it 700 bhp, you can have a rear-drive Mustang with the performance a 911 Turbo.

Naturally, the engine is the main course. The £14,587 'Power Pack' conversion – on top of a £34,495, 410bhp Mustang 5.0 V8 GT donor car – focuses on the fitment of a Whipple supercharger and an active exhaust system, plus a new rear valance so it all fits. As the name suggests, 700hp (690bhp) is possible, but to achieve this you'll need the larger throttle

bodies and the new carbon intake system that Sutton also offers, for a further £1134. This rather conspicuous demonstrator does without both of these, so it's just the 643bhp to digest today.

The other big mechanical change is to the chassis, which features KW's Variant 3 adjustable coilovers, complete with a 25mm front and 15mm rear drop in ride height, and lighter 20-inch alloys, all for £6283.

In the visual stakes the CS700 doesn't hold back. Like the look of the carbon bonnet and other aerodynamic accompaniments? That'll be £9651. Inside it's a more











'The coilovers answer some of the criticism of the standard car's low level of feedback'

Above left and top right: carbonfibre options include a bonnet and a rear wing. Above, middle: new dial adjusts how vocal the active exhaust is

subtle approach, with only the dashboard being upgraded (for an extra £2580), but don't be fooled by its carbon appearance and dismiss it as a mere fascia – the Sutton team removes the standard item and builds a new one entirely out of carbon.

One criticism of supercharged engines is that they never provide that kick in the back that the performance figures suggest. This isn't helped by the supercharger needing to draw so much power from the engine in order to get going. Squeeze the throttle of a 650bhp turbocharged car and even with a hint of turbo lag it will still make its presence felt like a hidden

chilli in a chicken korma. It's why a well-sorted turbocharged engine can be so thrilling.

It's also the root cause of why the CS700 can feel a little less than tantalising after an initial taste. The natural grunt of the 5-litre V8 is there, although it still feels a little lazy on initial throttle input, as per the standard car (and not helped by this car's six-speed auto). There's a faint whine from the 'charger with every throttle serving, but if you keep the revs below 4000rpm, you're only sampling the plain V8 with none of the 'charged side orders. Switch the engine map to Sport+ or Race,





pull the gearlever back to S and use the paddles to change gear and the CS700 is in its most responsive setup.

The noise hits you first, the whine building with gusto and adding meat to the soundtrack with every couple of hundred extra revs. Hit 4300rpm and you can do little but hold on and hope your right finger pulls back on the upshift paddle before the tacho's needle spills over the red line. As you get to 5000rpm the engine turns up the heat, the whine turns into a howl and that gradual climb in performance you associate with a big-capacity V8 is switched to a frenzied and frantic delivery you'd expect of a highly strung four-cylinder

'As you get nearer 5000rpm, the engine turns up the heat and the whine turns into a howl'

engine. But it never feels 644bhpquick, not like a McLaren 650S does.

Other elements of Sutton's work are instantly more rewarding, such as the chassis changes. The KW coilovers offer a wider spread of control and answer some of the criticism of the standard car's low level of feedback. They would also, we suspect, tighten the chassis further on track, too.

Ultimately, though, this car is about pace, and sadly the CS700 never feels that quick. In bursts, on arrowstraight roads where you can focus purely on going quickly in a straight line, the rate at which it piles on speed is impressive, but any of today's turbocharged cars feel equally as quick

and Jaguar's 5-litre supercharged V8 is a far better balanced engine that serves up its performance in a more satisfying and palatable way.

When Mustang values drop to Fiesta money, the temptation of a near-700bhp engine conversion will be hard to resist, but at more than £72.000 for a car with all the kit. the CS700 is too expensive to stomach for the improvements it brings. However, for £5068 you could have a CS500, which includes a more freely breathing air intake and a switchable exhaust (and the rear valance) to bring about 493bhp, which sounds like the best choice on the menu.

Stuart Gallagher (@stuartg917)

Specification

CO2 **Engine** V8, 4951cc, supercharger n/a

Chassis control improved; McLaren 650S power figure Not as thrilling as it should be; expensive

evo rating



Power 643bhp @ 7400rpm **Torque** 479lb ft @ 5580pm 0-62mph Top speed 4.4sec (claimed) 180mph (claimed)

Weight c1750kg (373bhp/ton)

Basic price See text





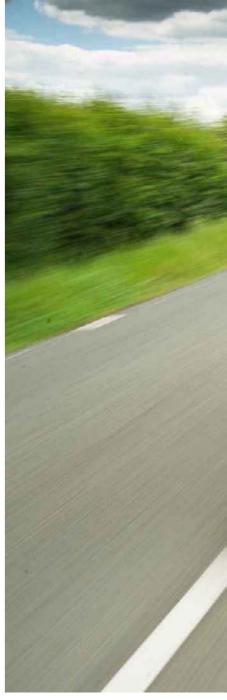


Test location: Royston, Hertfordshire **GPS:** 52.04810, 0.02416

Alfaworks GT4C

Specialist addresses the many flaws of Alfa's 4C, bringing it closer to the baby supercar we all want it to be





PROBLEMS. THE FIRST hint that all might not be well with Alfa's 4C came when Richard Meaden attended the car's 2013 launch, based largely at Alfa's flattering Balocco proving ground in northern Italy (evo 189). Doubts crystallised a month later on the Route Napoleon in the south of France. A full sport-spec 4C had been parachuted in to that year's eCoty as a wild-card entry on the strength of its lightweight, carboncored build, Elise-eclipsing spec and knee-weakening looks, yet it came more 'last' than any other car in the history of the event. It flat-lined on every judge's scorecard save for a faint blip of sympathy from one,

maybe reflecting the consensus that what, on paper, should be a perfectly formed junior exotic sports car was the victim of imperfect execution. In all likelihood, it could be fixed.

By the time the 4C Spider was unveiled in the late spring of 2015, Alfa claimed to have made the necessary corrections. From what I recalled of the 4C coupe, this wouldn't have been a small undertaking. Demonstrable point-to-point pace through lightness and lots of mechanical grip the car already had. Seeing to the jarring ride, old-fashioned turbo lag, hard-to-modulate throttle response on boost, a booming but characterless exhaust note, weirdly inconsistent steering weight and tiresome camber

sensitivity possibly required more time than that which had elapsed.

I went to the Spider's launch, again based at and around Balocco (evo 211). Changes to the steering's geometry and the suspension's damping seemed more tweak-level than genuinely telling, suspicions confirmed when we got to drive the car back in Blighty (evo 223) and found the fleeting moments of brilliance overshadowed by more frequent bouts of attention deficit disorder edginess. Something a little more radical was needed.

Following the unfolding saga on an industrial estate in Royston, Herts – and only too aware of the growing dissatisfaction among its 'There's a proper root and branch revision of the suspension geometry and damping'



new 4C-owning customers - longestablished Alfa Romeo specialists Alfaworks had clearly come to the same conclusion. With consultative help from Simon Scleater (ex-Lotus and RML) it enterprisingly drew up plans for more invasive surgery to first effect a 'cure' and then establish a platform on which to develop an altogether faster and more fabulous 4C. In its most extreme, 400bhp form. this would become the true baby supercar Alfa fancifully believes the standard 4C already is. That the work was to be carried out on Alfaworks boss Jamie Porter's own 4C would clearly keep the project stoked. And, oh... it'd be great if **evo** could lend a hand in the on-road development by

supplying some feedback.

The modifications looked tempting: a proper root and branch revision of the suspension geometry and damping, lighter wheels, new aero comprising splitter, diffuser and rear wing (all in CNC-machined carbon/graphene composite), an extra 40bhp (to begin with) and a new, sonically sussed exhaust system sans annoving drone.

One thing shone out about the 4C while experimenting with different setups. Its super-stiff carbon chassis is extremely reactive to small changes and to different wheel/tyre combos. Nailing the basics wasn't hard. Widening the front track and increasing the caster angle with the

fitment of CNC-machined aluminium blocks, for instance, transformed the steering at a stroke, massively improving on-centre feel, precision and weighting consistency.

For Alfaworks' 4C customers, it has become the one-stop 'fix' for the car's schizophrenic front end. But. by the time I get to drive it, work on Jamie's car has already progressed beyond this point. The self-steer characteristics Alfa dialled into the 4C's rear wishbones have been dialled out again, and with the fitment of Öhlins Road & Track dampers there's adjustment for compression and rebound as well as ride height. An impressive 11kg unsprung weight saving is achieved by the bespoke OZ

Above and left:

GT4C package includes aero upgrades in the form of a splitter, diffuser and rear wing in carbon/ graphene



Alleggerita HLT rims (7.5 x 17 front, 8.5 x 18 rear) wearing Toyo Proxes R888R tyres. The ECU remap has reprofiled the turbo's boost curve, raising peak power to 280bhp with 310lb ft of torque (up from 237bhp and 258lb ft) and improved throttle response, while the Quicksilver stainless steel exhaust with Helmholtz resonator (to kill the exhaust drone) has a far more sonorous singing voice and carbonfibre pipe tips.

With the adjustable bits fitted, it's possible to fine-tune the set to an almost ridiculous degree. I find my personal sweet spot with a spec (outlined in hardware terms above) to be sold as a complete package called the Alfaworks GT4C. It's still a car that places more demands on nerve and reflexes than an Elise would, but the harder I concentrate. the better it behaves and the stronger the impression I'm experiencing the 4C's true dynamic nature. The GT4C's

about-centre steering response is exceptional and gives clear feedback rich with detail. There's also the kind of turn-in crispness the standard car sorely lacks and a much more intuitive feel if you need to apply some corrective lock post apex. Yes, the car is still camber sensitive and the steering wheel moves about in your hands like an early 911's, but the Öhlins dampers have introduced layers of supple control that not only make the 4C more comfortable but also far easier to relax with, boosting its longhaul appeal. The engine remap is a corker, too. One up, it feels like a subfour-second-to-sixty machine. But you can also lean on the torque and short shift and still go very quickly.

So good news, the 4C can be reformed and, who knows, maybe it really does have supercar potential. With power upgrades in the pipeline, Alfaworks intends to find out.

David Vivian (@davidjvivian)

'The GT4C has the kind of turn-in crispness the standard 4C sorely lacks'





Top right: bespoke wheels contribute to reduction in unsprung weight. Right: Öhlins dampers can be manually adjusted



C	nac	ific	ation	
3	pec	HIC	auon	

Engine CO2 In-line 4-cyl, 1742cc, turbo n/a

Power 280bhp @ 6000rpm Torque

310lb ft @ 2200-4250rpm

■ The 4C transformed into a true driving weapon
■ Still needs care and commitment behind the wheel 0-62mph

4.0sec (est)

Top speed 165mph (est) evo rating Weight

**** Upgrade price

870kg (327bhp/ton) £20,000











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THE SALOON CAR WITH the world's most exotic name for something as prosaic as 'four-door' has just had a mid-life facelift. That means a subtle resculpting of the front and rear, a reworked interior, minor calibration tweaks to gearbox and engine, and new GranSport (sporty) and GranLusso (more luxurious) trim options. The UK line-up comprises a diesel (V6, 271bhp), the S (twin-turbo V6 petrol, 404bhp) and the rangetopping GTS, as driven here.

The £110.405 GTS's Ferrari-built twin-turbo V8 produces the same 523bhp at 6800rpm as before, and despite 479lb ft from 2250rpm (on overboost, and also unchanged), it's entirely happy with being wrung out right to the limiter. It's an oilysmooth engine, but its note won't make you grin from the moment you twist the key. It is, however, capable of sending the Quattroporte GTS to 62mph in 4.7sec and on to 193mph.

ZF's familiar eight-speed 'HP70' gearbox is still the sole transmission choice, with 100-millisecond shifts. It's a great partner for the V8, and can be shifted manually either

by sturdy, tactile metal paddles mounted on the steering column or via the central shift lever. It'll let the engine headbutt the limiter in manual mode, but will also rather confusingly kick-down beyond a poorly defined point in the throttle-pedal's arc.

Sitting behind the grille is now an active shutter that varies the airflow into the engine bay according to the engine's requirements. This speeds up the cold-start procedure by closing, enables every model to have the same size radiator (saving money), and improves the airflow under the car by closing again at high speed. It also makes for a ten per cent reduction in aerodynamic drag, reducing the Cd to 0.28.

Inside, the reworked centre console features a new, higherresolution infotainment screen. and the leather chairs and general fit and finish are as sumptuous as you'd hope for, given the price tag. For those being driven, rear leg-room is very generous, but occupants appreciably over six foot in stature will find the headlining rather close in the front seats, and brushing their head while sitting in the rear.



Dynamically, the big Maserati is much the same as before. It all starts promisingly at low speed, aided by impressive refinement that new 'cavity' sound insulation has improved still further. The steering has real weight to it, and the Quattroporte is now an outsider in retaining hydraulic power assistance. That sounds like a good omen, but the benefits aren't there in practice: there's a surprisingly pronounced 'sneeze factor' around the straightahead, and then unnatural ramping

up of weight thereafter. There's little to be gleaned from the rack during cornering and it also suffers from kickback over poor surfaces, compounded by a ride that can be confused by the same challenge, the variable Skyhook dampers stumbling over larger intrusions that impact far too much into the cabin.

What remains is a very different car to the old '03-'12 Quattroporte, and a much better limousine than that car ever was. But it's also much less of a sporting drive, with a far from ebullient character and a reduced presence, and while these latest improvements are certainly worthwhile, the same flaws remain in a luxury-limo class with some outstandingly talented members.

Those rivals include everything from the Aston Martin Rapide S at the upper end to the recently revealed new Porsche Panamera (see Radar) and the BMW M5. It's a disparate market but one thing that links them all is a breadth of talent that the Maserati can't quite match without the old car's charm to call upon.

Adam Towler (@AdamTowler)

Specification

Engine V8, 3798cc, twin-turbo CO2 250g/km

Power

523bhp @ 6800rpm

Torque 479lb ft @ 2250-3500rpm 0-62mph 4.7sec (claimed)

. 🛂 Still pretty, even more refined, and still with a V8 🧧 Off the pace dynamically Top speed 193mph (claimed)

evo rating Weight 1900kg (280bhp/ton) **** **Basic price** £110,405



CHOOSING BETWEEN THE C63 and C63 S is simple. Because even though the S costs £6910 more, the 4-litre twinturbo V8 is recalibrated to produce 503bhp (34bhp more than the non-S), you also get an electronically controlled limited-slip differential, active engine mounts and a Race transmission mode. And choosing which body style to go for is simple: it's the coupe, surely? The saloon and estate have a less sophisticated multilink rear axle than the coupe and the new Cabriolet, and because the Cabriolet doesn't have a fixed roof, it will be a heavy, wobbly mess by comparison. Won't it?

Well, the Cabriolet is indeed heavier. The drop-top C63 S, despite not having a complicated and heavy metal folding roof, is still a whopping 1925kg - 200kg more than the coupe. However, that extra heft has only dulled the performance slightly. The C63 S Cabriolet is only 0.2sec slower to 62mph than the coupe, with a time of 4.1sec. Its top speed isn't far off the coupe's either - both are limited to the obligatory 155mph unless you specify the AMG Driver's

Package, then the Cabriolet is limited to 174mph, just 6mph shy of the coupe's top speed. From the driver's seat, the Cabriolet's performance deficit is imperceptible, the big V8's 516lb ft from as low as 1750rpm making triple-figure speeds incredibly easy to reach.

Sadly, the extra bracing that makes up the bulk of the added weight hasn't compensated for the lack of a roof. You can feel the steering wheel move laterally in your hands, and if you select the firmer damper setting, the motion is exaggerated. When the roof is up, there's also the odd squeak and rattle where it meets the windscreen. In lesser C-class drop-tops with smaller engines, such as the C43 and C220, the body copes much better and doesn't exhibit the C63's structural shortfalls.

The Cabriolet's lack of a roof does, however, allow you better access to the thunder emitted from the C63's four exhausts. At start-up and idle the sound is a deep wuffling noise, typical V8, but as the revs rise it transforms into something more akin to a .50-calibre machine gun. It's brash, and with the exhaust in its



loudest setting, borderline offensive, but it's still hugely entertaining.

The gearbox is the same sevenspeed unit in all V8 AMGs except the AMG GT. It's not a dual-clutch 'box, but it's almost as quick and as crisp as one. The only gripe is that if you wait until the red line to change gear, the shift is slow and stunts your progress. You have to change when the lights on the dash prompt you to, but that robs you of the satisfaction of revving the engine out.

The Cabriolet might not have the rigidity of the coupe, but it does have the same lairy low-speed character. With enough throttle, it will light up its rear tyres out of slow corners and the combination of a tightly wound

e-diff and quick steering means the resulting slide is effortless.

The coupe's greatest skill is that its limits remain approachable even at much higher speeds. The supremely controlled chassis works in perfect harmony with the predictable rear axle and torquey engine so you have complete confidence up to and around its limits of grip. Sadly, the drop-top just isn't as dependable. It doesn't instil you with the same confidence because the lack of rigidity means you can't feel what's going on at tarmac level in as much detail. From turn-in to exit, it has a less aggressive attitude and doesn't respond to your inputs with the same immediacy. You can't tighten your line with the throttle in quicker corners, not that there's understeer to combat, and it isn't as satisfying as the way you can control the rear tyres with the throttle in the coupe.

The coupe, then, is still the pick of the C63 range, but the Cabriolet is almost as much fun thanks to its colossal engine and wonderfully progressive rear end.

Will Beaumont (@WillBeaumont)

Specification

Engine V8, 3982cc, twin-turbo

CO2 208g/km Power 503bhp @ 5500-6250 rpm

♣ A born hooligan
➡ Flex in the body takes away some of the control Torque 516lb ft @ 1750-4500rpm

0-62mph 4.1sec (claimed)

Top speed 155mph (limited)

evo rating Weight 1925kg (265bhp/ton) **** Basic price £68,115



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THIS CADILLAC DOES NOT have a V8. I know what you're thinking: what is the point of having a true American car that doesn't have a big, burbling V8? Well, the new CT6 is Cadillac's latest attempt at breaking into the European market, and this is its Mercedes S-class rival. As such, it's been designed to appeal to people who are more interested in luxury, fuel economy and dynamic finesse than small-block Chevy V8s.

So, instead of a V8, the CT6 has a 3-litre twin-turbocharged V6 producing 411bhp and 409lb ft. With four-wheel drive standard, that's enough to propel the 1950kg Cadillac to 62mph in 5.7sec. There is no choice of transmission - the CT6 comes with an eight-speed automatic. In fact, there aren't any options at all, the Platinum-spec CT6 – the only trim level available in the UK - coming fully loaded with almost everything you could wish for: Apple CarPlay, a big touchscreen infotainment system, night vision. built-in Wi-Fi, four-wheel steering, and massage seats front and rear. The only option you'd really want

that you can't have is for it to be right-hand drive.

The most intriguing piece of technology in the CT6 is its rear-view camera. A lens points out of the back of the car and the image it captures is displayed where the interior mirror would normally be. The image shows a wider angle than you get with a mirror, but the main advantage is that passengers, headrests and roof pillars don't interrupt your vision. It sounds ideal, but in reality it's not quite as natural as a mirror and it takes a moment for your eyes to adjust to the screen. Should you want or need to have a mirror instead, the display can be turned off and its surface becomes reflective.

The rest of the interior is more conventional. The seats are big, deeply cushioned and extremely comfortable, just as you'd expect of a luxury American saloon. It doesn't look as wild or modern as the exterior, and it doesn't quite have the same Teutonic tastefulness to the dials and graphics as rivals. The finish isn't as honed, either: the materials feel good quality but the buttons don't have a satisfying action and



overall things don't feel as solid. However, the CT6 is only £69,990. A similarly specced S-class would be £30,000 more expensive.

Our test route doesn't offer many opportunities to test the Cadillac's handling abilities. Instead there is a lot of motorway, but the CT6 excels at wafting down a long, straight road. In a high gear, the engine is practically silent, but start to revit and it begins to make a satisfyingly aggressive noise. Indeed, it's eager to rev, and with eight gears to choose from, it's also responsive and pulls well, too.

When a corner does arrive, you get a hint of the CT6's character. Sadly it's mostly inert. Sport mode (as opposed to Tour or Snow/Ice)

adds some weight to the steering and sharpens up the gearbox, but it doesn't change the CT6's character. The rear end remains very soft, absorbing all attempts to coax any excitement from it, and the engine that felt sprightly in a straight line is sluggish trying to pull the CT6 out of corners. The gearbox, left in automatic, is frustrating, and even in manual mode the shifts are slow and ill-defined. The paddles are also too far from the rim of the wheel.

The steering, meanwhile, offers no feedback, but even worse is that it's difficult to judge how much lock is needed. The car doesn't react enough to your initial input, so it takes even more lock before you're on your desired path. This could be a result of the rear-wheel steering trying to make the car more stable.

So, Mercedes and BMW aren't going to loose any sleep. The CT6 just doesn't engage an enthusiastic driver, and it's way outside its ideal operating window when it's being hustled. However, just cruising along. it works superbly.

Will Beaumont (@WillBeaumont)

Specification

Engine V6, 2997cc, twin-turbo CO2 223g/km Power

411bhp @ 5700rpm

■ Extremely comfortable ■ Not a hint of excitement; no right-hand drive Torque

409lb ft @ 2500-5100rpm

0-62mph 5.7sec (claimed)

Top speed 149mph (claimed)

evo rating Weight 1950kg (214bhp/ton) *** Basic price £69,990



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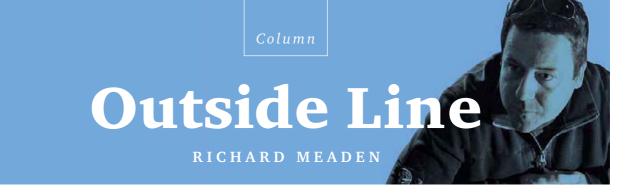
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It's easy to get sentimental about cars, but to romanticise washing them? No problem for Meaden (who hasn't held a sponge in years)

CAR CLEANING: CHORE OR DELIGHT?

It might seem odd to find a eulogy to washing cars in a magazine dedicated to driving them, but I've long believed that if you really want to get to know a car, you have to take the time to run a sponge

over it. I'm not talking about the half-baked magazine-photoshoot job using ice-cold river water in some remote Welsh lay-by. I've spent enough of my life doing just that to know there are few things more unpleasant and less satisfactory. No, I'm talking about a proper, lose-yourself-on-a-Sunday-morning wash and wax.

There was a time when this blokey ritual was as much a part of my motoring life as charging along a favourite road or making an extra lap of an empty roundabout. But in recent years this simplest and most readily accessible of carbased pleasures has become a distant memory, almost without me realising it.

As you get older, life and work have a habit of getting in the way, as indeed does where you live. Urbanites' cars can stay clean for weeks, but if, like me, you live at the end of a lane that in winter could double up as one of the muddier stages of the East African Safari Rally, or a dust-choked stage of the Acropolis Rally during the summer, maintaining a spotless car is heartbreaking. Consequently I don't bother.

That's my excuse, but what's yours? Apart from my dad, who is a chamois-wielding anal

retentive of epic proportions, and Richard Tipper – great friend of **evo** and the elbow grease behind world-renowned Perfection Valet – I don't know anyone who still washes their own car. I'm sure the diehard car cleaners amongst you have just thrown your magazine down in disgust at that statement, but I'd bet my boots that the rest of you are struggling to recall where your bucket and sponge are.

The reason is simple. Car washing has been hijacked by apathy or a sense of inferiority. Apathy in the face of the ultra-convenient '£5 Hand Car Wash' that has sprung up like weeds throughout the UK in the last few years; inferiority fuelled by the rise of professional detailing and its myriad potions, cloths, coatings and web forums dedicated to this high-end science. The obvious upside to this is we're all driving cleaner cars, but the sad fact is that whether you're motivated to lavish £500 on a forensic and totally dazzling 'paint

correction' or more inclined to spend a fiver on a quick dousing of truck degreaser and a rub with a gritty microfibre cloth in your local DIY-store car park, cleaning the car has become a chore to outsource rather than a treat to relish.

In the days before I was old enough to drive, the weekend wash 'n' wax was my first proper contact with cars. I can't remember my dad giving me a fatherly chat about the birds and the bees, but I can distinctly recall him sitting me down for a serious schooling on how to clean a car. Start with the roof and work down. Dropped the sponge? Throw it away. Avoid sunshine as it'll leave water marks

before you get a chance to chamois it. T-Cut and a torn-up bed sheet for tar spots. Simoniz and another piece of tired bed linen with which to apply the hard wax and then, if you were lucky, just enough time for a drink and a sandwich before you spent the next two hours buffing it off with a freshly cut piece of cheesecloth. And before you detailing zealots scoff, this was from a time long before clay bars, Crystal Serum, microfibre cloths and the 'two-bucket method' were invented.

These days I can't imagine having the spare time to lavish a whole afternoon cleaning a car, but I do know I used to love it. As much for the excuse to sit in the car (I always volunteered to do the interior, mainly so I could sit in the driver's seat)

as for the spotless end results. Three decades on, the (very) rare occasions I roll up my sleeves are a reminder that cleaning the car remains almost as revealing as driving it. Streaks of dirt running from nose to tail show airflow as clearly as any wind-tunnel test. Better, they evoke memories of a long, fast drive in challenging conditions. Caked layers of brake dust, thoroughly scrubbed tyres and a fleck or two of oil on the rear bumper are badges of trackday honour. A textured coating of bugs spattering the nose always equals summer fun, while a crystalline carapace of crud indicates some heroic wintry mission on slippery, salted roads.

Washing away the evidence is as much a chance to relive those moments as it is to relish the feel of a soapy sponge cutting through the grime, or watching raindrops gather like mercury on polished bodywork. The Thrill of Cleaning? You heard it here first.

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Maserati thinks it can pull off the same trick Porsche did with the Cayenne, but Porter reckons it's not that simple

I'VE JUST FINISHED WATCHING THE U.S.

TV programme *Billions*. It stars Damien Lewis as a billionaire who's a bit of a dick, and Paul Giamatti as a US attorney who's a bit of an arse, and the pair spend much of the 12-episode series being dickish

and arsey to each other. If that's not selling it, you should know that Lewis and Giamatti are fine actors who vividly portray flawed and petty men without ever entering that spittle-flecked, Daniel Day Lewis realm where you come away feeling drenched with acting. Thanks to these compelling characterisations and some

reasonable plotting, *Billions* is a watchable show with just three main problems.

Firstly, Damien Lewis is a good actor, but he's got a mouth like a bracketed cat's bum and once you've noticed this you can't wipe it from your mind.

Secondly, the scripts for the early episodes are prone to exposition so clatteringly hopeless there are regular bursts of dialogue that pretty much go, 'I'm so glad we can have this drink together because you're my sister and you work so hard as a doctor at the emergency room which is all the more amazing considering your husband died last year and you raise your three-year-old son alone.'

The third and most important problem is that, in one of the later episodes, Damien Lewis's character gives someone a Maserati

GranTurismo as a present. I don't think this warrants a spoiler alert, in either sense. But it does bother me. Lewis's dickish billionaire is called Bobby Axelrod, something that literally no one in the show seems to get the giggles about. There are hints in various episodes that Axelrod – come on, you'd titter a bit, wouldn't you? – is a bit of a car guy. He's got a Bentley Mulsanne. He's got a Range Rover Sport SVR. He's got a minty '69 Dodge Charger. But if you're a car guy, would you honestly give someone a Maserati GranTurismo?

Don't get me wrong, I enjoyed the GranTurismo S when I drove it, right up until the moment when the brakes excused themselves from any further work. But that was eight years ago and the GT S was flawed back then. By now it must feel horribly out-of-date. If you were a cocky billionaire hell-bent on tossing out Maser keys like breath mints, you'd start to dread the phone calls that started

'Now, I don't want to sound ungrateful but...' and ended with '...so I've swapped it for a Jag F-type'.

The sad thing is, on paper there's simply nothing cooler than a Maserati. Imagine saying, 'Shall we take the Maserati?' Or, 'My car? Oh yes, it's the Maserati,' or, 'Sorry, I seem to have reversed into your bins in my Maserati.' It sounds good, doesn't it? Less spivvy than Jaguar, more fun than Mercedes, less showy-offy than Ferrari, *much* less showy-offy than Lamborghini. It might be the most quietly assured and tasteful car name in the world. The problem is, the notion of driving a Maserati is more appealing than

actually driving one.

The GranTurismo is old and imperfect. The Ghibli is underwhelming and full of low-rent stuff lifted from the Chrysler parts bucket. The Quattroporte is just a longer Ghibli. And now Maserati has announced the Levante SUV. Very sensible business, you might say, mindful of how the Cayenne propelled Porsche into the ker-ching league for profit, enabling lovely things such as the GT3 RS 4.0 and 911 R. But Porsche got away with the move into SUVs because it was already making marvellous sports cars. That gave it the strength to sell Cayennes without denting its own myth or mystique. Maserati hasn't got that equity because the sad reality is that it doesn't make any great cars.

But it's never too late to start. The GranTurismo needs replacing. The Ghibli cries out for more glamour and some surgery on its awful, bulbous bottom. The Quattroporte could do with more magic too, and preferably some less squinty headlights. Finally, Maserati needs to get that lovely Alfieri two-seater into production, pausing only to send Ian Callum a royalty cheque.

If the Levante realises the funds to do all this then maybe redemption is coming. If, in fact, the glorious, glamorous, wonderful name of Maserati is about to become primarily known for generic, high-riding hatchbacks then the battle is lost. I hope it's not too late for the marque to tickle our hearts with genuinely great coupes and elegant sports saloons. Because I want to live in a world where a wealthy dick in a slightly preposterous TV show hands over a Maserati and it truly feels like a thoughtful gift.

'I enjoyed the GranTurismo S when I drove it, right up until the moment when the brakes excused themselves'





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Singer, Eagle and their ilk have put money-no-object custom cars back on the agenda. Dario's praying we don't slip back into old habits

IN 1995, DURING A VISIT TO AMG AFTER signing for Mercedes' DTM team, I encountered my very first Mercedes-Benz 1000SEL. It was in the secure parking of the factory at Affalterbach wearing a wide-body kit and evidently turbocharged. It also had a palm tree on the grille in place of the three-pointed star. Quite unmissable, this particular 1000SEL, but still on the subtle side compared to some others.

Now, if you don't know what a 1000SEL is, that's understandable, because nobody really does. Despite the legend, they weren't simply

Mercedes 500SELs fitted with 10-litre engines or any such nonsense. In fact there never was any official prescription as to what constituted a 1000SEL, and beyond building the donor car, the factory certainly wasn't involved. As far as I can tell, the name, often daubed across the bootlid in gold, was just an indication that the owner had customised the car in some fairly audacious way.

And some of them really were audacious (visit 1000sel.com when you've got an afternoon to spare). I've now seen tuned SELs so tasteless that I can recall almost every appalling little detail. Concocted from W126 S-class donor cars in the '80s by the likes of ABC Exclusive, Sbarro and, who could forget, 'Glenfrome of England', many were subjected to gold-plated grilles, picnic tables hidden in the doors, gearknobs designed

to resemble a falcon's head (of all things) and, imagine it at your peril, some even had gullwing doors. Not as bad the 300SL Gullwing conversions AMG restomodded for several clients in the '90s, some of which also had DTM-inspired interiors, but not far off.

This offensive phenomenon didn't begin and end with Mercedes, though. There was also the 930 Turbo 'Road Runner' by Koenig-Specials, with its Bugeye Sprite-style headlights and bizarre, upturned spoiler that was somewhere between a whaletail and a wrap-around ducktail. And Gemballa's take on the 635CSi, which came with four central exhaust tips - simply horrendous. Indeed, Lamborghini's 25th Anniversary Countach appeared staid in comparison with some of these tuner specials (no joke) and it was widely held that the broader the tracks and the more obnoxious the colour-coding, the better. Sod driveability, and sod taste.

Fast-forward 25 years and it would appear that we've learnt some

very important lessons. Modifying performance cars is still a rich man's game, and money doesn't buy taste, but just compare something like Singer's re-imagined 911 964s to the Koenig Turbo. One car is an improvement on the original, the other absolutely isn't, and while Singer's machines are jaw-droppingly good to look at, arguably the most impressive aspect of the conversion is the drivetrain. Quite simply, any dynamic compromises of the original car have gone, yet somehow the true soul of the thing remains. As car lovers, our insatiable desire to modify and tinker has evolved into something far more respectful and desirable than a trend that probably began in the

> days of the 1000SEL and climaxed with the Max Power cars that were a common sight in the UK. There are still outliers, of course, but even the likes of Mansory are bringing their decadent bodykits to heel.

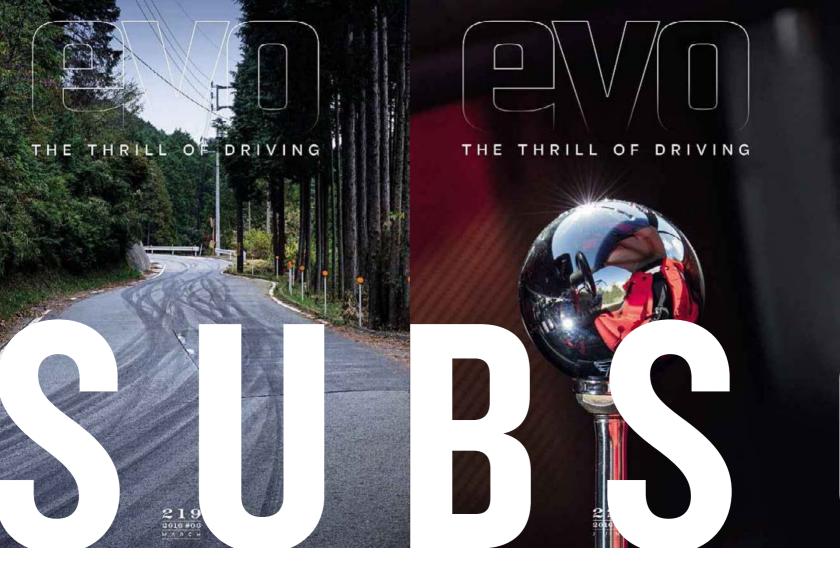
> In a similar vein to Singer, Eagle, based in East Sussex, have done remarkable things with the E-type, culminating in the Low Drag GT – a car that pays tribute to the original E-type Low Drag Coupe without sullying the design. And then there's the Alfaholics GTA-R 270, the bonnet hinges of which are drilled to save weight, while its doors are made of carbonfibre. Watch it go down a country road, though, and you could be back in 1969. In fact, the subtle genius of today's top restomodders is perhaps best

encapsulated by this tiny family enterprise, because with the GTA-R 270, the humble 105-series Giulia has gone nowhere at the same time as changing to an almost ludicrous degree - and for the better.

There is an art in knowing what to change and how to change it, and Singer, Eagle, Alfaholics, Ruf and Brabus (when they want to) are all masters. What's more, if Frontline Developments can hone an MGB to the point where I desperately covet one, then it really is open season in terms of what can and can't be modified.

So, let's set the budget at a cool £150,000. You'll have to burn some of that to buy the base car, remember, and any changes have to be realistic in regard to the remaining cash, so no hydrogenfuel-cell De Tomaso Panteras or the like! But suspension, engine, styling – your imagination can run wild, only perhaps not as wild as some imaginations ran in the '80s... Send your dream restomod to eds@evo.co.uk and we'll publish the best. ■

'There are still outliers, of course, but even the likes of Mansory are bringing their decadent bodykits to heel'



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The Col du Grand Saint Bernard.

I don't know why, but I've always wanted to explore this pass that runs over the ridge between Mont Blanc and Monte Rosa. So it's with some glee that I tap 'Aosta, Italy' into the navigation menu of a Mercedes-AMG C63 S Coupe. At the foot of the col on the Italian side, Aosta will be our base for the next couple of days. It's 566km from Stuttgart Airport, the C63 S and me, and a lot further for **evo** staffers Will Beaumont, Aston Parrott and Louis Shaw, who are driving from the UK in an M4 fitted with the Competition Package and a Lexus RC F.

God knows how much petrol we'll use, and I shudder to think of the cost in road tolls we'll collectively accrue, but the effort seems necessary and eminently sensible considering that we're converging on a special road and, we hope, a very special car. That car will arrive with Dan Prosser at

the wheel. Dan is never more than two days from a business-class flight and has bravely agreed to fly into Milan (seat 1A), get a chauffeur ride across to the Balocco test track, collect a new Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio and drive it across to Aosta. I haven't looked at a map but assume it'll take all of 20 minutes. His sacrifices to make these tests happen never fail to astound.

But the horror of slightly slow Wi-Fi in the BA lounge, the two or three people cluttering up the fast-track security line at Heathrow and the stiff neck from a relaxing doze in the ever-so-slightly-too-upright seat (1A) will be worth it. For the next couple of days will reveal just how good, bad or indifferent the Giulia Quadrifoglio really is. Early impressions from the launch (Driven, **evo** 223) suggest it's pretty darn good, but under the intense





'The Giulia is in for a baptism akin to having its head stuffed into a barrel of water by three burly blokes'



heat of battle-hardened rivals, there's always a slight paranoia that any Alfa will wither into another limp and crushing disappointment.

There are no such worries with the C63 S Coupe. Even just creeping through the arteries of the airport and out onto the Autobahn, it feels fabulously exciting. The 4-litre twin-turbocharged V8 is wickedly noisy, the light, fast steering creates a sense of urgency, and the gearbox snaps up and down the ratios with precisely administered violence. The whole car is erupting with energy and seems to flash a knowing smile. It's a serious performance car but it doesn't take itself too seriously. By the time I'm 6km into the 566km, I'm certain the Giulia is in for a tough couple of days: a baptism akin to having its head stuffed into a barrel of water by three burly blokes who have no intention of letting it up for air.

In fact, you might think us a little unfair. This version of the C63 S is a big step on from the saloon, with a unique rear axle, huge changes to the front

suspension and wider front and rear tracks. The M4 Competition Package and Lexus RCF are also very obviously missing two doors and hence naturally have an advantage in terms of rigidity and, perhaps more pertinently, focus. These are sports cars first and foremost. The Alfa Giulia is a saloon car with sports car attributes thrust upon it. However, there is method in our line-up. We want to know if the Alfa is great. Not just okay. Not just good. And we want to make that judgement in the harshest possible environment. The toughest roads coupled to the very best cars that £60,000 or so will buy you. If the Giulia can live with an M4 Competition and C63 S Coupe, it's fair to say it will eat a standard M3 and C63 saloon whole. The Lexus, meanwhile, is coupe-only.

I'm pondering this thought for much of the tortuous journey across Switzerland and I have to say it almost seems absurd to be heading towards a showdown with an M4, C63 S, RC F and an Alfa. I know the Quadrifoglio has been a staple of

Above: AMG and Alfa boast the exact same power output - 503bhp - though the V8 Merc is two cylinders up and miles ahead in terms of torque. Far left: the turbo'd Alfa, meanwhile, has no problems chasing down a very revhungry Lexus RC F on these twisty mountain stretches



'The Alfa's deep, rorty beat manages that Italian trick of being rude yet cultured'

motor shows for a little while now and there have been videos of it howling around the Ring, even an official lap time of 7:39 - or 13 seconds faster than a standard BMW M4 - but somehow I never really thought it would happen. You know, really happen. But it has. You can now buy a new Alfa Romeo saloon with a Ferrari-derived 2.9-litre twin-turbocharged V6 producing 503bhp at 6500rpm and 443lb ft at 2500-5500rpm.

You want more numbers? Okay, it does 0-62mph in 3.9sec and 191mph and it costs from £59,000. In the UK it comes as standard with an eight-speed automatic 'box that drives through an electronically controlled rear differential featuring two clutch packs to allow precise control of how much power goes to each wheel. It can overspeed the outside wheel for proper torque vectoring. The bonnet and roof are carbonfibre, as is the propshaft and the Quadrifoglio weighs 1524kg dry. You can also add things such as carbon-ceramic brakes (£5500) and carbonfibrebacked seats (£2500). It all sounds ridiculously promising, doesn't it? It has pedigree, too. No, not some tenuous link with great Alfas of old (I believe they made good cars in the 1930s), but because chief engineer Philippe Krief and many of his team recently helped create the Ferrari 458 Speciale.

On paper, then, the Quadrifoglio has the £60,065 M4 Competition Package comfortably covered. Even with a 19bhp boost over the standard car, its 444bhp at 7000rpm and 406lb ft from 1850rpm look a little off the pace. The £59,995 RCF is hopelessly outdone in the numbers game but it's here because it does things its own way and is full of quirk and character. Its 5-litre V8 is normally aspirated and produces 470bhp at 6400rpm, which sounds strong. However, torque is rated at 391lb ft at 4800-5600rpm and it's a hint that despite the large capacity, the motor needs revs before it delivers. Even then, with 1765kg to haul around, it's never quite as nutty as the BMW.

Of course, the Mercedes is nuttier than Grace Jones dipped in Nutella and then rolled in 100kg of cashews: 503bhp at 5500-6250rpm; 516lb ft



at 1750-4500rpm. It weighs 1725kg but nobody seems to have told the engine. It flings the car along like a crisp packet in a storm. It's expensive at £68,710, though. I take one run over the pass before heading to the hotel. The scenery is better than I'd hoped and by the time I've climbed up from Martigny on one side and descended back into Aosta on the other, the Merc's brakes are done. Tomorrow is going to be good, I think.

I WANT TO DRIVE THE GIULIA. OF

course I do. Sadly, it won't arrive until a little later and so I head to the Lexus for the run to the 2469m summit of the Colle del Gran San Bernardo. It sounds better in Italian, right? The RC F really is an oddball. In detail it's sabre-sharp and has an origami-like complexity, but the overall shape is heavy and slightly bulbous. The interior has touchpads, haptic feedback, rotary dials, buttons of all shapes and sizes and a weird mix of materials. You can select three driver modes – Normal,

Sport S and Sport S+ – and the optional torquevectoring differential has Normal, Slalom and Track modes. Then there's the stability control, with Sport and Expert modes (as well as simply on or off). It's all slightly baffling after too little sleep in an uncomfy bed (maybe Dan can work it all out when he arrives after his 12 hours under a feathery duvet), but it's also bizarrely appealing. The question is whether it's different for the sake of it or offers a genuinely compelling alternative to the Mercedes and BMW.

The big V8 starts with a boom and the LFA-style TFT dash screen sends a little shockwave of excitement up my spine. I select Sport S+ and the main tacho rotates so the red line, set at 7000rpm, is at top dead centre. Sport S+ also primes the VDIM stability system to Sport and gives the steering a bit more weight. Finally, I go for Slalom mode for the torque-vectoring diff, as I suspect the car will need all the agility it can muster as we flick and weave up the pass. The Lexus has the eight-







speed Sport Direct Shift automatic that was first introduced with the IS F, and although it's much improved, it doesn't quite have the snap of the best dual-clutch 'boxes. It'll be interesting to see how the Alfa's auto compares. One thing's immediately clear and that's how busy I'll be on the paddles—this V8 feels almost devoid of torque after the C63 and it's hard to believe its lungs measure 4969cc.

On the Italian side – the Swiss border is right at the top – the pass starts off in a tunnel of pine trees. It's not especially wide, but the surface is good and after a couple of big hairpins and long climbs, the road starts to bunch up. It's not a Stelvio-style hairpin-fest, thankfully, but the corners come thick and fast with good variation. The RC F needs first gear on the tightest corners and feels breathless on the steepest inclines, but it scythes through the quicker combinations with real composure and Slalom mode certainly gives the big coupe surprising agility. It snaps into the turns, the rear of the car really pointing it towards the apex, and then you can simply stand on the throttle. Without the burden of turbocharged torque, traction never seems to be an issue at all.

It sounds wonderful when you find room to keep the revs soaring, too – there's a deep, snorting induction noise that's unlike anything else. The brakes feel slightly stodgy but they're not really tested as gravity sucks the speed away every time you lift the throttle here. By the time we reach the peaceful lake at the top of the pass, I'm pretty impressed. On track the RC F feels heavy and a bit reluctant, but it seems to work nicely in the Alps. Of course, the Merc and BMW were never more than about 3cm behind on the climb up, but the RC F has cemented its place in the test. It proves there's life beyond the German establishment.

THE FANTASY OF AN EMPTY COLLE DEL Gran San Bernardo drenched in sunshine is just that, sadly. For now, at least, it's chilly, drizzling, and there are scores of cyclists who are outraged that we've dared arrive at *their* road. Aston busies himself with the static photography and detail shots as we wait impatiently for the sun to break through the clouds and the Alfa to arrive. As it happens, we don't have to drum our fingers for long. Dan has made good time and the gloom breaks almost as soon as the Giulia rolls to a stop.

Even the indignant cyclists can't resist gathering around the Quadrifoglio for a better look. There's something rather old-school about the shape of the Giulia, but the carbon detailing, the stance and those delicious telephone-dial alloys create a powerful and evocative impression. It squats over its rear tyres (bespoke P Zero Corsas) and looks like launch control is engaged even at a standstill. There's just so much pent-up energy, like it's bursting to prove that the bad old days are gone and this is the future of Alfa Romeo. A future that doesn't have to be propped up by a distant past or misty-eyed nonsense about 'character' that really translates as 'it's a bit crap but isn't it pretty?'

You like to imagine that when jumping into a new car, you savour every second, take in every detail. In reality it's a bit more hurried – an excited fumble with your brain quickly assimilating all the important info. Love the steering wheel. It's big but feels just right. *Hmmm*, starter-button placement just like in a Ferrari. *Ooooh*, long paddles fixed to the steering column, just like in a Ferrari. No manettino, but there's a rotary dial down to the left of the gear selector marked 'RACE' at 12 o'clock, 'd' at 10, 'n' at 9 and 'a' at 7. This is Alfa's DNA Pro system, which is linked to Chassis Domain

'The RC F has cemented its place in the test. It proves there's life beyond the Germans'





Control. It's a fancy way of saying you can dial the Quadrifoglio from mild to wild, with Advanced Efficiency allowing cylinder deactivation, Natural losing that feature but retaining the Comfort suspension setting, then Dynamic and Race bringing greater steering weight, brake response, and firmer suspension. The Race function disables stability control completely, provides overboost and brings the noise. Even more so. Depress a button in the middle of the dial and you can back the dampers off again, even when in Race or Dynamic. Just like in a Ferrari.

The engine sounds good. The volume isn't quite C63 S but it's not far off and its deep, rorty beat manages that Italian trick of being rude yet cultured. It feels aggressive right from the off. Just selecting D on the auto 'box emits a thunk that you'd never get in the smooth Lexus. It's a not-so-polite reminder that you're in a car with some serious firepower. Which is nice.

We're going to head down the Swiss side of the pass now and surprisingly it's much, much

bumpier and maybe half a car's width narrower, too. I select Dynamic and the softer suspension setting in anticipation of the bumps and lumps and roll away as gently as is humanly possible in a new 503bhp Alfa that you've been gagging to drive for an eternity. First impressions are of incredibly fast and super-accurate steering, a sense of amazing agility and massively oversensitive brakes. This car - a late pre-production example - has the optional ceramics and they require the lightest of touches to operate with anything approaching finesse. That's a shame, as the rest of the car feels instantly on your side. Even after the Lexus's surprising keenness to change direction, the Giulia's unflinching responsiveness feels hugely exciting. It seems 500kg lighter than the Lexus and the way it flicks between the bends is reminiscent of – guess what? – a Ferrari.

The damping, at least in the softer setting, can't quite live with the steering's speed, and as the pace starts to increase, suddenly that lost 500kg comes back with a floaty sensation and then a crash into

Above right: carbonshelled buckets in the Alfa are a tempting option at £2500. Right: with masses of grip and torque, the M4 Competition is a hugely effective point-to-point machine, but is it as enjoyable as the others?



the bumpstops. Instinctively I'm reaching for the damper button within a few miles to go for the default firmer setup in Dynamic. It's miles better and suddenly the car feels cohesive, searingly rapid and just razor sharp. The engine is fantastic, too. It pulls hard from little over 2500rpm but it's really worth revving it out for the reach of the top end and because upshifts executed near the limiter result in a great crack of ignition cut. The 'box is fast and aggressive, each upshift bringing a good old kick, almost like a good single-clutch automated manual. It's not subtle, but it does suit the Quadrifoglio's intensity.

'What do you think?' asks Dan when we stop to grab some more photos. This sounds awful but without thinking I blurt out, 'It's not shit!' with a huge grin. I'm not trying to be cruel, it's just a mark of how worried I was that Alfa would once again fail to live up to expectations. For me, even after a very quick drive, I know that's not the case. It's better than I'd hoped, in fact. Dan concurs. 'It's

the first saloon car I've driven that actually feels like a sports car,' he says. 'The steering is so sharp and the chassis so taut, which gives the car the response and immediacy of a much lighter, lower machine.' Speaking of which, the M4 Competition is ticking and pinging in the sunshine as if to say, 'Excuse me, I think you need to try a lower, lighter machine before getting too carried away.'

The BMW M4 is a bit of a conundrum. Our first exposure to its four-door brother was at eCoty 2014. We hated it. Numb, spiky and lacking any real sparkle, it seemed a pale imitation of an M car, despite its huge performance. Then we had an M4 long-term test car. It was better; a little more controlled over crests that tied that early M3 in knots, a little less likely to light up its tyres unexpectedly. Even so, it caused Dan a few heartin-mouth moments during his tenure with the car. Mostly on the way to Heathrow. We concluded it was fabulous in very specific circumstances but still an edgy beast and strangely characterless.



'Even on this very ragtag surface, the rear of the M4 stays true and accurate'





Left: Giulia's limited-slip differential enables you to exit corners in style. Right: grabby ceramic brakes in need of some calibration. Below: epic views on the Col du Grand Saint Bernard

The Competition Package, which has come pretty early in the F82's lifecycle, looks to address all those criticisms. Aside from the mild power boost, it gets revised springs, dampers and antiroll bars and features EDC (Electronic Damper Control) as standard with Comfort, Sport and Sport+ modes. The M Differential has been recalibrated, and there's an M sports exhaust, 20inch wheels inspired by those of the M4 GTS, and swanky-looking new sports seats. It costs £3000 for all this stuff, so the Competition Package will pretty much become the default spec. This car also has the M DCT 'box (£2495) and ceramic brakes (£6250).

Immediately it feels more controlled than the standard M4. The ride is very firm but despite that it seems to follow the road's contours more freely and the sharp, jagged spikes of wheelspin don't materialise. Even on this very ragtag surface, the rear of the car stays true and accurate. It has stunning front-end grip, too. Understeer at road speeds is non-existent, even on some wickedly tight and unsighted corners. Then there are the brakes, which offer fantastic feel and a sophistication that the grabby Alfa setup can't touch. It's the first time I've felt truly confident enough to wring out this generation of M4 on the road.

So it's better. Much better. But some fundamental problems remain. The engine is dull. Oh, you might not think so in isolation and the first time you feel it fire the M4 up a mountain. It has masses of performance. But in time you realise it's pretty much a joy-free motor except right at the top end. On these roads you rarely find that last 2000rpm or so and the engine just becomes a power unit. Impressive, but not at all inspiring. Compared with the V8 in the C63 S, the twin-turbo 3-litre straightsix just feels stingy in terms of what it offers the driver. Then there's the steering. It lacks the speed of the Alfa or Mercedes' systems and it's blighted by a gloopy quality that, again, seems to drain the fun out of the whole experience. Even in the lightest mode - Comfort - it has a treacly numbness.

'Compared with the V8 in the C63 S, the M4's twin-turbo 3-litre straight-six just feels stingy'





Strangely, there are moments when you do find the limits and the M4 comes alive, steering shifting its weight in your hands, front end locked on and the rear moving with beautiful progression thanks to the linear power delivery. But these are so fleeting that they only add to the frustration. You get a glimpse of the old M-car magic and then it's pulled away from you the next second. For me, the M4 remains a disappointment.

The Mercedes pretty much delivers everything you crave and pine for in the M4 in about 20 seconds. Its engine booms, crackles and howls, the AMG Sport mode for the stability control is lenient so that you can always feel the power tweaking the car's cornering line (M Dynamic mode is very restrictive in the M4 Competition), the steering is fast and makes the car feel keen to just get stuck in. Okay, it's light on feel initially, but you can dial into what it's doing and very quickly you're driving the C63 S on its door handles. There isn't quite the mechanical grip of the M4 or the Alfa, but that

hardly seems to matter. The car perfectly treads the line between control and entertainment. It'll just about live with the M4 in terms of pace if you keep it neat and tidy, but always asks a bit more from you: to pull back a bit of turn-in understeer if you've been greedy on entry, to judge the amount of power the rear tyres can take and balance any slip. The whole experience just draws you in and despite the great forces at work, the car is so progressive in everything it does.

Dan, Will and I are all in agreement. The winner of this test is either the C63 S or the Giulia Quadrifoglio. Take a moment to digest that. We all believe that the Giulia is more exciting and enjoyable than the M4 Competition Package. I think it's faster, too. The way it changes direction is quite amazing and the grip offered by the Pirelli tyres is above and beyond the rest of the cars here. The Lexus? I love its alternative take on, well, everything, but it's just not quite sharp enough to run with the pack here. Pretty soon, everyone is



ALFA ROMEO GIULIA QUADRIFOGLIO V RIVALS

loitering near the C63 S or Alfa for one last drive to decide which way it's going to go...

I'd feared that the lure of the new would wear off over the course of this test. That the Alfa's initial wow-factor would diminish. Instead, I find it more enjoyable the longer and further I drive. It's true that it lacks the final polish that the Mercedes and BMW offer in terms of damping, gearshift speed and precision, and the fine detail of things such as ABS actuation, but it more than compensates with its sense of urgency, its terrific steering response and the sheer manic performance it can serve up on a great road. The only real dynamic frustration beyond the extremely sensitive brakes is that the electronically controlled diff won't lock up in very tight corners and that allows the inside rear wheel to spin up slightly clumsily at times. However, in the quicker corners you feel it working, driving the front wheels into each corner and creating this lovely, easily manipulated balance. One final drive swings it for the Alfa. I think.

But then I sit in the Mercedes, and never mind the nearly ten-grand premium, it feels £25,000 more expensive. And I start the engine and it rips and snorts into life. And when it streams down the hill, the chassis feels so unbelievably easy to tease and boss. It's the arch entertainer. Hand on heart, would I enjoy driving this thing every day more than I would the Alfa? Yes. But it's a close-run thing. The Giulia Quadrifoglio is an Alfa Romeo we can all love not for the badge, not because it's Italian and noisy, but because it's a great car. I'd waited many years to drive the Col du Grand Saint Bernard and perhaps even longer to drive a genuinely brilliant Alfa Romeo. To do both at the same time? Unforgettable. ≥

> 'One final drive swings it for the Alfa. I think'

Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio

Engine V6, 2891cc, twin-turbo **CO2** 198g/km **Power** 503bhp @ 6500rpm

Torque 443lb ft @ 2500-5500rpm
Transmission Eight-speed automatic, rear wheel drive, torque-vectoring, limited-slip

differential, ESC **Front suspension** Double wishbones, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar Rear suspension Multi-link, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar

Brakes Carbon-ceramic discs (option),

390mm front, 360mm rear Wheels 8.5 x 19in front, 10 x 20in rear

Tyres 245/35 ZR19 front, 285/30 ZR19 rear

Weight (dry) 1524kg Power-to-weight (dry) 335bhp/ton

0-62mph 3.9sec (claimed) Top speed 191mph (claimed)

Basic price £59,000

evo rating

M4 Competition Package

Engine In-line 6-cyl, 2979cc, twin-turbo CO2 194g/km

Power 444bhp @ 7000rpm

Torque 406lb ft @ 1850-5500rpm Transmission Seven-speed dual-clutch (option), rear-wheel drive, limited-slip

differential, ESP

Front suspension MacPherson struts, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar **Rear suspension** Multi-link, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar

Brakes Carbon-ceramic discs (option),

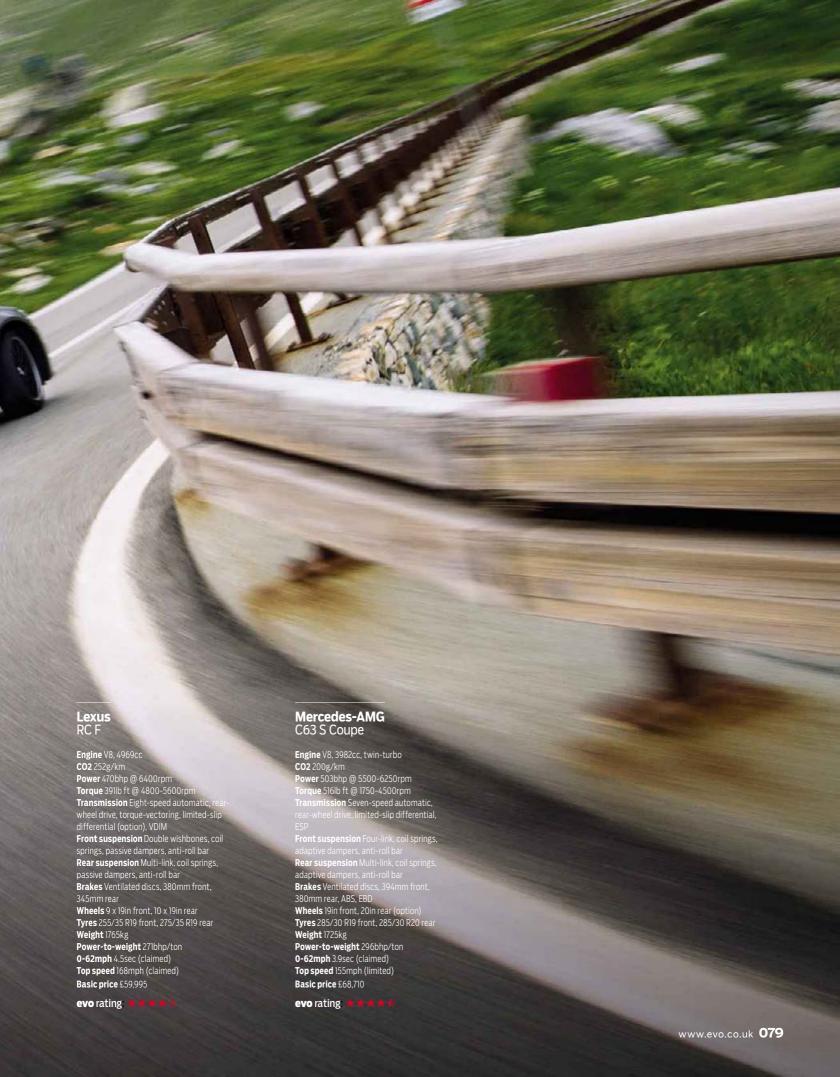
400mm front, 380mm rear Wheels 9 x 20in front, 10 x 20in rear Tyres 265/30 R20 front, 285/30 R20 rear

Weight 1515kg Power-to-weight 298bhp/ton

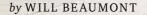
0-62mph 4.2sec (claimed)

Top speed 155mph (limited) Basic price £60,065

evo rating







PHOTOGRAPHY by ASTON PARROTT

TVR is on its way back. Over the following 12 pages is everything we've learned so far about its new sports car, and trust us, there's plenty to get excited about

OUT OF THE WILDERNESS?

T V R

TEN YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE PRODUCTION

of the last TVR ended, but the company's influence on the sports car market is still clear to see. The current crop of loud, brawny sports cars such as the Aston Martin Vantage and Jaguar F-type would arguably never have existed had the Griffith and Cerbera not set the mould. The established manufacturers offer no gratitude, however, as it's their cars that are going to give the new TVR the hardest time.

Without big money TVR will be, as it always has been, the underdog, but its outsider position and individual take on what a sports car should be is what made TVRs so loveable and helped us overlook their foibles. If the reborn company can channel some of this character into the new cars they will be distinctive enough to make new TVR a success.

To see if this non-conformist attitude still exists, we've spoken to Gordon Murray, who's heavily involved in the design and production process, inspected Black Hound, the Cerbera tasked with testing the Cosworth-fettled Ford V8 engine that will power the car, and heard ex-TVR marketing man Ben Samuelson's opinion on whether the firm has a chance in the current market. Excited about the new TVR? So are we. Read on...









THE NEW TVR WILL

use Ford's 5-litre Coyote V8 the same engine found in the current Mustang GT. Cosworth Engineering has been very publicly involved with the TVR project from the outset and

has realised enhanced performance and power delivery from the crate engine with minimal internal changes. The decision to keep the engine close to standard was made on the grounds of reliability - yes, you've read that right, the word 'reliability' in a story about a TVR. However, although it's disappointing the engine won't have much Cosworth DNA running through it, there will still be variable valve timing for the exhaust and intake valves, a forged-steel crank and an 11:1 compression ratio.

Cosworth has also developed the exhaust system, the dry-sump arrangement that allows the engine to fit under the new TVR's low bonnet, and the lightweight flywheel and clutch assembly that will help significantly transform the character of the V8. Cosworth also has the task of mapping the engine's fuel and ignition to increase the power so the new TVR will achieve its target of 400bhp per ton.

TVR has two engine mules: one for endurance

testing and one for performance testing. Black Hound, this modified Cerbera, is for the latter. TVR needed a mule that would be as close to the weight of the new car as possible when fitted with the Ford engine. The standard Cerbera's 1200kg is only slightly above the anticipated weight of the new TVR, and as it also has a front-engine, rear-wheel drive layout, it was the perfect candidate for an engine mule.

A roll-cage has been welded into Black Hound to replicate the stiffness of the new car. To compensate for the weight of the cage, the interior trim has been removed, but to replicate the new car's weight distribution, the battery from a truck has been installed in the boot. The dials have also been swapped with a race-spec electronic readout and there are easy-to-access sockets so a laptop can be plugged in every time the car comes to a stop.

As you'd expect of a mule, it isn't perfect. But rather than being held together by strips of duct tape and Zip-Clips, it's just a bit rough around the edges like a well-used trackday or race car.

The new TVR will have a six-speed manual gearbox, but it won't be the same 'box that's in the Mustang. The more energetic character a lightweight clutch and flywheel will give the engine means the lazy, clunky change from the

Above, from top: air intakes hide beneath the headlights of 'Black Hound'; 5-litre V8 is mounted encouragingly far back in the engine bay - it's also been tuned by Cosworth; side-exit exhausts will feature on the final production car, too. **Below:** test mules always feel a bit Mad Max and this one's no exception





'THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT: EVEN WITH THE MULE'S LONGER PIPES, THE FORD ENGINE IS LOUD'

Mustang really wouldn't work. TVR hasn't yet confirmed which gearbox it will use, but as the Coyote engine uses the same bell-housing bolt pattern as previous Ford V8s, there's a selection of performance-orientated transmissions that will bolt straight on.

The gigantic wing and protruding diffuser might make Black Hound look like an unliveried race car, but they aren't there just to add a bit of visual drama. The new TVR will be aerodynamically optimised like no other TVR before it, and will go through significant wind-tunnel testing. One major element that's already been implemented for the car is a completely flat floor, so it won't need obvious wings to stop it trying to take off. How effective the flat underbody of the new car will be can be seen in just how outrageous the wing on the Cerbera mule looks.

The side pipes on this Cerbera are not simply there because this is a test mule – they'll be a feature of the production car, too. But Black Hound's exhausts exit in a more conventional and arguably more civil place than the final car's will – its will exit just behind the front wheels, but not just because it will make the car typically TVR-loud: running exhausts all the

way to the back of the car, above the flat floor, where there is no airflow to help dissipate the heat, would mean it would get far too hot in the cavity below the passenger compartment. Even running the exhausts as far back as they are on this Cerbera would cause too much heat soak.

There's no doubt about it: even with the mule's longer pipes, the Ford engine is *loud*. It has a thunderous V8 tone to it as it idles, but it's far from lazy. The lightweight clutch and flywheel help the revs rise and fall incredibly quickly – you'd never guess the engine was from the Mustang. You'd never guess it was from any road car, because it sounds just like a competition motor. From the side of the Millbrook bowl, as the Cerbera hammers round at god-knows-what speed, if you had your eyes closed you'd swear it was a NASCAR testing.

Like most TVRs, the Cerbera was a performance car bargain; it traded luxury for spectacular speed and low cost. Rumours surrounding the new car have suggested that it might not be such a bargain. Even with Gordon Murray's cost-effective iStream chassis, the alleged price for the Launch Edition with the carbonfibre chassis is expected to be more than £120,000. But as is often the case, the rumours

are wrong and the first set of TVRs with the lightweight chassis will be priced below £100,000. The goal for the series-production cars is to get the cost to less than that of a Porsche 911 Carrera S – about £85,000 – but as the designs have yet to be finalised, the price hasn't been either.

The new car, in a first for a TVR, will be equipped with a form of traction control. The Ford Coyote's ECU already has the functionality built in, so TVR has decided to keep it. Of course, you'll be able to turn the system completely off for the authentic experience. Should you wish to replicate traditional TVR sensations even further, you'll also be able to turn the ABS off.

There's an honesty to Black Hound thanks to the way it wears its aero addenda loud and proud and its slightly rough condition. Of course, the production car is likely to be rawer than most of its established sports car rivals, but while it will be far more refined than this mule, it will do well to match its charm. With that said, the new TVR is something to get very excited about, because a 400bhp-per-ton, carbonfibre chassis'd, V8-powered, rear-driven car with a manual gearbox, costing the same as a 911, is an incredibly tantalising proposition.

T V R

Meet Ben Samuelson, Peter Wheeler's right-hand man during the company's most successful years. What he doesn't know about the Brit sports car outfit isn't worth knowing, so what does he think of the 'new' TVR's chances?

SON OF TWR

by RICHARD MEADEN

FOR MANY OF US, THE LATE PETER WHEELER'S

24-year tenure at the helm is TVR's definitive era. For the latter half of those years, Ben Samuelson worked closely alongside him, initially in PR and marketing roles. Though it was never reflected in his job title, as Samuelson won Wheeler's respect and trust, his input helped shape the marque and its years of success. Their perhaps unlikely, and certainly unconventional, bond (at least in the context of the motor industry) reflected the spirit at TVR in those days.

For the first five or so years of **evo**'s existence, TVR was a staple marque. We always relished the opportunity to test the cars, and though our relationship with TVR – and therefore Wheeler and Samuelson – was sometimes rocky, there was a shared sense of kindred spirits, for we were both relative minnows punching well above our weight. The cars might not have been as reliable as they should have been, but much like the customers who bought them, we loved their craziness and the maverick attitude of the company that made them. If that suggests a certain lack of impartiality, so be it. We never dodged making constructive criticism, but we knew life was better with

TVR in it, so we celebrated the cars.

When Wheeler suggested he was considering selling the business, Samuelson explored management buyout (MBO) opportunities, but when those discussions stalled, Russian Nikolai Smolensky swooped to secure ownership. Samuelson remained to work alongside him before devoting his energies to co-founding PR, marketing and events agency Samuelson Wylie Associates.

With his intimate knowledge of what it took to make TVR a success – not to mention first-hand experience of the trials and pitfalls – we thought it would be fascinating to ask Samuelson to reflect on what made those cars and the company such a success. And for his take on today's low-volume sports car market, where he thought TVR would be had Wheeler not elected to sell, and finally what it was like in those rollercoaster days when TVR regularly tweaked the nose of the supercar Establishment.

'The beauty of TVR was it didn't conform,' he says. 'Nowadays small sports car brands tend to be owned

'The beauty of TVR was it didn't conform,' he says. 'Nowadays small sports car brands tend to be owned and/or run by people from big car companies. TVR was a small sports car company with the can-do attitude of a race team. We were agile, always pushing. Sometimes



a little too far for our own good, admittedly, but never complacent.

'The cars we made weren't aimed at trackdays. They were slightly softer so they worked on real roads, such as those around the Trough of Bowland [a network of challenging driving roads that traversed the moorland terrain between Wheeler and Samuelson's homes]. Compromises were always made in favour of on-road

performance. If that made the car feel a bit too soft midway through Copse, so be it. We had no desire to build cars that had zero compliance and operated on a knife-edge. That said, times have changed. Trackdays are much more integral to the way a customer enjoys a fast car, and electronics are playing an increasingly significant role in mitigating big power outputs and more extreme chassis setups.

'TVRs were pure, simple cars, but you shouldn't confuse that with Peter being a Luddite. He was anything but. I'm sure he would have relished the challenges and opportunities of today, with increasingly effective and efficient hybrid systems,

but fundamentally if something added weight and complexity without palpably adding performance, he was instinctively against it.

'It might surprise some to know we were looking at ABS. Peter wouldn't countenance basic systems, just so we could say we had something when fundamentally it didn't actually make the car any safer. What he was seriously considering was a hydraulically modulated ABS system developed by Williams. With Peter, technology always had to make the car better. And faster.

'I'M SURE

THERE'S A

GREAT DEAL

OF RESIDUAL

AFFECTION

FOR TVR'

'Quality and reliability was always a challenge, and always will be for a small manufacturer. Peter [born in 1944] was from the generation of car enthusiasts who cut their teeth on Triumph TR3s and Jaguar XK150s. You had to fix those cars. It was just part and parcel of running them. People who grew up on Golf GTIs never had to do that so they don't have that tolerance. The US market is

> such a big one for sports cars, and we were seriously exploring ways of entering it when I was involved in the MBO, but the Lemon laws are terrifying. It's not impossible to get cars like TVRs into the States, but you need to know what you're getting yourself into.

> 'We weren't a global brand sales-wise, but we had a worldwide fanbase thanks to things such as the PlayStation game Gran Turismo. Consequently, I'm sure there's a great deal of residual goodwill and affection for TVR. Those who owned Griffs and Chimaeras in their 30s and 40s will now have more money to spend, so that rather than being something they would expect to drive daily - as many of them did

- a new TVR is perhaps more likely to be an incremental purchase. One where they buy a car instead of a boat or whatever. While those who only know and love TVR from console games will now be in a position to experience the next chapter for real.

'Another thing that's moved on considerably is performance relative to the big names. I can vividly remember driving a 4.5 Cerbera on the Autobahn and coming up behind a Ferrari 550. We both accelerated

TVR TIMELINE



1958 Grantura

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1622cc Power 86bhp @ 5500rpm Torque 97lb ft @ 3000rpm 0-60mph 12.0sec Top speed 98mph



1963 Griffith

Engine V8, 4727cc Power 282bhp @ 4400rpm **Torque** 282lb ft @ 2400rpm 0-60mph 5.2sec Top speed 163mph



1969 Tuscan

Engine V6, 2994cc Power 128bhp @ 4750rpm **Torque** 192lb ft @ 3000rpm 0-60mph 8.3sec Top speed 125mph



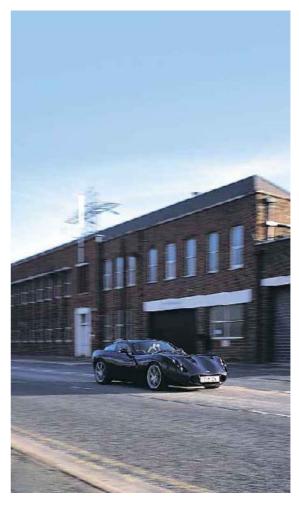
1975 Taimar

Engine V6, 2994cc Power 230bhp @ 5500rpm **Torque** 273lb ft @ 3500rpm 0-60mph 5.8sec Top speed 139mph





Above: the droptop TVR Tuscan. Right: an ultra-rare and heroically fast Typhon outside the factory in Blackpool. Just three were made with the most expensive option being a £33,995 trackday 'box. **Left:** the late Peter Wheeler





1980 TASMIN

Engine V6, 2792cc Power 150bhp @ 5700rpm **Torque** 162lb ft @ 4300rpm **0-60mph** 8.2sec Top speed 130mph



1986 420 SEAC

Engine V8, 4228cc Power 300bhp @ 5500rpm **Torque** 290lb ft @ 4500rpm **0-60mph** 4.7sec Top speed 150mph



1987 S Series

Engine V6, 2792cc Power 160bhp @ 6000rpm **Torque** 162lb ft @ 4300rpm **0-60mph** 6.8sec Top speed 140mph



1991 Griffith

Engine V8, 4997cc **Power** 350bhp @ 5500rpm **Torque** 350lb ft @ 4000rpm **0-60mph** 4.2sec Top speed 161mph

hard and the guy driving it couldn't pull a foot on me. Back then, any of our cars would snack on something like a Boxster, but now... And as for Ferrari, you'd have to build something fairly swift to draft up behind an F12 with your indicator on.

'Our biggest fear was Jaguar building the F-type. We were always glad they didn't, because a beautiful, rorty, British two-seater with a Jaguar badge had all the intrinsic

qualities of a TVR with all the upsides of being made by a big manufacturer. That's a potent combination, new or used.

'Are small sports car companies a reflection of their owners? Yes, I suppose, though whether that's a good thing depends on whether the dictator has an eye for the product as well as the business. Peter had an exceptional eye, and found his focus by building a car he believed in and wanted to own. He was utterly fearless, too. The more people told him not to make his own engine, the more determined he was to do it. That we even attempted it is something remarkable. That we persevered and eventually made the Speed Six engine reliable is something of which I'll always be proud.

'Had Peter's TVR still been around today, I think niche products would have become increasingly important. Brands such as Aston Martin have found great success in creating the One-77 and Vulcan. Indeed, most of the big brands are switched on to the growing appetite for bespoke, special-series cars. Those opportunities are also open to a brand like TVR. Likewise merchandising. Back in my day the Speed 12 was the most profitable thing we

ever did. Obviously not through sales, but because we licensed the rights to Scalextric.

'Being British was a big thing for us, but I think TVR was bigger than that somehow. Nikolai was looking at the supply chain and how we could shift areas of it to Russia and we had been talking to Sukhoi [makers of Russian jet fighters] about handling our composite requirements. Thinking laterally felt right for what TVR was.

'I can't tell you what a privilege it was to spend those years working with Peter, and to become his friend. Of course, it was fine when things were singing and we were making a decent profit, but the ducking and diving when things were tough was also fun. As I've said, Peter wasn't old-fashioned, but I do think he was somewhat Victorian in his attitude, that's to say in his principle that engineering was king. He had this outward-looking confidence. An unflinching belief that he could deliver on the mad ideas, ambition and style for which TVR ultimately became renowned. His favourite car was always the next one.

'With any car like a TVR, there has to be a reason to buy it. Just being different – or not being a Porsche or whatever – isn't enough. It needs theatre, excitement and a sense of occasion. It needs a distinct personality and has to deliver. Achieving that won't be easy, but then it never has been. I hope the new guard succeed, and experience the same joy we did in chasing that goal. There's nothing like the sense of doing something worthwhile, something special that resonates with people. That's what TVR was about.'

TVR TIMELINE



1992 Chimaera

Engine V8, 3950cc Power 240bhp @ 5250rpm Torque 270lb ft @ 5250rpm 0-60mph 4.7sec Top speed 152mph



'BACK THEN,

ANY OF OUR

CARS WOULD

SNACK ON

A BOXSTER.

BUT NOW...'

1996 Cerbera

Engine V8, 4185cc Power 350bhp @ 6500rpm Torque 320lb ft @ 4500rpm 0-60mph 4.0sec Top speed 185mph



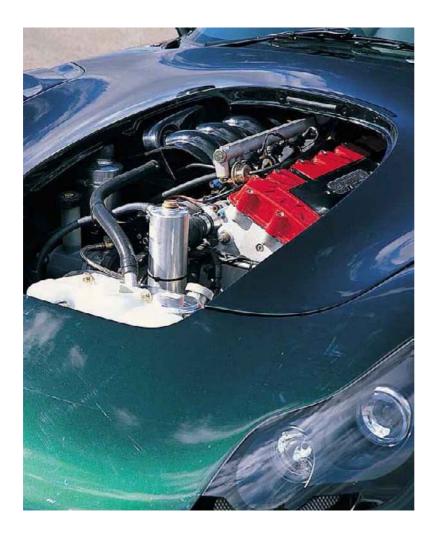
1998 Cerbera Speed 12

Engine V12, 7730cc Power 800bhp @ 7250rpm Torque 650lb ft @ 5750rpm 0-60mph 3.5sec Top speed 240mph



2000 Tuscan Speed Six

Engine Straight-six, 3996cc Power 360bhp @ 7000rpm Torque 310lb ft @ 5250rpm 0-60mph 4.2sec Top speed 180mph



MY BEST MOMENT



It's one of my great regrets that I never raced a Tuscan, for I'm sure it would have been my favourite TVR memory. However, I'm also sure a drive to the south of France and back in a Griffith 500 would have run it very close.

It was part of an **evo** group-test assembled around the then-new Honda S2000, the other contenders being a Lotus Elise and Porsche Boxster. The Griff was magnificent, loping along the autoroutes and romping down the cols. It needed a bump-start in Maçon, but otherwise never missed a beat. Of all the cars in that test, it's the one I wished I had now.

Richard Meaden



2001 TVR Tamora

Engine Straight-six, 3605cc Power 350bhp @ 7200rpm **Torque** 290lb ft @ 5500rpm 0-60mph 4.2sec Top speed 175mph



2002 TVR T350

Engine Straight-six, 3605cc Power 350bhp @ 7200rpm **Torque** 290lb ft @ 5500rpm **0-60mph** 4.2sec Top speed 175mph



2002 TVR Typhon

Engine Straight-six, 4000cc, supercharged Power 440bhp @ n/a Torque 467lb ft @ n/a **0-60mph** < 4.0sec Top speed 215+mph



2004 TVR Sagaris

Engine Straight-six, 3996cc **Power** 406bhp @ 7500rpm **Torque** 349lb ft @ 5000rpm 0-60mph 3.9sec Top speed 185mph

GORDON MURRAY SEES THINGS

differently to you and me. Many would think that a new TVR faces stiffer competition today than the Griffith and Chimaera did in the 1990s. Even Jaguar, with its aggressive and extrovert F-type R, builds a raw sports car. But no...

'TVRs always stood out from the crowd,' says Murray. 'They were exciting cars. Today it's even easier to stand out and be different. The modern sports car has become laden down with loads of complicated systems, KERS, hybrid power, intrusive electronics. I see the new TVR as the last shout for the powerful, proper sports car. We wouldn't have taken on this project if we didn't see eye to eye with [TVR chairman] Les Edgar and his team.

'Our goal from the outset was to keep all the positive sides of TVR and get rid of the negative aspects. Pretty obvious really. Most car enthusiasts, including TVR owners, will know what strengths and weaknesses we're talking about. High on the negative list is the ergonomics of the car. We've had almost all of TVR's past models into GMD [Gordon Murray Design], including the '80s wedgeshaped cars, and we've driven, measured and assessed all of them. They've all got terrible ergonomics. It's unnecessary and gets in the way of enjoying the car. TVR

wants its new car to be viable as an everyday car.'

Presumably, with more than five decades of designing racing cars plus a few iconic road cars thrown in, Murray has a few things to say about how TVRs from the past handled. 'We spent a couple of years trying to sort out the handling on Creighton Brown's [the late McLaren director and founder of McLaren Cars] Griffith and we got nowhere with it. TVRs are unstable in a straight line and that was one of the faults that Creighton wanted us to fix. The problem was that the chassis had so much flex that whatever changes you made had hardly any effect. We spent ages swapping springs and fiddling with damper settings and nothing worked. We also had a couple of Chimaeras at McLaren that we used as mules for the SLR, so we've got plenty of experience of TVRs.'

Enter iStream, GMD's patented cover-all production philosophy that was introduced with Murray's city-car project. We grasped the concept with the T.25 and T.27, but how does it work with a 'proper' sports car?

'At the heart of iStream,' explains Murray, 'is the honeycomb construction and the process that we've developed to produce it. Most road cars use carbonfibre in a monolithic structure, i.e. solid carbonfibre. Or in the case of BMW's i8, solid carbon-reinforced plastic.'

T V R

THE MURRAY MINDSET

Few know as much about how to create a pure drivers' car as Gordon Murray, and his engineering firm is a major player in the development of the all-new TVR. We ask him how he plans to keep the best of the brand while improving the bad bits





'I SEE THE NEW TVR AS THE LAST SHOUT FOR THE PROPER SPORTS CAR'

Modern carbon-tubbed racing cars, including F1 cars, use sheets of material comprising an aluminium honeycomb sandwiched between two sheets of carbon composite. Incredibly strong and stiff. Trouble is, it's extremely time-consuming and hence expensive to make.

'It takes about five hours to make a sheet; we can make a panel in 100 seconds. Equally time-consuming is the bonding-in of hard points into the panels. We need around 140 hard points in the car, to which we'll attach the steering column, seatbelt mounts, seats, suspension and more. In F1 they bond-in aluminium castings, but at the heart of our iStream process we use a steel frame for the hard points that is bonded into the composite.

'Aluminium honeycomb is expensive, so we use recycled paper. Just as effective but considerably cheaper. When we started out on the TVR project, we were going to use a GRP composite for the bread of the sandwich, as we had for the city cars, but then TVR started talking about launch editions having a carbon tub. That was nearly the end of the project as far as we were concerned, and with it our relationship with TVR. No point in working on something that won't be commercially viable. Then, in December last year, we came up with iStream Carbon for the sports car project we've been working on with Yamaha. That changed things and now the first-edition cars for Europe will have chassis made using iStream Carbon.'

In the 1960s, Colin Chapman's philosophy and influence reached all the way to a young Ian Gordon Murray in Durban, South Africa, who when he arrived in the UK in the early '70s to find work as a designer in F1 (with Brabham), immediately equipped himself with a Lotus Elan. He has one today, but his main method of transport to GMD's base in Shalford. Surrey, from his home a few miles away is a couple of grands' worth of Smart Roadster.

'All I really needed to know about road cars was learnt when I built my own road-legal special in South Africa and from driving my Elan. Everything since, from the F1 and LCC Rocket [driven in evo 214] to recent projects, has been putting those lessons into practice.'

The new TVR borrows its general design from another

of Murray's projects - the Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren. 'That car was the first front-engined sports car to feature underbody aerodynamics,' he says. 'The TVR will be the second. Like the SLR, it will also have side-exiting exhausts, so they don't occupy space we need for the venturis. Cosworth is not doing anything radical to the V8 engine. It'll be naturally aspirated with no turbos - something else that's rare these days. The biggest change is that the engine will be dry-sumped, so we can set it lower in the chassis. Not only will the car have an excellent power-to-weight ratio - we're aiming for below 1200kg wet – it'll also have a very low centre of gravity.

'The car will have stunning performance and will be fitted with ABS, airbags and some level of traction control. It'll be unintrusive and able to be switched off completely, unlike the systems in most modern high-performance cars whose manufacturers claim can be deactivated.

'One of the great TVR positives was its quirky interior design. There was nothing else like it on the market. That's going to be the same with the new car – the difference is we're going to make sure every system is reliable. That requires consistency, making sure that each car is built in exactly the same way, to the same process.'

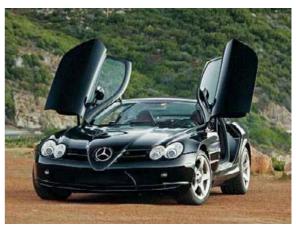
I've every confidence in Murray's ability to design a brilliant car. I share his belief in low weight, simplicity and the importance of not over-tyring a car or making it too wide. The big question is, will Murray and his team be involved right through the development and production stages? The breadth of talent at GMD is impressive, with designers and engineers with experience in high- and lowvolume production. Murray is adamant that GMD will be closely involved all the way. Right up until the point that the customer has the car's keys in his or her hand.

TVR is a strong brand with a dedicated following, but even so, starting a sports car company effectively from scratch is an epic task. If GMD is kept fully involved then there can be some confidence the car will come out right. That just leaves the complicated areas of finance, cash flow, marketing and distribution, plus all the other hurdles that have to be jumped before the first car is delivered.



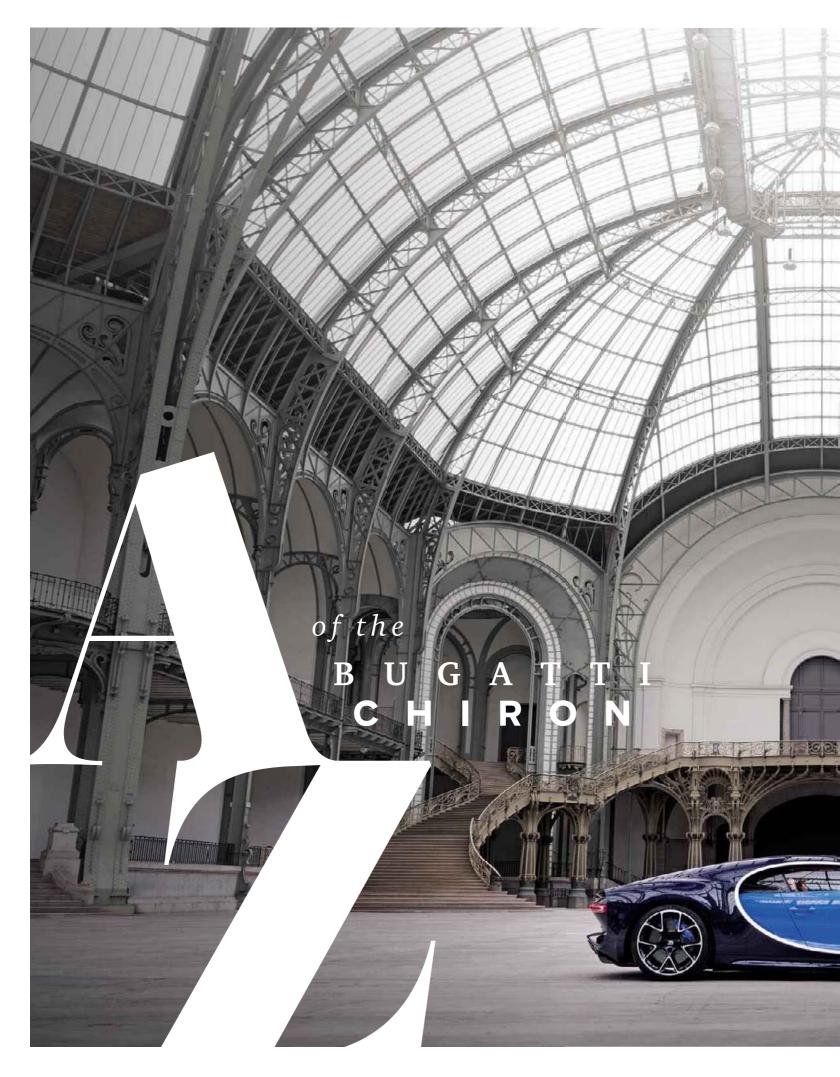


Clockwise from above: Murray's greatest hits include the groundbreaking McLaren F1 (1994), the Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren (2003), the McLaren MP4/4 (which took Ayrton Senna to his 1988 F1 title win), the iStream T.27 city car concept and the LCC Rocket (1992). Could we soon be adding the new TVR to this list? Clockwise from

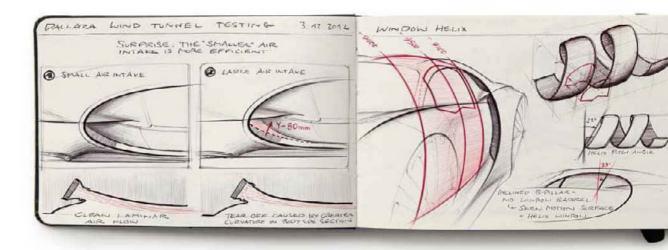














When completely retracted, the rear wing is angled at approximately minus ten degrees and produces a small amount of lift. When set to Top Speed mode, it moves to a completely flat position to be as aerodynamically neutral as possible.

If the Chiron is in Handling, EB or Autobahn mode, the wing is in its aggressive setting but with very precise angles for each mode – in Autobahn mode it's four degrees shallower than in Handling mode, for example. The wing's most severe angle is under braking, where it rotates to be almost perpendicular to the direction of travel and increases the Chiron's drag coefficient from 0.40 in Handling mode to 0.59.

There's also a flap ahead of each of the front wheels that either raises to increase downforce and direct more cool air to the brakes or moves flush with the floor to reduce drag.





Brakes

The carbon-ceramic brake discs measure 420mm in diameter at the front and use eight-piston titanium calipers developed by AP Racing. At the rear are 400mm discs with six-piston calipers. Every gram of unnecessary weight has been removed.

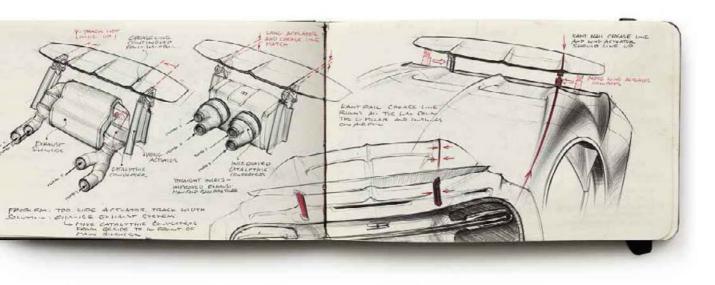
There are three cooling channels at the front to direct air straight at the brakes. A metal shield behind each disc forces hot air out, mitigating heat soak around the brakes, wheels and tyres.





Corner-weighted

Hydraulic top mounts alter the ride height to optimise aero and weight distribution for each of the Chiron's driving modes. As ride height changes, so too does the camber and toe for each wheel, with the geometry change accounted for in the suspension design. Every car will need regular corner-weighting to ensure perfect weight distribution, and the Sachs monotube dampers feature a threaded outer body to allow for adjustment.





Development

More than 30 pre-series development Chirons have been built, and between them they've covered over 310,000 miles while using more than 200 sets of tyres.

Over 300 hours have been spent in the wind tunnel, although there's no wind tunnel with a treadmill floor that can replicate the true effects of the Chiron's flat underbody and therefore how the car behaves aerodynamically at its top speed. The only way to discover how much downforce is generated at the 261mph (limited) top speed was to equip the car with special dampers that can measure the difference in pressure created by downforce. The real data was then gathered during an actual high-speed run and integrated within the final numbers.

Bugatti's rolling road was at its limit with the 1183bhp Veyron Super Sport, so it required considerable upgrades to manage the Chiron's 1479bhp and beyond. The rolling road has its own power source so that the Molsheim estate and the nearby village aren't adversely affected whenever a Chiron is tested.





Engine

Perhaps surprisingly, the W16 does not have direct injection, instead using two injectors per cylinder. One sits close to the valve on the intake tract of the cylinder head, the other, located in the plenum chamber, is used at high engine speeds.



Formation

Every Chiron starts with an engine. Once assembled, it's moved to one of five construction areas where the carbon rear structure is built around it before the front monocoque is moved into position. Once the suspension, wiring loom and most of the ancillaries are in place, the two carbon structures are united by titanium bolts.



Gearbox

The Chiron uses a dual-clutch gearbox built by Ricardo in the UK. It weighs 120kg, has seven forward gears (plus reverse) and is very similar to the Veyron's 'box. However, the oil system, clutch and shift forks have all been modified to cope with the Chiron's extra torque.

Positioned in front of the engine and between the two seats, the gearbox has a propshaft running to the front axle where there is a Haldex clutch and an open differential. The propshaft to the rear, meanwhile, is offset to the right side of the chassis and passes under the engine to an electronically controlled limited-slip differential on the rear axle.



RIDING IN THE CHIRON

Short, bumpy, narrow and lined with thousands of spectators, the hill climb at the Goodwood Festival of Speed wasn't the ideal location to experience the Bugatti Chiron for the first time. But you don't say no to the opportunity to ride shotgun in the world's most powerful production car being driven by Le Mans-winner and friend of evo Andy Wallace.

As inappropriate a piece of tarmac as it might have been, on the hill the Chiron's performance was still breathtaking. I mean that quite literally. The initial acceleration from standstill is impressive. If you've experienced launch control in a 911 Turbo S or a Nissan GT-R, it will feel familiar. But at the point where the acceleration in those two begins to wane, the Chiron just keeps charging forwards at a relentless pace. It feels so alien; your body simply isn't prepared to endure such forces and it becomes difficult to breathe. Mercifully the straights are short.

After a moment or two to regain some composure, the ease with which the Chiron deals with such rabid acceleration starts to sink in. The traction is simply incredible; Andy said the traction control just nibbled at the front wheels momentarily. Full throttle in a 1479bhp car on bumpy tarmac and the traction control only came on briefly once? Remarkable.

Will Beaumont





Honeycomb

Most of the Chiron is made from carbonfibre. But to make the structure as strong and light as possible, rather than just plain old woven fibres set in a resin, Bugatti creates a carbonfibre sandwich. The body and underbody, for example, are filled with different types of foam resin, and this means that even though the Chiron's body is a tenth bigger than the Veyron's, it is no heavier. The monocoque's floor, meanwhile, employs a technique used in F1, where aluminium is sandwiched between two layers of carbonfibre to form a honeycomb structure. This contributes to the Chiron's exceptional torsional rigidity - it takes 36,900lb ft of torque to twist the body by just one degree, which is a similar rigidity to an LMP1 car.







Interior

The Chiron's interior is clean and neat, and there are fifteen cows' worth of hide in each car. Every button and dial is solid aluminium - even the entire centre of steering wheel has been milled from a single piece of aluminium.

The dash is made from carbon and the weave used in the interior is a special construction designed to keep noise down and prevent resonating.



Jet

Each Bugatti customer owns, on average, two-and-a-half private jets. But Chiron drivers who sometimes fly commercial will be pleased to find that the luggage compartment in the car's front end is big enough for an airline-sized carry-on case.





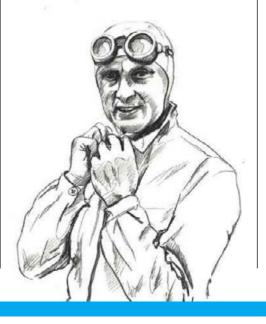
Key

As with the Veyron, the Chiron has a speed key that needs to be inserted into the car's sill to engage Top Speed mode.



Louis Chiron

Louis Chiron's dream was to win the Monaco Grand Prix, but despite living in Monaco and eventually racing Bugattis, he was far from the moneyed elite that made up most pre-war grids. His father worked at the Hôtel de Paris in Monte Carlo and as a young man Louis would earn money by dancing with lonely, wealthy older ladies. Eventually one such lady paid for a Bugatti for him to race and his talent was spotted by Ettore Bugatti, who invited Chiron to drive for the factory team, not realising he was merely the son of a hotel busboy.







Molsheim

Bugatti's headquarters at the Château Saint-Jean in Molsheim, Alsace, will be the Chiron's home, as it was to the Veyron.



Numbers

The Chiron has some big numbers: 1479bhp, 1180lb ft, 7993cc, 261mph, 0-124mph in under 6.5sec, 1995kg, £1.9million, 13 litres of a coolant pumped through the engine every second, 32 injectors, 230,266 square metres of active surface area for the catalytic converters.





Options

Twenty-three standard paint colours with eight tints for the visible carbon will be offered, with multiple two-tone options and two different wheel styles also available. Then there's the interior... Basically, you can have what you want if you can afford it. How does 70,000 euros for a bespoke seatbelt colour sound?

P

Production

Bugatti built 450 Veyrons; the production run for the Chiron is expected to last eight years and result in 500 cars being built.

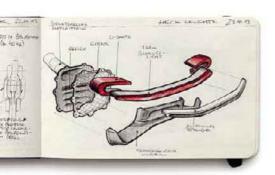


The Chiron has a quartet of turbos, but unlike those in the Veyron, where two were small and two large, the Chiron's are equally sized and 69 per cent bigger than the Veyron's largest. To eliminate lag, exhaust gases from all 16 cylinders feed just two turbos until 3700rpm, after which all four kick-in for maximum torque.



Rear light

The single, uninterrupted red strip that spans the car's rear end contains 82 LEDs and acts as the brake light, indicators and reversing light. It's the metal trim around the light that's even more astounding, though, as it has been machined from a single piece of aluminium.





Double wishbones front and rear with Eibach springs and adaptive Sachs dampers suspend the Chiron. The front and rear anti-roll bars pass through the carbon chassis, so as not to restrict ground clearance; they can also work effectively at different ride-heights. Splines on each end of the main torsion tubes allow the anti-roll bars to be assembled in position. Specify the optional lightweight package and the aluminium anti-roll bars are replaced with carbon versions. They offer the same stiffness as the standard items, but at 1.25kg each, weigh only half as much.

Two rubber compounds are used in each wishbone bush. A stiffer, more elastic compound deals with the rotational forces, while a softer compound handles lateral movement. This combination allows for added comfort without sacrificing precision.

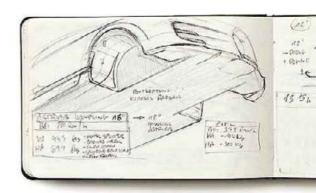




Unsurprisingly, the Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres aren't off-the-shelf items. They have been developed specifically for the Chiron to deal with the stresses that a 1479bhp, 1180lb ft, four-wheel drive, 260mph-plus car can create.

An aircraft-tyre test rig had to be adapted to test the bespoke compound because no road-tyre rig was capable of simulating the required speeds. Measuring 285/30 R20 at the front and 355/25 R21 at the rear, the Chiron's tyres are of a conventional diameter, making them more affordable than the Veyron's metric-sized tyres.





Underbody

The Chiron has an almost completely flat underbody that allows air to pass beneath the car quickly and smoothly. It also creates a low-pressure area that sucks the Chiron to the road without generating any additional drag. It isn't completely flat under there, however. There are strakes that disrupt the air around the front wheels to accelerate the airflow, and then there's the diffuser, into which two hidden exhaust pipes (additional to those visible at the car's rear) expel exhaust gases to increase the speed of the air further. Sound familiar? F1 teams in 2013 did the same with 'blown diffusers'.





VW standards

Every Chiron has to meet the exact same quality standards as every Volkswagen Group car. This includes crash safety, and will mean more than ten Chirons will be hurtled at concrete blocks in the name of global vehicle crash testing.

Every Chiron that is built will have to pass a series of additional checks, too, including completing 37 miles on a rolling road before being subjected to high-pressure water jets for 30 minutes. The car is then driven 217 miles, some of that distance on the road, some at Colmar Airport (33 miles from Molsheim), where flights are paused so a Chiron can use the entire runway for a high-speed run.

Before the car is delivered to the customer, the wheels and underbody are replaced with new items, the paintprotection film is removed and the mileage is reset to zero.



W16

The dimensions of the W16 block in the Chiron may be identical to those of the one in the Veyron, but the engine is all new. The aluminium block has been optimised so that 800 litres of coolant and 120 litres of oil can flow through it every minute.

Despite the larger turbos and intercoolers, Bugatti wanted the engine's weight to remain as close as possible to that of the Veyron Super Sport's W16, so the intake manifold and intake turbo pipes are made from carbonfibre, and the exhaust system and con rods from titanium. As a result of this and other weight-saving measures, the 8-litre, 16-cylinder, quadturbo engine weighs 436kg.

Each Chiron engine takes seven days to assemble and is then tested on a dyno for eight hours before a car is built around it.





Examine

As you'd expect, every Chiron is examined in extreme detail before it's delivered to its owner. An auditor spends six hours looking over the car and should they find anything out of place, the car returns to the atelier to be corrected. After the checks are completed, a member of Bugatti management will inspect the car, and only when he or she is satisfied is it ready for the customer.

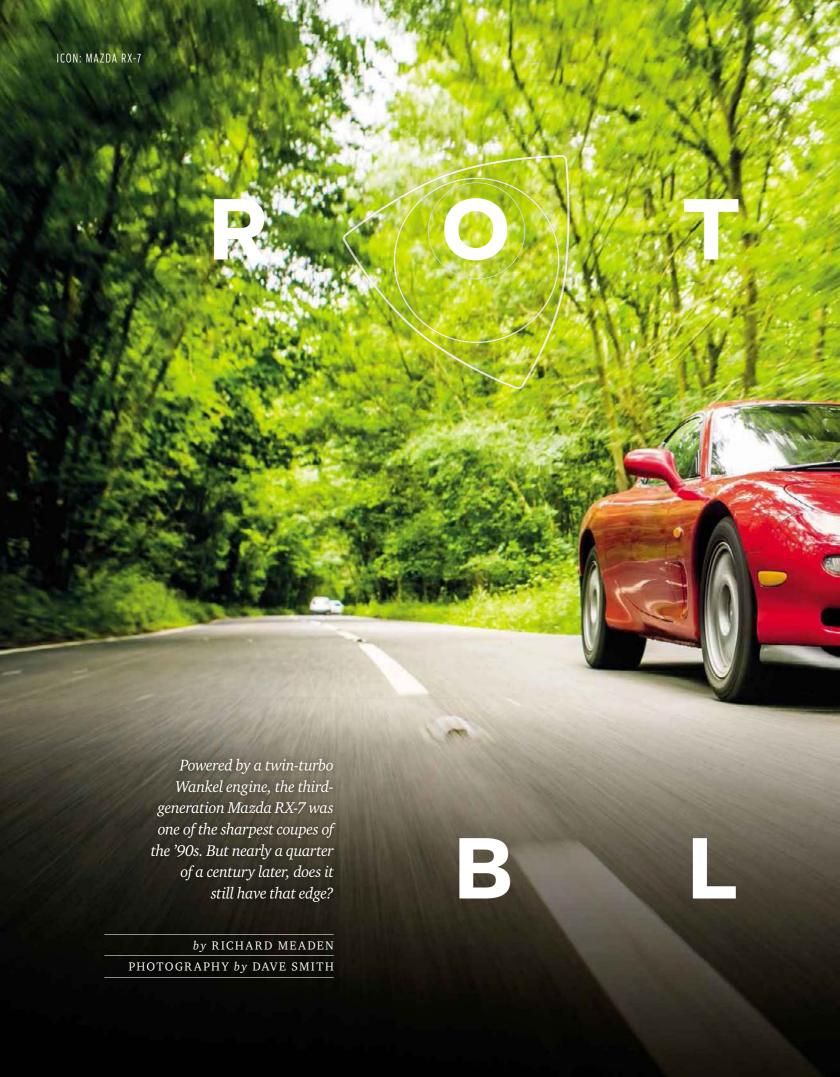


It's widely known that VW lost money on every Bugatti Veyron built. However, this won't be the case with its successor, with Bugatti forecasting a profit for the Chiron - or as the company likes to put it, the new car will 'make a positive contribution to Group results'.



Zenith

The Chiron has no hybrid power system, no F1-style KERS, just the most powerful engine Bugatti could build and a relatively simple carbon tub. So while McLaren's P1, Ferrari's LaFerrari and Porsche's 918 Spyder have shown us what is possible with the latest technology, with the new Chiron, Bugatti is demonstrating what's still possible with traditional methods - if they are taken to the extreme.





the last time I drove a thirdgeneration, 'FD' RX-7. But that's
because it was also the first time.
It was way back in 1993, when the
car was new and causing a stir in
the UK. There was a real buzz about
it, and I'm not just talking about its
audible rev limiter. Even those who would not
normally be drawn to Japanese performance
cars found the fast and voluptuous rotarypowered Mazda very hard to ignore.

The same was true of Toyota's bewinged A80 twin-turbo Toyota Supra and Nissan's slightly more discreet, but no less appealing, 300ZX. That this was also the heyday for Honda's NSX makes it clear how strong the Japanese brands were in the early to mid '90s. Factor in BMW's equally fresh E36 M3 and Porsche's 968 and you'll appreciate this was something of a golden era for fans of fast, front-engined and relatively affordable rear-drive coupes.

As you'd expect from Mazda, the RX-7 was the oddball of the bunch, courtesy of its twin-turbo 13B-REW Wankel engine. With twin rotor chambers (each displacing 654cc) and turbo equivalency applied, the RX-7 was deemed to have a 2.6-litre motor. The unit's compact size and light weight made it easy to package behind the front axle line and low in the chassis for a 50:50 weight distribution and low centre of gravity.

The engine was unusual for its use of twin sequential turbos. Indeed, it was amongst the first of its kind. The concept was simple, the first turbo boosting from 2000rpm, with exhaust gases then fed directly from it into the second, identically sized, turbo to further reduce lag. It was an effective, if complex system that relied on precise electronic control of boost pressures to work seamlessly.

In Japan it was tuned to deliver 255bhp, but in Europe it developed a slightly softer 237bhp at 6500rpm, with 218lb ft of torque at 5000rpm. That still put it on a par with the four-cylinder 968, but some way short of the more potent six-cylinder M3, Supra and 300ZX. Nevertheless, the 1284kg RX-7 remained an appealing and rapid machine, capable of hitting 60mph from a standstill in 5.4 seconds and touching 156mph flat-out. That was quick in the early '90s, kids.

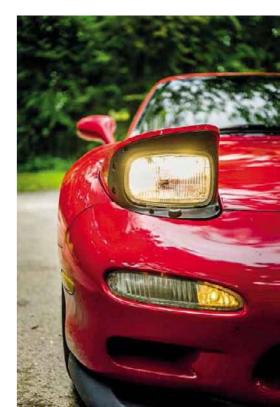
Just 210 of these curvy coupes were officially imported to the UK, and this is one of them. Of course, many more subsequently arrived from Japan in the late-'90s, courtesy of the Single Vehicle Approval (SVA) import scheme, but the FD RX-7 remains a rare sight on our roads, especially in unmolested condition. The *Fast and Furious* movie franchise has plenty to answer for.

Like all cars of this era, the RX-7 seems so small and compact. It might be small, but its curves (evolved from a concept penned by



'EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK, THE RX-7'S FULSOME CURVES







REMIND YOU YOU'RE DRIVING SOMETHING SPECIAL'

Mazda's US design studio) ensure it has plenty of presence. It's funny, though, how your mind plays tricks; cars that you thought looked low and wide and had big wheels don't actually look that spectacular these days. No wonder, when a quick glance at the pretty five-spoke rims shows they're only 16 inches in diameter and wrapped in 225/50 rubber. No matter, for the innate rightness of the shape and the courage of the design mean the FD's looks remain surprisingly avant-garde.

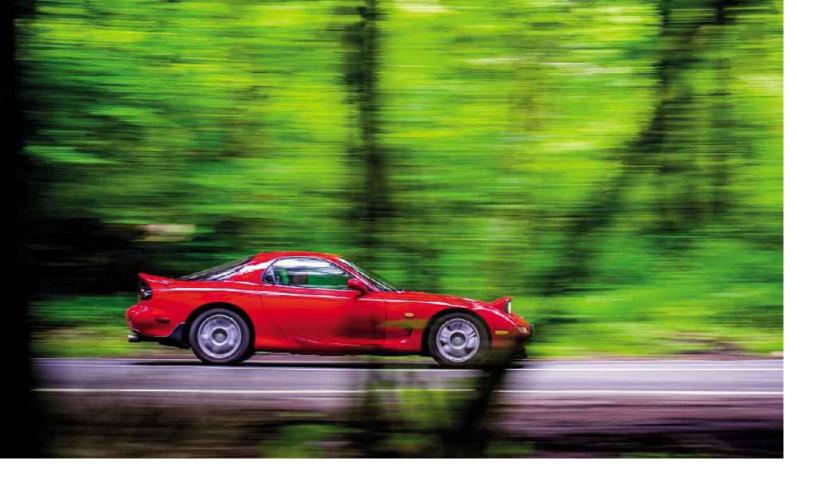
There wasn't really anything like it before, and there hasn't been anything quite like it since. The smoked, one-piece, full-width tail light still makes a dramatic statement, while the pop-up headlights are proper '90s nostalgia. They were actually a necessity due to the low-line nature of the RX-7's nose.

The door handle is positioned unusually high, up above the waistline and nestled against the B-pillar. You open the door expecting the glass to be frameless, but instead

you find a heavy black surround framing the side-glass lenses like a pair of thick-rimmed spectacles. The interior mirrors the exterior with its organic curves, but advances in materials mean the RX-7's black-plastic cockpit has dated badly. It doesn't feel that great quality-wise, but it's a comfortable place to be thanks to squidgy seats that yield nicely, allowing you to sink into them for support.

You don't sit as low as you might expect, and the steering wheel is quite big in diameter with proud stitching that also features on the handbrake and gearknob. Equipment levels are pretty basic by today's standards – leather upholstery, a pair of plastic luggage bins instead of rear seats, air conditioning, electric windows, powered mirrors and a stereo are all there is to shout about. The instruments are simple but really quite handsome, with a bold typeface, a speedo that reads to 180mph and a tacho that reads round to 9000rpm, even though the red line itself starts at an

Above: interior shows its 23 years, but the pedals were laid out by someone who knew what they were talking about. **Left:** pop-up headlights were required to meet regulations due to the RX-7's low nose



'THE ENGINE
HAS A FINELY
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IT HARD'

altogether more modest 7000rpm. Gauges for oil pressure, oil temperature and fuel level sit to the left of the tacho to complete a proudly analogue binnacle.

The view though the windscreen is dominated by curves, the rising line of each extremity swooping up towards you while each door mirror captures a reflection of the long arc of the door tops that flow into the rear wheelarches. Everywhere you look, sections of the RX-7's fulsome shape swell into view to remind you you're driving something special.

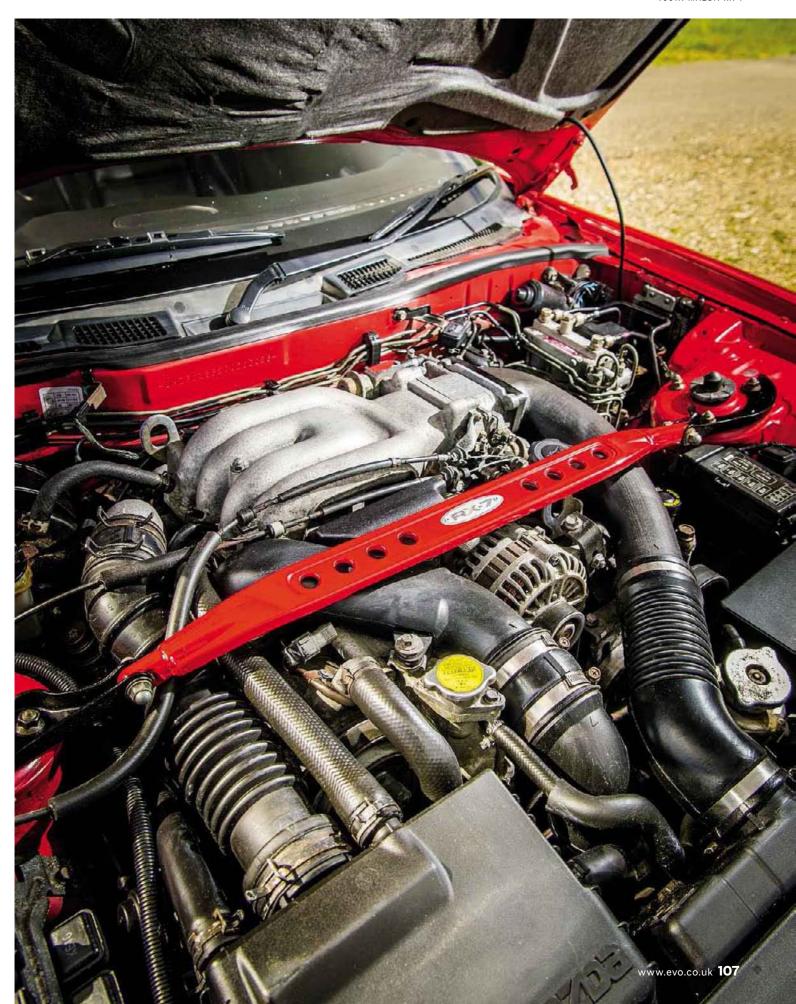
The engine starts with a characteristic chunter before settling into a rapid idle, rotary tips whizzing round at a busy and rorty 2500rpm for a minute or two before the revs eventually settle down. The clutch is modestly weighty; the throttle has a nice measured resistance. The stubby gearlever hints at a snappy, short-throw gearshift that's clean and accurate, but the first few miles reveal the five-speed transmission is blessed with a good rather than brilliant shift.

The steering weight is more substantial than I was expecting, and that's a welcome surprise, for it confirms the sense that the RX-7 is a communicative car with well-matched control efforts and carefully measured responses. The cast-aluminium pedals look attractive, feel good under your feet and are widely spaced across the footwell. The relationship between brake and throttle was clearly signed off by someone who enjoyed heel-and-toe work, and

the exhaust is soon popping and crackling nicely with each easily blipped downshift.

Of course, the 13B motor was what made the RX-7 unique amongst its contemporary rivals, and it's what continues to add curiosity value today. The engineering differences between rotary and conventional internal combustion engines might be large, but the tangible differences from behind the wheel are surprisingly subtle. Yes, of course that has something to do with the motor not being in a screaming state of tune, unlike in the legendary Mazda race cars, but it also shows that while rotary engines are still seen as eccentric, they are impressively straightforward in the way they go about their business.

This car has an aftermarket exhaust, which is a bit more vocal than an OE system, but strip away the snorty soundtrack and you find an engine blessed with refinement and good manners. Rise through the revs and it has a finely serrated smoothness that confounds your senses and encourages you to work it hard. It's a genuinely enjoyable engine; torquey with little lag, it delivers a solid shove from 3000rpm through to 6000rpm. Beyond that it runs out of puff a bit, yet still pulls meaningfully to the red line - signalled by the infamous buzzer as a reminder to take another gear. If you're remotely intrigued by a car's oily bits, the RX-7's motor is special. It doesn't dominate the whole character of the car, but it asserts itself nicely and sets the tone





Mazda RX-7 FD (UK spec)

Engine Twin-chamber rotary, 1308cc, twin-turbo Power 237bhp @ 6500rpm Torque 218lb ft @ 5000rpm Transmission Five-speed manual, rearwheel drive, limited-slip differential Front suspension Double wishbones, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar Rear suspension Double wishbones, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar Brakes Ventilated discs. 294mm front and rear. ABS Wheels 8 x 16in front and rear Tyres 255/50 R16 front and rear Weight 1284kg Power-to-weight 188bhp/ton 0-60mph 5.4sec (claimed) **Top speed** 156mph (claimed) Value now £7000+ On sale (in UK) 1992-1995 (£33,999)

evo rating: ★★★★

for a driving experience that's outside the norm but delivers the goods.

This particular car has clearly lived a life, one in which it has covered more than 90,000 miles. That said, while the dampers and bushes aren't in their first flushes of youth, and despite the front axle running on a different brand of tyre to the rear, it still manages to feel tidy. It rides with pliancy, masking minor surface imperfections and absorbing potholes without too much fuss, though there are a few creaks from the interior plastics! More impressive is the way the innate balance of this front-midengined, rear-drive chassis shines through, and how you rapidly build a clear picture of the sharpness and agility for which the third-gen RX-7 was rightly praised when new.

Funnily enough, of the memories I have of my first drive in an FD RX-7 back in 1993, the most lasting impression is of a car that demanded respect - something the 22-year-old me had just enough of to keep the Mazda out of the weeds. One moment in particular sticks in my mind. The road was damp and chased across hilly terrain. Travelling at enthusiastic but not silly speed, the RX-7 squeezed into a gently curving compression. As the suspension got towards the bottom of its travel, the vertical and lateral loads pushed the tail out of line with little warning. It was one of those moments

caught by luck and youthful, sparky synapses rather than sage car control, not least because these were the days when I was testing my own limits as much as those of the car. It certainly taught me a lesson.

My driving skills - and judgement - have come a long way in the last 20 years, but I still can't help but feel a little wary of this old Mazda for the first few miles. The nicely weighted steering is complemented by a calm rate of response that's typical for fast cars of this era (just under three turns lock to lock) and which makes it easy to confidently place the RX-7 in corners with intuitive precision. You need only encourage it into long curves with a small squeeze of steering input, then relax the lock as the corner opens out. It finds a very satisfying and easily sustained flow.

The balance is beautifully neutral, with just enough bite from the front tyres to generate decent grip and response but not enough to induce oversteer. Likewise, the rear end has strong traction - not a surprise given the rear tyres aren't exactly over-burdened with torque. In short, the perfect weight distribution and sweet ratio of grunt to grip ensures a harmony that lets the chassis work unhindered by dynamic imbalance. That it's not fighting with an engine that's too potent underlines the fact that sometimes less really is more.

Carry meaningful speed into a second- or third-gear corner, chase the throttle from apex to exit, and you feel the car and its Torsen limited-slip diff load up nicely, sitting down on the outside rear as the loads increase and those sequential turbos start to blow. It's at this point I feel something of the RX-7 I recall, for when pushed hard it rapidly makes the transition from just on the limit to some way over it. It's fun and harmless enough in the dry, but I can clearly see how I nearly came unstuck all those years ago.

The brakes are up to the job of fast road driving, with progressive response, but they don't have the capabilities of those on today's high-performance cars, so you have to be a little sympathetic. You'd toast them on track, but then cars of this age weren't developed with as much in reserve as today's performance models.

It's been great to be reacquainted with the FD RX-7. Two decades of rampant engineering progress and sky-rocketing performance mean Mazda's flagship sports car is no longer the force it was back in 1993, but it remains a thoroughly charming, fascinating, intriguing and usefully rapid car. It does things differently – as you'd hope - but it does them well. Well enough to remain the high point for Mazda's rotary efforts. Here's hoping last year's glorious RX-Vision concept makes the leap to production and rekindles some of this RX-7's abundant magic. ■



Enter a new dimension with the Akrapovič Slip-On Line for the Audi R8 5.2 FSI Coupé/Spyder. Innovative design, improved performance, and a truly captivating sound reflect Akrapovič's uncompromising quality and provide a superb driving experience. Such a small change, yet such a huge difference – that's the power of Akrapovič exquisite craftsmanship.

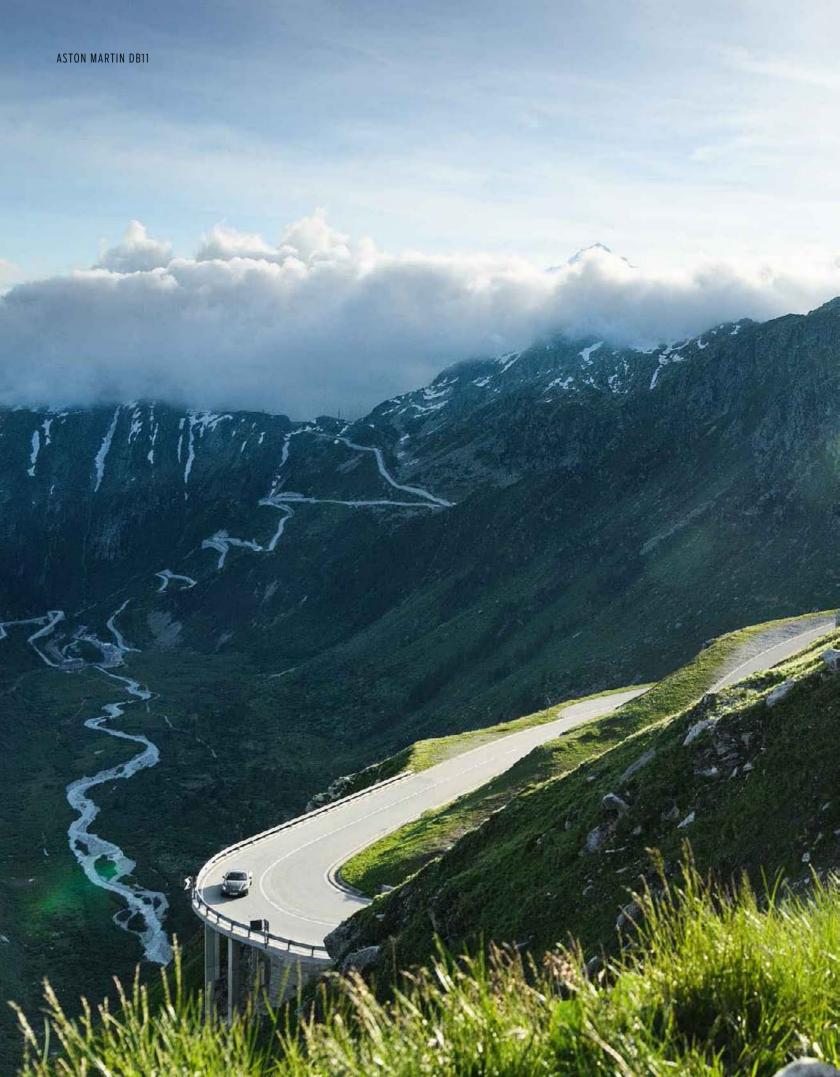


Audi R8 5.2 FSI Coupé/Spyder / Slip-On Line (Titanium)

+ 8.5 kW / 5950 rpm / + 20.0 Nm / 6050 rpm / - 19.5 kg (-57%)







by HENRY CATCHPOLE
PHOTOGRAPHY by DEAN SMITH

AIN'T NO MOUNTAIN...

Aston Martin asked **evo** to deliver its new DB11 to the car's international launch in Tuscany. Naturally, we took the long way

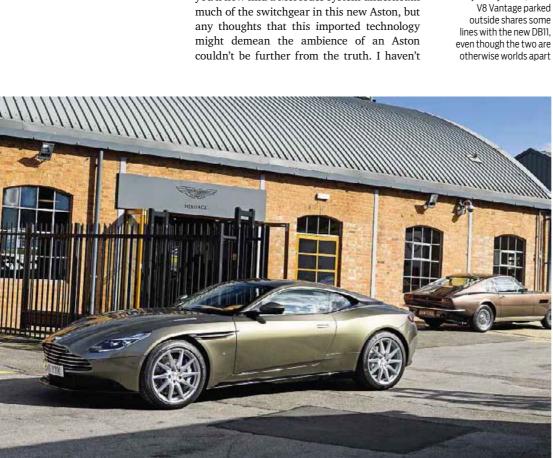


FROM THE FIRST TURN OF THE

wheel, this feels like a different Aston Martin. The knurled rim is familiar as I go clockwise for 'N', then anticlockwise for 'E' before heading back through the rotational clicks like a navigational safe-cracker for 'W'. It's just so much easier to use than any Aston before.

Of course, I'm not talking about the steering wheel here (we'll get to that in a bit), but rather the much smaller, more circular item perched on the transmission tunnel between the seats. Peel away the beautiful brogue leather and you'll now find a Mercedes system underneath

Below: Aston Martin Lagonda Heritage workshop at Gaydon is the first stop on our journey south; 1970s V8 Vantage parked outside shares some





'I haven't even started the engine yet and the DB11 already feels like it is going to be good company'



even started the engine yet and the DB11 already feels like it is going to be good company over the next two days.

I'm currently sitting in the car park outside Aston HQ at Gaydon. Daniel Ricciardo was the first person I saw on arrival (he really does seem to smile all the time) and I've just seen Max Verstappen head out in a Lagonda because The Future was unveiled this afternoon in the slinky shape of the AM-RB 001. Clearly the two F1 drivers are happy about the association. But while Adrian Newey's vision for science fact isn't due until 2018, the DB11 is very much ready now and its big international launch is due to start in a few days' time down in Tuscany. This example needs to be there too, and we have the key, so we're going to do a bit of a grand tour, firstly because this is a new Aston, and secondly because if the '11 lives up to its GT credentials, a road-trip should be a walk in the park.

I add in a 'P' and then select Newport Pagnell from the list. They say every journey starts with a single step and the 50 miles to Aston Martin's traditional home certainly seem like a small hop when set against the 1360 miles we need to cover by Thursday evening. However, as well as giving the DB11 a brief history lesson, these first few miles will give me the chance to try the car on a couple of familiar roads.

The Emotion Control Unit has been consigned to Aston history and there is now just a large keyless key that you can keep in your pocket. On the dash is a row of five glass buttons labelled P, R, Start, N and D, and the middle one glows red as I stretch a finger towards it. What it summons is a new all-alloy, quad-overhead-cam, 5.2-litre twin-turbo V12. Developed by Aston Martin itself, it has 600bhp and 516lb ft of torque and is more powerful than any previous Aston road-car engine apart

from the One-77's naturally aspirated 7.3-litre V12. Yes, it should be very good company.

The really good stretches of bumpy B-road on the way to Newport Pagnell aren't long, but they do reveal some interesting facets of the DB11. For a start, there is a surprising length to the suspension travel. This means the DB11 cushions the lumps but sacrifices a little bit of instant precision as it moves through that travel on turn-in. Over bigger hits, even in its firmest setting, the damping doesn't always control the car completely on the rebound, so it can take a couple of movements to settle. However, the other thing that's very obvious is that the balance of the DB11 is spot on. Despite a certain remoteness, you still feel in touch with the road, too. Interesting.

I park the DB11 on Tickford Street while photographer Dean Smith and I decide how to blend traditional Aston with 21st-century



Aston. It's fun watching the few workers leaving the Aston Martin Lagonda Works building do a double-take as they walk past. There's lots of the One-77 in the DB11's design and I love the way the waist of the car seems to nip in and then the rear arches flare out. The rear of the car in particular is very distinctive and the C-pillar, with its integrated AeroBlade intake, has a little bit of BMW i8 about it (and also a hint of new Vauxhall Astra, but I won't mention that). Lift up the beautiful clamshell bonnet and you can see the slatted wheelarch covers that relieve the high-pressure area around the wheels, the air escaping through a facsimile of the Vulcan's bold side-strake.

We spot a '70s Vantage wearing a brown paintjob called Cardigan Metallic (seriously) and our old-meets-new vision is captured, so Dean and I head head off for the Eurotunnel terminal where we consume a Burger King, see a lot of excited Welsh football fans and finally board a train at about 10pm. Once on

the other side we head for Lille, as Brussels is always best avoided, and eventually find a glamorous Ibis Budget hotel that looks as though it was modelled on an uncomfortable open prison.

WE RECONVENE AT 6AM AND SET

the satnav for our first stop of the day, just north of Stuttgart. Belgian motorways are poor, but the DB11 shows its ability to cosset on this leg of the journey. The attractive, slightly square steering wheel has a button on its right-hand spar that changes the engine and gearbox characteristics, while mirroring it on the left-hand spar is a button for the suspension. Three modes can be cycled through with each button – GT, Sport and Sport Plus – and this morning is very much a GT sort of morning. You can really feel that relaxed, long-travel suspension breathing with the road through the bigger dips. There's something quite Rolls-Royce about it.

'Under load the raucous exhaust note still sounds unmistakably Aston' The seats deserve real praise, too. Their shape is slim and the padding doesn't look like the sort that will overly mollycoddle a posterior, but they definitely work. Even Dean, a man who seems to have a spine more delicate than a daisy chain, is full of praise.

We clear Belgium, then Luxembourg, and finally, mid-morning, the DB11 has a chance to stretch its legs in Germany. Unsurprisingly, at this time of day there's never a clear enough stretch of Autobahn to get near the Aston's claimed top speed of 200mph, but frequent forays in the region of 170mph are easy. Just moseying along, covering ground at 100mph feels good, and the DB11 feels reassuringly stable, never tense or twitchy.

One thing that bugs a little are the brakes. The big steel discs feel great when you're stopping hard, but when you want to just brush the middle pedal, you have to go through quite a bit of pedal travel before you get a reaction, as though the pads are set some way from the discs. Odd.

We branch off north of Stuttgart and head out into the countryside to a small town with a big industrial estate. The last time I came to Affalterbach, home of AMG, the company had only recently been bought-out by Mercedes, and it seems to have expanded almost beyond recognition since then. Smart, angular new buildings litter Benzstrasse and Maybachstrasse and I keep catching glimpses of the DB11's sleek profile in big, mirrored windows. We spot a new E63 estate in camouflage and a white GT R looking like the ideal wheels for a stormtrooper. There's also someone's Porsche 928 'RS' project car, resplendent in what looks like Nogaro Blue.

In addition to Mercedes' contributions to the DB11's interior, the next Vantage will be getting the 4-litre turbo V8 developed here at AMG. At first I was uneasy at the thought of the tie-up, as the two marques seemed unlikely bedfellows, but I'm a big fan of the AMG V8 and I'm now just intrigued to see how Aston will put it to use.



Amazingly, no one shoos us away when we park outside the main AMG entrance, but we can't linger for long and we're soon pushing on for the Swiss border. We hit Zürich at rush hour but that reveals two very different aural delights. The first is a white GT3 RS that treats us to all of first gear and a bit of second. Lovely. The second is from the Aston and happens at every set of traffic lights. As well as cylinder deactivation, the DB11 also has stop/start, and every time the big V12 spins back into life it does so with a wonderfully theatrical highpitched flourish from the starter motor that reminds me of a Lamborghini Aventador.

We're racing the light as we reach Andermatt and the base of two passes. The way to Italy is over the Gotthard, but we're taking a detour and instead heading up the Furka. The reason can be found about halfway up on the eastern side, where a small green sign marks the spot of possibly the most famous Aston Martin photograph of all time. The road has changed a little since 1964, so a replica of the shot isn't possible today. Also, I look nothing like as insouciantly cool as Sean Connery did in Goldfinger, but the DB11 would make a very stylish modern stand-in for a DB5. As it's a final pre-production car, it's even got a big red ejector seat (alright, engine kill switch) button hidden in the centre storage area.

The real reason for coming here is that the Furka is fantastic to drive. It's narrow and bumpy at first, which doesn't really suit this Aston. It copes, but it just doesn't feel very settled. As we race higher, chasing the sinking sun, however, the road becomes much more DB11-friendly. As the tarmac gets wider and smoother, so the DB11 begins to really flow.





Opposite page: the introduction of Mercedes-sourced switchgear is good news for the DBIT's interior.

Top right: Mercedes and AMG will have even closer links to Aston Martin in future models





Below: the DB11 ghosts past the entrance to Ferrari in Maranello. It's much more of a relaxed GT car than the £241.000, 730bhp F12 Berlinetta built here





With the road allowing the car to sit more calmly onto its suspension, you're free to enjoy the beautiful balance that the chassis has.

Ever since we left Gaydon I've been wondering where the button for the ESP is. And one last search through the menus finally reveals that if you select Settings, then Assistance, then ESP in the screen to the right of the rev-counter, you have three options to choose from - On, Off or Track. The big, wide hairpins of the Furka are crying out for a bit of sideways fun and the DB11 is happy to oblige. You need to wait until late in the corner, when the road is flattening away from the apex, otherwise the LSD will still allow the inside wheel to spin too much, but be patient and DB11 slides beautifully. It feels very smooth over the limit and you seem to have plenty of time in the slides.

The ZF eight-speed 'box is occasionally a little petulant on our pre-production car. Especially on part or light throttle openings it sometimes thumps or jolts, but at speed it's faultless and given we've never had any issues with the usually silky-smooth gearbox in any other application, we'll put that down to preproduction calibration issues for now.

With alpenglow spreading over the distant peaks and the temperature plummeting, we head back up to the summit of the pass and past the Belvedere Hotel (which looks like something out of a Wes Anderson movie) before stopping to make the most of the view and the light. Part of me wonders whether we should push on over the Gotthard towards Milan tonight, but in the end we head into Andermatt and find a bar and hotel attached



to a petrol station. Despite the late hour, they even serve us two huge bowls of spaghetti and a couple of large Weissbier. In the background a television is showing Wales sadly losing to Portugal. It seems a long time ago that we saw the fans at the tunnel.

AT 6.30 THE FOLLOWING MORNING,

with perfect blue skies above, we open up the swan doors once more and head for the Gotthard. I'm glad we waited for the light, because it is a truly spectacular pass and one I've never driven before, although I recognise the incredible hairpins on stilts from a story that appeared in evo 035 with a Zonda C12S. The road is even wider and faster than anything on the Furka, but it also feels a bit more mainstream. The original road is still visible in the shade off to the side, and looks like it was zigzagged onto the mountain by a giant Mr Whippy machine, so we drop down to investigate. Apart from a lone marmot, it's deserted, but there's a reason - the whole thing is cobbled. Deciding that it's better viewed from afar, we head back to the main road in the sunshine and descend through a couple of open-sided avalanche tunnels, past a military barracks, and on towards the next border.

At school there was always a sense of relief when the bell went for the end of a lesson with a particularly strict teacher, and I always get the same sensation when I leave the draconian road rules of Switzerland behind and cross into Italy. To celebrate, we stop at a service station and hand over a paltry amount of money for two deliciously thick espressos. Italian petrol stations might be some of the grottiest in Europe, but without fail they always do some of the best coffee you'll taste anywhere. It's as Italian as Ferrari. Talking of which...

We couldn't not drop into Maranello. The place gets more touristy with every visit, yet you can't help but love it. We cruise up to the back gates on Via Musso in case anything wearing a 'Prova' plate is about to leave, but it's all quiet on the testing front. We do get lucky on Via Marsala though. This small street backs onto the Fiorano circuit and although Ferrari has tried to stop people watching through the fence, it's still possible. No one's there when we arrive but 30 seconds later we hear an amazing sound and soon people are flocking. I've never really understood the Corse Clienti programme, but seeing an ex-Gerhard Berger 412 T2 from 1995, I ache to have a go. It was Ferrari's last F1 V12 and the 3-litre engine sends all sorts of emotions fizzing into the hairs on the back of your neck.

Over a pizza later (go to Pizzeria Mirage on Via Claudia, a little bit away from the factory),





Clockwise from above: 5.2-litre V12 has a pair of turbos and is Aston's first turbocharged production-car engine; TFT dials a slick juxtaposition in an otherwise traditional cabin; seats are fabulously comfortable for long stretches; steering-wheel control adjusts engine and gearbox settings





Dean and I ponder what the Ferrari rival to a DB11 would be. At £155k the Aston is, relatively speaking, cheap, but the interior feels right up there with anything Ferrari has. It's much more of a GT than an F12 and not as thrilling as a result, but it's more enjoyably driveable than a GTC4 Lusso (although the rear seats in the Aston are merely token efforts, albeit with Isofix).

Stupefyingly full of mozzarella, we restore some sort of metabolic balance with another espresso and set off on the last stretch to Tuscany. A couple of hours later we're amongst stereotypical cypress trees and rolling farmland north of Siena, and my opinion of the DB11 is crystallising. We go through three different sizes of road in relatively quick succession and its obvious where the Aston is happiest. The smallest, bumpiest roads with corners coming thick and fast are not the right hunting ground, with the big Aston never really recovering composure between each bump and change

of direction. The big engine never has a chance to get into its stride, either.

Step up to something smoother with a white line down the middle and the DB11 is surprisingly adept. You can lean on the front end in tighter corners to the point where you hear the tyres chirrup and yet it never washes out. The big punch of torque, which feels at its most potent around 4000rpm, allows you to work the rear wheels through corners easily, too. Track mode for the ESP also works very well, giving you plenty of slip before it intervenes, and when you throw in surprisingly quick steering and brake-based torque vectoring to help on turn-in, it means this big, 1770kg car can really be hustled.

Where the DB11 feels at its absolute best, however, is in quick, smooth corners. The final run to our destination has long straights linked with fast bends that can be lined up with perfect sight lines. Down the straights the DB11 hauls as well as you'd expect, piling on speed in great, thrilling strides. Although

there's no denying that the turbocharged engine isn't the sort of V12 where you feel the need to hang on for the limiter, under load the raucous exhaust note still sounds unmistakably Aston. In the fast corners you really get to enjoy the manner in which the DB11 works its chassis and the beautiful way you can feel the car move as you get on the throttle from early in the corner. Even at speed it's so nicely balanced that a little bit of oversteer feels very natural.

Aston wants its new generation of cars (of which the DB11 is the first) to be distinct from each other. This is meant to be the GT in the range and it fulfils that role extremely well. It means it suffers in some areas, but that doesn't matter so much because it's got clarity of purpose. And if you want proof of what a good GT car it is, as we arrive at the launch venue, Dean and I genuinely talk about just turning around and driving the 1360 miles straight back to Gaydon instead of flying. I still rather wish we had.

'This is meant to be the GT in Aston's newgeneration range and it fulfils that role extremely well'

Aston Martin DB11

Engine V12, 5204cc, twin-turbo CO2 333g/km **Power** 600bhp @ 6500rpm Torque 516lb ft @ 1500-5000rpm Transmission Eight-speed automatic, rearwheel drive, limited-slip differential, ESC Front suspension Double wishbones, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar Rear suspension Multi-link, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar Brakes Ventilated discs, 400mm front, 360mm rear, ABS, EBD, torque vectoring Wheels 9 x 20in front, 11 x 20in rear Tyres 225/40 ZR20 front, 295/35 ZR20 rear Weight (dry) 1770kg Power-to-weight (dry) 344bhp/ton 0-62mph 3.9sec (claimed) Top speed 200mph (claimed) Basic price £154,900 On sale Now

evo rating: ★★★★



EVO TYRETEST 2016



Good tyres are a vital component of any performance car, improving handling, braking and safety. But which should you choose? Our test of nine performance tyres will help you decide

by DAN PROSSER
PHOTOGRAPHY by DEAN SMITH



EIGHTEEN INCHES BARELY FILL AN ARCH

these days. Hot hatches and high-performance coupes have all graduated to 19-inch wheels in recent times, and now evo's annual tyre test is doing the same. For the first time we're looking at tyres in the size 235/35 R19, tyres that slot into the

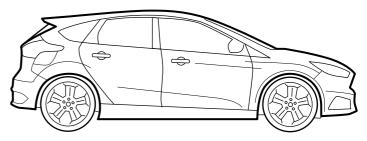
'ultra high performance' category.

That phrase can be a little misleading. You might expect 'ultra high performance' to refer to the most aggressive track-focused tyres, the kind that have just enough grooves to make them road legal, but it's actually the industry term for the sort of rubber a mainstream manufacturer would fit to a sporty road car - think Porsche Boxster or Ford Focus RS.

Given the nature of these tyres the test has been weighted to favour the dry-weather assessments, but nonetheless it has been structured so the best all-rounder wins overall. That means there are tyres here that stand out in wet conditions, and others that excel in the dry, that don't necessarily come out terribly well in the final reckoning. It is worth considering the outcomes in the individual tests, therefore, and aligning those with your own priorities.

We've also weighed each tyre and factored the data into the final results. The heaviest tyre, interestingly, weighed almost 2kg more than the lightest, which is an awful lot of unsprung weight.

THE CAR



To test high-performance tyres you need a high-performance car. With 247bhp the Ford Focus ST is plenty powerful enough, but crucially not so powerful that its output overpowers the chassis. it also steers and stops with enough precision and control that we can really get beneath the skin of each of the competitors.

Importantly, the ST also has a fairly neutral chassis balance, which will tease out any under- or oversteer characteristics from the individual sets of tyres. If the test car was prone to terminal understeer, for instance, we wouldn't learn a great deal about the tyres themselves.

Aside from the tyres the ST was in completely standard specification. Incidentally, we removed fuse 86 to disable the stability control completely but leave the ABS active.



Continental **SportContact 6** (Y 91, 9.8kg) - £152.26



Dunlop SportMaxx RT 2 (Y 91, 9.7kg) - £139.72



Falken Azenis FK510 (Y 91, 10.5kg) - £115.99



Goodyear Eagle F1 Asymmetric 3 (Y 91, 9.6kg) - £150.16



Hankook Ventus S1 evo2 K117 (Y 91, 10.3kg) - £128.95



Michelin **Pilot Super Sport** (Y 91, 10.2kg) - £172.61



Pirelli P Zero K1 (Y 91, 10.2kg) - £210.28



Vredestein Ultrac Vorti R (Y 91, 11.7kg) - £161.72



Yokohama Advan Sport V105 (Y 91, 10.5kg) - £124.60

THE TRACK

Continental's Uvalde Proving Grounds in Texas is a vast facility with countless different tracks and routes, its origins dating back to the 1950s. It gave us all the tools we needed to comprehensively test the tyres in one location - albeit in the company of rattlesnakes, scorpions and lethal spiders, apparently.

Uvalde's brand-new, stateof-the-art dry handling circuit is a fast and revealing track. Fascinating, too - its designers claim just as much engineering work went into its layout and construction as a typical highperformance tyre.

THE TYRES

Nine manufacturers are represented in this year's test. We sourced all the tyres from the wholesale market and used two sets for each competitor: one for the braking tests and the other for handling and subjective assessments, with the least destructive tests carried out first.

All tyres are 235/35 R19. Speed ratings, load ratings and weights are shown in brackets.

Prices from BlackCircles.com, including VAT and fitting.

WET HANDLING

JUST SHY OF A MILE IN length, Uvalde's wet handling course is made up of 11 low- and medium-speed corners, with one or two off-camber bends and a tricky 60mph transition. It's kept watered by a sprinkler system to maintain a constant level of grip. Despite the layer of standing water, grip levels are more akin to a wet road than a skid pad.

The wet handling course gives us an objective result in the form of a lap time as well as an opportunity to make a detailed subjective assessment. To ensure the results were comparable we ran a reference tyre at the beginning and end of the test so that we could correct the lap times to account for changing fuel loads, shifting ambient conditions and my own familiarity with the circuit. The track was

driven in second gear alone to remove one more variable and two flying laps were completed on each set of tyres, giving us an average lap time.

The tyres were judged subjectively for turnin, mid-corner grip, traction, confidence and steering feel. Encouragingly, the correlation between my subjective assessment and the lap times was very strong.

The fastest tyre was the Pirelli, which set an average time of 69.64sec. My notes include the phrase 'most like driving on a dry surface', which meant it gave stable, consistent grip that I felt confident enough to lean on and sharp steering response, too. In fact the Pirelli's grip, traction and braking performance were all good enough that I could actually start chasing a lap time, whereas on certain tyres it was really just a matter of keeping the car off the grass.

The Hankook was the most treacherous tyre. Its time of 73.64sec was a full four seconds slower than the Pirelli's – a huge difference around a relatively short lap. On the Hankooks the ST's front wheels would flare up under light throttle inputs, its ABS worked overtime on the way into corners and in one medium-speed right-hander I had so much oversteer that I was convinced I was heading for the scenery.

With the second slowest time of 72.11sec the Michelin was a second and a half faster than the Hankook, but it also gave unsettling oversteer characteristics in the quicker corners. The Yokohama, by contrast, was almost as effective as the Pirelli, setting a strong lap time of 70.20sec. There was little to choose between the remaining five tyres, which were covered by just 0.7sec.



WET STEERING PAD

THE SIMPLEST MEASURE of a tyre's wet cornering ability is the steering pad, a circle 58 metres in diameter that's covered in a constant layer of standing water. The test is simply a matter of accelerating to the point where the car's nose starts to wash wide, then pulling back a little. I completed seven slightly nauseating laps on each tyre, giving us an average lap time.

Once again, the Pirelli proved to be best performer with a time of 11.60 seconds. The Vredestein and Yokohama were fractionally slower. The Hankook was spared the ignominy of losing another test, but it only bettered the Falken by 0.01sec. The overall spread between the fastest and slowest tyres was three-tenths of a second.





BRAKING AND ROLLING RESISTANCE

THE BRAKING TESTS WERE carried out using a VW Passat fitted with a bar across its nose that connects to a rail. This rail runs the length of the braking course and ensures

that precisely the same piece of asphalt is used each time for absolute repeatability.

In both the wet and dry braking tests the Continental proved to be the best, which reflects the company's commitment to classleading braking performance. From 62mph the Continentals brought the ST to a halt in 36.5 metres in the dry test, compared with 39 metres for the worst-performing tyre, the Falken. The Michelin and Goodyear were the other strong performers in dry braking.

In the wet braking test the Continental recorded a stopping distance of 26.6 metres from 50mph, narrowly beating the Yokohama. The Hankook recorded the longest stopping distance at 30.2 metres, which equates to a residual speed of almost 22mph at the point where the Continental had come to a stop.

Rolling resistance is a measure of the amount of energy that's requires to roll a given tyre over the road surface. Low rolling resistance is good for fuel efficiency, but it's often inversely proportional to grip and traction. The Goodyear was the best performer here and the Yokohama the worst.

DRY BRAKING

	ıyre	Distance (metres)	Score
1	Continental	36.5	100
2	Michelin	36.8	99.2
3	Goodyear	37.5	97.3
4=	Dunlop	37.8	96.6
4=	Vredestein	37.8	96.6
6	Yokohama	37.9	96.3
7	Hankook	38.1	95.8
8	Pirelli	38.2	95.6
9	Falken	39.0	93.6



WET BRAKING

Tyre	Distance (metres)	Score
Continental	26.6	100
Yokohama	26.7	99.6
Pirelli	27.0	98.5
Falken	27.1	98.2
Dunlop	27.7	96.0
Goodyear	27.9	95.3
Michelin	28.5	93.3
Vredestein	28.7	92.7
Hankook	30.2	88.1
	Continental Yokohama Pirelli Falken Dunlop Goodyear Michelin Vredestein	Continental 26.6 Yokohama 26.7 Pirelli 27.0 Falken 27.1 Dunlop 27.7 Goodyear 27.9 Michelin 28.5 Vredestein 28.7

ROLLING RESISTANCE

	Tyre	Coefficient	Score
1	Goodyear	0.846	100
2	Dunlop	0.852	99.3
3	Continental	0.910	93.0
4	Hankook	0.926	91.4
5=	Michelin	0.951	89.0
5=	Vredestein	0.951	89.0
7	Falken	0.974	86.9
8	Pirelli	0.985	85.9
9	Yokohama	1.059	79.9

AQUAPLANING

THE GROOVES IN A TYRE are there to disperse standing water. When the water is too deep for the channels to clear, the tyre

rises up on top of the water and loses all contact with the road. If you've ever experienced this, you'll know how important this test is.

Each tyre was measured for its ability to clear standing water both in a straight line and around a curve. The Dunlop prevailed in both tests, while the Vredestein lost in both. In a water depth of 9mm, the Dunlop began to aquaplane significantly (defined as 15 per cent slip at the front wheels) at 44.2mph compared with just 40.1mph for the Vredestein.



STRAIGHT AQUAPLANING

	Tyre	Speed (mph)	Score
1	Dunlop	44.2	100
2	Yokohama	42.8	96.8
3	Goodyear	42.0	95.1
4 5	Continental	41.7	94.4
5	Falken	40.8	92.3
6	Michelin	40.6	92.0
7	Hankook	40.4	91.4
8	Pirelli	40.2	91.0
9	Vredestein	40.1	90.9

CURVED AQUAPLANING

	Tyre	Lateral accel. (m/s²)	Score
1	Dunlop	3.15	100
2	Goodyear	2.99	94.9
3	Hankook	2.86	90.8
4	Yokohama	2.84	90.2
5	Continental	2.72	86.4
6	Falken	2.69	85.4
7	Michelin	2.67	84.8
8	Pirelli	2.59	82.2
9	Vredestein	2.49	79.1

DRY HANDLING

OF ALL THE INDIVIDUAL assessments in this test, this is surely the most important to drivers of modern performance

cars. Uvalde's dry handling course isn't a racing circuit. In fact, it's been designed to have the same grip levels as a public road and there are off-camber corners and pronounced crowns in the track, too. It's therefore a very useful indicator of how well each tyre would perform on the public road.

This test is split into objective and subjective assessments. Two laps were completed to give an average lap time and, again, these were corrected to account for

shifting fuel loads and changing ambient conditions. In subjective terms the tyres were judged for turn-in and mid-corner grip, traction, steering feel, confidence and stability in high-speed transient bends. Third gear was used for the full lap.

By no small margin the Michelin was the best performer. It set an average lap time of 91.03sec with very good consistency from the first lap into the second. It gave far and away the best turn-in and mid-corner grip, which meant I could commit to corners and really chase the lap times. With so much less understeer than most of the other tyres, it was the most enjoyable to drive on, too.

DRY LAP

	Tyre	Time (sec)	Score
1	Michelin	91.03	100
2	Vredestein	91.25	99.8
3	Continental	91.79	99.2
4	Yokohama	92.24	98.7
4 5= 5= 7	Goodyear	92.29	98.6
5=	Hankook	92.34	98.6
7	Dunlop	92.39	98.5
8	Pirelli	93.02	97.9
9	Falken	93.77	97.1





The Vredestein came second both in my subjective assessments and in terms of lap time. It recorded an average of 91.25sec, dropping just two-tenths to the Michelin. I rated the Vredestein highly for traction and stability in high-speed transient corners.

Third place went to the Continental, which set a time of 91.79sec. It generally gave good grip, traction and steering response, but in high ambient temperatures – up to 35C – the tyres did begin to fade on the second lap, making it half a second slower than the first.

The slowest tyre, and the most frustrating to drive on, was the Falken. It set an average lap time of 93.77sec, almost three seconds off the

Michelin, with a drop-off from lap one to lap two of six-tenths of a second. It was the only tyre that caused me to drop a wheel off the track in a tight, uphill left-hander. It was also the only tyre that I doubted had enough grip and stability to allow me to negotiate the flowing, high-speed section with the throttle wide open. It was the most inclined to oversteer in a fast right, too.

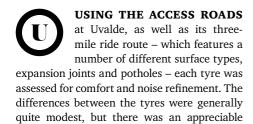
Perhaps surprisingly, the Pirelli was the second slowest tyre in this test, setting a time of 93.02sec. The drop-off into lap two was almost a full second and although turn-in grip was okay, it would start to bleed away at the apex, running me out of road on the exit of corners.

DRY HANDLING - SUBJECTIVE

	Tyre	Score
1	Michelin	100
2	Vredestein	97.1
3	Continental	92.7
4=	Hankook	88.2
4= 6= 6=	Yokohama	88.2
6=	Goodyear	86.8
6=	Pirelli	86.8
8	Dunlop	85.3
9	Falken	75.0



ROAD ROUTE



difference in ride quality and refinement between the best and worst performers.

The Goodyear, for instance, rounded off ridges and landed into potholes with a soft edge, giving a comfortable and settled ride quality. It also generated less tyre roar than the other competitors. The noisiest tyre was the Michelin, which roared significantly at motorway speeds

and made a distinct pinging sound in potholes. It also had the sharpest edge over ridges and thudded heavily over the biggest intrusions.

This test also provided an opportunity to assess each tyre's linearity. A tyre with a firm sidewall and stable grip will give clean, predictable response in a sudden 80mph lane change, whereas one with a softer sidewall



and less stability will give two distinct steering inputs – the first from the front axle and a second when the rear tyres eventually reach a slip angle. This second input can unsettle the car right at the point where you want it to feel secure. Good linearity is typically at odds with ride comfort and refinement, and accordingly the Michelin was easily the best tyre in this regard, while the Hankook was the least impressive.

ROAD ROUTE

	Tyre	Score
1	Goodyear	100
2=	Continental	86.4
2=	Dunlop	86.4
2=	Hankook	86.4
2=	Pirelli	86.4
2=	Vredestein	86.4
2=	Yokohama	86.4
8	Falken	81.8
9	Michelin	77.3

RESULTS

FALKEN 91.6%
The Falken was the slowest tyre around the dry handling circuit, and by no small margin. We could forgive it for that if it shone in the wet handling test, but it didn't. It came seventh. The Falken also lost the dry braking test, but to its credit it did finish fourth in wet braking, bettering some big names.

HANKOOK

A mid-table showing in the dry handling test spared the Hankook the wooden spoon. It was the least impressive by a distance on the wet handling course and it was the only one that required more than 30 metres to stop from 50mph in the wet braking test. It did at least beat the Falken and Pirelli in dry braking, however.

PIRELLI

The P Zero is one of the most commonly fitted tyres on modern performance cars, so why the poor result? The latest-generation P Zero wasn't available in the correct size in time for this test – it's a useful improvement over this outgoing version – and a weak showing in the dry handling test cost it dearly. The P Zero did set the fastest lap time around the wet handling circuit, though.

MICHELIN

94.1%

In contrast to the Pirelli, the Super Sport was masterful in dry conditions, but out of its depth in the wet. It was one of the

slowest around the wet handling course and the least refined on the road route, too, but was far and away the most enjoyable to drive on the dry handling track. If dry-weather performance is what matters most to you, this is your winner.

DUNLOP

1 didn't win any of the box-office tests, but the Dunlop didn't get shown up in any, either. It's therefore a better all-rounder than both the Pirelli and the Michelin, earning it a decent overall result. The SportMaxx RT 2 counts a pair of victories in the two aquaplaning tests to its credit and it's one of the more affordable tyres tested here, too.

VREDESTEIN

94.8%
Beaten only by the Michelin in the dry handling tests, the Vredestein is a fine ultra high performance tyre. It backed up its second-fastest lap around the dry handling circuit with a fourth-fastest lap on the wet handling track, too. Poor results in the wet braking and aquaplaning tests are what kept it off the podium.

YOKOHAMA 95.0%
Tied for second overall with the Goodyear, the Yokohama recorded strong performances across the board. It also set the second fastest time on the wet handling course and showed well in the aquaplaning tests, which sealed an overall victory across the various wet handling tests. The fourth-fastest

lap around the dry handling track, meanwhile, shows what a good all-rounder it is.

GOODYEAR

Rather like the Yokohama, the Goodyear earned its podium position by showing well across the various wet and dry tests. There are other tyres here that give sharper steering response and more outright grip on a dry road – most notably the Michelin – but only the winning tyre offered a broader spread of ability across wet and dry conditions.

For the second year running, Continental triumphs in evo's summer tyre test. The SportContact 6 built this victory on a very strong showing in the dry tests – it was the third fastest around a lap and unmatched for braking – combined with a competitive performance in the wet tests. It's not the fastest tyre here, but there is no better all-rounder in this category.





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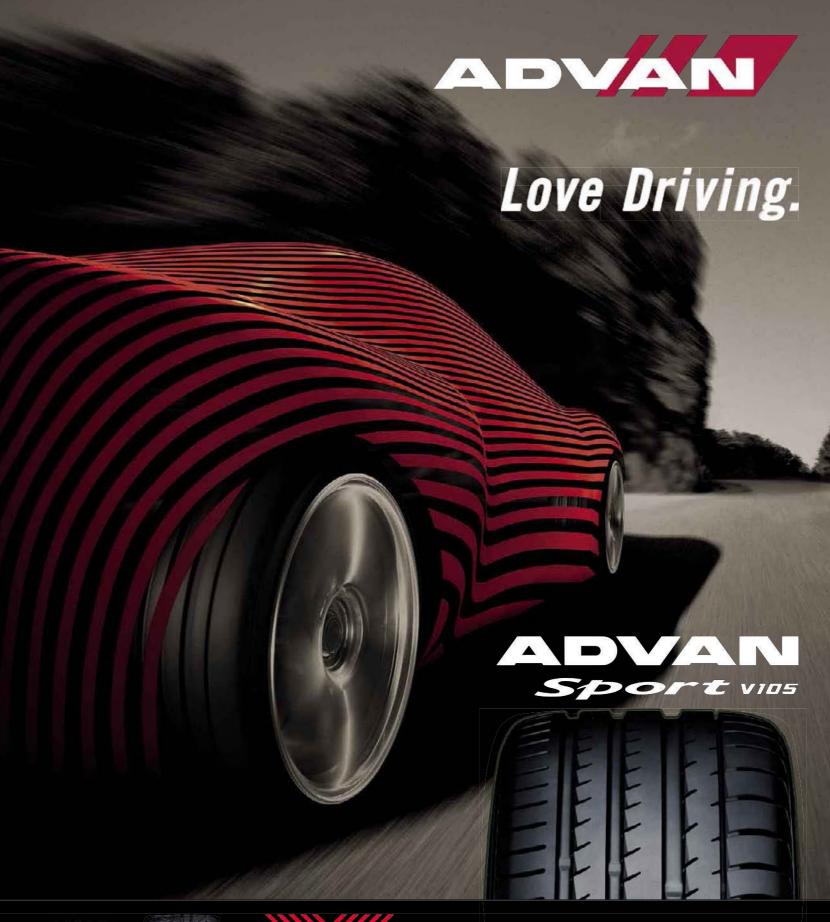


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TEN MONTHS, 18,000 miles, countless traffic jams and, fortunately, enough proper drives to cement the Octavia vRS's place on the **evo** Fast Fleet 'highly commended' board.

While it never delivered Aventador levels of thrills, our vRS did generate an unexpected amount of respect for being near-perfect for the job it was designed to do: carry stuff, lots of stuff, quickly, comfortably and with an element of satisfaction you only get from a car that delivers beyond expectation. And that's what the Octavia did – over-deliver.

I had free rein in speccing the vRS, hence its 'old man' paint job (officially known as Ouartz Grev). Also optioned were the Black design pack (front grille, roof-rails) and a black interior with silver piping (the other option, red piping, was far too extravagant...). The box for privacy glass was also ticked, but not for vanity purposes - if you have a child, you'll know how infuriating it is fixing sunshades to the windows.

The majority of the options spend went on convenience items. The electric tailgate was standard, but the radar cruise control was worth every penny on my daily 200-mile commute, and I've yet to meet anyone who could withstand the heated front or rear seats on their warmest setting for more than ten seconds. The heated windscreen? A no-brainer for wintertime airport runs and early hour office departures on press day. In total, I managed to spend £33,160 on the vRS.

With ZYD's arrival, the most common questions were: why a diesel and why a DSG? The former is easily answered: 1000 miles a week. The latter? Well, evo had previously run two Skoda Octavias and both had been six-speed manuals, so it was time to live with the popular six-speed double-clutch 'box.

While the 181bhp 2-litre engine wasn't at the cutting edge of performance diesels, it still delivered where it mattered. The torque band was wide enough that the 'box wasn't always hunting for the correct gear, unless, that is, you dived into the vRS Driving Mode function and selected 'Eco', which blunted the throttle response horribly.

The Driving Mode menu was somewhere I visited half a dozen times within the first 1000 miles before settling on Sport for the steering - more weight, no more feel - and Normal for the engine and gearbox. Selecting Sport for the powertrain perked the motor up, but it also resulted in the 'box being keen to stay in too low a ratio.

Would I recommend this drivetrain configuration? No, sadly. The diesel with the manual 'box works well, and the petrol TFSI and the manual or DSG are good partners, but the diesel just isn't suited to the ratios packaged into the DSG unit. Give the next vRS diesel more power and the latest seven-speed DSG and it will be hard to resist for big-mileage drivers.

Talking of big miles, it was no great surprise that ZYD was in demand when someone needed to get into Europe without putting their toiletries in a clear plastic bag. Before I'd even driven 'my' vRS, Jethro was off to Genk to drive a Ford Focus of some significance, and on the eve of its departure, Dickie Meaden willingly handed over the key to his Conti GT so he could load up the vRS with Nomex underwear for his latest spa weekend. Sorry, weekend of racing at Spa.

Despite the Octavia sharing much of its underpinnings with VW's Golf GTI, its longer wheelbase and less driver-focused chassis mean it never really gets under your skin. Competent and consistent rather than thrilling and enthralling, then.

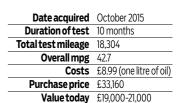
Running costs? The TDI returned nearly 10mpg more than our

previous, TFSI-engined Octavia, and the original tyres had plenty of life left in them after 18,000 miles, too.

Our previous vRSs have left a hole in the fleet on their departure. We miss their fuss-free approach and stealthy day-to-day performance. This time it's no different.

■

Stuart Gallagher (@stuartg917)





Above and right: sensible, yes, but the vRS had a combination of talents that no other car on our fleet could match, and that meant it was always in demand







NEW ARRIVAL

Audi RS6 Performance

The sledgehammer estate returns to the Fleet with more power than ever

FROM ONE ESTATE CAR to another, and VW parentage aside, there is very little that links **evo**'s outgoing Skoda Octavia vRS to our incoming Audi RS6 Avant Performance.

This time last year I managed to hold on to the keys of a regular, 552bhp RS6 long enough to convince myself that Audi's über-estate was a mighty machine to have custody of. All I needed was an excuse to ask Audi if I could run one, the problem being that **evo** had already enjoyed the long-term company of an RS6

when the car was new in 2013, and to run another with nothing new to say isn't really the done thing.

Then, at the end of 2015, Audi announced a new RS6 'Performance' model with more power. And then it asked if we'd like to run one, and being the only person in the **evo** office capable of answering a phone, I said: 'Yes. I'd be delighted to.'

December was spent on the configurator, and after building a £120,000 car from a £84,675 list price, I started again. Daytona Grey was what I really wanted but the photographers' union threated industrial action if I ordered another grey car. Panther Black looked a bit drug-dealer, **evo'**s previous RS6 was red, and white was a 'no' from the outset. Silver? It just didn't have

the impact, so I did what every car buyer does and asked the child what she thought. 'Blue,' she said. 'It will match the house. Now help me with this Lego.' So Sepang Blue it was.

I also swapped the titanium finish on the mirrors, bumper inserts and roof-rails for gloss black, which cost nothing compared to the £3000 Audi charges for a carbon finish.

Inside, I stuck with the standard leather and Alcantara trim. Rear side airbags (£375) were added, so too Audi's Connect infotainment and phonebox (£750, the latter enabling your phone to be operated via the MMI and boosting its signal using the car's aerial). Being lazy, I also spent £750 of Ingolstadt's cash on keyless entry with hands-free boot opening.

Mechanically, the options are

what Meaden calls 'evo-reader spec'. I hope you agree. Off went the air suspension and in its place is RS Sport Suspension with Dynamic Ride Control and a locking rear diff, which for £1000 looks good value. Then again, next to the £9375 I 'spent' on ceramic brakes, anything looks like a bargain, but this car weighs 1950kg and has 597bhp and 553lb ft, and I'd quite like it to be able to stop.

The final bill came in at £98,850. That's quite a lot for any car and a considerable sum for an Audi that doesn't have a V10, but in the first month I've covered 4000 miles in it and every single one has been a delight. You're going to have to drag me out of this car, Audi.

Stuart Gallagher (@stuartg917)

'Mechanically the options on the RS6 are what Meaden calls "**evo**-reader spec". I hope you agree'

Date acquired	June 2016
Total mileage	4049
Mileage this month	4000
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	24.9



END OF TERM

BMW 730Ld

Tech-heavy limo offered us a glimpse of a less involved future – but it's not all doom and gloom

FAREWELL TO THE MOST sophisticated car we've ever run on Fast Fleet. It was a car that wormed its way into our affections, but one that also frustrated at times.

Our BMW 730Ld M Sport was one of the latest, sixth-generation 7-series. Its styling won few friends; it reminded us that the most distinctive big Beemer of recent years was Chris Bangle's sunkenbottom E65 of 2001. The colour (Black Sapphire) attracted praise as often as the leather interior (Ivory White Exclusive Nappa) attracted dirt, and the options (not chosen by me. I hasten to add) lifted the price from £71,350 to £101,305. Yes, you read that correctly - this 7 arrived with £30,000 of options...

On the chassis side, these included rear-wheel steering (£1195), **Executive Drive Pro suspension** control (£2450) and 20-inch M alloys (£1100). The rear-wheel steer worked effectively, giving agility and stability when appropriate, and matched with a direct if not overly feelsome electric (front) steering rack gave the driver more interaction than you'd expect of a 5.25m-long saloon.

It's hard to say what role the partcarbon chassis played in this, but the platform always felt stable and the air suspension well anchored. Through all settings, from Comfort to Sport+, the 7-series remained compliant, resisted roll and gripped evenly front and rear. However, I always thought it disappointing that

the only 'M' in this 730Ld was the wheels, the paint and some trim - if you thought it had unique 'sporty' suspension, you'd be wrong.

On the inside, it had a brilliant Bowers & Wilkins surround sound system (£4675), but perhaps the most talked about feature was the gesture control for the infotainment. which at £160 didn't cost much but provided a demo-to-your-matesonce novelty piece. Simply put, it did nothing that pushing a button or using voice control couldn't do better (and often quicker and safer).

On the positive side, BMW has evolved its head-up display (£1150) into the best in the business, and the panoramic roof (£1695) and a Rear Seat Comfort pack (£4815, including rear TV screens and massaging seats) brought a level of pampering to match anything from Rolls-Royce.

At £2450, the laser headlights cost as much as 2191 litres of fuel. However, they were exceptional and

truly turned night into day. I tended to disable the auto-on function, though, as I've yet to find one that reacts as quickly as my little finger.

Speaking of functions, I tried all of them in the 7391 miles we had the car - every system, setting and level of 'assistance'. This included Active Cruise Control, Stop&Go, Steering and Lane Control Assistant, Lane Departure Warning, Lane Keeping Assistant, Active Side Collision Protection, Approach Control Warning, Crossing Traffic Warning and Person Warning with City Braking function. Many of the systems combined offer 'partially autonomous driving', and there's absolutely no doubt that the 7-series offers a glimpse into the future.

Active Cruise Control with Stop&Go worked excellently, but I could never get on with the lane control. In short, I couldn't switch off my own inclination to correct the path the car was taking, which







meant the car and I were often battling against each other. Also, the car tracked brilliantly, so I never felt I needed any real assistance...

In terms of the numerous approach-control and protection systems, they did indeed create a virtual safety blanket around the car that informed you of many obstacles, including cyclists. However, I found the highest 'gain' setting often prevented movement or showered me with warnings, so I wound it right back so that my own senses would provide the majority of the early warnings while the car kept a low level of intervention should I miss anything.

Of course, the question is why the car offers such a high level of automation and active safety tech when it works best when the human still plays the major role in the process. The answer is that it is to acclimatise us to systems that will no doubt evolve to be fitted to all cars in the future. And yes, I have no doubt this will be the case.

Costs-wise, a nasty puncture saw the car having to be trailered to a dealer for a rather dear replacement tyre, but an average of 33.2mpg seemed pretty respectable.

In summary, then, our time with the 7-series will be defined by how it gave us a glimpse into the future. But, ironically, it wasn't the electronics that gave us the most reason to be optimistic – it was the nuts and bolts (and carbon) of the chassis. If the next M5 uses a version of this chassis, it will inherit a superb platform on which the M division wizards can work their magic.

Date acquired	December 2015
Duration of test	7 months
Total test mileage	7391
Overall mpg	33.2
Costs	£242.40 tyre
Purchase price	£101,305
Value today	£58,000-65,000

Honda Civic Type R

Just two driven wheels, turbo lag, only 306bhp – can the Civic really cut it among the new breed of super-hatches?

IF YOU RECENTLY watched a particular episode of that muchtalked-about Sunday-night light entertainment show featuring cars, you may have seen the Honda Civic Type R make a fleeting appearance in the middle of an advert for the new Ford Focus RS.

Blink and you'd miss it, but the upshot was that the CTR feels 'old fashioned'. Why so? Because in a drag race on a damp runway, the 306bhp, front-wheel-drive Civic is slower off the line than the 345bhp, four-wheel-drive Focus and the 376bhp, four-wheel-drive Mercedes-AMG A45. Go figure. Oh, and also because it hasn't got a Drift mode.

Well, call me old fashioned too, but I can't say I've found myself wishing the Honda had another 40bhp or more, or the all-wheel drive that would be needed to deploy it properly, or a button that would likely see me black-flagged at a trackday. None of these are vital ingredients for a great hot hatch, and to my mind the purer, rawer driving experience the Civic offers is more than compensation for the hit you'll take on a standing start.

Not that the Type R is sluggish off the line, anyway. We recently

timed ours at 5.4sec to 60mph (see youtube.com/evo) against Honda's claim of 5.7sec to 62mph – and this was when the car was still on its well-worn original Continental tyres, not the new Michelin Cup 2s.

One thing about the Civic that I suppose you could reasonably consider to be old fashioned is its turbo lag, which can result in a nothing-nothing-whumph! style of power delivery. I say 'can' because this only really happens if you haven't been giving your gear selection enough thought, or if you've deliberately chosen to run through the full length of a single gear to experience the rush of boost as the turbo comes on song. Personally, I like the way the Civic's turbocharging is a feature rather than something that's been disguised, and the way it means getting the best from the engine requires investment from the driver. Some might call it old fashioned, I suppose, but I call it character.

Ian Eveleigh

Date acquired	January 2016
Total mileage	8716
Mileage this month	815
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	32.2





BMW E46 M3

M-division brakes never were the best, but now our E46 M3 stops like it goes

RIGHT OFF THE BAT, THE brakes on my M3 were bugging me. The pads were old, the discs lipped and in general they just weren't powerful enough. I thought about replacing them with BMW parts, but the more I looked into it, the more a proper big-brake upgrade tempted me.

Obsessed with the huge Alcon brake kit fitted to the Litchfield GT-R we featured last year (**evo** 220), I looked into what the brand offered for the E46. A few phone calls and a trip to Litchfield's workshop later and the M3 was fitted with a set of Alcon's Advantage Extreme brakes.

At £5071 (£2761 front, £2310 rear) they require a serious outlay, but having already done a trackday in the car with them fitted, I'm certain it has been completely worth it. The M3 has been transformed, not just in its outright braking performance, but also in how it behaves under heavy braking. It now feels settled when scrubbing off large amounts of speed, while the pedal feel is progressive and the performance on offer monumental. The result is an increased faith in the car's ability to stop, which means I feel much more comfortable driving it harder.

It's not surprisingly, really. The Alcon kit uses six-piston calipers at the front and four-piston calipers at



the rear, which is plenty for the M3. Also included are low-noise pads designed to operate when cold and eliminate squeal. I've driven the M3 through London and they haven't made a peep, which is impressive given the size of the discs (365mm at the front, up from 325mm).

Litchfield's technicians worked their magic while fitting the kit, bleeding the lines and getting the pedal feel just right. They advised one more trip back to the workshop for a final bleed, so that's on the cards soon. First up, though, my car isn't loud enough and I'm a big showoff, so it's time for a new exhaust.

Hunter Skipworth (@HunterSkipworth)

Date acquired	February 2016
Total mileage	83,002
Mileage this month	801
Costs this month	£5071 brakes
mpg this month	21.0

END OF TERM

Audi RS Q3

Expensive but armed with several very desirable traits, is the RS Q3 'evo' enough to get a wholehearted recommendation?

FOR WEEKS I HAD BEEN avoiding all forms of communication with evo HQ. Technical problems with email, terrible phone signal, baby changed the router settings, natural disasters, gone racing – I wheeled out everything I possibly could from the Dickie Meaden book of excuses. In my case it wasn't because I was late delivering some work, however, but because I was trying not to have a conversation about handing back the Audi RS Q3.

It was a different story from when the RS Q3 first arrived. Initially I was a little disappointed, specifically with how small it was for occupants and in terms of load space (though at £50,095 after options, up from £46,120 basic, its price was anything but small). At six-foot-two I found the pedals were too close and the wheel too far away. I was also worried that I wouldn't be able to carry all my photography kit around,



and that proved to be a legitimate concern. But you can't hold it against the RS Q3 – this is simply the size of cars in its segment.

Aside from these initial gripes, the ownership experience was pure class. Every journey felt special. A high seating position may not be for everyone (including most of the staff at **evo!**), but I found it really suited my driving style. Overtakes instantly became safer, hedges lining roads less obtrusive and sitting in traffic



BentleyContinental GT V8 S

A late-night/early morning dash develops into the kind of journey the Conti could have been tailor-made for



almost bearable. The drawbacks to the height in dynamic terms were obvious: there was more roll and pitch than you'd get from a regular car, but even this wasn't half as bad as you might expect. Moreover, I thought the ride would be too harsh on the 20-inch alloys, but it was genuinely much better than the Octavia vRS, Focus ST and RS4 that I'd run previously.

As with the RS4, the centrepiece of the RS Q3 was the engine. I'd

wager that if you stuck its 335bhp 2.5-litre five-cylinder TFSI unit into something very ordinary – say, a Peugeot 308 – I'd most likely grow to like that, too. It was so refreshing to drive a new car boasting an engine teeming with character instead of one less inspiring than mowing the lawn. With short gear ratios (seventh being much taller for motorway use) and lightning-quick changes from the S-tronic double-clutch gearbox, seeing the needle smash

into the 7000rpm red line was a common sight and an utterly joyous aural experience. Admittedly, fuel consumption wasn't stellar, but beyond a punctured tyre, the RS Q3 was relatively cheap and easy to run and very dependable, too.

As you've likely gathered, I really grew to like the RS Q3. It was far too small for my needs as a new dad, automotive photographer and keen mountain-biker, but if you're in the market for a hatchback-sized SUV

with the performance to embarrass most sports cars, and with an engine to die for, I can heartily recommend the RS Q3. It will be sorely missed. ■

Dean Smith (@evoDeanSmith)

Date acquired	October 2015
Duration of test	9 months
Total test mileage	12,344
Overall mpg	24.7
Costs	£171 tyre
	£16 oil (one litre)
Purchase price	£50,095
Value now	£37000-40000

■ **Bentley** Continental GT V8 S

SOMETIMES A GREAT drive sneaks up on you when you least expect it.
That's what just happened with the Bentley, after a tedious journey back from a historic-racing weekend at the French circuit of Dijon-Prenois.

I didn't drive the Conti GT out to Dijon as logistics dictated it was better to travel with the team, but it was waiting for me back at Raceworks Motorsport's workshops at godawful o'clock on Monday morning. We were reunited after a five-hour journey through France, a delightful three-and-a-half hour wait at the Chunnel and a two-hour trip north from Folkestone. By the time I sank into the embrace of the Bentley's seat, it was just after 3am.

As you can imagine, enthusiasm for anything other than sleep was in short supply. The sound of the V8 burbling on its deliciously vocal warm-up fast idle was as impressive as always, but with every drop of adrenalin consumed over the previous three days, I just wanted to

get myself home swiftly and with an abundance of soothing comfort.

Heated seat set to a gentle simmer, Naim hi-fi delivering some chilled-out tunes, the Conti swept along deserted roads bathed in the soft light of the emerging dawn. Oh, and a brilliant wall of lumens, courtesy of some of the best headlights I've ever sat behind. The whole journey was a delight.

By the time I arrived home it was 4.30am, the birds were in full song and the world was waking up.

Any car would have got me there, but none I can think of would have done so with such a well-judged combination of qualities. Fast cars are terrific. Fast cars that can also do serene are truly wonderful.

Richard Meaden

(@DickieMeaden)

Date acquired	February 2016
Total mileage	7761
Mileage this month	1946
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	20.9

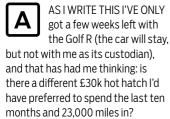




■ Volkwagen Golf R

Volkswagen Golf R

As our road test editor's time with the R nears an end, is it still the hatch he'd choose?



There's certainly no shortage of alternatives, which shows how healthy the hot hatch sector is right now. There's a pretty useful variety of quick hatches out there, too, from the fairly civilised Golf R to the decidedly uncivilised Honda



Civic Type R. I happen to think the bewinged Honda is spectacularly good fun to drive, but while I don't usually let image or styling influence my opinion of a car that much, I just don't get on with the way it looks.

The BMW M135i, soon to become the M140i, is a more grown-up sort of hot hatch, rather like the Golf R, and in its own way it's very good to drive, too. You'll have guessed from the mileage I've racked up on the Golf within the space of a year that I do a lot of motorway driving, mostly between home in Bristol. the office

near Bedford, and Heathrow, and I reckon the M135i would have been a good companion. Given the choice I'd still take the VW, though.

What about the Focus RS? It's a mighty hot hatch alright, and on circuit the Golf just wouldn't have a hope of staying in touch. If I didn't do quite so many motorway miles I might well pick the Ford over the VW, but as it is, the Golf is a better fit for my lifestyle. I guess that says I shouldn't run a hot hatch as my daily at all. It definitely says I shouldn't run a hardcore, track-focused hot hatch.

And on that note, find out which hardcore, track-focused hot hatch I'm switching into next month.

Dan Prosser (@TheDanProsser)

Date acquired	September 2015
Total mileage	23,500
Mileage this month	2700
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	31.0

Vauxhall VXR8 GTS

Our Aussie-developed muscle car isn't quite the anachronism it seems

FOR WHAT'S PERCEIVED to be an old-school saloon – in fact I described it as such last month – the VXR8 GTS has a lot of technology. It's not intrusive, so it's easy to just jump in the big Vauxhall and drive, but it's worth paying attention to what's available to the driver in order to find the sweet spot in all the settings.

Beneath the tech is some lovely and heavy-duty engineering. The basics are that the VXR8 GTS has that 'LSA' 6.2-litre pushrod V8 with two valves per cylinder. It's boosted



Peugeot's hottest hatch joins the Fast Fleet so we can find out whether this left-field choice can justify a place on your shortlist

THE ADVANTAGE OF talking over the phone rather than face-to-face is that, if you're a raging buffoon like me and you haven't the foggiest idea what the cleverer person is waffling on about, you can hide your baffled look and just say 'oh right' – all while googling what it is that the cleverer person just said to you.

This time around that cleverer person was managing ed Gallagher, and what he said was: 'Your new long-termer is here. It's a 308 GTi.'

Cue an 'oh right' and a very speedy change of subject as I didn't have Google to hand. Could it be that I'd misheard and he'd said 'GTS'? Perhaps Ferrari wanted to promote its approved pre-owned network and supply us with a 308 GTS for a year. Seemed unlikely.

Googling '308 GTi' later made for mixed emotions. For a start I was

embarrassed that I didn't know Peugeot made a 308 GTi (I couldn't even have told you what a normal 308 looked like). Thing is, Peugeots are so far off my radar because I'd never buy one. I don't get the big deal with the 205 GTI as it was before my time, and Meaden can tell me how great his 106 Rallye is until he's blue in the face, but to me a 106 is still a car you buy in your 80s to get in the way of other road users with.

However, some people are getting excited because Peugeot is finding its mojo again. Certainly the 208 GTi we had on eCoty last year was a hoot to drive, and by all accounts the same could be expected of the 308. I was intrigued.

So here it is, then, in all its Magnetic Blue glory. Wearing red lipstick on its lower front grille and sitting on outrageous 19-inch alloys that barely squeeze over the 380mm front brake discs, it certainly looks like it means business. Those who know their Peugeots will have spotted that this is the vindaloo of the GTi range, the snappily named 'GTi 270 by Peugeot Sport'. Upgrades over the lesser 'GTi 250 by Peugeot Sport' include those 19-

inch wheels, which are lightweight items saving 2.3kg at each corner and are shod with sticky Michelin Pilot Super Sport tyres. You also get 20bhp more, for a tasty 266bhp at 6000rpm, and a Torsen limited-slip diff. Peugeot Sport is clearly not messing about with this hot hatch.

Standard features are very impressive indeed. In fact the only optional extra on our car is SOS assistance at £240, bringing the total to £28,695. Standout features include a set of lovely bucket seats in leather and Alcantara, a panoramic glass roof, a 9.7-inch touchscreen, satnay, full LED lights, cruise control, a rear-view camera... the list feels almost endless.

So, on first encounter all is well and I'm interested to see how we get on. The 308 doesn't look any smaller than my outgoing RS Q3 inside, so life shouldn't be any more compromised. We'll have to see.

■

Dean Smith (@evoDeanSmith)

Date acquired	July 2016
Total mileage	2456
Mileage this month	34
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	28.9

Vauxhall VXR8 GTS

by an Eaton supercharger to produce 576bhp at 6150rpm and 545lb ft at 3850rpm. The car weighs 1834kg (we'll verify this on our scales soon) and features MacPherson struts up front and multi-link rear suspension. There's a mechanical LSD, of course. The brakes are huge – AP Racing sixpot calipers up front with 390mm discs and four-pots at the rear with 372mm discs.

So far, so simple. However, the GTS also has 'Generation 3 MRC' (Magnetic Ride Control), which adjusts each damper every 1000th of a second, plus brake-enabled torque vectoring and a 'Driver Preference Dial' that can be switched between Touring, Sport, Performance and Track modes. Each setting affects the traction control, stability control, steering weight, torque vectoring, the bimodal exhaust system and the MRC. Touring mode is relatively tame and quiet; Sport makes for

a very slightly firmer ride, ups the noise and increases steering effort (it's a small and well-judged change); Performance introduces the torque vectoring and reduces the traction and stability intervention; and finally Track gives a bigger step in terms of the damping. Helpfully, the programming for the automatic 'box is separated out, so you can

run in Performance for the added agility but not sound like you're on a qualifying lap in a V8 Supercar.
So far I've mostly been in Sport, although I'm starting to experiment with Performance to see if the

So far I've mostly been in Sport, although I'm starting to experiment with Performance to see if the torque vectoring makes a big difference. At modest road speeds, the difference isn't vast, but I'm hoping the next few weeks will



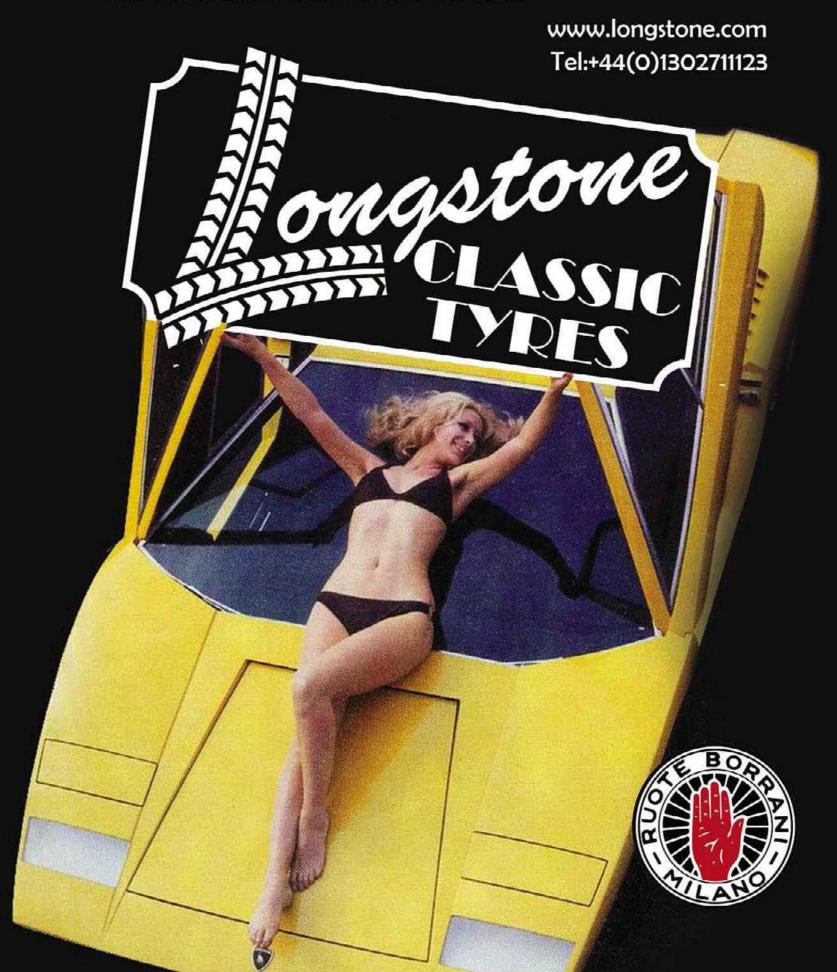
provide a bit more freedom to learn more. Maybe I'll have a play with the EDI (Enhanced Driver Interface) system too, which can display G-force, oversteer angle in degrees (how cool is that?) and anything else you can imagine plus a little bit more. It'll even data-log laps for you to interrogate later.

As well as all this performance stuff, there's also a collision-warning system, blind-spot assist... the VXR8 will even park itself. But for all that, it feels honest and requires plenty of thought to drive quickly and neatly. It's a unique mix of traditional V8 thrills and modern tech.

Jethro Bovingdon (@JethroBovingdon)

Date acquired	June 2016
Total mileage	12,928
Mileage this month	1400
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	17.8

PURVEYORS OF UNUSUAL RUBBER EQUIPMENT FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT AT THE WEEKEND







I'VE SOLD THE IMPREZA. Had to. I miss it, too, which is dumb because I barely drove it, my wife hated it, and it did its best to cost me more in the short period I owned it than my 911 SC has.

But let's rewind. I bought the Impreza to drive to the Monte Carlo Rally in – a bargain rally weapon bound for one of the most fabled motorsport events of all time. It was a feature idea nominated by Jethro Bovingdon and seconded by others in the office. When it became clear (by the speed at which our publisher left the building when I asked if **evo** could buy a car) that the only way the story could happen was for me to buy the car, I duly sourced and bought V209 NVX.

Secretly I was happy about this – I lusted after Imprezas during the early part of my career as a motoring journalist (in 1997) and promised myself that I'd own one some day.

The deal was done a couple of days before the 2015 Monte, so I quickly fitted a set of Vredestein winter tyres and gave the car a basic health-check, then the next day colleague Will Beaumont picked it up for the long drive. Everything was

'I tore around for two months in an Impreza that I now didn't want to sell. Why? Because I was having too much fun'

going fine – until about ten minutes into the journey, when the car overheated. Catastrophically.

It was taken to Paragon Auto in Northampton. They diagnosed a blown head gasket, so the trip was cancelled and the Impreza returned to the office on a low-loader.

It remained in the car park for eight months. I did my best to ignore it while the bills racked up on the SC, but then as the bills got even bigger, it was clear that I had to sell the Impreza. Problem was, it was unlikely I'd sell it with a broken flat-four.

A mate suggested I attempt to repair the head gasket with Steel Seal – a pour-in solution – and with nothing to lose I gave it a try. Against

expectations, it fixed the leak. Not only that, the Steel Seal held as I tore around for two months in an Impreza that I now didn't want to sell. Why? Because I was having too much fun.

Then an email arrived from Dom Lloyd. It read like this: 'Been taking a keen interest in your experiences with your Impreza, so you can imagine how surprised I was flicking to your latest write-up and seeing the number plate for the first time... She was my first experience with a Scooby, purchased brand new from the Subaru dealer in Chelmsford in November 1999.

'I remember so well the day I collected the car. I arrived at the dealership a wide-eyed 25-year-old who had parted company with a Mondeo ST24. Paperwork done, I literally ran to the car and drove straight to Scooby Sports in Basildon to have the rear silencer fitted.

'I have often wondered if she was still on the road. It always comes up in conversations in the pub about how it was the car I learned to fly in! If you do ever decide to sell her, please let me know, as it would make a great base for my 14-year-old son to tinker/restore and learn

and enjoy everything Scooby.'

You can imagine what came next. Ever the journalist looking for a good cyclical story (OK, I was desperate to sell by now and my wife, four years after I promised it, was wondering where the new kitchen was), I sold the car to Dom. So farewell, V209 NVX. You were easily as much fun as any car I've ever owned, at a fraction of the price. Please look after your new (old) owner.

Nick Trott (@evoNickTrott)





FUN THOUGH THE LAST evo track evening that I attended was (see issue 216), the then 23-year-old Eunos proved far from fighting fit. After only a couple of laps the brakes were fading badly, and I drove home to the disconcerting sound of the engine and road speed being out of phase, thanks to a slipping clutch.

Those issues were swiftly rectified with a trip to MX5 City in Doncaster to fit a set of EBC brakes and a new Exedy clutch (**evo** 219), but I had to wait until the first track evening of 2016 to properly test their worth.

And worth it they are. The clutch,

'I'll soon be investigating more serious bracing to curb the MX-5's chassis flex'

now nicely bedded-in, is more than up to the task of handling the roadster's weedy power output (though thanks to the recent service, and the fitting of the new Klarius exhaust detailed last month, it's not as weedy as it once was). The brakes are great too, remaining strong and fade-free throughout 60-odd miles of lapping around the Bedford Autodrome.

Since that last track report I've also fitted the Garage Star door bushings. They've reduced rattles even with the hard-top removed, but I'll soon be investigating more serious bracing to curb the MX-5's

chassis flex, as there's a tangible creaking from the interior every time the chassis is stressed under hard cornering. Or over kerbs.

So, all is generally well with the Eunos, and I'm thrilled with just how well it coped with its latest evening of circuit-based fun. I wasn't even the slowest car on track this time around...

Antony Ingram (@evoAntony)

February 2015
95,664
654
£0
33.9

■ Ford Focus ST TDCi Estate

Ford Focus ST TDCi Estate

Back on summer tyres and not a moment too soon – our ST estate is off on a European road-trip

DESPITE APRIL/MAY/JUNE showers being inevitable in the UK, as the warmer months finally approached I felt it was time to get our Focus ST diesel back on its summer tyres. So off came the Michelin Alpins and back on went the Pilot Sport 3s. With front-end grip back to its best

and the rear rock-solid again, my confidence to attack corners at proper hot hatch (or hot estate) speeds has returned.

As we were changing tyres, Ford also decided to let us try out some different wheels. Our ST was originally fitted with the 19-inch silver-finish alloys that are part of the Style Pack. The pack adds said inchlarger wheels, rear privacy glass, red brake calipers and illuminated scuff plates. It costs £850 on the ST-2, or £575 on the ST-3, where the calipers and scuff plates are already included. But there's also a Black Style Pack, which costs the same but adds – you guessed it – 19-inch wheels finished in black.

Being able to customise your ST to



make it really stand out is fantastic and allows customers to get a lot closer to the RS look, as opposed to the jumped-up-standard-Focus look. I think our Stealth grey ST looks super sharp on the black rims.

In other news, I'm about to head off on a sabbatical around Europe. You can't beat a good road-trip, and the diesel ST will be my companion for five weeks. I actually can't think of a better vehicle to travel around Europe in (well, within reason): tons of space, really good on fuel, fast enough for an Autobahn overtake and very comfy (even if the damping is a bit stiff). I'll let you know how it gets on next time.

Sam Riley (@samgriley)

Date acquired	August 2015
Total mileage	18,533
Mileage this month	795
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	43.3









AT LAST, MY MX-5 HAS ITS new tyres fitted. They're Dunlop SportMaxx RT 2s and they're excellent. The car now has bags of grip – more than the OE Bridgestone Potenzas ever offered – and I can drive it harder, but that ever-present body roll has become even more irritating.

The Mazda is so small and light and now has so much grip that I just want to drive it as hard as possible, but every time I do, it feels a bit like it's about to flip over on turn-in. I

can't really blame the tyres for that, and with a bit of setup tweaking I'm sure the MX-5 would be fantastic.

I understand that this car isn't really about driving beyond seven tenths, but surely any owner would appreciate the benefits of firmer suspension, especially when the engine has loosened up with miles, as ours now has, and they find themselves wanting to push harder. In fact, this is something that has bugged me throughout my time with the car. Basically, it's so close

to being properly brilliant that just a few tiny changes and I'd never want to see it go.

In the meantime, my commute recently changed to a twistier route, meaning I can really exercise the MX-5's chassis. Whether the roads are bone-dry or sopping wet, at no point has it spooked me.

Refinement has also improved on the new rubber, while a wheel alignment check at Tyres Northampton revealed the MX-5 has effectively been crabbing for the last month. It now feels tight as a whistle after the guys reset the geometry to factory spec.

It's an great car then, the Mk4 MX-5, but just that little bit more and I'd be completely sold. ■

Hunter Skipworth (@HunterSkipworth)

Date acquired	October 2015
Total mileage	16,876
Mileage this month	1418
Costs this month	£288.40 four tyres
mpg this month	29.9

Kia Proceed GT

Kia Proceed GT

After a flawless probation period, problems arise

RIVERS TURNING TO blood, plagues of locusts, days of darkness... No, not my weekly shopping trip to Tesco in Wellingborough, but a list of things I'm expecting to endure this month in our cursed Kia.

It all started so well: my first few reports painted a glowing picture of life with our Proceed GT. It's easy to settle into, entertaining on a twisty road and blessed with an infotainment system that prioritises

ease of use rather than novelty.

But then snapper Aston Parrott picked up a puncture and it's never been quite the same since. Just a few days later I noticed that the rear bumper has at some stage suffered a clout – a nasty-looking chunk has been taken out of the plastic and whatever hit it was significant enough to dislodge that side of the bumper from its clips. It's certainly not of my own doing – the GT has a reversing camera that makes precision parking a doddle – so I can only assume it's been administered by some inconsiderate oaf in the damned car park at Tesco.

Next, presumably in direct response to my gloating over a lack of electrical issues, the Kia's entertainment system threw a wobbler. Plugging in my iPhone as



normal, it refused to play any music, and when it finally capitulated after the old turn-it-off-and-on-again fix, it wouldn't allow me to skip between tracks, either via the touchscreen or the steering-wheel controls. The next day it worked perfectly again, so I'm assuming it wasn't a protest at my choice of tunes.

And more recently, the Proceed's been feeling... well, just a little

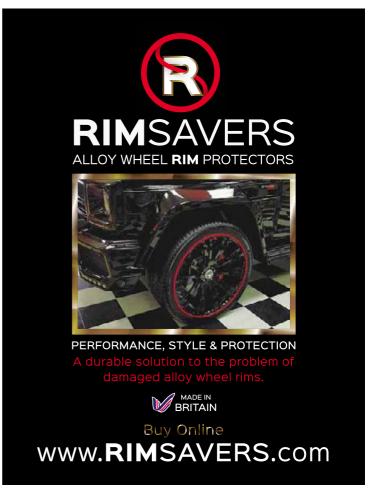
flat. It's never been the hottest of hatches and I have driven some fairly brisk machinery recently, but the turbocharged 1.6 feels reluctant to rev in a way I've not noticed before and occasionally stutters through a flat-spot in the mid-range.

I'm yet to investigate the cause, but since the Kia's passed the 10,000-mile mark without me noticing, it's now due a service. Perhaps some dealership TLC will also exorcise whichever demons have found their way into the GT since its tyre mishap.

Antony Ingram (@evoAntony)

Date acquired	December 2015
Total mileage	10,662
Mileage this month	1289
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	30.2











Porsche 911 SC

You'd have to have a heart of stone not to pity Trott after his 911's latest wobbly...

JUST LOOK AT IT! THE immaculate finish, the red cam covers, the Porsche script – looks awesome, huh? But followers of this long and protracted account on my SC's engine woes may be wondering why, after nearly a year, the newly rebuilt 3-litre engine is not actually installed in the Slate Blue body of my 1982 911.

Well, I must've done something despicable in a previous life, because things aren't going well under the rear deck of the Porsche. In fact, things are going *really* badly.

When Ollie from RPM Technik was fitting the engine to the gearbox, he noticed that something wasn't quite right. He sent me a short video where he waggled the first-gear input shaft. 'See that?' he said, 'This shouldn't move.' Crumbs.

Once I'd stopped swearing, I asked what the next steps were. There was no option but to crack open the 'box. And, of course, when you break open something as complicated as a gearbox, the money in your wallet evaporates in a flash. *Pffft*.

The diagnosis? Worn first-gear input shaft, worn first-gear teeth, and the hardening on both the reverse-gear idler and reverse-gear shaft has worn through. Oh, and a missing speedo pick-up.

Labour aside, Ollie warned me that I was facing a big bill – the first-gear input shaft alone is nearly £2000, and you can only source it from Porsche. Add this to the other parts costs, various sundries and gaskets and, well, the bill is going to at least match the enginerebuild costs.

Or, in other words, there's a very good chance that I'll spend more on fixing the engine and gearbox than I paid for the entire car − £16,000. ■

Nick Trott (@evoNickTrott)

'When you break open something as complicated as a gearbox, the money in your wallet evaporates in a flash. *Pffft*'

Date acquired	March 2014
Total mileage	90,993
Mileage this month	0
Costs this month	Please, stop
	rubbing it in
mpg this month	If only

Porsche 911 GT2

More TLC for the 996 after its Scottish adventure

IN THE LAST 18 MONTHS
I've suffered two engine
blow-ups and a gearbox
issue. None, I can report (whilst
crossing everything), on the GT2.

G2 TOO has been impeccable. It's coped with a winter lay-up then a hard drive in Scotland admirably. When it returned home, the battery – some four years old – finally gave out, but that aside it's been fine.

And do you know what? As absurd as it sounds, when it returned from Scotland I wanted to spoil it. I felt that as so much time and attention had been spent on the SC, the overlooked GT2 – that insentient collection of metal and plastics – deserved a treat. So I ordered a car cover, from covercar.com.

I'd always wanted a tailored indoor car cover, and we'll gloss over the fact that for the time being I don't have a garage (it's 'in-build', like the kitchen). I got stuck into the whizzy delights of CoverCar's website and lost an evening configuring my perfect cover. No idea why I went for green, silver and black – other than I liked the combination – and, of course, when given the option to add a graphic, I couldn't resist. I'll post a report on how the GT2 expressed its gratitude next month.

Nick Trott (@evoNickTrott)



Date acquired	June 2015
Total mileage	27,996
Mileage this month	108
Costs this month	£TBC
mpg this month	19.3



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THE HSCC 27-29 AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY WEEKEND CARS MIS HISTORIC GRAND PRIX CARS AND MOREL





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 - * STATIC SPITFIRE ME109
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 CREAM TEA TENT
 - * CONCOURS D'ESPRIT
- HISTORIC MOTOR RACING PERIOD LIVE MUSIC
 - * ARTISAN MARKET
 - * FUNFAIR

 - " HUGE CAR CLUB DISPLAY

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T IS IMPOSSIBLE TO OVERSTATE THE importance of a high-quality crash helmet to safety. That we've recently lost drivers such as Jules Bianchi and Justin Wilson in freak accidents is bad enough, but the numbers would be unimaginably high without the research that is poured into the latest helmet technology.

If you plan to spend any time on track

- whether at trackdays or in competition –
then a quality helmet is absolutely essential.
With that in mind, several members of the
evo team can frequently be spotted wearing
Aral's GP-6 PED, as pictured here.

Currently £1367.99 from Demon Tweeks,
Arai's popular helmet is not cheap, but it is
FIA 8858-2010 certified. This means it is fully
compatible with restraint systems such as
HANS and has a flame-resistant lining. Other
features include intake and exhaust holes for
cooling, while PED stands for Performance
Enhancing Devices – stick-on plastic spoilers
(not fitted here) that offer resistance against
buffeting in open-cockpit vehicles.

Double your budget (£2999.99 on Demon Tweeks) and the carbonfibre GP-6 RC is illustrative of the kind of lid F1 drivers wear. A less expensive carbon option is \mathbf{OMP} 's GP Carbon 8860 (£1334.29), which meets the same FIA standards as the GP-6 PED.

Of course, we don't all have a grand or more to spend on a helmet. OMP also makes the Grand Prix 10 HANS, which sells for £480.91 and once again meets the 8858-2010 FIA regs. **Bell** is also known for its great-value options, and the Sport 5 (£330.00) is popular with those on tighter budgets.



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ESSENTIALS

THE ROUND-UP

New motoring products that have caught our eye this month



APP

CSR Racing 2

£free

Apple and Google Play stores

Sequel to one of the world's most popular mobile games (130 million downloads and counting), CSR Racing 2 lets you drag-race players across the world in real-time. There's a large selection of stunningly rendered real-world cars including Ferraris and McLarens - to choose from.



CAR CARE

Chipex Aquaphobic Screenwash

£13.95 (one litre)

chipex.co.uk

Aguaphobic screenwash isn't just useful for repelling water in winter weather (or indeed summer weather here in the UK). By reducing friction on the surface of the screen it can also reduce a literal summer bugbear: bugs. So long, fly-splattered windscreens.



GT3RS £23

porscheclubgb.com/shop

Car clubs aren't known for their tasteful attire, but Porsche Club GB has proven it's an exception with this T-shirt. Available in grey, blue or brown, it's based on a print by Joel Clark and displays the 991 GT3 RS in its most striking hue - Lava Orange.



TOY

Porsche 919 Hybrid and 917K Pit Lane

£69.99

shop.lego.com

There's finally a Lego set cooler than the classic pirate ship: this diorama of the Porsche 919 Hybrid and 917K, complete with a garage, drivers, pit mechanics, a car lift and a fuel rig. The 1970 Le Mans-winning 917 is the star, in classic Porsche Salzburg livery.



eBOOK

Autodrome - The lost race circuits of Europe

£26.99

digital.veloce.co.uk

If you've ever visited the old pit buildings at Reims-Gueux in northern France, you'll know the haunting experience abandoned race circuits can offer as you imagine them in their heyday, buzzing with noise. Autodrome, with the help of some beautiful photography, examines them in detail.



MODEL

Eagle E-type

£POA

eaglegb.com

There's having a personalised model car, and then there's having your very own car reproduced in scale form. Thanks to Graphite Additive Manufacturing, Eagle buyers (sorry, they're not available to everyone) can have just that, with a beautifully detailed epoxy-resin, 3D-printed model.



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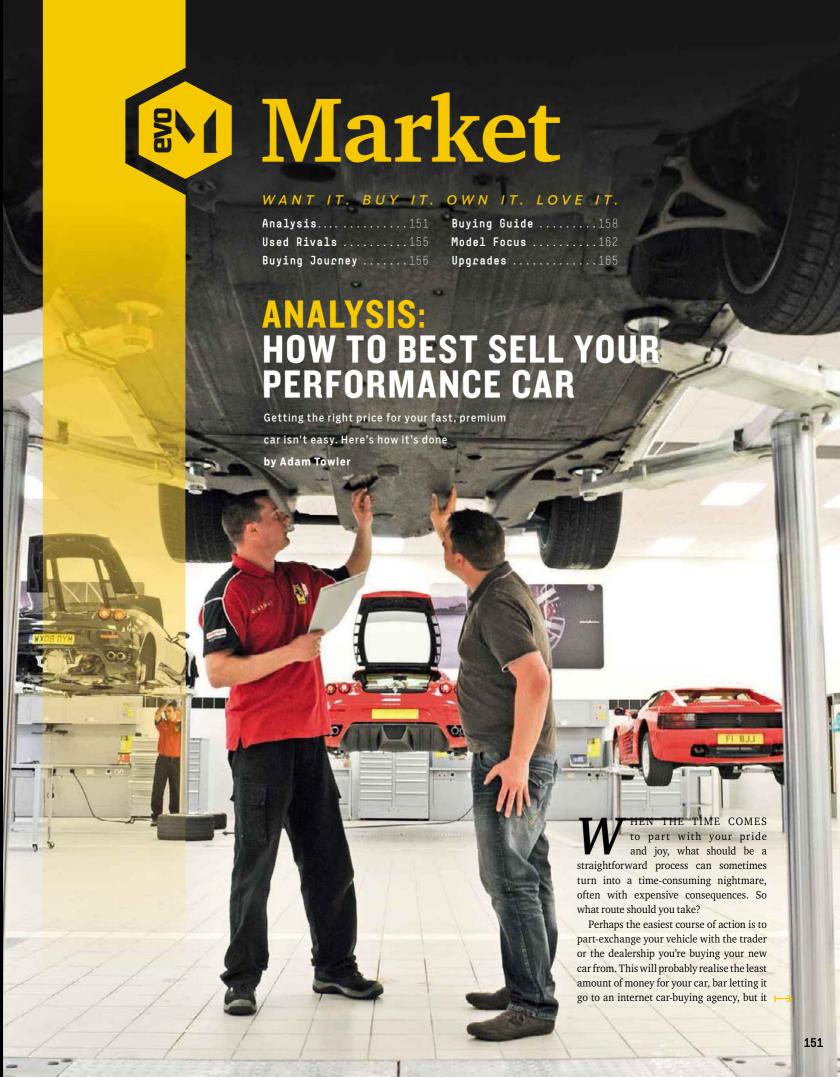












requires nothing more than turning up on the forecourt and letting the salesman look it over. What the salesman offers will be governed by the 'trade' value for the car, usually influenced by what the industry price guides are 'booking' the car at that month, but in many cases it will also be 'underwritten' by another dealer who will undertake to buy your car for the purposes of retail.

Steve Tarrant is the used-car director at Stratstone (stratstone. com), with franchises such as BMW, Mercedes, Jaguar, Aston Martin and Porsche generating a huge amount of used cars every month. 'Most of our used stock is part-ex,' he says, 'and underwritten from dealer to dealer unless it's direct from the manufacturer. We use an electronic appraisal form when we value a part-ex now, but in the past poor appraisals by salesmen was an industry Achilles' heel.

'Items such as satnav discs and spare keys are really important - the latter can cost £250 to replace. Make the effort to present your car clean, and ensure it has the best service history with all documentation. A salesman will be looking to see if the car reflects the age and mileage. I'd consider having small dents removed, because they may prompt a closer look at paint and other issues, but unless the wheels are really bad, I wouldn't bother getting them refurbished. Research what your car is worth - it's so easy now, with the internet, to know your market.'

Given the margin that dealers will want to make, it's not surprising that this isn't the way to get the best price for your car. That's not just down to the dealer making profit, it's also prep costs. For example, a used Porsche being retailed through the dealer network has to have paint chips resprayed, the same brand of tyre all round, a geometry check and a full Porsche history to be eligible.

Another option is to engage a specialist dealer to sell your car on a sale-or-return basis (SOR). This way you retain ownership of your car until it's sold, but for a fee can let someone else worry about the marketing and actual sale of the car. Lucas Hutchings runs the Image Automotive group of companies,



including the Octane Collection and Millennium Heroes. 'As a vendor you'll get more money for your car with SOR than by selling it straight to a dealer,' says Hutchings, 'because if the dealer is putting their own money into the car, they'll want a bigger return on their investment.' SOR certainly has its positives (see 'Expert View'), taking away the hassle of selling your car while still realising a decent value.

A further option that has gained in popularity is the auction. Will Daniels is the modern classics consultant at Brightwells (brightwells.com) and is clear on the advantages: 'Auctions mean not having to deal with timewasters, no worries about security at home, it's often cheaper than SOR, the reserve offers some protection, there's always the chance it will go over list, and there's no comeback and no haggling. Fees can be small; we charge £60 for our modernclassic auctions and £180 for our classic and vintage auctions, with a vendor commission of 5 per cent. Of course, there is always the chance it won't sell, but this is usually down to the vendor wanting too much money. On price guides, it's important to project an appealing estimate to get buyers excited and feel they might be able to afford the car. Values are somewhere between trade and retail, but sometimes cars can go for more.'

Finally, you could always go it alone and sell privately. Matthew Hayward is editor of **evo**'s sistersite classicandperformancecar. com and has this advice: 'The best

adverts have strong images – it's worth spending the time to clean and then get good photos of your car, to show it in its best light. A good description is also important, with all the information you would want to see if you were the buyer, i.e. model year, spec and options fitted. Nevertheless, don't waffle on – buyers usually know about the car they're trying to buy and don't need you to copy and paste Wikipedia.'







OPINION

THE SPECIALIST

MATTHEW HAYWARD classicandperformancecar.com

'If you're selling privately, use common sense when someone comes to view your car. Don't let your keys go unless you're 100 per cent happy and have proof of insurance. With payment, a bank transfer is the safest thing to do as long as you're certain that the funds have cleared. If you're at all worried, talk to your bank first.'

'Research
what your
car is worth
– the internet
makes it easy
to know your
market'



Expert view



LUCAS HUTCHINGS

imageautomotive.co.uk 01483 338905

'Sale or return allows you to try a higher price, but if you're after a quick sale you can always go with the market value. There have, of course, been some unfortunate tales with SOR. Dodgy dealers that sell the car, go bankrupt, and then the liquidator comes in and neither the buyer nor vendor see the car or their money again. Pick a reasonably large dealer that has a good reputation. You need to trust them. There are some dealers out there that will say anything. We always say, "Come down and meet us, see how we work."

'Fees for SOR can vary between £500 and £5000 in the industry, but what you're actually getting for your money will vary a lot. We say you should expect great marketing, someone always answering the phone for enquires, great photography, global reach – overseas buyers require even more photos and reassurance. It's all about the level of service. We put our cars through two days of detailing first, for example. If someone is giving me a car to sell, I should be working for them to get the best price.

'Avoid dealers that apply pressure to sell for less money so they can simply get their fee. Ultimately, I say to clients that SOR will allow them to get the same sort of money, or slightly more, than if they sell privately, but without all the hassle.'

Left: trading-in at a dealer is the easiest way to move your old car on. **Below left:** auctions are a relatively simple option, too

SUMMARY

Selling your car can be a complex procedure, and your chosen method will depend partly on the value of your car and also on how much time and effort you're prepared to put into the process. For cars with a low value, there will always be the appeal of selling privately, and this can realise a good price. In fact, it can be an enjoyable process, meeting a fellow enthusiast who becomes a friend for years to come – for all the dodgy

people out there, there are also lots of genuine enthusiasts who want to buy a decent car, just as you did when you acquired the car you're now selling.

If you don't fancy the private route, the sale-or-return option can work well as long as you have faith in the company you've chosen to undertake the sale on your behalf. They may be doing the legwork to sell your car, but you should be kept informed, and not feel pressurised into selling your car

for less than you originally wanted without fair reasoning.

Moreover, whether it's SOR, or an auction sale or simply a part-ex deal, the old adage of spending to accumulate holds true for car sales: investing in putting right minor defects, or even just getting the car looking as nice as possible with a thorough detail, will probably pay you back much more than you spent when it comes to the bottom line.



BREXIT WAKE FELT AT LE MANS AUCTION

Artcurial's Le Mans Classic auction was, by most criteria, a success: 73 per cent of the cars sold, and sales totalled €9m. However, some high-profile lots, such as a 1961 Ferrari 250 GT SWB Berlinetta, didn't sell. Artcurial thinks this is a consequence of a weakened pound following the Brexit vote result leading to fewer Brits attending.



RUF GOES GLOBAL

German Porsche tuner Ruf has expanded its international network into the USA, Canada, Singapore, Japan, China, Thailand, Taiwan and Chile. And now the UK joins that list. The UK office has been formed in conjunction with car brokers Richard and Mark Sekula and will sell Ruf's range of 200mph cars as well as offer aftersales support.



GOODWOOD AUCTION LOTS ANNOUNCED

Bonhams has published the first selection of cars that will go under the hammer at its auction on 10 September at this year's Goodwood Revival meeting. The lots announced so far include a 1971 Ferrari Dino 246 GT, a 1987 Ferrari 328 GTS, a 1991 Lamborghini Diablo (pictured) and a 1962 Series 2 Lotus Elite Super 95 Special Equipment model.

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USED RIVALS:

LASER-GUIDED **LIGHTWEIGHTS**

by Adam Towler

T'S AN ECCENTRIC, LOOPY BAND of high-powered, five-star British sports cars this month. No other nation has quite such a propensity for producing lightweight, minimalist sporting machinery.

This trio all hail from the end of the last decade. The Ford Duratec-engined Superlight R500 was the ultimate Seven of the period, and more dependable than its highly strung forebear, the Rover K-series-powered R500.

The Atom, meanwhile, follows no rulebook whatsoever, and in doing so has established itself as a real alternative to the Caterham. In supercharged form it's absolutely manic.

Finally, the Exige is more of an actual 'car', and naturally much heavier than the others, but it's still pretty extreme. Its sheer performance and track hardiness contribute to its excellent residual value, particularly now four-pot Exiges are a thing of the past.



CATERHAM SUPERLIGHT R500

Engine Power

Torque

Weight 0-60mph

Top speed

On sale evo rating

In-line 4-cyl, 1999cc 263bhp @ 8500cpm

1771b ft @ 7200rpm

506kg (528bhp/ton)

2.9sec (claimed) 150mph (claimed)

2008-2014



'I had a K-series R500, but the Duratec R500 felt stronger. I never got to take it on a circuit but I've no doubt it would have been amazing. It was such a good chassis - noticeably stiffer than my older Sevens, with better suspension. I have a Seven JPE now but I wish I still had the R500 in many ways.'

Matthew Stears

EXAMPLES



2012 £31.995 Sevens & Classics Ltd.

Built up from a starter kit. so not an official R500, but it has the same 263bhp and is cheaper, too.



ARIEL ATOM 300

300bhp @ 8200rpm

1621b ft @ 7200rpm

550kg (554bhp/ton)

3.3sec (claimed)

155mph (claimed)

2009-2012

In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc, supercharger

'I had a 200bhp Caterham Roadsport before my

don't get a lot of actual "car" with the Atom, but

what you do get is very well made. It's staggeringly

quick and more challenging to drive than the Seven.

I hated the plastic seats, and have replaced them

with carbon buckets.' Chris Connor

Atom, but the Ariel felt like the logical next step. You

2009 £33,950 Tom Hartley

Features upgraded suspension and brakes, lightweight wheels and a Quaife limited-slip diff.

'Watch the oil level on the 2-litre Honda engine they're very sensitive to that and you can damage the engine's top end if it runs too low. Try and find one with an oil cooler if you're going to do track work. You won't damage an engine without it, but it may go into limp-home mode if it gets too hot. The only known weak link are the synchros in the transmission, but these should only be problematic

Lee Cunningham, svr.uk.com



LOTUS EXIGE S

In-line 4-cyl, 1796cc, supercharger

218bhp @ 7800rpm

158lbft @ 5500cpm

930kg (238bhp/ton)

4.5sec (claimed) 148mph (claimed)

2006-2011

'I was looking for a car that would hold its value and not cost a lot to run, yet be quick and fun. The Exige has been perfect. It's a mini supercar, but cheap to service and reliable. The reaction it gets is so positive, and while there are rattles, and it does leak rainwater, it's actually hard for me to find something Idon't love about it.' Matthew Moriarty



2010 £35,495 **Lotus Approved**

Metallic black with black leather and just 18.403 miles. With Performance and Touring packs.

BUYING **ADVICE**

'The early engines had poor valve springs, but these were updated later on, as were the coil and injector looms and the bellhousing. We'd say change them on an early car. Do keep an eye on the oil level, and beware running them dry. They're not really old enough to see corrosion, but running costs can be high - I'd check valve clearances and do a compression check at each service. Finding one with decent miles is better than a low-mileage car.'

Callum McDougall, sevensandclassics.com



with really heavy race use.

THE EVO It's an eclectic bunch when a Lotus is the most CHOICE

'normal'. The Exige is a brilliant, useable and multitalented car that's appreciating in value, too. One of Lotus's very best, it offers so much to so many, no matter the skillset. We'd have one in a heartbeat, but this month we're talking thrills, so Caterham's R500

has to be a contender. You'll need a track to fully exploit its performance and experience one of the most engaging driving experiences this side of a P1 GTR. In fact, it might be too track-focused for some.

This leaves the Atom. It has the head-turning. thrill-delivering, laugh-out-loud brilliance of the

Caterham, but you don't need to be travelling at qualifying speeds to enjoy it. For all the Exige's mini-supercar looks, nothing turns heads more than an Atom. It is as much of an occasion to look at as it is to drive, which is why it gets our vote. Stuart Gallagher

'These cars have been holding their value now

Performance Pack is a sweet spot for these cars.

and you'll pay from high £20,000s to low £30,000s

for such an example. When buying, make sure you

get the car up in the air and check underneath for

and watch for air-con leaks. Don't be put off by

higher mileages and occasional circuit use. Jamie Matthews, bellandcolvill.co.uk

damage; check the gearbox synchro doesn't crunch,

for the past three years. I think the 240bhp

BUYING JOURNEY

From 928 to 599 HGTE. an evo reader shares his ownership history



NEWELL



Porsche 928 S4

'My first car, at the age of 28. I paid what I considered a bargain £12k for a V8 Porsche in Cassis Metallic. My friends called it the Pink Porsche. Harsh, I thought! Chaotic electrics made it a brief, albeit entertaining, affair.'



BMW E46 M3

'After five years of basically free motoring in the Rover, I splashed out and bought a brand-new M3. Great engine, but I was piling on the miles so it had to go."



Rover 416si

'Given to me as part of a sponsorship deal at work. Did 125,000 miles in this robust little thing before it went bang on the M25... and that was the end of that.'



Porsche 996 GT3

5th

'These are undeniably superb, but I wouldn't recommend them as an only car, which is essentially what I tried to do. Easily the most uncomfortable car I've ever owned. I'm surprised I didn't dislodge fillings on some journeys.'



Porsche 993 Carrera 4S

'You'd be hard pushed to find a more beautiful car, in my eyes at least, but the offset pedals and an iffy driving position gave me chronic backache. Another one bites the dust '





Ferrari 550 Maranello

'Heaven on wheels Enjoyed four years and 20-odd-thousand miles of pure motoring bliss. Don't mind admitting that I was an idiot for selling it.'



Porsche 997

'Guards Red, manual - what's not to like? I had lusted after a 599 since they came out, though, so thought I'd get one while I could still afford one ... '





Steve's buying journey began in what must surely be a unique manner. 'The 928 was literally my first ever car. I cleared out my savings account... Very sensible!' he says. 'It still makes me laugh thinking about collection day and being slightly terrified driving it away from the dealer. Thankfully it was an auto, so at least I couldn't stall it!'

Coming back down to earth with a bump, Steve then served a more traditional driving apprenticeship at the wheel of a Longbridge staple. The booted Rover may not qualify for evo status in any shape or form, but from the way Steve talks about the car, and the 125,000 miles he drove in it, his affection for it is clear. And it was free.

He had another 'flirtation with sensible motoring' with a new VW Golf TDI in the mid-noughties, but it's the five-yearold BMW 330Ci he purchased in 2010 that seemed to hit the spot as a 'daily'. The 599 takes up that role now, though, and 'dailies' don't come more spectacular than that.



'After the 599, I don't know,' says Steve. 'F12s are too expensive; everything else seems mundane. I'm really not a fan of classic cars generally - I always love the new stuff. I do have a bit of a soft spot for the Lotus Exige, which would give me an opportunity to do some more track driving. It would also mean I could keep the 599.



We sense the appearance of a retina-scorching Hethel product is near. Yes, we can even hear the supercharger whine now...



Ferrari **599 HGTE**

'The F1 'box isn't the best around town, but that's not where I do my driving anyway. Truth is, in every other respect the 599 is astonishing - the sound, the speed, the sumptuous interior, it just feels unbelievably special.'



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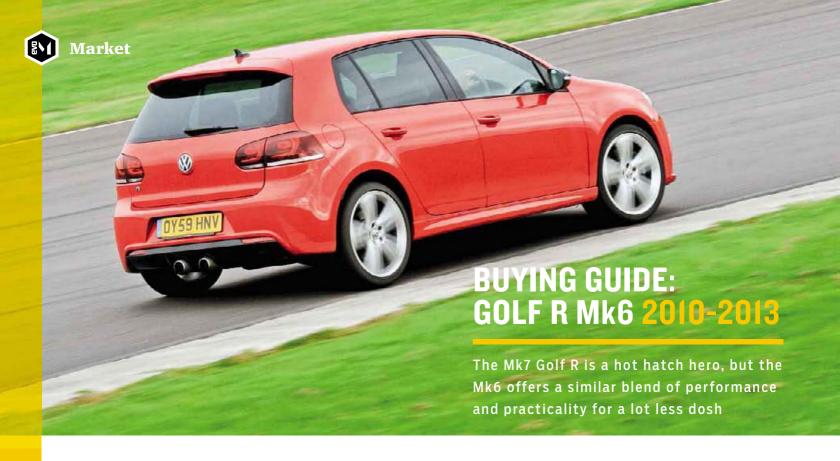
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HERE AIN'T NO SUBSTITUTE FOR cubic inches... is what they used to say, and for decades we swallowed the line. But then came downsizing and turbocharging, and today everyone's at it, from Ford to Ferrari. So you could say that Volkswagen was ahead of the curve with the Mk6 Golf R. When the company announced in September 2009 that the replacement for the Mk5 R32 and its 3.2-litre V6 would be nothing more exotic than another turbocharged 2-litre four-pot, many lamented the passing of the über-Golf. That was until they drove the Mk6 R...

Truth is, the 3.2 was always a little bit flabby and flaccid. The pumped-up 2-litre TSI actually kicked out more power (266bhp versus 246) and torque (258lb ft plays 236) and it weighed

a useful 35kg less, too. With drive still going through all four wheels, the 0-62mph figure was slashed by around a second to 5.7sec with the six-speed manual 'box or 5.5sec with the paddleshift DSG semi-auto. The R was a similar chunk quicker than the regular Mk6 GTI, which had to make do with 207bhp.

The 4Motion system featured a centre diff in the form of a Haldex clutch to distribute drive to the wheels with most grip. The EA113 engine (taken from the Mk5 Golf because it was better suited to tuning) benefited from a reinforced block, a new cylinder head, uprated pistons and conrods, and high-pressure fuel injectors. It also got a new turbo that puffed 1.2bar of boost and a more effective intercooler to deal with the increased thermal load. All of which makes it a

natural for further tuning: plenty of examples have been remapped to well over 300bhp.

The ride height was lowered by 25mm compared with the Mk6 GTI and the springs and dampers tweaked for sharper responses, though ACC switchable adaptive dampers were a cost option. The brakes featured impressive 345mm discs up front with 'R' monogrammed calipers.

To help justify the £30,000 price tag (seven grand more than the GTI at the time), the R was distinguished by 18-inch 'Talladega' alloys (also available as a 19-inch option), a subtle bodykit and twin, centrally sited exhaust tailpipes protruding through a gloss black diffuser. The interior was pretty much carried over from the GTI, with Recaro seats as a highly desirable optional extra.

CHECKPOINTS

ENGINE

The EA113 engine is generally strong and reliable - even when tuned to over 300bhp - as long as it's serviced meticulously. Andy McLeish at VW/ Audi specialists APS advises every 10,000 miles or 12 months, whichever is sooner. Its one weakness is premature wear of the fuel pump cam follower, which in turn scores the camshaft.

The good news is that replacing the follower is an inexpensive service item: finding out if it's been done can provide a clue as to how well a car has been cared for. Also look out for a leaking water pump and check the cambelt has been changed at four years or 60,000 miles (and the water pump replaced at the same time). Budget around £300 from a specialist.

TRANSMISSION

Some early cars (mostly 2010) suffer from failure of the Haldex pump. This is the electronic pump that generates the hydraulic pressure to push the plates in the centre diff together and send the torque to the axle with most grip Floor the throttle in the lower gears and if you notice more than the slightest hint of wheelspin, it

probably points to a problem with the pump. Reckon on £400-500 to have a replacement fitted. And it makes sense to get the rear propshaft donut replaced at the same time. Haldex oil/filter needs changing every two years.

The manual 'boxes are generally robust. If you feel a juddering when moving off, it's probably the dualmass flywheel on the

way out – not cheap, and it makes sense to get the clutch replaced at the same time, so the total bill will be well over a grand. If you get the car mapped, you'll need an uprated clutch.

If you're going to map the car, the DSG 'box can't handle as much torque as the manual, but generally gives few problems if properly maintained: it's vital the oil and filter are changed every 40,000 miles to avoid overheating or the clutches burning out. Check both the automatic and the manual shifts for speed and smoothness.

SUSPENSION, STEERING, BRAKES

No particular issues here beyond normal wear and tear. Creaks or knocks could





Above: 2-litre TSI engines are strong, but cambelt needs changing at 60,000 miles. **Below:** interior solid, but check all electrics





point to wear in the front suspension top mounts. Dampers should be checked for leaks, and springs for breakages. The ACC dampers seem to give few problems. If the ABS light and/or the ESP light is illuminated, beware. It could be a fault with a sensor (not too expensive to fix) or it could be that the ABS pump-control unit needs replacing, which costs more than £1000 from VW.

BODY, INTERIOR, ELECTRICS

Check for uniformity of panel gaps and any overspray, which could indicate accident repairs. Interiors are holding up well, so any signs of excessive wear or damage to the trim would suggest the car has lived a hard life and better examples can be found. The CAN Bus wiring system can give problems, so check all the toys work.

RIVALS

FORD FOCUS RS (Mk2)

Not for shrinking violets. The Mk2 Focus RS ('09-'11) offers a fiery 300bhp from its 2.5-litre turbo five, 0-60mph in 5.9sec and a properly wild FWD ride. From around £17k.

RENAULTSPORT MÉGANE 265 CUP

For sheer driving pleasure, this is the one. Built from 2012 to 2015, the 265 has 261bhp from its 2-litre engine – enough for 0-60 in 6.4sec – and a brilliant chassis. From £16k.

AUDIS3

The S3 ('06-'12) is the Golf R's twin under the skin. With 4WD, 261bhp and 0-60mph in 5.6sec, it's highly capable but just a little clinical. £16k-18k gets a late low-miler.

INFORMATION

VW GOLF R Mk6 (manual)

Engine	In-line 4-cyl, 1984cc, turbo
Max bomer	266bhp @ 6000rpm
Max torque	2581b ft @ 2500-5000rpm
Transmission	Six-speed manual, four- wheel drive
Weight	1521kg
Power-to- weight	178bhp/ton
0-62mph	5.7sec (claimed)
Top speed	155mph (limited)
Price new	£30,235 in January 2010

PARTS PRICES

Prices from autops.co.uk. Tyre price from blackcircles.com. All prices include VAT but exclude fitting charges.

Tyres (each)	£91.55 [Dunlop SportMaxx]
Front pads (set)	£108.68
Front discs (pair)	£235.94
Front damper (each)	£101.49
Clutch (manual)	£291.33
Release bearing	£87.60
Flywheel	£659.32
Haldex pump	£247.92
Spark plugs (set)	£61.96

SERVICING

(Prices from autops.co.uk, including VAT) Every 12 months or 10,000 miles, whichever sooner.

Oil change service Major £171.68

Major service with filters and plugs f345 - APS recommends replacing the oilfilter housing at each service (add £55.96 to

Haldex oil change

£98.60

USEFUL CONTACTS

FORUMS, ADVICE, EVENTS vwroc.com

golfmk6.com

INDEPENDENT SPECIALISTS

autops.co.uk quattro-tech.co.uk awesomegti.com vagtech.co.uk

CARS FOR SALE

volkswagen.co.uk/used classicandperformancecar.com





'I BOUGHT ONE'

OLLIE DUNSTALL

'I'm on my second Golf R after the first was written off in an accident. I knew another long search was in store – there are only around 800 Mk6 Rs in the UK and finding one with a good spec is a challenge. Prices are holding well, and a cherished example doesn't stick around.

'A fellow member of vwroc.com heard about my accident and contacted me to say he was thinking of selling. Three weeks, several emails and four hundred miles later, I was the owner of this late-2012 model in Rising Blue metallic.

'It belonged first to VW as their demo car, so has every single option, including the Recaro buckets – an expensive option at almost £3500, but coupled with the RNS 510 satnav and upgraded Dynaudio system it makes the cabin a very nice place to be. Although not to everyone's tastes, the DSG gearbox is a no-brainer in my opinion and makes a quick hot hatch even quicker!

'To many, the R is "just another Golf" – and that's one of the things I like the most. Mine has been treated to H&R front and rear anti-roll bars, BC adjustable coilovers and Powerflex bushes. I've also upgraded to EBC slotted discs with Yellowstuff pads, while the 19in wheels wear Pirelli P Zeros. Future plans include a turbo-back exhaust, a

new intake and a high-pressure fuel pump, which should add a further 90 to 100bhp.

'Running costs are relatively low – VW servicing is quite reasonable and the car averages 25mpg. Road tax is circa £280, but insurance is expensive – the fact that I'm only 22 probably plays a factor!'

'There aren't many cars within this price bracket that can rival the Golf R's range of abilities and also put such a huge grin on your face.'



IN THE CLASSIFIEDS



2010 (10) GOLF R £15,988

46,330 miles, manual, Candy White with black/grey Kyalami upholstery, FSH, touchscreen infotainment system with six-CD autochanger imperialcarsupermarkets.co.uk



2011 (61) GOLF R £17,490

39,000 miles, manual, Reflex Silver metallic with full leather in black, full VW service history, parking sensors, six-CD autochanger

churchsperformancecars.co.uk



2012 (62) GOLF R £19,987

33,600 miles, DSG gearbox, Rising Blue metallic with black leather interior, optional 19-inch alloys, Convenience Pack, full VW service history

petercoopergroup.co.uk

WHAT WE SAID



FIRST DRIVE, FEBRUARY 2010

'Where the R32 lacked the incisive delicacy of the Mk5 GTI, the Mk6 Golf R feels sharper, angrier and a whole lot faster than the current GTI. Where the potent but chunky R32 always fell victim to the law of diminishing returns, the Golf R proves that, when executed well, more power can equal decisively more performance.

'The same goes for the chassis. Experience suggests that switching a Golf from front-wheel-drive to all-wheel-drive delivers security at the expense of sparkle, yet the Golf R's 4Motion system seems to achieve the opposite. I should qualify that statement by saying that conditions for our are first drive are wintry, but the steering response is cleaner and the general enthusiasm for corners more energetic than the beautifully polished but overwhelmingly straight-laced GTI.

'The optional ACC switchable dampers aren't fitted to this test car, and the ride and handling compromise struck by the standard-fit fixed-rate suspension seems pretty much spot-on.

'The Golf R is a hugely impressive addition to the hot hatch Premier League. It's pricey, but you only need look inside a Focus RS to know where Ford saves money. The Golf R has got terrific pace and tractability, coupled to a memorably effervescent engine and a sport-biased chassis that exudes confidence and genuine enthusiasm. It's a formidable range-topper. Golf R: same game, bigger balls.' – evo 140

WHAT TO PAY



Around £15k is the entry point to Mk6 Golf R ownership, but these can be high-mileage cars with less-than-watertight service histories. £16-18k brings a wide choice of low-to-average-mile cars with good provenance within reach. £20k will get you the pick of the very best late, low-mileage, one-or two-owner cars with a full VW service history. Sought-after ACC switchable dampers and Recaro seats command a premium.



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Porsche 911 Turbo S 2015

Part exchange valuation SOLD FOR Returned customer (less fee) £90,000 £108.995 £103,995



Lamborghini Gallardo Superlegerra

Part exchange valuation SOLD FOR Returned customer (less fee) £105,000 £128.995 £123,995

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Example stock cars



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Nissan GTR



McLaren MP4 12C



Porsche 911 Turbo S



Mercedes AMG GT S



Porsche 911 991 GT3



MODEL FOCUS: ASTON MARTIN VANQUISH

You'll be hooked on the noise, and the sheer character, of the original V12 Vanguish

by Adam Towler

HEN AN ASTON MARTIN enthusiast talks about the Vanquish as 'the bridge', they're not heading for a rousing middle eight but referring to a car that straddles the era of hand-built V8 leviathans from Newport Pagnell and the VH-platform cars that have emerged from Gaydon in the years since.

Just 2578 of these flagship Astons were built between 2001 and 2007, and compared with later Ian Callum-penned creations, their more brutal, masculine lines mean very few people don't see the original Vanquish as one of the most handsome cars ever to wear the marque's winged emblem.

The Vanquish has never enjoyed the best reputation for reliability, and anecdotal evidence suggests that the very early cars often gave trouble. As ever, it's about separating fact from hearsay, and doing your homework: no one would dare suggest a Vanquish can be run on a shoestring, but knowledgeable and enthusiastic specialists can make it more affordable than you might think. Understand the potential issues, of which there are a good few, and Vanquish ownership can be massively rewarding. Just imagine how you'd feel seeing one parked in your garage.

Values were depressed, but today an early 460bhp car will be around £75,000-80,000, unless it needs work. The later, 520bhp S starts above that and can go up to £150,000, with the final 50 - the Ultimate Editions – being much more.





SERIAL BUYER NICK GILLEY

'I ordered my Tungsten Silver car in late 2003 having never had an Aston before, but my father owned them. I replaced that car with an Ultimate Edition S in 2007 which was supposed to be a keeper. But it wasn't. It was better, but it was firmer, more aggressive to drive, and the ride meant I'd wince when I saw a pothole. It just didn't connect with me in the same way as my first one.

'I was thinking of buying the new-era Vanquish, but feel it looks too much like the DB9. Then, one day, I was browsing the ads online and saw an early Vanquish like mine, locally, and looked twice and saw it was my original car. I'd sold the Ultimate Edition, so bought back my first one. It was a sentimental purchase.

'It's done 49.000 miles now, and I use it all year round - I've even got a set of winter tyres for it. I've done trackdays in both the cars I've owned, and taken this one to the Alps for a family skiing holiday. I went to Stuttgart in it and averaged 23mpg, which given the 150mph Autobahn runs and 80mph average speed, I didn't think was had '

Expert view

ALISTAIR SOMMERVILLE, HWMASTONMARTIN.CO.UK

'I can remember selling a nice Vanquish S for around £70,000 in 2008, but a good one is now £150.000: the S is definitely more desirable, but the standard V12 has risen. Useable V12s went as low as £50,000, but nice ones are now around £80,000, while the best of the final Ultimate Edition S models will fetch £250,000. Any latemodel S with the DB9 switchgear attracts a £5000-10,000 premium. They're nice to drive: beautifully damped, good steering. The key is to find one that's well prepared.

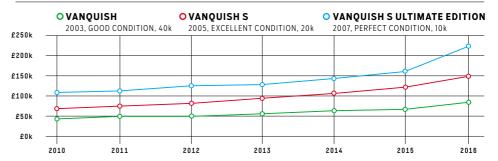
PETER MARTIN, MARTINSASTONSERVICES.CO.UK

'It's the gearbox [a single-clutch automated manuall that makes them a Marmite car. Drive two or three examples before buying - it needs to be set up right. The early version of the 'box can go wrong, so have a contingency fund. Remember, parts prices are high, but servicing not especially so at an independent specialist. As the cars get older, heat is affecting various parts, and suspensions are getting tired. Corrosion is an issue, so get it inspected properly. I'd avoid a cheap car that needed body work.'

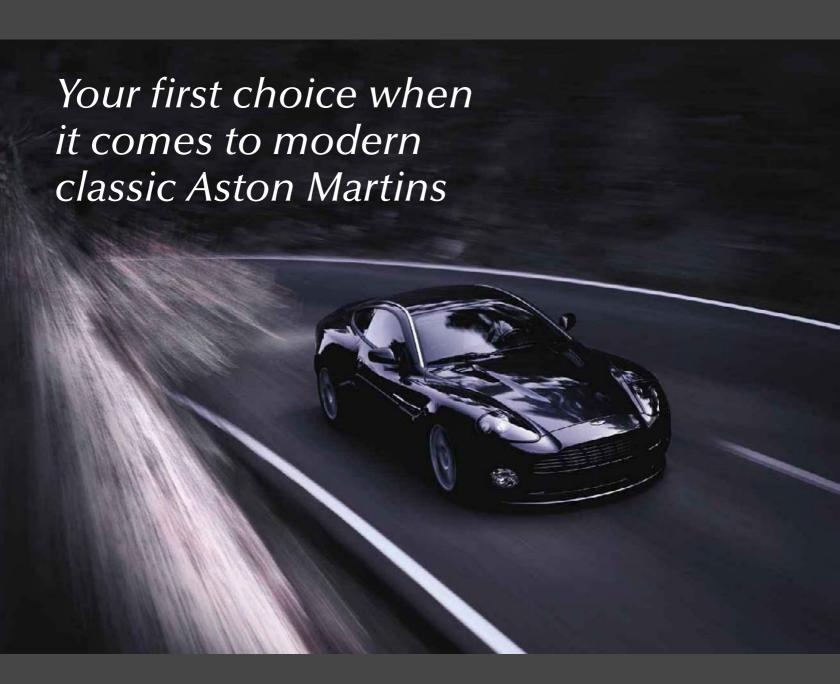


Trends

Data supplied by Alistair Sommerville of HWM Aston Martin







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*DB7 Vantage Volante, 2002 "52", 12,880 miles, 1 owner, Skye Silver DB7 Vantage Coupe, 2002 "52", 64,676 miles, Mendip Blue DB7 Coupe i6, 58,370 miles, 1995 "N", Original Flying Saucer Hubcaps, Chiltern Green. We are actively buying DB7s, Newport Pagnell Vanquishes, and all Gaydon era Aston Martins. For a valuation and offer to purchase within hours, call Alistair on 01932 240611 or 07747 007193. We likely offer the easiest, hassle free method of selling your vehicle.





Castle Sports Cars, has re-launched as a Lotus main dealer with a fantastic range of new and used cars.

As a re-launch offer, exclusive to EVO readers we are offering a Lotus Exige S V6 (pictured right) for a reduced price of £46,750 for a limited time only. The car is equipped with the touring pack, sports pack and racing pack.

Castle Sports Cars also provides a full service centre and accident repair facility.





Relight the spark that made you buy your car in the first place by treating it to some choice upgrades and accessories by Antony Ingram

LOTTING IN SOMEWHERE BEHIND the 8C and the new Giulia Quadrifoglio, the 156 GTA is one of Alfa Romeo's most appealing modern models, but it's always been heavily compromised on bumpy UK roads.

Years of research from loyal owners has uncovered ways to make it better, however. A Quaife ATB helical limited-slip differential will helps tame the Busso V6's 221lb ft of torque. Autolusso (autolusso.co.uk) will supply and fit one for £750.

Autolusso will also supply and fit a Bilstein B12 Pro-kit (springs and dampers) and Eibach anti-roll bars for £1475 all-in. Combined, they improve body control over the poorly damped original suspension and reduce roll.

Now you've fixed the handling, why not celebrate by enhancing the note of that 3.2-litre V6? Alfaholics (alfaholics.com) can supply a full exhaust system for £1620, enabling the GTA to produce a soulful wail that not even the Giulia Quadrifoglio can match.

Aftermarket news



LITCHFIELD LM1 RS Tuner Litchfield has

unveiled the latest development of its ultra-powerful Nissan GT-R LMI RS. Now with 1300bhp, it's been created mainly to promote a new adjustable race suspension setup, co-developed with Bilstein and as used on the LMI RS at **evo**'s latest Track Car of the Year test (issue 220).



SCHNITZER M3/M4

AC Schnitzer has revealed its full programme of improvements for the current BMW M3 and M4. ECU upgrades take the turbo six from 425bhp to 503bhp, while gas flow and aural improvements are claimed of the new flapcontrolled silencers. There's lower suspension, a body kit and new wheels too.



LARTE MODEL S Few have been brave

enough to extract more performance from Tesla's 'ludicrous' Model S, but bodykits certainly aren't unusual. Larte's is the latest, shedding a couple of kilos from the bumpers through the use of basaltfibre composites. It fits both pre- and post-facelift Model S cars



PIECHA SLC

Enthusiasts may overlook the Mercedes-AMG SLC43, but the car hasn't escaped the attention of tuners. Piecha has developed a new exhaust backbox to replace the faux tailpipes of the standard car. Also on offer is 25mm-lowered suspension and a module to sharpen the response of the drive-by-wire throttle.

NEXT MONTH

ANALYSIS

1990s hot hatches: Clio Williams, 306 GTI 6, Renault 19 16v, Ibiza Cupra

USED RIVALS

Hypersaloons: Ferrari FF v Panamera Turbo S v Bentley Continental GT

MODEL FOCUS

Mercedes C43/55/63 AMG: German supersaloons to take on BMW's M3

BUYING GUIDE

Lotus Exige V6: Hethel's mini-supercar under the microscope

'Why I've kept it'

JASON ROSS

HONDA S2000





'Around the year 2000 my daily driver was a Citroën Xsara VTS. It was my first French car and after a year I'd simply had enough of the flimsy build quality, over servo'd brakes and incredible noise at motorway speeds – it was time to move on.

'At the same time, my girlfriend was hankering after a convertible and looking at MX-5s and MGFs, whereas I was smitten with the S2000, which Honda had quietly launched in 1999. We drove one and loved it, but couldn't find a deal on a new one. A few weeks later we tracked down a 1500-mile, 18-month-old example in Kent.

'The week before Christmas we did the deal and drove home gingerly to Nottingham in the fog in our new pride and joy. The S2000, while never being an **evo** favourite, is a great balance of everyday usability and raw sports car. You can trickle around outside the VTEC window in total comfort in the driverfocused cabin, and then when you really want to have some fun you just let the revs build to 9000rpm – it feels amazing.

'Fast-forward to today and the car has now covered 58,000 fun and trouble-free miles. I've yet to find any car I could love more. My daily is an E92 M3 coupe, which has a great engine, but the much lighter, cable-throttled S2000 tops it as a drive.

'I feel the need to scratch that Caterham itch, but I'll be keeping the S2000, obviously. I'll never flog it.'

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1999 BMW 840CI Est: £7,000 - £9,000



2002 Bentley Arnage Est: £20,000 - £25,000

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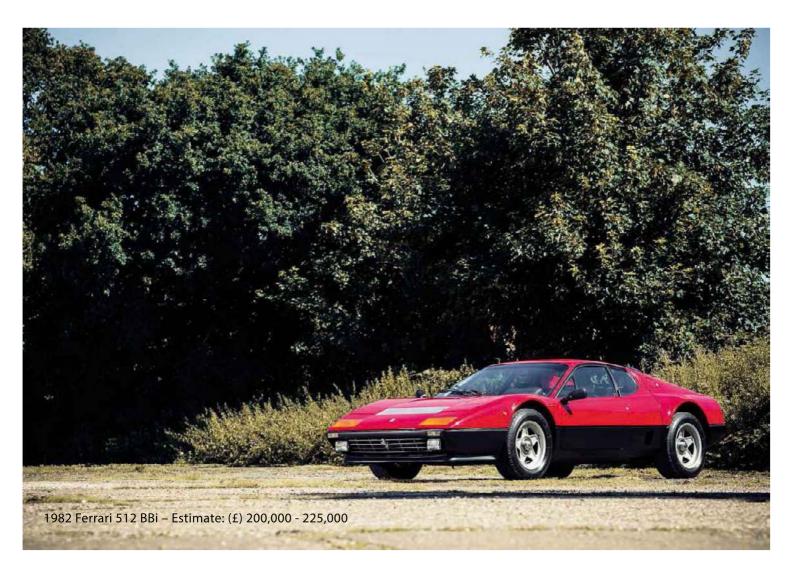
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Lamborghini Murcielago LP670-4 SV Ceramic brakes, High level rear wing small decal option, 600 miles, 2009, £499,990



Lamborghini Diablo 6.0 VT Final Edition Carbon Fibre Driving Zone, Carbon Fibre Inserts, Carbon Fibre Engine Bay, 20,000 miles, 2000, £229,990



Lamborghini Murcielago LP640 Coupe Hercules alloys, Carbon Driving Zone, Parking Camera, 16,000 miles, 2009, £159,990



Lamborghini Murcielago V12 COUPE Branding Pk, Manual transmission, Lifting Gear, 21,000 miles, 2003, £123,990



Lamborghini Urraco P250 Alloy wheels, Colin Clarke Engine Re-Build, 100 miles, 1973, £89,990



Lamborghini Murcielago LP670-4 SV Ceramic Brakes High Level Rear Wing Small Decal option 4,000 miles 2009 £399,990



Lamborghini Murcielago LP640 Coupe Titanium Hercules alloys, Parking Camera, 10,000 miles, 2008, £164,990



Lamborghini Murcielago LP640 Coupe Parking Camera, Titanium Hercules alloys, Carbon racing seats, 19,000 miles, 2007, £154,990



Lamborghini Gallardo LP 560-4 Spyder 1 Owner, Branding Pk, Calisto Alloys, Reverse camera, 15,000 miles, 2012, £117,990



Lamborghini Gallardo LP560-4 Coupe LHD Glass engine bay cover, Rear Camera, 25000 miles, 2008, £84,990



Lamborghini Aventador V12 Coupe Transparent engine cover, Sports exhaust, Carbon fibre engine bay, 2,800 miles, 2014, £264,990



Lamborghini Diablo Roadster 5.7 VT Sports exhaust, Full leather interior, 30,000 miles, 1997, £159,990



Lamborghini LP550-2 Singapore Edition Transparent engine cover, Skorpius Alloys, Carbon Driving Zone, 25,000 miles, 2011, £139,990



Lamborghini Gallardo Superleggera LHD Skorpius Alloys, Alcantara Sports Seats, Carbon Driving Zone, 25,000 miles, 2009, £94,990



Lamborghini Gallardo Coupe E gear Calisto Alloys, Lifting Gear, Parking Camera, 34,000 miles, 2006, £74,990

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THE KNOWLEDGE

• new entry this month. * = grey import. Entries in italics are for cars no longer on sale. Issue no. is for our most recent major test of the car (D = Driven, R = Road test or group test, F = Feature, FF = Fast Fleet). Call 0844 844 0039 to order a back issue. Price is on-the-road including VAT and delivery charges. Engine is the car's main motor only - additional hybrid tech isn't shown. Weight is the car's kerb weight as quoted by the manufacturer. bhp/ton is the power-to-weight ratio based on manufacturer's kerb weight. 0-60mph and 0-100mph figures in bold are independently recorded, all other performance figures are manufacturer's claims. CO2 g/km is the official EC figure and EC mpg is the official 'Combined' figure or equivalent.

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	CO2 G/KM	EC MPG	EVO RATING	
Abarth 595 Competizione	196 D	£19,090	4/1368	158/5500	170/3000	1035kg	155	7.4	-	130	155	43.5	+ Spirited engine, still looks great - Favours fun over finesse	***
	205 R	£33,055	4/1369	187/5500	184/3000	997kg	191	5.9	-	143	-	-	+ Engineered like a true Abarth product - Desirable extras make this a £50k city car	****
Alfa Romeo Giulietta QV	199 D	£28,330	4/1742	237/5750	251/2000	1320kg	182	6.0	-	151	162	40.3	+ Still looks good, and now it's got the 4C's engine - Pricey, and it has more rewarding rivals	***
Alfa Romeo Giulietta Cloverleaf	144 D	'10-'14	4/1742	232/5500	251/1900	1320kg	179	6.8	-	150	177	37.2	+ Shows signs of deep talentbut should be more exciting	***
Audi S1	211 R	£25,595	4/1984	228/6000	273/1600	1315kg	176	5.8	-	155	162	40.4	+ Compliant and engaging chassis; quick, too - Looks dull without options	****
Audi A1 quattro	181 R	73	4/1984	253/6000	258/2500	1420kg	181	5.7	-	152	199	32.8	+ Polished 253bhp all-wheel-drive A1 - Just 19 for UK, Porsche Cayman price	****
Audi S3	188 R	£31,230	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1395kg	216	5.4	12.5	155	162	40.4	+ Lots of grip and one of the best-sounding four-pot turbos - Still a little too clinical	****
Audi RS3 Sportback	221 R	£40,795	5/2480	362/5500	343/1625	1520kg	242	3.6	-	155	189	34.9	+ Addictive five-cylinder noise; monster pace - Chassis not exactly playful	****
Audi S3	106 R	'06-'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	****
Audi RS3 Sportback	156 R	'11-'12	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1575kg	216	4.5	-	155	212	31.0	+ Above, with added five-pot character - Again, see above	****
BMW 125i M Sport	176 D	£27,060	4/1997	218/5000	228/1350	1420kg	156	6.4	-	155	154	42.8	+ Performance, price, running costs - Dull four-pot soundtrack	****
BMW M135i	212 R	£32,010	6/2979	321/5800	332/1300	1430kg	228	5.2	-	155	188	35.3	+ Powertrain, noise, chassis, price - M235i looks nicer, and has an LSD on its options list	****
BMW 130i M Sport	106 R	'05-'10	6/2996	261/6650	232/2750	1450kg	183	6.1	15.3	155	-	34.0	+ Fantastic engine - Suspension can still get a little boingy	****
Citroën Saxo VTS	020 R	'97-'03	4/1587	120/6600	107/5200	935kg	130	7.6	22.6	127	-	34.9	+ Chunky, chuckable charger - Can catch out the unwary	****
Citroën AX GT	195 R	'87-'92	4/1360	85/6400	86/4000	722kg	120	9.2	-	110	-	-	+ Makes terrific use of 85bhp - Feels like it's made from paper	****
Citroën DS3 1.6 THP	142 R	'10-'15	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, feistier version of above - Not as hardcore as its 'Racing' tag suggests	***
	222 D	£20,495	4/1598	205/6000	221/3000	1175kg	177	6.5	-	143	125	50.4	+ All the right ingredients - Undercooked	***
Fiat Panda 100HP	132 R	'06-'11	4/1368	99/6000	97/4250	975kg	103	9.5	-	115	154	43.5	+ Most fun per pound on the market - Optional ESP can't be turned off	****
Ford Fiesta ST	207 R	£17,545	4/1596	197/5700	214/2500	1088kg	184	7.4	18.4	137	138	47.9	+ Chassis, price, punchy performance - Not as powerful as key rivals	****
Ford Fiesta ST Mountune	213 R	£18.144	4/1596	212/6000	236/2750	1088kg	198	6.4	-	140	138	-	+ One of the best mid-sized hatches made even better - Badge snobbery	****
	225 R	£22,745	4/1596	212/6000	236/2500	1088kg	198	6.7	-	143	140	46.3	+ Massive fun - Mountune version offers the same power for considerably less	****
Ford Fiesta Zetec S	123 D	'08-'13	4/1596	118/6000	112/4050	1045kg	115	9.9	-	120	134	48.7	+ Genuinely entertaining supermini - Grown up compared to Twingo/Swift	****
Ford Fiesta ST	075 D	'05-'08	4/1999	148/6000	140/4500	1137kg	132	7.9	-	129	-	38.2	+ Great looks, decent brakes - Disappointing chassis, gutless engine	***
Ford Focus ST TDCi Estate	219 D	£23,295	4/1997	182/3500	295/2000	1488kg	124	8.3	-	135	110	67.3	+ Performance not sacrificed at the alter of economy - Gets ragged when really pushed	****
	207 R	£22.745	4/1999	247/5500	265/2000	1362kg	184	6.5	-	154	159	41.5	+ Excellent engine - Scrappy when pushed	****
Ford Focus ST Mountune	187 D	£23,940	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	119 R	'05-'10	5/2522	222/6000	236/1600	1392kg	162	6.7	16.8	150	224	30.4	+ Value, performance, integrity - Big engine compromises handling	****
	223 R	£31,000	4/2261	345/6000	347/2000	1524kg	230	4.7	12.4	165	175	36.7	+ Torque-vectoring 4WD brings new sensations to hot hatch sector - Engine isn't thrilling	****
Ford Focus RS (Mk2)	195 R	'09-'11	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 RS500 (Mk2)	181 R	70-71	5/2522	345/6000	339/2500	1467kg	239	5.6	12.7	165	225	-	+ More power and presence than regular Mk2 RS - Pricey	****
Ford Focus RS (Mk1)	207 R	'02-'03	4/1998	212/5500	229/3500	1278kg	169	5.9	14.9	143	-	-	+ Some are great - Some are awful (so make sure you drive plenty)	****
Ford Escort RS Cosworth	157 R	'92-'96	4/1993	224/6250	224/3500	1275kg	179	6.2	-	137	-	-	+ The ultimate Essex hot hatch - Unmodified ones are rare , and getting pricey	****
Ford Puma 1.7	095 R	'97-'02	4/1679	123/6300	116/4500	1041kg	120	8.6	27.6	122	-	38.2	+ Revvy engine, sparkling chassis, bargain used prices - Rusty rear arches	****
Ford Racing Puma	128 R	'00-'01	4/1679	153/7000	119/4500	1174kg	132	7.8	23.2	137	-	34.7	+ Exclusivity - The standard Puma does it so well	****
	216 R	£29,995	4/1996	306/6500	295/2500	1378kg	226	5.4	-	167	170	38.7	+ Great on smooth roads - Turbo engine not as special as old NA units; styling a bit 'busy'	****
Honda Civic Type R (FN2)	102 R	'07-'11	4/1998	198/7800	142/5600	1267kg	158	6.8	17.5	146	215	31.0	+ Looks great, VTEC more accessible - Steering lacks feel, inert balance	****
Honda Civic Type R Champ'ship White	126 D	'09-'10	4/1998	198/7800	142/5600	1267kg	158	6.6	-	146	-	31.0	+ Limited-slip diff a welcome addition - It's not available on the standard car	****
Honda Civic Type R (EP3)	075 R	'01-'05	4/1998	197/7400	145/5900	1204kg	166	6.8	16.9	146	-	31.7	+ Potent and great value - 'Breadvan' looks divide opinion, duff steering	****
	217 D	£20,205	4/1591	201/6000	195/1500	1359kg	143	7.3	-	150	170	38.2	+ Fun and appealing package - Soft-edged compared to rivals	****
Lancia Delta Integrale	194 R	'88-'93	4/1995	207/5750	220/3500	1300kg	162	5.7	-	137	-	23.9	+ One of the finest cars ever built - Demands love, LHD only	****
	132 R	£15,995	4/1498	102/6000	101/4000	1030kg	107	10.4	-	117	135	48.7	+ Fun and funky - Feels tinny after a Mini	***
Mazda 3 MPS	137 R	'06-'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-AMG A45	221 R	£39,995	4/1991	376/6000	350/2250	1480kg	258	3.9	-	155	162	40.9	+ Tremendously fast - But not a true great	****
Mercedes-Benz A45 AMG	194 R	12-15	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	****
	194 D	£15,485	3/1499	134/4500	162/1250	1085kg	125	7.9	-	130	105	62.8	+ Punchy three-cylinder engine, good chassis - Tubby styling	****
	196 D	£18.840	4/1998	189/4700	206/1250	1160kg	166	6.8	-	146	133	49.6	+ Still has that Mini DNA - Expensive with options; naff dash displays	****
	211 R	£23,050	4/1998	228/5200	236/1250	1200kg	193	6.3	-	153	155	42.2	+ Fast, agile, nimble - Chassis lacks sparkle found in previous JCWs	***
	224 R	c£32,000	4/1998	228/5200	236/1250	1215kg	191	6.3	-	152	155	42.2	+ A more hardcore JCW, honed with help from evo ! - Just 100 being built	****
Mini John Cooper Works Coupe (R58)	164 R	71-75	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	'09-'14	4/1598	120/6000	118/4250	1075kg	113	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)	149 R	'06-'14	4/1598	181/5500	177/1600	1140kg	161	7.0	-	142	136	48.7	+ New engine, Mini quality - Front end not quite as direct as the old car's	****
Mini Cooper SD (R56)	158 D	71-74	4/1995	141/4000	225/1750	1150kg	125	8.0	-	134	114	65.7	+ A quick diesel Mini with impressive mpg - But no Cooper S alternative	***
Mini John Cooper Works (R56)	184 R	'08-'14	4/1598	208/6000	206/2000	1160kg	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	13-14	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 (R53)	077 R	'02-'06	4/1598	168/6000	155/4000	1140kg	143	7.8	19.9	135	-	33.6	+ Strong performance, quality feel - Over-long gearing	****
Mini Cooper S Works GP (R53)	144 R	'06	4/1598	215/7100	184/4600	1090kg	200	6.5	-	149	-	32.8	+ Storming engine, agility - Tacky styling 'enhancements'	****
	208 D	£21,995	4/1618	215/6000	206/3600	1315kg	166	7.0	-	137	165	39.2	+ Quirky character and bold styling - Not a match for a pukka hot hatch	***
Peugeot 106 Rallye (Series 2)	-	'97-'98	4/1587	103/6200	97/3500	865kg	121	8.8	_	121	-	34.0	+ Bargain no-frills thrills - Not as much fizz as original 1.3	****
Peugeot 106 Rallye (Series 1)	095 R	'94-'96	4/1294	100/7200	80/5400	826kg	123	10.6		118	-	35.6	+ Frantic, thrashy fun - Needs caning to extract full potential	****
Peugeot 208 GTi	184 R	£18,895	4/1598	197/5800	203/1700	1160kg	173	6.8	17.9	143	125	47.9	+ Agile chassis works well on tough roads - Could be more involving	****
Peugeot 208 GTi by Peugeot Sport	225 R	£21,995	4/1598	205/5800	221/1750	1185kg	176	6.5	-	143	125	47.9	+ The most focused small hatch on sale - Nearly £4k more than a Fiesta ST Mountune	****
	223 R	£26,855	4/1598	246/6000	243/1900	1205kg	207	6.2		155	139	47.1	+ A very capable hot hatchthat lacks the sheer excitement of the best in class	****

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OUR CHOICE

Renaultsport Mégane 275. This generation of Mégane has got better and better with every update, and the 275 is simply sublime. Optional Öhlins dampers and Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 rubber (taken from the Trophy-R) aren't essential, but improve things even further.



BEST OF THE REST

The latest Ford Focus RS (left) is our favourite super-hatch, with the more grown-up Golf R close behind. The SEAT Leon Cupra 290 (which replaces the 280 and has an extra 10bhp), is a real buzz, especially with the Sub8 pack and sticky tyres, while the Fiesta ST Mountune is our pick of the smaller hatches.

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	МАХ МРН	C02 G/KM	EC MPG	EVO RATING	
Peugeot 308 GTi 270 by Peugeot Sport	 215 D	£28,250	4/1598	266/6000	243/1900	1205kg	224	6.0		155	139	47.1	+ As above - As above	****
Peugeot 205 GTI 1.9	195 R	'88-'91	4/1905	130/6000	119/4750	910kg	145	7.9	-	124	-	36.7	+ Still scintillating after all these years - Brittle build quality	****
Peugeot 306 GTI 6	020 R	'93-'01	4/1998	167/6500	142/5500	1215kg	139	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	'98-'99	4/1998	167/6500	142/5500	1199kg	142	6.9	19.2	137		30.1	+ Essentially a GTI-6 for less dosh - Limited choice of colours	****
Renaultsport Twingo 133	175 R	'08-'13	4/1598	131/6750	118/4400	1050kg	127	8.6	-	125	150	43.5	+ Renaultsport experience for pocket money - Optional Cup chassis gives bouncy ride	****
Renaultsport Clio 200 Auto	184 R	£20,445	4/1618	197/6000	177/1750	1204kg	166	6.9	17.9	143	144	44.8	+ Faster, more refined, easier to drive - We miss the revvy nat-asp engine and manual 'box	****
Renaultsport Clio 220 Trophy	213 R	£21.780	4/1618	217/6050	206/2000	1204kg	183	6.6	-	146	135	47.9	+ Improves on the 200 Auto - Still not a match for previous-generation Renaultsport Clios	****
Renaultsport Clio 200 Cup	195 R	'09-'13	4/1998	197/7100	159/5400	1204kg	166	6.6	16.7	141	190	34.5	+ The hot Clio at its best - They don't make it anymore	****
Renaultsport Clio 197 Cup	115 R	'07-'09	4/1998	194/7250	158/5550	1240kg	161	6.9	-	134	-	33.6	+ Quick, polished and capable - Not as much sheer fun as 182 Cup	***
Renaultsport Clio 182	066 R	'04-'06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1110kg	165	6.6	17.5	139		34.9	+ Took hot hatches to a new level - Flawed driving position	****
Renaultsport Clio 182 Cup	187 R	'04-'06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1090kg	168	6.5	-	139		34.9	+ Full of beans, fantastic value - Sunday-market upholstery	****
Renaultsport Clio Trophy	200 R	'05-'06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1090kg	168	6.6	17.3	140	-	34.9	+ The most fun you can have on three (sometimes two) wheels - Just 500 were built	****
Renaultsport Clio 172 Cup	048 R	'02-'04	4/1998	170/6250	147/5400	1011kg	171	6.5	17.7	138	-	-	+ Bargain old-school hot hatch - Nervous in the wet, no ABS	****
Renaultsport Clio V6 255	057 R	'03-'05	6/2946	251/7150	221/4650	1400kg	182	5.8	-	153	-	23.0	+ Supercar drama without the original's edgy handling - Uninspired interior	****
Renaultsport Clio V6	029 R	'99-'02	6/2946	227/6000	221/3750	1335kg	173	5.8	17.0	145	-	23.0	+ Pocket supercar - Mid-engined handling can be tricky	****
Renault Clio Williams	195 R	'93-'96	4/1988	148/6100	126/4500	981kg	153	7.6	20.8	134	-	26.0	+ One of the best hot hatches ever - Can be fragile	****
Renault 5 GT Turbo	195 R	'87-'91	4/1397	118/5750	122/3000	855kg	140	7.3	-	120	-	28.4	+ Clio Williams' grand-daddy - Few unmodified ones left	****
Renaultsport Mégane 275 Cup-S	223 D	£23,935	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1394kg	198	5.8	-	158	174	37.7	+ Cup chassis, LSD, the same engine as the Trophy-R - Could be too hardcore for some	****
Renaultsport Mégane Nav 275	-	£25,935	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1394kg	198	5.8	-	158	174	37.7	+ A more luxurious 275 - Cup chassis is an option	****
Renaultsport Mégane 265 Cup	195 R	12-75	4/1998	261/5500	265/3000	1387kg	191	6.4	14.8	158	174	37.7	+ A hot hatch benchmark - Cupholder could be better positioned	****
Renaultsport Mégane 275 Trophy	212 R	74-75	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1376kg	200	5.8	-	159	174	37.7	+ Another cracking Trophy model - Stripped-out Trophy-R is even more thrilling	****
Renaultsport Mégane 275 Trophy-R	215 R	74-75	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1297kg	212	5.8	-	158	174	37.7	+ As absorbing as a 911 GT3 RS on the right road - Too uncompromising for some; pricey	****
Renaultsport Mégane 250 Cup	139 R	'09-'12	4/1998	247/5500	251/3000	1387kg	181	6.1	14.6	156	190	34.4	+ Fantastic chassispartially obscured by new-found maturity	****
Renaultsport Mégane dCi 175 Cup	119 R	'07-'09	4/1995	173/3750	265/2000	1470kg	119	8.3	23.5	137	-	43.5	+ A diesel with a genuinely sporty chassis - Could take more power	****
Renaultsport Mégane 230 F1 Team R26	195 R	'07-'09	4/1998	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	200 R	'08-'09	4/1998	227/5500	229/3000	1220kg	189	5.8	15.1	147		-	+ One of the true hot hatch heroes - Two seats, plastic rear windows	****
SEAT Ibiza Cupra	225 R	£18.100	4/1798	189/4300	236/1450	1185kg	162	6.7	-	146	145	45.6	+ Quick, competent, refined, and manual only - Not exciting enough	****
SEAT Ibiza Cupra	183 D	'10-'15	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1259kg	144	6.9	-	142	139	47.9	+ Punchy engine, unflappable DSG - Lacks engagement, DSG only	***
SEAT Leon Cupra 290	221 D	£28,375	4/1984	286/5900	258/1700	1300kg	224	5.8	-	155	156	42.2	+ As below, but with another 10bhp - As below	****
SEAT Leon Cupra 280	220 R	14-15	4/1984	276/5600	258/1750	1300kg	216	5.8	-	155	149	44.1	+ Serious pace and agility for Golf GTI money - The Mk7 Golf R	****
SEAT Leon Cupra	105 R	'07-'11	4/1984	237/5700	221/2200	1375kg	175	6.3	-	153	190	34.0	+ Great engine, composure - Doesn't have adjustability of old Cupra R	****
SEAT Leon Cupra R	139 R	'10-'12	4/1984	261/6000	258/2500	1375kg	193	6.1	14.0	155	190	34.9	+ Bold car, blinding engine - Lacks the character of its rival mega-hatches	****
SEAT Leon Cupra R 225	067 R	'03-'06	4/1781	222/5900	206/2200	1376kg	164	6.9	-	150	-	32.1	+ Cross-country pace, practicality, value - Not as thrilling as some	****
Skoda Fabia vRS (Mk2)	146 D	'10-'14	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1218kg	148	7.3	-	139	148	45.6	+ Well priced, well made, with great engine and DSG 'box - Dull steering	****
Skoda Fabia vRS (Mk1)	077R	'04-'07	4/1896	130/4000	229/1900	1315kg	100	9.6	-	127	-	55.4	+ Fascinatingly fun and frugal hot hatch - A little short on steering feel	****
Skoda Octavia vRS (Mk3)	187 D	£24.230	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1345kg	164	6.8	-	154	142	45.6	+ Quick, agile, roomier than a Golf - Ride is harsh for what could be a family car	****
Skoda Octavia vRS 230 (Mk3)	215 D	£26,350	4/1984	227/4700	258/1500	1345kg	171	6.7	-	155	142	45.6	+ Limited-slip diff makes for a sharper steer - It could handle more than the extra 10bhp	****
Skoda Octavia vRS TDI 4x4 (Mk3)	223 D	£27,590	4/1968	181/3500	206/1750	1475kg	125	7.6	-	142	129	57.7	+ Four-wheel drive tightens the vRS chassis - Diesel and DSG only	****
Skoda Octavia vRS (Mk2)	163 R	'05-'13	4/1998	197/5100	206/1700	1395kg	143	7.3	-	149	175	37.7	+ Drives like a GTI but costs much less - Green brake calipers?	****
Subaru Impreza STI 330S	124 R	'08-'10	4/2457	325/5400	347/3400	1505kg	219	4.4	-	155	-	-	+ A bit quicker than the STIbut not better	****
Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk2)	175 R	£13,999	4/1586	134/6900	118/4400	1045kg	130	8.7	-	121	147	44.1	+ The Swift's still a great pocket rocket - But it's lost a little adjustability	****
Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk1)	132 R	'05-'11	4/1586	123/6800	109/4800	1030kg	121	8.9	-	124	165	39.8	+ Entertaining handling, well built - Lacking in steering feedback	****
Vauxhall Corsa VXR	211 R	£18.125	4/1598	202/5800	206/1900	1278kg	161	6.5	-	143	174	37.7	+ Begs to be wrung out - You'll need the £2400 Performance Pack	****
Vauxhall Corsa VXR	154 R	'07-'14	4/1598	189/5850	192/1980	1166kg	165	6.8	-	140	172	38.7	+ Looks snazzy, punchy engine - Lacks feel, uncouth compared with rivals	****
Vauxhall Corsa VXR N'ring/Clubsport	164 R	'11-'13/'14	4/1598	202/5750	206/2250	1166kg	176	6.5	-	143	178	-	+ VXR gets more power and a limited-slip diff - But they come at a price	****
Vauxhall Astra VXR (Mk2)	207 R	£27.850	4/1998	276/5500	295/2500	1475kg	190	5.9	-	155	184	34.9	+ Better than the car it replaces; loony turbo pace - Lacks RS Mégane's precision	****
Vauxhall Astra VXR (Mk1)	102 R	'05-'11	4/1998	237/5600	236/2400	1393kg	173	6.7	16.7	152	221	30.7	+ Fast and furious - Lacks a little composure and precision	****
VW Up/SEAT Mii/Skoda Citigo	171 R	£8275+	3/999	59/5000	70/3000	854kg	70	14.1	-	99	105	62.8	+ Accomplished city car is dynamically soundbut predictably slow	****
VW Polo GTI	211 R	£19,125	4/1798	189/4200	236/1450	1197kg	160	6.7	-	146	139	47.1	+ Smooth and brawny - Fiesta ST is more engaging	***
VW Polo GTI	154 R	10-14	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1184kg	153	6.8	-	142	139	47.9	+ Modern-day mk1 Golf GTI gets twin-clutch DSG - It's a little bit bland	****
VW Golf GTD (Mk7)	200 D	£26,955	4/1968	181/3500	280/1750	1302kg	141	7.5	-	143	114	64.2	+ Pace, fuel economy, sounds good for a diesel - Lacks the extra edge of the GTI	****
VW Golf GTI (Mk7)	207 R	£27,495	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1276kg	173	6.5	-	153	139	47.1	+ Brilliantly resolved - Mégane 265 beats it as a pure drivers' car	****
VW Golf GTI Clubsport Edition 40 (Mk7)	218 D	£30.935	4/1984	286/5350	280/1700	1300kg	224	6.3	-	155	162	40.4	+ A faster, sharper, more entertaning GTI - Some rivals are more exciting on track	****
VW Golf GTI Clubsport S (Mk7)	225 D	c£35,000		306/5800	280/1850	1285kg	242	5.8	-	165	172	38.2	+ Another front-wheel-drive Ring record winner - We've only driven it on the Ring so far	****
VW Golf R (Mk7)	220 R	£31,685	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1401kg	215	5.2	12.4	155	165	39.8	+ A VW 'R' model you can take seriously - Mégane 275 <i>just</i> edges it as a pure drivers' car	****
VW Golf GTI (Mk6)	172 R	'09-'13	4/1984	207/5300	207/1700	1318kg	160	6.4	16.5	148	170	38.7	+ Still a very accomplished hot hatch - 207bhp isn't a lot any more	****
VW Golf R (Mk6)	140 D	10-13	4/1984	266/6000	258/2500	1521kg	178	5.5	-	155	199	33.2	+ Great engine, tremendous pace and poise - High price, ACC only optional	****
VW Golf GTI (Mk5)	195 R	'04-'09	4/1984	197/5100	207/1800	1336kg	150	6.7	17.9	145	-	-	+ Character and ability: the GTI's return to form - Lacking firepower?	****
VW Golf R32 (Mk5)	087R	'06-'09	6/3189	246/6300	236/2500	1510kg	165	5.8	15.2	155	-	26.4	+ Traction's great and you'll love the soundtrack - We'd still have a GTI	***
VW Golf R32 (Mk4)	053 R	'02-'04	6/3189	237/6250	236/2800	1477kg	163	6.4	16.3	154	-	24.6	+ Charismatic - Boomy engine can be tiresome	****
VW Golf GTI 16v (Mk2)	195 R	'88-'92	4/1781	139/6100	124/4600	960kg	147	7.9	-	129	-	26.6	+ Still feels everyday useable - Very hard to find a standard one	****
	224 R	'82-'84	4/1781	112/5800	109/3500	840kg	135	8.1	-	112	-	36.0	+ The car that started it all - Tricky to find an unmolested one	****
VW Golf GTI (Mk1, 1.8)														

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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. The '30 Jahre' special edition, which has an extra 40bhp, is especially worth a look.



BEST OF THE REST

Mercedes' E63 AMG offers intoxicating performance, especially with the S upgrade (pictured). BMW's M3 is an appealing all-round package, but its C63 AMG rival has more approachable limits. If you must have an SUV, take a look at Jaguar's F-Pace or Porsche's Macan Turbo, Macan GTS or Cayenne GTS.

	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	НА W09-0	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	C02 G/KM	EC MPG	EVO RATING	
Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio	223 D	c£59,000	6/2891	503/6500	443/2500	1524kg	335	3.9	-	191	198	40.3	+ If Ferrari built a saloon (really) - We've only driven it on track so far	****
Alpina D3 Biturbo (F30)	192 D	£46,950	6/2993	345/4000	516/1500	1585kg	221	4.6	-	173	139	53.3	+ 173mph from a 3-litre diesel! Brilliant chassis, too - Auto only	****
Alpina B3 Biturbo (F30)	188 D	£54,950	6/2979	404/5500	442/3000	1610kg	255	4.2	-	190	177	37.2	+ Understated appearance, monster performance - E90 M3 is better on the limit	****
Alpina B5 Biturbo	149 D	£75,150	8/4395	533/5200	538/2800	1920kg	282	4.5	-	198	244	26.9	+ Big performance and top-line luxury - Driver not really involved	***
Alpina B7 Biturbo	134 D	£98,800	8/4395	533/5200	538/2800	2040kg	265	4.6	-	194	230	28.5	+ Massive performance and top-line luxury - Feels its weight when hustled	****
Aston Martin Rapide S	201 D	£147,950	12/5935	552/6650	465/5500	1990kg	282	4.2	-	203	300	21.9		****
Aston Martin Rapide	141 R	'10-'13	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1990kg	240	5.2	-	188	355	-	+ Better than its DB9 sibling - More a 2+2 than a proper four-seater	****
Audi S3 Saloon	192 D	£33,540	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1430kg	210	5.3	-	155	162	26.4		***
Audi S4 (B9)	225 D	c£43.500	6/2995	349/5400	369/1370	1630kg	218	4.7	-	155	166	38.7		***
Audi S4 (B8)	166 D	'08-'16	6/2995	328/5500	324/2900	1705kg	195	4.9	-	155	190	34.9	+ Great supercharged powertrain, secure chassis - The RS4	****
Audi RS4 Avant (B8)	216 R	12-15	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1795kg	251	4.5	10.5	174	249	26.4	+ Looks and sounds the part, thunderously fast - Unnatural steering, dull dynamics	***
Audi RS4 (B7)	088 R	'05-'08	8/4163	414/7800	317/5500	1650kg	255	4.5	10.9	155	-	-	+ 414bhp at 7800rpm! And there's an estate version too - Busy under braking	****
Audi RS4 (B5)	192 R	'00-'02	6/2671	375/6100	325/2500	1620kg	236	4.8	12.1	170	-	17.0		***
Audi RS2	214 R	'94-'95	5/2226	315/6500	302/3000	1595kg	201	4.8	13.1	162		18.0	+ Storming performance (thanks to Porsche) - Try finding one	***
Audi S6	091 D	'06-'11	10/5204	429/6800	398/3000	1910kg	228	5.2	-	155	299	22.4	+ Even faster, and discreet with it - Very muted V10	***
Audi RS6 Avant (C7)	203 R	£77.995	8/3993	552/5700	516/1750	1935kg	290	3.6	8.2	155	223	29.4		***
Audi RS6 Avant Performance (C7)	224 D	£86,420	8/3993	597/6100	553/2500	1950kg	311	3.7		155	223	29.4		****
Audi RS6 Avant (C6)	116 R	'08-'10	10/4991	572/6250	479/1500	2025kg	287	4.3	9.7	155	333	20.2		***
Audi RS6 Avant (C5)	052 R	'02-'04	8/4172	444/5700	413/1950	1865kg	242	4.8	11.6	155	-	19.3	+ The ultimate estate car? - Numb steering	****
Audi RS7 Sportback	208 R	£84,480	8/3993	552/5700	516/1750	1920kg	292	3.9	-	155	229	28.8		***
Audi S7 Sportback	171 D	£63.375	8/3993	414/5000	406/1400	1945kg	216	4.6	-	155	225	20.0	+ Looks and drives better than S6 it's based on - Costs £8000 more	***
Audi S8 Plus	217 D	£97.700	8/3993	597/6100	553/2500	1943kg	305	3.8	-	155	229	28.2	+ Fantastic drivetrain, quality and refinement - Dynamic Steering feels artificial	***
		£45,495	5/2480		332/1600		206	4.8	-	155	203	32.1		****
Audi RS Q3	206 D		8/3997	335/5300		1655kg			-			32.1 25.9		
Bentley Flying Spur V8	200 D 185 D	£142,800		500/6000	487/1700	2342kg	217	4.9	-	183	254 343	19.0		***
Bentley Flying Spur		£153,300	12/5998	616/6000	590/1600	2400kg	261	4.3		200				***
Bentley Bentayga	217 D	£160,200	12/5950	600/5000	664/1350	2347kg	260	4.0	-	187	296	21.6	+ Sublime quality, ridiculous pace, capable handling - Inert driving experience, SUV stigma	
Bentley Mulsanne	178 F	£229,360		505/4200	752/1750	2610kg	197	5.1		184	342	19.3		****
Bentley Mulsanne Speed	223 F	£252,000		530/4200	811/1750	2610kg	206	4.8	-	190	342	19.3		****
BMW 320d (F30)	168 R	£29,475	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 tad noisy	****
BMW 328i (F30)	165 D	£30,470	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 six-cylinder soundtrack	****
BMW 330d M Sport (F30)	180 D	£36,975	6/2993	254/4000	413/2000	1540kg	168	5.6	-	155	129	57.6		****
BMW 435i Gran Coupe	203 D	£41,865	6/2979	302/5800	295/1200	1585kg	194	5.5	-	155	174	34.9	+ Superb straight-six, fine ride/handling balance - 335i saloon weighs and costs less	****
BMW M3 (F80)	211 R	£56,590	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1520kg	284	4.1	8.6	155	204	32.1		****
BMW M3 (E90)	123 R	'08-'11	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	8/4361	444/8300	324/3750	1580kg	285	4.4	-	180	295	-		****
BMW M5 (F10M)	208 R	£73,960	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 (E60)	129 R	'04-'10	10/4999	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	8/4941	394/6600	369/3800	1795kg	223	4.9	11.5	155	-	-	+ Magnificent V8-engined supersaloon - We'd be nit-picking	****
BMW M5 (E34)	110 R	'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	1431kg	200	6.2	-	151	-	-	+ The original storming saloon - Understated looks	****
BMW M6 Gran Coupe	190 D	£98,145	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1875kg	299	4.2	-	155	232	28.5		***
BMW X5 M50d	191 D	£64,525	6/2993	376/4000	546/2000	2190kg	155	5.3	-	155	173	42.8		***
BMW X6 M	212 D	£93,080	8/4395	567/6000	553/2200	2265kg	245	4.2	-	155	258	25.4	+ Big improvement on its predecessor - Coupe roofline still of questionable taste	****
BMW X6 M	134 D	'09-'15	8/4395	547/6000	502/1500	2305kg	241	4.7	-	171	325	20.3	+ Fast, refined and comfortable - But it definitely lacks the M factor	****
Brabus Bullit	119 R	c£330,000	0 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	8/6162	556/6100	551/3800	1928kg	293	3.9	-	191	365	18.1	+ It'll stand out among M-cars and AMGs - But the novelty might wear off	****
Ford Sierra RS Cosworth 4x4	141 R	'90-'93	4/1993	220/6250	214/3500	1305kg	159	6.6	-	144	-	24.4	+ Fast and furious- Try finding a straight one	****
Honda Accord Type R	012 R	'98-'03	4/2157	209/7200	158/6700	1306kg	163	6.1	17.4	142	-	29.4	+ One of the finest front-drivers of all time- Lack of image	****
Infiniti Q50S Hybrid	195 D	£39,995	6/3498	359/6800	402/5000	1750kg	208	5.1	-	155	144	45.6	+ Good powertrain, promising chassis - Lacklustre steering, strong rivals	***
Jaguar XES	213 D	£44,865	6/2995	335/6500	332/4500	1635kg	208	4.9	-	155	194	34.9		****
Jaguar XFS	214 D	£49,945	6/2995	375/6500	332/4500	1710kg	223	5.0	-	155	198	34.0		***
Jaguar XF S Diesel	219 D	£49,945	6/2993	296/4000	516/2000	1750kg	172	5.8	-	155	144	51.4		***
Jaguar XFR	181 D	'09-'15	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1800kg	284	4.8	10.2	155	270	24.4		***
Jaguar XFR-S	208 R	13-15	8/5000	542/6500	501/2500	1800kg	306	4.4	-	186	270	24.4	+ XF gets turned up to 12 - Tyres aren't cheap	***
Jaguar XFR-S Sportbrake	203 R	74-75	8/5000	542/6500	501/2500	1892kg	291	4.6	-	186	297	22.2	+ Looks fantastic, huge performance, nice balance - Not as sharp as the saloon	***
Jaguar XJ 3.0 V6 Diesel	148 D	£58,690	6/2993	271/4000	442/2000	1835kg	150	6.0	-	155	167	46.3	+ A great Jaguar - But not as great as the XJR	***
Jaguar XJR	191 D	£91,755	8/5000	542/6500	502/2500	1875kg	294	4.4		174	270	24.4	+ Hot-rod vibe, fine cabin - Opinion-dividing looks	***
Jaguar F-Pace 3.0 V6 Supercharged	222 D	£65.275	6/2995	375/6500	332/4500	1884kg	202	5.1	-	155	209	57.7	+ A match for Porsche's SUVs - Supercharged V6 needs to be worked hard	***
Land Rover Discovery Sport	205 D	£32,395	4/2179	187/3500	310/1750	1863kg	100	9.8	-	117	159	46.3	+ A Match for Porsche's Sov's - Supercharged vo needs to be worked hard + Style, packaging, refinement - Will need to prove Sport tag in UK	***
		1,32,393	4/4/1/9	101/ 3300	210/1/20	IOOSKX	100	9.0	-	117	IJ	40.3	· DEVICE DUCKARILIS, TELLICITIETTE - WHITTEEU TO DIOVE SHOLL LASTITUTA	A B B B





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Lexus ISF Lotus Carlton Maserati Ghibli Maserati Ghiblis Maserati Quattroporte S Maserati Quattroporte GTS Maserati Levante Diesel Maserati Levante Diesel Maserati Quattroporte S Maserati Quattroporte S Maserati Quattroporte Sport GTS Maserati Quattroporte Mercedes-Benz 190E 2.5-16 Mercedes-Benz CLA45 AMG Mercedes-Benz CLA45 AMG Mercedes-AMG C63 Mercedes-AMG C63 S Mercedes-AMG C63 S Mercedes-AMG C63 S	151 R 170 R 186 D 198 D 184 D 179 D 221 D 137 R 141 R 085 R 185 F 186 D 205 R 209 D 216 R 211 R	'07-'12 '91-'93 £52,615 £63,760 £80,115 £108,185 £54,335 '08-'12 '08-'12 '04-'08 '89-'92 £42,270 £44,595 £59,800	8/4969 6/3615 6/2979 6/2979 6/2979 8/3798 6/2897 8/4691 8/4691 8/4244 4/2498 4/1991	417/6600 377/5200 325/5000 404/5500 523/6800 271/4000 425/7000 433/7000 394/7000	372/5200 419/4200 406/1750 406/4500 406/1750 479/2250 442/2000 361/4750 361/4750	1714kg 1658kg 1810kg 1810kg 1860kg 1900kg 2205kg	247 231 182 227 221 280	4.7 4.8 5.6 5.0 5.1	10.9 10.6 -	173 176	270 -	24.4 17.0	+ Shockingly good Lexus - The M3's available as a (second hand) four-door too + The Millennium Falcon of saloon cars - Every drive a work-out	****
Maserati Ghibli Maserati Ghibli S Maserati Quattroporte S Maserati Quattroporte GTS Maserati Quattroporte GTS Maserati Levante Diesel Maserati Quattroporte S Maserati Quattroporte S Maserati Quattroporte Maserati Quattroporte Mercedes-Benz 190E 25-16 Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG Mercedes-AMG C63 Mercedes-AMG C63	186 D 198 D 184 D 179 D 221 D 137 R 141 R 085 R 185 F 186 D 205 R 209 D 216 R 211 R	£52,615 £63,760 £80,115 £108,185 £54,335 '08-'12 '04-'08 '89-'92 £42,270 £44,595	6/2979 6/2979 6/2979 8/3798 6/2897 8/4691 8/4691 8/4244 4/2498	325/5000 404/5500 404/5500 523/6800 271/4000 425/7000 433/7000 394/7000	406/1750 406/4500 406/1750 479/2250 442/2000 361/4750	1810kg 1810kg 1860kg 1900kg 2205kg	182 227 221	5.6 5.0	-		-	17.0		
Maserati Ghibli S Maserati Quattroporte S Maserati Quattroporte GTS Maserati Levante Diesel Maserati Quattroporte S Maserati Quattroporte S Maserati Quattroporte Sport GTS Maserati Quattroporte Mercedes-Benz 190E 2.5-16 Mercedes-Benz CLA45 AMG Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG Mercedes-BenZ GLA45 AMG Mercedes-AMG C63 Mercedes-AMG C63 Mercedes-AMG C63	198 D 184 D 179 D 221 D 137 R 141 R 085 R 185 F 186 D 205 R 209 D 216 R 211 R	£63,760 £80,115 £108,185 £54,335 '08-12 '08-12 '04-'08 '89-'92 £42,270 £44,595	6/2979 6/2979 8/3798 6/2897 8/4691 8/4691 8/4244 4/2498	404/5500 404/5500 523/6800 271/4000 425/7000 433/7000 394/7000	406/4500 406/1750 479/2250 442/2000 361/4750	1810kg 1860kg 1900kg 2205kg	227 221	5.0						
Maserati Quattroporte S Maserati Quattroporte GTS Maserati Levante Diesel Maserati Quattroporte S Maserati Quattroporte S Maserati Quattroporte Mercedes-Benz 190E 25-16 Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG Mercedes-AMG C63 Mercedes-AMG C63 Estate	184 D 179 D 221 D 137 R 141 R 085 R 185 F 186 D 205 R 209 D 216 R 211 R	£80,115 £108,185 £54,335 '08-12 '08-12 '04-08 '89-'92 £42,270 £44,595	6/2979 8/3798 6/2897 8/4691 8/4691 8/4244 4/2498	404/5500 523/6800 271/4000 425/7000 433/7000 394/7000	406/1750 479/2250 442/2000 361/4750	1860kg 1900kg 2205kg	221			163	223	29.4	+ Bursting with character; good value compared to Quattroporte - It's still a big car	***
Maserati Quattroporte GTS Maserati Levante Diesel Maserati Quattroporte S Maserati Quattroporte Sport GTS Maserati Quattroporte Mercedes-Benz 190E 25-16 Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG Mercedes-AMG C63 Mercedes-AMG C63	179 D 221 D 137 R 141 R 085 R 185 F 186 D 205 R 209 D 216 R 211 R	£108,185 £54,335 '08-'12 '08-'12 '04-'08 '89-'92 £42,270 £44,595	8/3798 6/2897 8/4691 8/4691 8/4244 4/2498	523/6800 271/4000 425/7000 433/7000 394/7000	479/2250 442/2000 <i>361/4750</i>	1900kg 2205kg			-	177	242	27.2	+ Stands out from the crowd; sounds good too - Chassis lacks finesse, engine lacks reach	
Maserati Levante Diesel Maserati Quattroporte S Maserati Quattroporte S Maserati Quattroporte Mercedes-Benz 190E 2.5-16 Mercedes-Benz CLA45 AMG Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG Mercedes-AMG C63 Mercedes-AMG C63	221 D 137 R 141 R 085 R 185 F 186 D 205 R 209 D 216 R 211 R	£54,335 '08-'12 '08-'12 '04-'08 '89-'92 £42,270 £44,595	6/2897 8/4691 8/4691 8/4244 4/2498	271/4000 425/7000 433/7000 394/7000	442/2000 <i>361/4750</i>	2205kg	280		-	177	242	27.2	+ Tempting alternative to V8 - Feel-free steering, secondary ride lacks decorum	***
Maserati Quattroporte S Maserati Quattroporte Sport GTS Maserati Quattroporte Mercedes-Benz 190E 2.5-16 Mercedes-Benz CLA45 AMG Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG Mercedes-Bend GLA5 AMG Mercedes-AMG C63 Mercedes-AMG C63	137R 141R 085 R 185 F 186 D 205 R 209 D 216 R 211 R	'08-'12 '08-'12 '04-'08 '89-'92 £42,270 £44,595	8/4691 8/4691 8/4244 4/2498	425/7000 433/7000 394/7000	361/4750		105	4.7	-	190	274	23.9	+ Performance, sense of occasion - Lacks the charisma and edge of its predecessor	***
Maserati Quattroporte Sport GTS Maserati Quattroporte Mercedes-Benz 190E 25-16 Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG Mercedes-AMG C63 Mercedes-AMG C63	141 R 085 R 185 F 186 D 205 R 209 D 216 R 211 R	'08-'12 '04-'08 '89-'92 £42,270 £44,595	8/4691 8/4244 4/2498	433/7000 394/7000			125	6.9	12.1	143 174	189	39.2 18.0	+ Impressive blend of ride and handling - Diesel performance is mild for a Maserati	***
Maserati Quattroporte Mercedes-Benz 190E 2.5-16 Mercedes-Benz CLA45 AMG Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG Mercedes-AMG C63 Mercedes-AMG C63	085 R 185 F 186 D 205 R 209 D 216 R 211 R	'04-'08 '89-'92 £42,270 £44,595	8/4 <u>2</u> 44 4/2498	394/7000	301/4/30	1990kg 1990kg	216 221	5.1 5.1	- 12.1	174	365 365	18.0	+ A QP with the bhp it deserves - Grille is a bit Hannibal Lecter	***
Mercedes-Benz 190E 2.5-16 Mercedes-Benz CL A45 AMG Mercedes-Benz GL A45 AMG Mercedes-AMG C63 Mercedes-AMG C63 Estate	185 F 186 D 205 R 209 D 216 R 211 R	'89-'92 £42,270 £44,595	4/2498		333/4500	1990kg 1930kg	207	5.1	-	171	-	17.9	+ The most stylish supersaloon - Slightly wooden brakes, unforgiving ride + Redefines big-car dynamics - Don't use auto mode	****
Mercedes-Benz CLA45 AMG Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG Mercedes-AMG C63 Mercedes-AMG C63 Estate	186 D 205 R 209 D 216 R 211 R	£42,270 £44,595		201/6750	177/5500	1360kg	147	7.2	-	142	-	24.4	+ M-B's M3 alternative - Not as nimble as the Beemer	***
Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG Mercedes-AMG C63 Mercedes-AMG C63 Estate	205 R 209 D 216 R 211 R	£44,595		355/6000	332/2250	1510kg	239	4.6		155	161	31.0	+ Strong performance, classy cabin - Pricey compared to A45 AMG hatchback	***
Mercedes-AMG C63 Mercedes-AMG C63 Estate	209 D 216 R 211 R		4/1991	355/6000	332/2250	1510kg	239	4.8	-	155	175	37.7	+ An aggressive and focused sports crossover - Low on driver interaction	***
Mercedes-AMG C63 Estate	216 R 211 R		8/3982	469/5500	479/1750	1640kg	291	4.1	-	155	192	34.5	+ Fast and feelsome - Lacks the ultimate finesse and response of the C63 S	***
	211 R	£61,260	8/3982	469/5500	479/1750	1710kg	279	4.2	-	155	196	33.6	+ Much more fun than it looks - Gearbox dim-witted at low speeds	***
		£66.545	8/3982	503/5500	516/1750	1655kg	309	4.0	-	155	192	34.5	+ Tremendous twin-turbo V8 power - Not quite as focused as an M division car	***
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG	151 R	'07-'14	8/6208	451/6800	442/5000	1655kg	277	4.4	9.7	160	280	23.5	+ Monstrous pace and extremely engaging - Same-era M3 is just a little better	***
Mercedes-Benz C55 AMG	088 R	'04-'08	8/5439	367/5250	376/4000	1635kg	228	5.2	-	155	-	23.7	+ Furiously fast, commendably discreet - Overshadowed by M3 and RS4	***
Mercedes-AMG E63	187 D	£74,115	8/5461	549/5500	531/1750	1770kg	315	4.2	-	155	230	28.8	+ Power, response and accuracy in spades - A little lacking in originality	***
Mercedes-AMG E63 S	208 R	£84,710	8/5461	577/5500	590/1750	1795kg	327	4.1	-	155	229	28.8	+ Effortless power; intuitive and approachable - Dim-witted auto 'box	***
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W212)	165 R	'11-'13	8/5461	518/5250	516/1750	1765kg	298	4.2	-	155	230	28.8	+ Turbo engine doesn't dilute E63 experience - Sometimes struggles for traction	***
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W212)	134 D	'09-'11	8/6208	518/6800	465/5200	1765kg	298	4.5	-	155	295	22.4	+ As below, but with an extra 11bhp and squarer headlights - Steering still vague	***
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W211)	096 D	'06-'09	8/6208	507/6800	465/5200	1765kg	292	4.5	-	155	-	19.8	+ Brilliant engine, indulgent chassis - Vague steering, speed limits	****
Mercedes-Benz E55 AMG	052 R	'03-'06	8/5439	476/6100	516/2650	1760kg	271	4.8	10.2	155	-	21.9	+ M5-humbling grunt, cosseting ride - Speed limits	***
Mercedes-Benz S63 AMG L	191 D	£119,835	8/5461	577/5500	664/2250	1995kg	294	4.4	-	155	237	27.9	+ Monster pace - Average steering feel	***
Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG S	199 D	£86,500	8/5461	577/5500	590/1750	1795kg	327	4.1	-	155	231	28.5	+ Remains quick and characterful - Dated gearbox, no four-wheel drive option in the UK	***
Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG	178 R	'11-'14	8/5461	518/5250	516/1700	1795kg	293	4.2	-	155	231	28.5	+ Monster performance, 549bhp an option - Not as desirable as a Bentley or Aston	***
Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG	099 R	'06-'11	8/6208	507/6100	464/2650	1905kg	270	4.5	-	155	345	19.5	+ Beauty, comfort, awesome performance - M5 has the edge on B-roads	***
Mercedes-Benz GLE63 AMG S	218 D	£94,405	8/5461	577/5500	560/1750	2270kg	258	4.2	-	155	276	23.9	+ Stonking pace, extreme refinement - Feels remote	***
Mercedes-Benz GLE63 AMG S Coupe	213 D	£96,555	8/5461	577/5500	560/1750	2275kg	258	4.2	-	155	278	23.7	+ Subtler than an X6 M - More force than finesse	***
Mercedes-Benz ML63 AMG	176 R	£87,005	8/5461	518/5250	516/1750	2270kg	232	4.7	-	155	276	23.9	+ Great engine, surprisingly good dynamics - £85K buys a Boxster and an ML350	***
Mercedes-Benz G63 AMG	172 D	£124,000	8/5461	537/5500	560/2000	2475kg	220	5.4	-	130	322	-	+ It exists; epic soundtrack - Ancient chassis, silly price	***
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-300 SST	118 R	'08-'13	4/1998	290/6500	300/3500	1590kg	185	5.2	13.9	155	256	26.2	+ Evo gets twin-clutch transmission - Not as exciting as it used to be	***
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-360	122 D	'08-'13	4/1998	354/6500	363/3500	1560kg	231	4.1	-	155	328	19.9	+ Ridiculously rapid new Evo - A five-speed gearbox?!	***
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-330 SST	134 R	'08-'12	4/1998	324/6500	322/3500	1590kg	207	4.4	-	155	256	-	+ Great engine and gearbox combo - It still lives in the shadow of the Evo IX	***
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-400	181 R	'09-'10	4/1998	403/6500	387/3500	1560kg	262	3.8	-	155	328	-	+ Most powerful factory Evo everabout X grand too much when new	***
Mitsubishi Evo IX FQ-340	088 R	'05-'07	4/1997	345/6800	321/4600	1400kg	250	4.3	10.9	157	-	-	+ Gives Porsche drivers nightmares - Points. Lots of	****
Mitsubishi Evo IX MR FQ-360	181 R	'05-'07	4/1997	366/6887	363/3200	1400kg	266	3.9	-	157	-	-	+ Well-executed engine upgrades - Prison food	****
Mitsubishi Evo VIII	055 R	'03-'04	4/1997	276/6500	289/3500	1410kg	199	5.1	-	157	-	-	+ The Evo grows up - Brakes need beefing up	****
Mitsubishi Evo VIII MR FQ-300	057 R	'03-'05	4/1997	305/6800	289/3500	1400kg	221	4.8	-	157	-	20.5	+ Extra pace, extra attitude - Extra money	****
Mitsubishi Evo VII	031R	'02-'03	4/1997	276/6500	282/3500	1360kg	206	5.0	13.0	140	-	20.4	+ Terrific all-rounder - You tell us	***
Mitsubishi Evo VI Mäkinen Edition	200 R	'00-'01	4/1997	276/6500	275/2750	1365kg	205	4.6	-	150	-	-	+ Our favourite Evo - Subtle it is not	****
Porsche Panamera 4S	186 D	£86,080	6/2997	414/6000	383/1750	1870kg	225	4.8	-	177	208	31.7	+ Strong performance and typically fine Porsche chassis - Misses characterful V8 of old 'S'	***
Porsche Panamera GTS	208 R	£93,391	8/4806	434/6700	383/3500	1925kg	229	4.4	-	178	249	26.4	+ Vivacious V8, entertaining balance - Can feel light on performance next to turbo'd rivals	
Porsche Panamera Turbo	137 R	£108,006	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	'11-'13	8/4806	542/6000	590/2250	1995kg	276	3.7	-	190	270	24.6	+ Pace, excellent ergonomics - Steering feel, ride	***
Porsche Macan S	205 R	£43,648	6/2997	335/5500	339/1450	1865kg	183	5.4	-	157	204	31.4	+ No less compelling than the Turbo - Although lacks its ultimate speed and agility	****
Porsche Macan GTS	217 D	£55,188	6/2997	355/6000	369/1650	1895kg	190	5.2	-	159	212	30.7	+ Handles like an SUV shouldn't - Still looks like an SUV	****
Porsche Macan Turbo	207 D	£59,648	6/3604	394/6000	406/1350	1925kg	208	4.5	11.1	165	208	30.7	+ Doesn't feel like an SUV - Not a match for a proper sports saloon	****
Porsche Cayenne GTS (Mk2, V6)	211 D	£72,523	6/3604	434/6000	442/1600	2110kg	209	5.2	-	163	228	28.3	+ The driver's Cayennebut why would a driver want an SUV?	****
Porsche Cayenne GTS (Mk2, V8)	173 D	'12-'15	8/4806	414/6500	380/3500	2085kg	202	5.6	-	162	251	26.4	+ Dynamically the best SUV of its era - At two tons, it's still no sports car	***
Porsche Cayenne Turbo (Mk2)	212 D	£93,574	8/4806	513/6000	533/2250	2185kg	239	4.5	-	173	261	25.2	+ Remarkable performance, handling, completeness - Vague steering, dated engine	***
Porsche Cayenne Turbo S (Mk2)	184 D	£118,455	8/4806	562/6000	590/2500	2235kg	255	4.1	-	176	267	24.6	+ More power and torque than a Zonda S 7.3 - In an SUV	***
Range Rover Evoque Coupe Si4	160 D 222 FF	£46,660 £84,350	4/1999 8/4367	237/6000 334/3500	251/1900 546/1750	1670kg 2359kg	144 144	7.0 6.5	-	135 140	199 219	33.6	+ Striking looks, sporting dynamics - Hefty price, and petrol version is auto-only + A brilliant long-distance machine - Doesn't live up to the 'Sport' branding	***
Range Rover Sport VS Supersharged	186 D		8/5000		460/2500		219	5.0	-	155	298	21.7		***
Range Rover Sport V8 Supercharged Range Rover Sport SVR	212 D	£84,350 £95,150	8/5000	503/6000 542/6000	501/3500	2335kg 2335kg	236	4.5	-	162	298	21.7	+ Deceptively quick and capable sports SUV - It's still got a weight problem + Characterful drivetrain; genuine off-road ability - Not a match for its rivals on the road	***
******* * ****************************				334/3500					-					
Range Rover SDV8 Rolls-Royce Ghost	180 D 186 D	£80,850	8/4367 12/6592	563/5250	516/1750 575/1500	2360kg 2360kg	144 242	6.5 4.7	-	140 155	229 317	32.5 20.8	+ Lighter, more capable, even more luxurious - Diesel V6 model feels more alert + It's quicker than you think - It's more enjoyable driven slowly	****
Rolls-Royce Phantom	054 R	£216,864 £310,200	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									-			27.2	+ Fast Subaru saloon returns (again) - Without a power increase	***
Subaru WRX STI	201R	£28,995 '10-'13	4/2457 4/2457	296/6000 296/6000	300/4000 300/4000	1534kg 1505kg	196 200	5.2 5.1	-	158 <i>158</i>	242 243	26.9	+ Fast Subaru saloon returns (again) - Without the blue paint and gold wheels	***
Subaru Impreza WRX GB270	151 D 109 D	10-13 '07	4/2457	266/5700	310/3000	1505кg 1410kg	192	5.1 5.2	-	143	- 243	20.9	+ Fitting final fling for 'classic' Impreza - End of an era	***
Subaru Impreza WKX GB270 Subaru Impreza STI	090 R	'05-'07	4/2457	276/6000	289/4000	1410kg 1495kg	188	5.2 5.3	-	158	-	25.9	+ Fitting final filing for classic impreza - End of an era + Stunning to drive - Not so stunning to look at	***
Subaru Impreza 811 Subaru Impreza RB320	105 R	'07	4/2457	316/6000	332/3750	1495kg 1495kg	215	5.3 4.8	-	155	-	25.9	+ Sturming to drive - Not so sturming to look at + Fitting tribute to a rallying legend - Too hardcore for some?	***
Subaru Impreza WRX STI PPP	073 R	'03-'05	4/1994	300/6000	299/4000	1493kg 1470kg	207	4.0 5.2	12.9	148	-	-	+ A Subaru with real edge - Bit too edgy in the wet	***
Subaru Impreza Turbo	011 R	'98-'00	4/1994	215/5600	214/4000	1235kg	177	5.4	14.6	144	-	27.2	+ Destined for classic status - Thirsty	***
Subaru Impreza Turbo Subaru Impreza P1	200 R	'00-'01	4/1994	276/6500	260/4000	1233kg 1283kg	219	4.9	13.3	150	-	25.0	+ Destined for classic status - Thirsty + One of our favourite Imprezas - Doesn't come cheap	***
Subaru Impreza PI Subaru Impreza RB5 (PPP)	187 R	'99	4/1994	237/6000	258/3500	1203kg 1235kg	195	5.0	14.1	143	-	-	+ Perfect blend of poise and power - Limited numbers	***
Subaru Impreza RB3 (PPP) Subaru Impreza 22B	188 R	'98-'99	4/1994	276/6000	265/3200	1235kg 1270kg	220	5.0	13.1	150	-		+ Per rect brend of poise and power - Limited numbers + The ultimate Impreza - Prices reflect this	
Tesla Model S P85D	208 D	£79,080	4/2212 515kW	691	687	2239kg	314	3.2	- 13.1	155	0	n/a	+ The unimate impreza - Prices renect this + Dual motors and 4WD equals extraordinary acceleration - Lack of charging points	****
Tesla Model S Performance		14	310kW	416	442	2100kg	201		-	130	0	n/a	+ Dual motors and 4WD equals extraordinary acceleration - Lack of charging points + Intoxicating performance, soothing refinement - Generic styling, charging limitations	
	196 R	£29,824	6/2792	321/5250	321/5250	2100kg 1825kg	179	<i>4.2</i> 5.6	-	170	249	11/a 26.6	+ A170mph Vauxhall - Should be a more engaging steer	***
Vauxhall Insignia VXR SuperSport Vauxhall Vectra VXR	189 D	'06-'09	6/2792	276/5500	262/1800	1580kg	177	6.1	-	161	249	27.4	+ A Tromph Vauxhaii - Should be a more engaging steer + Great engine, effortless pace, good value - Numb steering, lumpy ride	***
Vauxnaii vectra v.x.r Vauxhall VXR8 GTS	102 D	£54,499	8/6162	576/6150	545/3850	1834kg	319	4.2	-	155	363	18.5	+ Great engine, errortiess pace, good value - Numb steering, lumpy ride + Monster engine; engaging driving experience - Woeful interior	****
Volvo V60 Polestar	215 D 222 D	£54,499 c£50,000		362/6000	347/3100	1721kg	214	4.2	-	155	186	34.9	+ Monster engine, engaging driving experience - woerunnterior + Subtle, well-executed performance car - Plays a little too safe	***





FORD FIESTA ST

Why would you?

Because the Mk6 Fiesta ST can be a corking little hatch when its potential is unlocked. The Ford-approved upgrades from Mountune are perfect examples of how to do this, offering 165, 185 and 200bhp in Stage 1, 2 and 3 tune respectively.

What to pay

£2500 for privately advertised '05/'06 cars with average miles and some service history. £6000 buys the very best 2008 cars.

What to look out for

Don't be put off by modified cars – the 2-litre Duratec unit will take 200bhp in its stride.

Supercharging is OK up to 300bhp because of its linear delivery; 260bhp is a sensible cap with a turbo. Ascertain if the oil has been regularly checked and topped up; if it hasn't you can get oil starvation and big-end failures. Check around the wheelarches for rust. (Full guide, evo 221.)

SPECIFICATION

Years 2005-2008
Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1999cc
Power 145bhp @ 6000rpm
Torque 140lb ft @ 4500rpm
0-60mph 7.9sec (claimed)
Top speed 129mph (claimed)
Rating ★★★☆



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OUR CHOICE

 $\textbf{Lotus 3-Eleven.} \ \text{It may not be groundbreaking but it is hugely exciting.} \ \text{The V6}$ sounds fabulous and the open linkage on the manual gearbox looks fantastic. A circuit is obviously its natural habitat but it has surprisingly civilised road manners, so you could happily drive to and from a trackday in it.



BEST OF THE REST

Porsche's 781 Boxster S (left) has lost some character and desirability with the switch to four cylinders, but its performance and handling are still exemplary. Jaguar's F-type also impresses in both V6 and V8 forms, while an Ariel Atom or Caterham Seven offer an even more extreme alternative to the 3-Eleven.

	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	C02 G/KM	EC MPG	EVO RATING	
Abarth 124 Spider	225 D	£29,850	4/1368	168/5500	184/2500	1060kg	161	6.8	-	143	148	44.1	+ Predictable and fun rear end - Vague and lifeless front end	****
Alfa Romeo 4C Spider	223 R	£60,255	4/1742	237/6000	258/2200	940kg	256	4.5	-	160	161	40.9	+ Stunningly beautiful; better steering than coupe - Still has the coupe's other foibles	****
Alfa Romeo 8C Spider	161 R	'09-'11	8/4691	450/7000	354/4750	1675kg	273	4.5	-	181	-	-	+ Beauty meets beast. They hit it off - Boot is useless for touring	****
Alpina D4 Biturbo Convertible	212 D	£54,950	6/2993	345/4000	516/1500	1815kg	193	5.0	-	171	156	47.9	+ As much torque as a 997 Turbo - A diesel convertible wouldn't be our choice of Alpina	****
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 3.5R	205 R	£64,800	4/1998	350/8400	243/6100	550kg	647	2.6	-	155	-	-	+ Remarkable balance, poise and pace - Pricey	****
Ariel Atom 3 245	113 D	'08-'12	4/1998	245/8200	155/5200	500kg	498	3.2	-	150	-	33.0	+ The Atom just got a little bit better - Can still be a bit draughty	****
Ariel Atom 3 Supercharged	138 R	'09-'12 '12-'13	4/1998 4/1998	300/8200 270/8300	162/7200 188/6000	550kg 550kg	554 499	3.3 2.9		155 150	-	-	+ It's brilliant - It's mental + Perfect engine for the Atom's chassis - Only ten were made	****
Ariel Atom Mugen Ariel Atom V8 500	165 R 165 R	12-13	8/3000	475/10,500	284/7750	550kg	877	2.9 3.0	5.8	170	-	-	+ An experience unlike anything else on Planet Car - £150K for an Atom	****
Ariel Nomad	210 R	£33.000	4/2354	235/7200	221/4300	670kg	365	3.4	J.0 -	134	-	_	+ Off-road capabilities make for a super plaything - No Bluetooth	****
Aston Martin V8 Vantage Roadster	130 R	£89,994	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1710kg	250	4.7		180	328	20.4	+ Sportiest, coolest drop-top Aston in years - Starting to feel its age	****
Aston Martin V8 Vantage Roadster	161 R	£108,995	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1690kg	258	4.6		189	299	21.9	+ Sounds amazing, looks even better - Still not the best drop-top in its class	****
Aston Martin V12 Vantage S Roadster	212 R	£147,000	12/5935	565/6750	457/5750	1745kg	329	4.1		201	343	19.2	+ A brilliant two-seat roadsterlet down by a frustrating gearbox	****
Aston Martin V12 Vantage Roadster	175 R	12-14	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1760kg	294	4.4	-	190	-	-	+ As good as the coupe, with amplified V12 rumble - Just a smidgen shakier	****
Aston Martin DB9 Volante	150 D	£141,995	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1815kg	263	4.6	-	190	368	18.2	+ Consummate cruiser and capable when pushed - Roof-up wind noise	****
Aston Martin DBS Volante	133 D	'09-'12	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1810kg	286	4.3	-	191	388	17.3	+ A feelgood car par excellence - It's a bit of a heavyweight	****
Audi TTS Roadster	207 D	£41,085	4/1984	306/5800	280/1800	1450kg	214	5.2	-	155	169	38.7	+ A serious proposition, ranking close behind a Boxster S - Coupe still looks better	****
Audi TTS Roadster	122 D	'08-'14	4/1984	268/6000	258/2500	1455kg	187	5.6	-	155	189	34.9	+ Effortlessly quick - Long-term appeal open to question	****
Audi TT RS Roadster	133 D	'09-'14	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1510kg	225	4.7	-	155	212	31.0	+Terrific engineis the best thing about it	****
Audi S5 Cabriolet	130 D	£46,770	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 RS4 Cabriolet	094 D	'06-'08	8/4163	414/7800	317/5500	1845kg	228	4.9	-	155	-	-	+ That engine - Wibble wobble, wibble wobble, jelly on a plate	***
Audi R8 V8 Spyder	186 D	'11-'15	8/4163	424/7900	317/6000	1660kg	259	4.8	-	187	337	19.6	+ More delicate and subtle than the V10 - The V10 sounds even better	****
BAC Mono	189 R	£124,255	4/2261	280/7700	206/6000	540kg	527	2.8	-	170	-	-	+ The most single-minded track car available - That means no passengers	****
Bentley Continental GT V8 Convertible	168 R	£150,200	8/3993	500/6000	487/1700	2395kg	212	4.7	-	187	254	25.9	+ One of the world's best topless GTs - Still no sports car	****
Bentley Continental GT V8 S Convertible	194 D	£160,500	8/3993	521/6000	502/1700	2395kg	221	4.5	-	191	258	25.4	+ A true drivers' Bentley - Excessively heavy; feels like it could give more	****
Bentley Conti GT Speed Convertible	187 D	£181,000	12/5998	626/6000	605/1700	2420kg	263	4.1	-	203	347	19.0	+ Effortless performance, style - Running costs a tad on the high side	****
Bentley Continental Supersports	147 D	'10-'12	12/5998	621/6000	590/2000	2395kg	263	3.9	-	202	388	17.3	+ Fast, capable and refined - Coupe does the Supersports thing better	****
BMW M235i Convertible	207 D	£37,710	6/2979	321/5800	332/1300	1600kg	204	5.2	-	155	199	33.2	+ Neat styling; great drivetrain - Loss of dynamic ability compared with coupe	****
BMW Z4 sDrive 35i M Sport (Mk2)	186 D	£43,005	6/2979	302/5800	295/1300	1505kg	204	5.2	-	155	219	30.1	+ Looks, hard-top versatility, drivetrain - Clumsy chassis is upset by ragged surfaces	****
BMW Z4 3.0si (Mk1)	094 D	'06-'09	6/2996	265/6600	232/2750	1310kg	205	5.7	-	155	-	32.9	+ Terrific straight-six - Handling not as playful as we'd like	****
BMW Z4 M Roadster	091 R	'06-'09	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1410kg	244	4.8	-	155	-	23.3	+ Exhilarating and characterful, that engine - Stiff suspension	****
BMW M Roadster	002 R	'98-'02	6/3246 6/2979	325/7400	258/4900	1375kg	240	5.3	-	155		25.4	+ Fresh-air M3, that motor, hunky looks - M Coupe drives better	****
BMW 435i Convertible BMW M4 Convertible (F83)	194 D 202 D	£45,680 £61.145	6/2979	302/5800 425/5500	295/1200 406/1850	1740kg 1750kg	176 247	5.6 4.6	-	155 155	190 213	34.8 31.0	+ Impressive chassis, smart looks, neat roof - Extra weight, not as composed as coupe + As good as fast four-seat drop-tops get but still not as good as a coupe or saloon	****
BMW Z8	026 R	'00-'03	8/4941	400/6600	369/3800	1585kg	256	4.0 4.8	11.1	155	- 213	14.4	+ M5-powered super-sportster - M5's more fun to drive	****
Caterham Seven 160	205 R	£19.710	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 270	219 R	£23,795	4/1595	135/6800	122/4100	540kg	254	5.0		122	-	-	+ Feisty engine, sweetly balanced, manic and exciting - The temptation of more power	****
Caterham Seven 360	209 R	£27,795	4/1999	180/7300	143/6100	560kg	327	4.8		130	-	-	+ Extra power is welcome - You'll need the six-speed gearbox to make the most of it	****
Caterham Seven 420	223 R	£30.795	4/1999	210/7600	150/6300	560kg	381	4.0	10.3	136	-	-	+ It's the one we built for ourselves - Trickier on the limit than lesser-powered Sevens	****
Caterham Seven 620S	220 D	£44,995	4/1999	310/7700	219/7350	610kg	516	3.4	-	155	-	-	+ Ludicrous, near-620R pace, with added habitability - Well, 'habitable' for a Seven	****
Caterham Seven 620R	187 R	£50,795	4/1999	310/7700	219/7350	572kg	551	2.8	-	155	-	-	+ Banzai on track, yet still relevant on the road - £50k for a Seven?	****
Caterham Seven CSR	094 R	£47,295	4/2261	256/7500	200/6200	565kg	460	3.8	-	155	-	-	+ Brilliant for high days, holidays and trackdays - Wet Wednesdays	****
Caterham Seven Roadsport 125	105 R	'07-'14	4/1595	125/6100	120/5350	539kg	235	5.9	-	112	-	-	+ Great debut for new Ford-engined model - Bigger drivers need SV model	****
Caterham Seven Supersport	165 R	'11-'14	4/1595	140/6900	120/5790	520kg	273	4.9	-	120	-	-	+ One of the best Caterhams is also one of the cheapest of its era - It's quite minimalist	****
Caterham Seven Supersport R	180 D	13-14	4/1999	180/7300	143/6100	535kg	342	4.8	-	130	-	-	+ One of the best road-and-track Sevens - Impractical, noisy, uncomfortable	****
Caterham Seven Superlight R300	150 R	'09-'12	4/1999	175/7000	139/6000	515kg	345	4.5	-	140	-	-	+ Possibly all the Caterham you need - They're not cheap	****
Caterham Seven Superlight R500	123 R	'08-'14	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 Levante	131 R	'09-'10	8/2398	550/10000	300/8500	520kg	1074	4.8	8.2	150	-	-	+ Twice the power-to-weight ratio of a Veyron! - Not easy to drive slowly	****
Caterham Seven R300	068 R	'02-'06	4/1796	160/7000	130/5000	500kg	325	4.7	-	130	-	-	+ Our 2002 Trackday Car of the Year - Not for wimps	****
Caterham Seven R500	200 R	'99-'06	4/1796	230/8600	155/7200	460kg	510	3.6	8.8	146	-	-	+ The K-series Seven at its very best - No cup holders	****
Donkervoort D8 GTO Performance	185 R	£120,000	5/2480	375/5500	350/1750	695kg	548	2.8	-	168	-	-	+ There's nothing else like it - Pricey for a car with a five-cylinder engine	****
Ferrari California T	212 D	£154,460	8/3855	552/7500	557/4750	1729kg	324	3.6	-	196	250	26.9	+ Turbocharged engine is a triumph - Still places daily useability above outright thrills	****
Ferrari California	171 D	'08-'14	8/4297	483/7750	372/5000	1735kg	283	3.8	-	193	299	-	+ Revised with sharper performance and dynamics - We'd still take a 458 Spider	****
Honda S2000	118 D	'99-'09	4/1997	237/8300	153/7500	1260kg	191	6.2	-	150	-	28.2	+ An alternative and rev-happy roadster - The Boxster's better	****
Jaguar F-type Convertible	186 R	£56,745	6/2995	335/6500	332/3500	1587kg	214	5.5	-	161	234	28.8	+ Beautiful, enjoyable, responsive - Noticeably junior to the V6 S	****
Jaguar F-type S Convertible	183 R	£65,745	6/2995	375/6500	339/3500	1604kg	238	5.3	-	171	234	28.8	+ Better-damped and more rounded than the V8 S - A Boxster S is £20k cheaper	****
Jaguar F-type R Convertible	- 212.0	£92,295	8/5000	542/6500	501/3500	1665kg	331	4.0	-	186	255	26.4	+ Pace, characterful V8 - Costs £25k more than the S	****
Jaguar F-type Project 7	212 R	75	8/5000	567/6500	501/2500	1585kg	363	3.9	-	186			+ Noise, performance, adjustability - Expensive, and not the GT3 rival we would have liked	
Jaguar F-type V8 S Convertible	183 R 130 R	'13-'14 '00 '17	8/5000	488/6500	461/2500	1665kg	298	4.3	-	186	259	25.5	+ Wilder than the V6 S - Could be too exuberant for some	****
		'09-'14	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1725kg 1725kg	296 319	4.6 4.2	-	155 186	292 292	23.0 23.0	+ Fantastic 5-litre V8 - Loses sporting ground to its main foes + Loud and mad; most exciting Jag in years - It was also the most expensive in years	****
Jaguar XKR Convertible		'11 '1/	9/5000	5/2/6500			.219	4.2	-	100	292	23.0		***
Jaguar XKR-S Convertible	167R	711-714 505 990	8/5000	542/6500	502/2500			/.1		1//	100	2/ 0		4444
Jaguar XKR-S Convertible KTM X-Bow GT	<i>167 R</i> 183 D	£95,880	4/1984	281/6400	310/3200	875kg	326	4.1 3.6	-	144	189	34.0	+ Extraordinary ability, now in a more road-friendly package - Price	****
Jaguar XKR-S Convertible KTM X-Bow GT KTM X-Bow R	<i>167 R</i> 183 D 165 R	£95,880 £87,480	4/1984 4/1984	281/6400 296/5500	310/3200 295/3300	875kg 818kg	326 368	3.6	-	144	189	34.0	+ Extraordinary ability, now in a more road-friendly package - Price + Sharper handling, more power - Pity it's not even lighter, and cheaper	****
Jaguar XKR-S Convertible KTM X-Bow GT	<i>167 R</i> 183 D	£95,880	4/1984	281/6400	310/3200	875kg	326		-			34.0 - - 45.0	+ Extraordinary ability, now in a more road-friendly package - Price	



RENAULT CLIO V6

With a mid-mounted 227bhp V6, this super-Clio rekindled the spirit of the Renault 5 Turbo. Here's what Richard Meaden thought at its launch

'Flooring the throttle unleashes a memorable soundtrack that builds from a low-rev rumble, through rich, resonant waves of mid-range muscularity to a bellowing, almost operatic crescendo at peak revs. There's more than a hint of dry 911 rasp, Diablo thunder and - quite an

odd one this - the proud, gaseous

howl of an E-type Jag's straightsix. Not bad for a hatchback. 'Despite what instinct tells

you, it's almost impossible to unsettle the Clio's tail out of tight first- and second-gear hairpins. But above 60mph or so, if your commitment starts to waver mid-corner you become instantly aware there's a sting in that absurdly broad tail. When momentum starts to overtake you, things happen pretty sharply and you know you've only got one chance to gather things up. This isn't a car to take liberties with through high-speed corners.'

ISSUE 026, DECEMBER 2000



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	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	H- W09-0	0-100МРН	мах мрн	C02 G/KM	EC M PG	EVO RATING	
Lotus Elise Cup 250	224 R	£45,600	4/1798	243/7200	184/3500	931kg	265	3.9	-	154	175	37.7	+ Quickest Elise yet - Prioritises grip over adjustability	****
Lotus Elise 1.6 Club Racer	183 R	'11-'15	4/1598	134/6800	118/4400	852kg	160	6.0	-	127	149	45.0	+ Even lighter, even more focused - Are you prepared to go this basic?	****
Lotus Elise S Club Racer	189 D	'13-'15	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	905kg	244	4.2	-	145	175	37.5	+ Purist approach intensifies ability - Lightest, option-free spec requires commitment	****
Lotus Elise R	068 R	'04-'11	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	131 R	'08-'11	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 Elise S 1.8	104 R	'06-'10	4/1794	134/6200	127/4200	860kg	158	6.3	18.7	127	-	37.2	+ Brilliant entry-level Elise - Precious little	****
Lotus Elise 111S	049 R	'02-'04	4/1796	156/7000	129/4650	860kg	197	5.1	-	131	-	40.9	+ A genuinely useable Elise - Air-con? In an Elise?	****
Lotus Elise Sport 135	040 D	'03	4/1796	135/6200	129/4850	726kg	189	5.4	-	129	-	-	+ One of our fave S2 Elises - Brakes need more bite and pedal feel	****
Lotus Elise Sport 190	044R	'03	4/1796	190/7800	128/5000	710kg	272	4.7	12.1	135	-	-	+ Fabulous trackday tool - Pricey	****
Lotus Elise (S1)	126 R	'96-'01 £55.900	4/1796 6/3456	118/5500 345/7000	122/3000 295/4500	<i>731kg</i> 1125kg	<i>164</i> 312	6.1 3.7	18.5	<i>126</i> 145	235	<i>39.4</i> 28.0	+ A modern classic - A tad impractical? + An Exige with added sunny-day appeal - A Boxster would be a better everyday bet	*****
Lotus Exige Sport 350 Roadster Lotus Exige S Roadster	- 186 R	13-15	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1166kg	301	3.8	-	145	235	28.0	+ Like the hard-top Exige S, but more road-friendly - 981Boxster S is a better all-rounder	****
Lotus 3-Eleven	220 R	£82.500	6/3456	410/7000	302/3000	925kg	450	3.3	-	174	-	-	+ A fantastically exciting Lotus - If not exactly a groundbreaking one	22222
Lotus 2-Eleven	126 R	'07-'11	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 2-Eleven Supercharged	123 R	'07-'11	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	'09-'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 340R	126 R	'00	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	'89-'95	4/1588	165/6600	148/4200	1022kg	164	6.7	-	137	-	21.0	+ Awesome front-drive chassis - Rather uninvolving	****
Maserati GranCabrio	142 D	£98,940	8/4691	434/7000	332/4750	1980kg	223	5.2	-	177	337	19.5	+ As good to drive as it is to look at - Lacks the grunt of some rivals	****
Maserati GranCabrio Sport	161 D	£104,535	8/4691	444/7000	376/4750	1980kg	228	5.0	-	177	377	19.5	+ Looks, performance, cruising ability - Brakes could be sharper	****
Maserati GranCabrio MC	185 D	£112,370	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-5 2.0i Sport (Mk4)	219 R	£22,505	4/1998	158/6000	147/4600	1000kg	161	7.3	-	133	161	40.9	+ Lightest MX-5 since the Mk1 - Lacks intensity	****
Mazda MX-5 2.0i Sport Tech (Mk3.5)	212 R	'09-'15	4/1999	158/7000	139/5000	1098kg	146	7.6	-	138	181	36.2	+ Handles brilliantly again; folding hard-top also available - Less than macho image	****
Mazda MX-5 1.8i (Mk3)	091 R	'05-'09	4/1798	124/6500	123/4500	1080kg	108	9.3	-	122	-	-	+ Gearchange, interior - Lost some of the charm of old MX-5s; dubious handling	****
Mazda MX-5 1.8i (Mk2)	017 R	'98-'05	4/1839	146/7000	124/5000	1065kg	140	8.6	-	123	-	32.5	+ Affordable ragtops don't get much better - Cheap cabin	****
Mazda MX-5 1.6 (Mk1)	131 R	'89-'97	4/1597	115/6500	100/5500	971kg	120	9.0	-	114	-	-	+ The original and still (pretty much) the best - Less than rigid	****
Mercedes-AMG SLC43	222 D	£45,950	6/2996	362/5500	383/2000	1520kg	242	4.7	-	155	178	26.2	+ Twin-turbo V6 well-suited to baby roadster - But also highlights the chassis' age	****
Mercedes-Benz SLK 55 AMG	186 R	'12-'15	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 SLK 55 AMG	087 R	'05-'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 SLK 55 AMG Black Series	110 R	'07-'08	8/5439	394/5750	383/3750	1495kg	268	4.9	11.2	174	212	31.0	+ AMG gets serious - Dull-witted 7G-Tronic auto box, uneven dynamics	****
Mercedes-Benz SL500 Mercedes-Benz SL63 AMG	169 D 171 D	£81,915 £112,510	8/4663 8/5461	429/5250 530/5500	516/1800 590/2000	1710kg	255 304	4.6 4.3	-	155 155	212	31.0	+ Wafty performance, beautifully engineered - Lacks ultimate sports car feel	****
Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG	183 D	£170.815	12/5980	621/4800	737/2300	1770kg 1875kg	336	4.0	-	155	270	24.4	+ Monster performance, lighter than before - Still heavy, steering lacks consistency	****
Mercedes-Benz SL63 AMG	117 D	'08-'13	8/6208	518/6800	464/5200	1970kg	278	4.6	-	155	328	20.0	+ Chassis just about deals with the power - Speed limits + More focused than old SL55 AMG - Lost some of its all-round appeal	****
Mercedes-Benz SL55 AMG	070 R	'02-'07	8/5439	493/6100	516/2650	1975kg	256	4.6	10.2	155	J20 -	-	+ As fast as a Murciélago - Not as much fun	****
Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG	071 D	'04-'10	12/5980	604/4800	737/2000	2035kg	302	4.1	-	155			+ Gob-smacking performance - Gob-smackingly pricey	****
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG Roadster	167R	12-14	8/6208	563/6800	479/4750	1660kg	345	3.7	-	197	308	21.4	+ Loses none of the coupe's talents - But (understandably) loses the gullwing doors	22222
Morgan 3 Wheeler	198 R	£31,140	2/1976	82/5250	103/3250	525kg	159	6.0	-	115	215	30.3	+ Quirky, characterful, brilliant - Can become a two-wheeler if you push too hard	****
Morgan Plus 8 Speedster	202 R	£71.140	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1000kg	368	4.2	-	148	282	23.3	+ Fantastic old-school roadster experience - Gets unsettled by big bumps	****
Morgan Plus 8	171 R	£86,345	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1100kg	334	4.4	-	155	256	25.7	+ Hilarious mix of old looks and new mechanicals - Refinement is definitely old-school	****
Morgan Aero SuperSports	145 R	£128,045	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	105 R	'02-'08	8/4799	362/6300	361/3400	1100kg	334	4.5	-	170	-	25.2	+ Glorious sound, view over bonnet, dynamics - Awkward-looking rear	****
Nissan 370Z Roadster	143 R	'10-'14	6/3696	326/7000	269/5200	1554kg	213	5.5	-	155	262	25.2	+ The Zed's old-school character remains intact - Its purposeful looks don't	****
Porsche 718 Boxster	224 D	£41,739	4/1988	296/6500	280/1950	1335kg	225	5.1	-	170	168	38.2	+ Chassis as good as ever - Four-cylinder's tuneless din would be hard to live with	****
Porsche 718 Boxster S	222 R	£50,695	4/2497	345/6500	310/1900	1355kg	259	4.4	9.8	177	184	34.9	+ Still sensationally capable - Turbo four-cylinder engine lacks appeal of the old flat-six	****
Porsche Boxster (981)	172 R	'12-'16	6/2706	261/6700	206/4500	1310kg	202	5.4	-	164	192	34.5	+ Goes and looks better - Shame about the electric steering	****
Porsche Boxster S (981)	186 R	12-16	6/3436	311/6700	265/4500	1320kg	239	5.1	-	173	206	32.1	+ Boxster steps out of 911's shadow - But gets 911's less appealing electric steering	****
Porsche Boxster GTS (981)	203 D	74-76	6/3436	325/6700	273/4500	1345kg	246	5.0	-	174	211	31.4	+ Superb dynamics, fantastic engine, great looks - Sport suspension is very firm	****
Porsche Boxster Spyder (981)	2123 R	'15-'16	6/3800	370/6700	310/4750	1315kg	286	4.5	-	180	230	28.5	+ The fastest, most rewarding Boxster yet - Feedback trails the Cayman GT4's	****
Porsche Boxster S (987)	161 R	'05-'12	6/3436	306/6400	265/5500	1355kg	229	5.3	-	170	223	29.7	+ As above, but with more power - As above	****
Porsche Boxster Spyder (987)	188 R	'10-'12	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1275kg	252	5.0	-	166	221	29.1	+ Lighter, more driver-centric Boxster - Collapsed-brolly roof not the most practical	****
Porsche Boxster (986 2.7)	049R	'99-'04	6/2687	228/6300	192/4700	1275kg	182	6.3	-	155	-	29.1	+ Still an impeccable sports car - Very little	****
Porsche Boxster S (986)	070 R	'99-'04	6/3179	260/6200	228/4700	1320kg	200	5.5	-	164	-	26.9	+ Added power is seductive - As above	****
Radical SR3 SL	174 R	£69,840	4/2000	300/6000	265/4000	775kg	393	3.4	-	161	-	-	+ Our 2011 Track Car of the Year, and it's road-legal - You'll need to wrap up warm	****
Radical SR8LM	138 R	'09-'12	8/2800	460/10,500		680kg	687	3.2	-	168 131	-	-	+ Fastest car around the Nordschleife - Convincing people it's road legal	****
Renault Sport Spider	183 R	'96-'99	4/1998	148/6000	136/4500	930kg	157	6.5	-	,0,		-	+ Rarity, fabulous unassisted steering feel - Heavier than you'd hope	~~~~
Rolls-Royce Dawn	222 D	£250,000		563/5250	575/1500	2560kg	223	4.9	-	155 <i>130</i>	330	20.0 <i>38.2</i>	+ Effortless driving experience - Driver involvement not a priority	****
Toyota MR2	187 R	'00-'06	4/1794 6/260E	138/6400	125/4400	975kg	141	7.2	21.2		-	38.2	+ Tight lines, taut dynamics - Minimal luggage space	~~~~
TVR Tamora TVP Turcan Convertible	070 R 091 R	'01-'07 '05-'07	6/3605	350/7200	290/5500	1050kg	338	4.5	01	160	-	-	+ Well-sorted soft-top TVR - Awkward styling + Spirit of the Griff sphere. Over 105 mph 2 Paylly 2	****
TVR Tuscan Convertible TVR Chimaera 5.0	091 R 007 R	'93-'03	6/3996 8/4988	365/6800 320/5500	315/6000 320/3750	1100kg 1060kg	337 307	3.8 4.6	8.1	195+ 167	-	26.4	+ Spirit of the Griff reborn - Over 195mph? Really? + Gorgeous noise, tarmac-rippling grunt - Details	****
TVR Griffith 4.3	068 R	93-03 '92-'93	8/4280	280/5500	305/4000	1060kg	268	4.0 4.8	11.2	148	-	20.4	+ The car that made TVR. Cult status - Mere details	****
TVR Griffith 500	000 R	92-93 '93-'01	8/4988	320/5500	320/3750	1060kg	307	4.8	11.2	167		22.1	+ Gruff diamond - A few rough edges	****
Vauxhall VX220	023 R	'00-'04	4/2198	145/5800	150/4000	875kg	168	5.6	-	136		34.4	+ Absurdly good Vauxhall - The badge?	****
Vauxhall VX220 Turbo	025 R	'03-'05	4/1998	197/5500	184/1950	930kg	215	4.7	-	151		-	+ Nothing comes close for the money - Marginal everyday usability	****
Vuhl 05	220 R	£59,995	4/2000	285/5600	310/3000	725kg	405	3.7	-	152	-	-	+ Impressive pace and quality - You can get a more thrills from a Caterham at half the price	****
									-		-	-		****
Zenos E10 S	214 R	£30,595	4/1999	250/7000	295/2500	725kg	350	4.2	-	145	-	-	+ Neutral and exploitable - Prescriptive balance	***





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Porsche 911 GT3 RS. The 911 GT3 RS may only have finished third at eCoty 2015, but it is, of course, still fabulous. Its naturally aspirated flat-six is mesmerising as it revs to its manic top end, while the chassis mixes colossal grip with a dreamy balance and incredible composure.



BEST OF THE REST

If you fancy something less hardcore than the GT3 RS, the 911 Carrera and Carrera S haven't been ruined by the addition of turbos. Aston Martin's Vantages remain thoroughly entertaining and Jaguar's F-type R Coupe (left) is a hoot, while Lotus's Exige and Evora offer sublime handling in all guises.

	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	Н-0-0	0-10 0M PH	MAX MPH	C02 G/KM	EC MPG	EVO RATING	
Alfa Romeo 4C	209 R	£51,500	4/1742	237/6000	258/2200	895kg	269	4.5	-	160	157	41.5	+ Carbonfibre tub, mini-supercar looks - Hot hatch engine, clunky gearbox	****
Alfa Romeo 8C Competizione	120 R	'07-'09	8/4691	450/7000	354/4750	1585kg	288	4.1	-	181	-	-	+ Looks, exclusivity, noise, balance - They're all sold	****
Alpina D4 Biturbo	206 R	£50,950	6/2993	345/4000	516/1500	1585kg	221	4.6	-	173	139	53.3	+ Fifth-gear oversteer - Sounds like a diesel; fuel economy not as good as you might hope	****
Alpina B4 Biturbo	206 R	£58,950	6/2979	404/5500	442/3000	1615kg	254	4.2	-	188	177	37.2		****
Aston Martin V8 Vantage	169 D	£84,995	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1630kg	262	4.7	-	180	328	20.4		****
Aston Martin V8 Vantage N430	218 R	£89,995	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1610kg	271	4.5	-	189	321	20.5		****
Aston Martin V8 Vantage S	168 R	£94,995	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1610kg	271	4.5	-	189	299	21.9		****
Aston Martin Vantage GT8	224 R	£165,000	8/4735	440/7300	361/5000	1530kg	292	4.4	-	190	-	10.2		****
Aston Martin V12 Vantage S	224 D 214 R	£138,000	12/5935	565/6750	457/5750	1665kg	345 384	3.7 3.5	-	205	343	19.2		****
Aston Martin Vantage GT12 Aston Martin V12 Vantage	214 K 146 R	£250,000 '09-'13	12/5935 12/5935	592/7000 510/6500	461/5500 420/5750	1565kg 1680kg	308	3.5 4.4	9.7	185 <i>190</i>	388	17.3		****
Aston Martin DB9	178 R	£133.495	12/5935	510/6500	457/5500	1785kg	290	4.4	9.7	183	368	18.2		****
Aston Martin DB9 GT	214 D	£140,000		540/6750	457/5500	1785kg	307	4.5		183	333	19.8		***
Aston Martin DBS	142 R	'07-'12	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1695kg	306	4.2	-	191	388	17.3		****
Audi TT 2.0 TFSI (Mk3)	204 R	£29,915	4/1984	227/4500	273/1650	1230kg	188	6.0	_	155	137	47.9		****
Audi TT 2.0 TFSI quattro (Mk3)	203 D	£32,860	4/1984	227/4500	273/1600	1335kg	173	5.3	-	155	149	44.1		****
Audi TTS (Mk3)	209 R	£38,790	4/1984	306/5800	280/1800	1365kg	228	4.9	_	155	-			****
Audi TT RS (Mk2)	158 R	'09-'14	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1450kg	235	4.4	11.1	155	209	31.4		***
Audi TT RS Plus (Mk2)	185 D	12-14	5/2480	355/5500	343/1650	1450kg	249	4.3	-	174	209	31.4		***
4 Audi S5	225 D	c£45,000		349/5400	369/1370	1615kg	220	4.7	-	155	166	38.7		****
Audi S5	189 D	12-16	6/2995	328/5500	325/2900	1675kg	199	4.9	-	155	190	34.9	+ Supercharged V6 makes S5 cleaner and faster than V8 predecessor - Poor body control	
Audi RS5	206 R	£59,870	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1715kg	263	4.5	-	155	246	26.9		****
Audi R8 V8	201R	'07-'15	8/4163	424/7900	317/4500	1560kg	276	4.1	9.9	188	332	19.9		****
Bentley Continental GT V8	178 R	£140,300	8/3993	500/6000	487/1700	2220kg	229	4.6	-	188	246	27.0		****
Bentley Continental GT V8 S	204 F	£149,800	8/3933	521/6000	502/1700	2220kg	238	4.3	-	192	250	26.4		****
Bentley Continental GT	152 D	£150,500	12/5998	567/6000	516/1700	2245kg	257	4.3	-	197	338	19.5	+ 200mph in utter comfort - Weight, thirst	****
Bentley Continental GT Speed	212 D	£168,300	12/5998	626/6000	605/1700	2245kg	283	4.0	-	206	338	19.5	+ Desirability meets exclusivity and performance - We'd still have the V8	****
Bentley Continental GT3-R	203 D	£237,500	8/3993	572/6000	518/1700	2120kg	274	3.6	-	170	295	22.2	+ The best-handling Continental ever - Expensive; it still weighs 2120kg	****
BMW 1-series M Coupe	188 R	'11-'12	6/2979	335/5900	369/1500	1495kg	228	4.8	-	155	224	-	+ Character, turbo pace and great looks - Came and went too quick	****
BMW M235i Coupe	225 R	£35,225	6/2979	321/5800	332/1300	1455kg	224	5.2	12.7	155	189	34.9	+ Powertrain, chassis, looks, size - Limited-slip diff is an option, not standard	****
BMW M2	223 R	£44,070	6/2979	365/6500	369/1450	1495kg	248	4.5	-	155	199	33.2	+ More progressive chassis balance than M4 - Engine isn't inspirational	****
BMW M4	218 R	£57,055	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1515kg	285	4.3	-	155	204	32.1		****
BMW M4 Competition Package	221 R	£60,005	6/2979	444/7000	406/1850	1515kg	298	4.3	-	155	204	32.1		****
BMW M4 GTS	222 R	£120,500	6/2979	493/6250	442/4000	1510kg	332	3.7	8.0	190	199	34.0		****
BMW M3 (E92)	196 R	'07-13	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1580kg	266	4.3	10.3	155	290	22.8		****
BMW M3 GTS (E92)	171 R	'10-'11	8/4361	444/8300	324/3750	1530kg	295	4.3	-	190	295	-		****
BMW M3 (E46)	066 R	'00-'07	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1495kg	230	5.1	12.3	155	-	23.7		****
BMW M3 CS (E46)	219 R	'05-'07	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1495kg	230	5.1	-	155	-	23.7	+ CSL dynamics without CSL price - Looks like the standard car	****
BMW M3 CSL (E46)	200 R	'03-'04	6/3246	355/7900	273/4900	1385kg	260	5.3	12.0	155	-	-		****
BMW M3 (E36)	148 R	'93-'98	6/3201	321/7400	258/3250	1460kg	223	5.4	12.8 17.8	157	-	25.7	+ Performance, image - Never quite as good as the original	****
BMW M3 (E30) BMW Z4 M Coupe	165 R 097 R	'86-'90 '06-'09	4/2302 6/3246	212/6750 338/7900	170/4600 269/4900	1165kg 1420kg	185 242	6.7 5.0	-	147 155	-	20.3 23.3	+ Best M-car ever! Race-car dynamics for the road - LHD only + A real drivers' car - You've got to be prepared to get stuck in	****
BMW M Coupe	097 K	'98-'02	6/3246	321/7400	258/4900	1420kg 1375kg	237	5.3	-	155	-	25.0		***
BMW 640d	165 D	£62,295	6/2993	309/4400	465/1500	1790kg	175	5.5		155	144	51.4		****
BMW M6 (F13)	218 R	£93.150	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1850kg	303	4.2		155	231	28.5		****
BMW M6 (E63)	106 R	'05-70	10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1635kg	311	4.8	10.0	155	342	19.8		****
BMW i8	210 R	£99,590	3/1499	357/5800	420/3700	1485kg	244	4.4	-	155	49	134.5		****
Chevrolet Camaro Z/28*	220 R	\$71,750	8/7008	505/6100	481/4800	1732kg	296	4.2	_	175		-		****
Chevrolet Corvette Stingray (C7)	197 R	£62,450	8/6162	460/6000	465/4600	1539kg	304	4.4	9.4	180	279	23.5		****
Chevrolet Corvette Z06 (C7)	206 R	£87,860	8/6156	650/6400	650/3600	1598kg	413	3.2		186	-	-	+ Mind-boggling raw speed; surprisingly sophisticated - Edgy when really pushed	****
Ford Mustang 2.3 EcoBoost	222 D	£30,995	4/2261	313/5500	319/3000	1655kg	192	5.8	_	155	179	35.3		***
Ford Mustang 5.0 V8 GT	225 R	£34,995	8/4951	410/6500	391/4250	1711kg	243	4.8	11.6	155	299	20.9		****
Ford Mustang Shelby GT350 *	221 R	\$48,695	8/5162	526/7500	429/4750	1715kg	312	4.3	-	180	-	-		****
Ginetta G40R	165 R	£35,940	4/1999	175/6700	140/5000	795kg	224	5.8	-	140	-	-		****
Honda Integra Type R (DC2)	200 R	'96-'00	4/1797	187/8000	131/7300	1101kg	173	6.2	17.9	145	-	28.9		****
Honda NSX	188 R	'90-'05	6/3179	276/7300	224/5300	1410kg	196	5.5	-	168	-	22.8		****
Honda NSX-R *	100 R	'02-'03	6/3179	276/7300	224/5300	1270kg	221	4.4	-	168	-	-		****
Jaguar F-type Coupe	204 D	£51,260	6/2995	335/6500	332/3500	1567kg	217	5.5	-	161	234	28.8		****
Jaguar F-type S Coupe	211 D	£60,260	6/2995	375/6500	339/3500	1584kg	241	5.3	-	171	234	28.8		****
Jaguar F-type R Coupe	218 R	£85,010	8/5000	542/6500	501/3500	1650kg	334	4.0	-	186	255	26.4		****
Jaguar F-type R Coupe AWD	223 R	£91,660	8/5000	542/6500	501/3500	1730kg	318	3.5	8.1	186	269	25.0		****
Jaguar F-type SVR Coupe	224 D	£110,000	8/5000	567/6500	516/3500	1705kg	338	3.5	-	200	269	25.0		****
Jaguar XKR	168 R	'09-'14	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 XKR-S	168 R	'11-'14	8/5000	542/6000	502/2500	1678kg	328	4.2	-	186	292	23.0		****
Lexus RC200t F Sport	225 R	£36,495	4/1998	242/5800	258/1650	1675kg	147	7.5	-	143	168	39.2		****
Lexus RC F Lotus Elise S Cup	206 R 207 D	£59,995 '15	8/4969 4/1798	470/6400 217/6800	391/4800 184/4600	1765kg 932kg	271 237	4.5 4.2	-	168 140	251 <i>175</i>	26.5 <i>37.5</i>		****





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Good, pre-facelift cars, which had a 4.2-litre V8, should be £15,000-18,000 with sub-50,000 miles.

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What to look out for

Regular (i.e. annual) servicing is vital, with no skimping – every four years there's a big service that costs nearly £2k. With the DuoSelect automated manual 'box, gearchanging anomalies,

such as jumping from second to fourth, could mean a worn clutch. (The optional ZF auto on later cars is usually trouble-free.) Creaks and knocks can mean worn suspension. Brakes are very expensive – over £500 for front pads and £1000 for drilled discs. (Full guide, evo 220.)

SPECIFICATION (4.2 V8)

Years 2004-2013 **Engine** V8, 4244cc Power 394bhp @ 7000rpm Torque 333lb ft @ 4500rpm 0-62mph 5.2sec Top speed 171mph Rating ★★★★★

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	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	МАХ МРН	C02 G/KM	EC MPG	EVO RATING	
Lotus Exige Sport 350	221 R	£55,900	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1125kg	312	3.7	-	170	235	28.0	+ Further honed, and with a vastly improved gearshift - Still not easy to get into and out of	****
Lotus Exige S (V6)	209 R	12-15	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1176kg	298	3.8	-	170	235	28.0	+ Breathtaking road-racer; our joint 2012 Car of the Year - Gearshift not the sweetest	****
Lotus Exige S (S2)	105 R	'06-'11	4/1796	218/7800	158/5500	930kg	238	4.5	-	148	199	33.2	+ Lightweight with a hefty punch- Uninspiring soundtrack	****
Lotus Exige (S1)	200 R	'00-'01	4/1796	192/7800	146/5000	780kg	247	4.6	-	136	-	-	+ Looks and goes like Elise racer - A tad lacking in refinement	****
Lotus Evora	138 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	£63,950	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 911	****
Lotus Evora 400	216 R	£72,000	6/3456	400/7000	302/3500	1395kg	291	4.1	-	186	225	29.1	+ Evora excitement levels take a leap - Gearbox still not perfect; punchy pricing	****
Maserati GranTurismo	114 R	£82,890	8/4244	399/7100	339/4750	1880kg	216	5.5	12.7	177	330	19.8	+ Striking, accomplished GT - Doesn't spike the pulse like an Aston or 911	****
Maserati GranTurismo Sport	188 R	£91,420	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1880kg	245	4.8	-	185	331	19.7	+ The best everyday GranTurismo yet - Starting to get long in the tooth	****
Maserati GranTurismo MC Stradale	193 R	£110,740	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1800kg	256	4.5	-	188	360	18.2	+ Brilliant blend of road racer and GT - Gearbox takes a little getting used to	****
Mazda RX-8	122 R	'03-'11	2R/1308	228/8200	156/5500	1429kg	162	6.5	16.4	146	299	24.6	+ Never mind the quirkiness, it's a great drive - Wafer-thin torque output	****
Mercedes-AMG C43 4Matic Coupe	225 D	£46,280	8/2996	362/5500	383/2000	1735kg	212	4.7	-	155	178	36.2	+ Fast and instilled with a real sense of quality - Not enough emphasis on fun	****
Mercedes-AMG C63 S Coupe	217 D	£68,070	8/3982	503/5500	516/1750	1725kg	296	3.9	-	155	200	24.8	+ Mouth-watering mechanical package - Might be too firm for UK roads	****
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Coupe	162 R	'11-'14	8/6208	451/6800	442/5000	1655kg	277	4.4	10.3	186	280	23.5	+ A proper two-door M3 rival - C63 saloon looks better	****
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Black Series	171 R	12-13	8/6208	510/6800	457/5200	1635kg	317	4.2	-	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	'06-'09	8/6208	481/6800	464/5000	1755kg	278	4.6	-	155	-	19.9	+ Power, control, build quality - Lacks ultimate involvement	****
Mercedes-Benz CLK63 AMG Black Series	106 R	'07-'09	8/6208	500/6800	464/5250	1760kg	289	4.2	-	186	-	-	+ AMG goes Porsche-hunting - Dull-witted gearshift spoils the party	****
Mercedes-AMG S63 Coupe	205 D	£125,595	8/5461	577/5500	664/2250	1995kg	294	4.2	-	155	237	28.0	+ Thunderously fast S-class built for drivers - Lacks badge appeal of a Continental GT	****
Mercedes-AMG S65 Coupe	209 D	£183.075	12/5980	621/4800	737/2300	2110kg	299	4.1	-	186	279	23.7	+ Almighty power, fabulous luxury - Nearly £60k more than the S63!	****
Mercedes-AMG GT S	216 R	£110,495	8/3982	503/6250	479/1750	1570kg	326	3.8	-	193	219	30.1	+ Fantastic chassis, huge grip - Artificial steering feel; downshifts could be quicker	****
Nissan 370Z	204 R	£27,445	6/3696	323/7000	268/5200	1496kg	219	5.3	_	155	248	26.7	+ Quicker, leaner, keener than 350Z - Not quite a Cayman-killer	****
Nissan 370Z Nismo	209 R	£37,585	6/3696	339/7400	274/5200	1496kg	230	5.2	-	155	248	26.6	+ Sharper looks, improved ride, extra thrills - Engine lacks sparkle	****
Nissan 350Z	107 R	'03-'09	6/3498	309/6800	264/4800	1532kg	205	5.5	13.0	155	-	24.1	+ Huge fun, and great value too - Honestly, we're struggling	****
Nissan GT-R (2017MY)	224 D	£79,995	6/3799	562/6800	470/3300	1752kg	326	2.7	13.0	196	275	24.0	+ More refinement, much improved interior, still fast - Feels a touch less alert	****
Nissan GT-R Track Edition	224 D	£88.560	6/3799	542/6400					77	196	275	24.0		****
					466/3200	1740kg	316	3.4	7.7					
Nissan GT-R Nismo	205 R	£125,000	6/3799	592/6800	481/3200	1720kg	350	2.6	-	196	275	24.0	+ Manages to make regular GT-R feel imprecise - Compromised by super-firm suspension	
Nissan GT-R (2012MY-2016MY)	218 R	'12-'16	6/3799	542/6400	466/3200	1740kg	316	3.2	7.5	196	275	24.0	+ GT-R is quicker and better than ever - But costs over £20K more than its launch price	****
Nissan Skyline GT-R (R34)	196R	'99-'02	6/2568	276/7000	289/4400	1560kg	180	4.7	12.5	165	-	20.1	+ Big, brutal, and great fun - Needs more than the standard 276bhp	****
Nissan Skyline GT-R (R33)	196 R	'97-'99	6/2568	276/6800	271/4400	1540kg	182	5.4	14.3	155	-	22.0	+ Proof that Japanese hi-tech can work (superbly) - Limited supply	****
Peugeot RCZ 1.6 THP 200	155 R	£27,150	4/1598	197/5500	202/1700	1421kg	141	7.3	18.1	147	155	42.1	+ Distinctive looks, highly capable handling - Could be a bit more exciting	****
Peugeot RCZ R	209 R	£32,250	4/1598	266/6000	243/1900	1280kg	211	5.9	-	155	145	44.8	+ Rewarding and highly effective when fully lit - Dated cabin, steering lacks feel	****
Porsche 718 Cayman S	225 D	£48,843	4/2497	345/6500	310/1900	1355kg	259	4.6	-	177	184	26.4	+ Faster and better to drive than ever - Turbo four-cylinder robs it of some of its charm	****
Porsche Cayman S (981)	202 R	'16-'16	6/3436	321/7400	273/4500	1320kg	247	4.5	10.5	175	206	32.1	+ The Cayman comes of age - Erm	****
Porsche Cayman GTS (981)	219 F	74-76	6/3436	335/7400	280/4750	1345kg	253	4.9	-	177	211	31.4	+ Tweaks improve an already sublime package - Slightly 'aftermarket' looks	****
Porsche Cayman GT4 (981)	221 R	'15-'16	6/3800	380/7400	310/4750	1340kg	288	4.4	-	183	238	27.4	+ evo Car of the Year 2015 (even though the 991 GT3 RS was there!) - Second-hand prices	****
Porsche Cayman S (987)	132 R	'06-'13	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1350kg	237	5.2	-	172	223	29.7	+ Still want that 911? - Yeah, us too	****
Porsche Cayman R (987)	158 R	'11-'13	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 (991.2)	218 R	£76,412	6/2981	365/6500	332/1700	1430kg	259	4.6	-	183	190	34.0	+ Forced induction hasn't ruined the Carrera - Purists won't be happy	****
Porsche 911 Carrera S (991.2)	217 R	£85,857	6/2981	414/6500	369/1700	1440kg	292	4.3	-	191	199	32.5	+ As above, but blindingly fast - You'll want the sports exhaust	****
Porsche 911 Carrera S (991.1)	201 R	'12-'15	6/3800	394/7400	324/5600	1415kg	283	4.3	9.5	188	223	29.7	+ A Carrera with supercar pace - Electric steering robs it of some tactility	****
Porsche 911 Carrera 4S (991.1)	179 R	'13-'15	6/3800	394/7400	324/5600	1465kg	273	4.5	-	185	233	28.5	+ More satisfying than rear-drive 991.1 Carreras - Choose your spec carefully	****
Porsche 911 Carrera 4 GTS (991.1)	208 D	£95,862	6/3800	424/7500	324/5750	1470kg	293	4.4	-	189	233	28.5	+ The highlight of the 991.1 Carrera line-up - Pricey for a Carrera	****
Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.2)	121 R	'08-'11	6/3800	380/6500	310/4400	1425kg	271	4.7	-	188	242	27.4	+ Poise, precision, blinding pace - Feels a bit clinical	****
Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.1)	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	'98-'01	6/3387	296/6800	258/4600	1320kg	228	5.2	-	174		28.0	+ evo Car of the Year 1998; beautifully polished - Some like a bit of rough	****
Porsche 911 GT3 (991)	206 R	£100.540	6/3799	468/8250	324/6250	1430kg	333	3.5	_	196	289	23.0	+ evo Car of the Year 2013 - At its best at licence-troubling speeds	****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (991)	223 R	£131,296	6/3996	493/8250	339/6250	1420kg	353	3.0	7.1	193	209	22.2	+ Sensationally good to drive - They won't all be painted Ultra Violet	****
Porsche 911 R (991)	224 R	£136.901	6/3996	493/8250	339/6250	1370kg	366	3.8	-	200	308	21.2	+ GT3 RS engine, manual gearbox, light weight - Limited availability	****
Porsche 911 GT3 (997.2)	182 R	'09-'11	6/3797	429/7600	317/6250	1395kg	312	4.2	9.2	194	303	22.1	+ Even better than the car it replaced - Give us a minute	****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (3.8, 997.2)	200 R	'10-'11	6/3797	444/7900	317/6750	1370kg	329	4.0	-	193	314	-	+ Our favourite car from the first 200 issues of evo - For people like us, nothing	****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS 4.0 (997.2)	187 R	'11-'12	6/3996	493/8250	339/5750	1360kg	368	3.8		193	326		+ evo Car of the Year 2011 - Unforgiving on-road ride; crazy used prices	****
											- 320	-		
Porsche 911 GT3 (997.1)	182 R	'07-'09 '07-'09	6/3600	409/7600	298/5500	1395kg	298	4.3	9.4	192 193	-	-	+ Runner-up evo Car of the Year 2006 - Ferrari 599 GTBs	****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (997.1)	105 R		6/3600	409/7600	298/5500	1375kg	302	4.2				-	+ evo Car of the Year 2007 - A chunk more money than the brilliant GT3	****
Porsche 911 GT3 (996.2)	221 R	'03-'05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1380kg	272	4.3	9.2	190	-	-	+ evo Car of the Year 2003 - Chassis is a bit too track-focused for some roads	****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (996.2)	068 R	'03-'05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1330kg	286	4.2	9.2	190	-	-	+ Track-biased version of above - Limited supply	****
Porsche 911 GT3 (996.1)	182 R	'99	6/3600	360/7200	273/5000	1350kg	271	4.5	10.3	187	-	21.9	+ evo Car of the Year 1999 - Porsche didn't build enough	****
Radical RXC	189 R	£94,500	6/3700	350/6750	320/4250	900kg	395	2.8	-	175	-	-	+ A real trackday weapon - Can't match the insanity of a Caterham 620R	****
Radical RXC Turbo	205 R	£129,000	6/3496	454/6000	500/3600	940kg	491	2.6	-	185	-	-	+ Eats GT3s for breakfast - Might not feel special enough at this price	****
Radical RXC Turbo 500	209 D	£143,400	6/3496	530/6100	481/5000	1100kg	490	2.6	6.8	185	-	-	+ Huge performance, intuitive adjustability, track ability - Compromised for road use	****
Rolls-Royce Wraith	205 D	£229,128	12/6592	624/5600	590/1500	2360kg	260	4.6	-	155	327	20.2	+ Refinement, chassis, drivetrain - Shared componentry lets cabin down	****
Subaru BRZ	204 R	£22,495	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	223 R	£22,495	4/1998	197/7000	151/6400	1240kg	161	6.9	16.5	140	181	36.2	+ More fun than its cousin (above) - Same lack of torque, poor interior quality	****
TVR Sagaris	097R	'05-'07	6/3996	406/7500	349/5000	1078kg	383	3.7	-	185	-	-	+ Looks outrageous - 406bhp feels a touch optimistic	****
TVR Tuscan S (Mk2)	076 R	'05-'07	6/3996	400/7000	315/5250	1100kg	369	4.0	-	185	-	-	+ Possibly TVR's best ever car - Aerodynamic 'enhancements'	****
VW Scirocco GT 2.0 TSI	155 R	£26,125	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1369kg	158	6.5	-	153	139	47.1	+ Golf GTI price and performance - Interior lacks flair	****
	200 D	£32,580	4/1984	276/6000	258/2500	1426kg	187	5.7	-	155	187	35.3	+ Great engine, grown-up dynamics - Perhaps a little too grown-up for some	****



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OUR CHOICE

McLaren 675LT. The 'long-tail' is the step forward we've been hoping for from McLaren's super-series cars, adding a real sense of involvement to the incredible pace that's been building since the 12C. In fact, the 675LT is so intense it might even make you question if you need a P1.



BEST OF THE REST

The Ferrari 488 GTB (left) has a stunning turbocharged engine and the chassis to exploit it. Lamborghini's Aventador offers true supercar drama, especially in Superveloce form, while the Pagani Huayra rivals it for theatre (albeit at four times the price) and was our joint 2012 Car of the Year.

		ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60МРН	0-100M PH	мах мрн	C02 G/KM	EC MPG	EVO RATING	
	Aston Martin Vanquish (Mk2)	203 R	£192,995	12/5935	568/6650	465/5500	1739kg	332	3.6	-	201	298	22.1		****
	Aston Martin Vanquish S (Mk1)	110 R	'05-'07	12/5935	520/7000	425/5800	1875kg	282	4.9	10.1	200	-	-		****
	Aston Martin One-77 Audi R8 V10 Plus	179 R 217 R	10-12 £134,500	12/7312 10/5204	750/6000 602/8250	553/7600 413/6500	<i>1740kg</i> 1555kg	4 <i>38</i> 393	<i>3.7</i> 3.2	-	<i>220+</i> 205	- 287	23.0		*****
	Audi R8 V10	181 D	10-15	10/5204	518/8000	391/6500	1620kg	325	3.2 3.9	8.4	194	346	19.0		****
	Audi R8 V10 Plus	190 R	13-15	10/5204	542/8000	398/6500	1570kg	351	3.8	-	198	346	19.0		****
	Audi R8 GT	169 F	'10-'12	10/5204	552/8000	398/6500	1520kg	369	3.6	-	199	-	-		****
	Audi R8 LMX	208 R	'15	10/5204	562/8000	398/6500	1595kg	358	3.4	-	198	299	21.9		****
	Bugatti Veyron 16.4 Bugatti Veyron Super Sport	134 R 151 R	'05-'11 '10-'14	16/7993 16/7993	1000/6000 1183/6400	922/2200 1106/3000	1950kg 1838kg	521 654	2.8 2.5	5.8 -	253 268	596 539	11.4 12.2		***** *****
	Bugatti EB110	078 R	'91-'95	12/3500	552/8000	451/3750	1566kg	358	3.4		212	-	- 12.2		****
	Chevrolet Corvette ZR1	133 R	'09-'13	8/6162	638/6500	603/3800	1528kg	424	3.8	7.6	205	355	18.8		****
	Ferrari 488 GTB	222 R	£183,964	8/3902	661/6500	561/3000	1475kg	455	3.0	-	205+		24.8	+ Staggeringly capable - Lacks a little of the 458's heart and excitement	****
	Ferrari 488 Spider	216 D	£204,400	8/3902	661/6500	561/3000	1525kg	440	3.0	-	203+		24.8		****
	Ferrari 458 Italia Ferrari 458 Speciale	221 R 203 R	'09-'15 '14-'15	8/4497 8/4497	562/9000 597/9000	398/6000 398/6000	1485kg 1395kg	384 435	3.2 3.0	6.8 -	202 202+	307 275	20.6 23.9		*****
	Ferrari F430	163 R	'04-'10	8/4308	483/8500	343/5250	1449kg	339	4.0		196	-	18.6		****
	Ferrari 430 Scuderia	121 R	'07-'10	8/4308	503/8500	347/5250	1350kg	378	3.5	7.7	198	-	15.7		****
	Ferrari 360 Modena	163 R	'99-'04	8/3586	394/8500	275/4750	1390kg	288	4.5	9.0	183	-	17.0	+ Worthy successor to 355 - Not quite as involving as it should be	****
	Ferrari 360 Challenge Stradale	068 R	'03-'04	8/3586	420/8500	275/4750	1280kg	333	4.1	-	186	-	-		****
	Ferrari F355 F1 Berlinetta Ferrari F12 Berlinetta	163 R 190 R	'97-'99 £241,053	8/3496 12/6262	374/8250 730/8250	268/6000 509/6000	1350kg 1630kg	<i>281</i> 455	4.7 3.1	-	<i>183</i> 211	- 350	<i>16.7</i> 18.8		*****
	Ferrari F12tdf	217 R	£339,000	12/6262	769/8500	520/6250	1520kg	514	2.9		211	360	18.3		****
	Ferrari 599 GTB Fiorano	101 R	'06-'12	12/5999	611/7600	448/5600	1688kg	368	3.5	7.4	205	415	15.8		****
	Ferrari 599 GTO	161 R	'11-'12	12/5999	661/8250	457/6500	1605kg	418	3.4	-	208	-	-	+ One of the truly great Ferraris - Erm, the air con isn't very good	****
	Ferrari 575M Fiorano Handling Pack	200 R	'02-'06	12/5748	508/7250	434/5250	1730kg	298	4.2	9.6	202	-	12.3		****
0	Ferrari 550 Maranello Ferrari GTC4 Lusso	169 R 225 D	'97-'02 c£230,000	12/5474 12/6262	485/7000 680/8000	<i>415/5000</i> 514/5750	<i>1716kg</i> 1920kg	<i>287</i> 360	4.3 3.4	10.0	199 208	350	<i>12.3</i> 18.8		****
•	Ferrari FF	194 R	11-15	12/6262	651/8000	504/6000	1880kg	347	3.7	-	208	360	15.4		**** ****
	Ferrari LaFerrari	203 R	'13-'15	12/6262	950/9000	664/6750	1255kg	769	3.0	-	217+	330	-		****
	Ferrari Enzo	203 R	'02-'04	12/5999	651/7800	485/5500	1365kg	485	3.5	6.7	217+	545	-		****
	Ferrari F50	186 R	'96-'97	12/4699	513/8500	347/6500	1230kg	424	3.9	-	202	-	-		****
	Ferrari F40	222 R	'87-'92 '04''06	8/2936	471/7000	426/4000	1100kg	437	4.1 3.7	-	201 205	-	-		****
	Ford GT Hennessey Venom GT	200 R 180 R	'04-'06 £900,000	<i>8/5409</i> 8/7000	550/6500 1244/6500	500/3750 1155/4000	<i>1583kg</i> 1244kg	353 1016	2.5	-	270	-	-		***** *****
	Honda NSX	217 R	c£140,000	6/3493	565	476	1725kg	333	2.9	-	191	-	-		****
	Jaguar XJ220	157R	'92-'94	6/3498	542/7200	475/4500	1470kg	375	3.7	-	213	-	-		****
	Koenigsegg Agera R	180 R	c£1.09m	8/5032	1124/7100	885/2700	1435kg	796	2.8	-	273	-	-		****
	Koenigsegg One:1 Koenigsegg CCXR Edition	202 R 118 R	c£2.0m '08-'10	8/5065 8/4800	1341/7500 1004/7000	1011/6000 796/5600	1360kg 1280kg	1002 797	2.9 2.8	-	273 250+	-	-	+ The most powerful car we've ever tested - It's sold out; we couldn't afford one anyway + One of the world's fastest cars - Spikey power delivery	****
	Lamborghini Huracán LP580-2	224 R	£155,400	10/5204	572/8000	397/6500	1389kg	418	3.4		199	278	23.7		****
	Lamborghini Huracán LP610-4	209 D	£186,760	10/5204	602/8250	413/6500	1532kg	399	3.2	-	202+		22.6		****
	Lamborghini Gallardo LP560-4	180 D	'08-'13	10/5204	552/8000	398/6500	1410kg	398	3.7	-	202	325	16.0		****
	Lamborghini LP570-4 Superleggera	152 R	'10-'13	10/5204	562/8000	398/6500	1340kg	426	3.5	-	202	325	20.6		****
	Lamborghini Gallardo Lamborghini Aventador LP700-4	094 R 194 R	'06-'08 £260,040	10/4961 12/6498	<i>513/8000</i> 690/8250	<i>376/4250</i> 509/5500	<i>1520kg</i> 1575kg	343 445	4.3 2.9	9.4	196 217	370	17.7		**** ****
	Lamborghini Aventador LP750-4 SV	216 R	£321,723	12/6498	740/8400	509/5500	1525kg	493	2.8		217+	370	17.7		****
	Lamborghini Murciélago LP640	093 R	'06-'11	12/6496	631/8000	487/6000	1665kg	385	3.3	-	211	-	21.3		****
	Lamborghini Murciélago LP670-4 SV	200 R	'09-'11	12/6496	661/8000	487/6500	1565kg	429	3.2	7.3	212	-	-		****
	Lamborghini Murciélago	089 D	'01-'06	12/6192	570/7500	479/5400	1650kg	351	4.0	-	205	-	-		****
	Lamborghini Diablo 6.0 Lexus LFA/LFA Nürburgring	019 R 200 R	'00-'02 '10-'12	12/5992 10/4805	550/7100 552/8700	457/5500 354/6800	1625kg 1480kg	343 379	3.8 3.7	-	200+ 202	-	-		**** ****
	Maserati MC12	079 R	'04-'05	12/5998	621/7500	481/5500	1445kg	437	3.8		205	-	-		****
	McLaren 570S	217 R	£143,250	8/3799	562/7500	443/5000	1440kg	397	3.1	-	204	258	26.6		****
	McLaren 570GT	224 D	£154,000	8/3799	562/7500	443/5000	1495kg	382	3.4	-	204	258	26.6		****
	McLaren 650S	196 R	£195,250	8/3799	641/7250	500/6000	1428kg	456	3.0	-	207	275	24.2		****
	McLaren 675LT McLaren 675LT Spider	216 R 222 D	£259,500 £285,450	8/3799 8/3799	666/7100 666/7100	516/5500 516/5500	1328kg 1368kg	510 495	2.9	-	205 203	275 275	24.2 24.2		***** *****
	McLaren 12C	187 R	711-714	8/3799	616/7500	442/3000	1434kg	435	3.1	-	207	279	24.2		****
	McLaren P1	205 R	13-15	8/3799	903/7500	664/4000	1490kg	616	2.8	-	217	194	34.0		****
	McLaren F1	205 R	'94-'98	12/6064	627/7500	479/4000	1137kg	560	3.2	6.3	240+	-	19.0		****
	Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG	159 R	'10-'15	8/6208	563/6800	479/4750	1620kg	335	4.1	8.4	197	308	21.4		****
	Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG Black Series Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren	204 R 073 R	'13-'15 '03-'07	8/6208 8/5439	622/7400 617/6500	468/5500 575/3250	1550kg 1693kg	408 370	3.6 3.7	-	196 208	321	20.6		**** ****
	Noble M600	186 R	c£200.000	8/4439	650/6800	604/3800	1198kg	551	3.8	7.7	225	-	-		****
	Pagani Huayra	185 R	c£1m	12/5980	720/5800	737/2250	1350kg	542	3.3	-	224	-	-		****
	Pagani Zonda 760RS	170 R	£1.5m	12/7291	750/6300	575/4500	1210kg	630	3.3	-	217+	-	-		****
	Pagani Zonda S 7.3	096 R	'02-'05	12/7291	555/5900	553/4050	1250kg	451	3.6	-	<i>197</i>	-	-		****
	Pagani Zonda Cinguo Poadstor	186 R	'05-'06 '09-'10	12/7291	602/6150	575/4000	1230kg	497	3.6	-	214 217+	-	-		***** *****
	Pagani Zonda Cinque Roadster Porsche 911 Turbo S (991.2)	147D 223 R	£145,773	12/7291 6/3800	669/6200 572/6750	<i>575/4000</i> 553/2250	1400kg 1600kg	4 <i>85</i> 363	3.4 2.6	6.0	205	212	31.0		*****
	Porsche 911 Turbo S (991.1)	217 R	13-15	6/3800	552/6500	553/2200	1605kg	349	3.1	-	197	227	29.1		****
	Porsche 911 Turbo (997.2)	218 R	'09-'13	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 - Favours outright grip over adjustability	****
	Porsche 911 GT2 RS (997.2)	204 R	'10-'13	6/3600	611/6500	516/2250	1370kg	453	3.5		205	284	-		****
	Porsche 911 Turbo (997.1)	094 R	'06-'09	6/3600	472/6000	457/1950	1585kg	303	4.0	8.7	193	- 200	22.1		****
	Porsche 911 Turbo (996) Porsche 911 GT2 (996.2)	017 R 072 R	'00-'06 '04-'06	6/3600 6/3600	414/6000 475/5700	413/2700 472/3500	1540kg 1420kg	273 338	4.1 4.0	10.0 8.3	190 198	309 309	21.8 21.8		*****
	Porsche 911 Turbo (993)	066 R	'95-'98	6/3600	402/5750	398/4500	1500kg	272	4.5	-	180	376	18.0		****
	Porsche 911 GT2 (993)	003 R	'95-'98	6/3600	424/5750	398/4500	1295kg	333	4.4	-	183	368	18.3		****
	Porsche 918 Spyder	200 R	'13-'15	8/4593	875/8500	944/6600	1674kg	531	2.6		211	79	85.6		****
	Porsche Carrera GT	200 R	'04-'06	10/5733	604/8000	435/5750	1380kg	445	3.8	7.6	205	432	15.8		****
	Ruf CTR 'Yellowbird'	097 R	'87-'89	6/3366	469/5950	408/5100	1170kg	345	4.1	-	211	-	-	+ A true legend - We can't all drive like Stefan Roser	****

TRACK TIMES

= new this month. Red denotes the car is the fastest in its class on that track.

ANGLESEY COASTAL CIRCUIT

■ LOCATION Anglesey, UK ■ GPS 53.188372, -4.496385 ■ LENGTH 1.55 miles



Car	Lap time	issue no.	YouTube
Radical RXC Turbo 500 (fastest coupe)	1:10.5	-	Yes
McLaren P1 (on P Zero Trofeo R tyres) (fastest supercar)	1:11.2	200	Yes
Porsche 918 Spyder	1:12.4	200	Yes
McLaren P1	1:12.6	200	Yes
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (991)	1:13.6	-	Yes
Porsche 911 Turbo S (991)	1:13.6	=	Yes
Ferrari 458 Speciale	1:14.2	198	Yes
Porsche 911 Turbo (991)	1:15.2	210	Yes
Aston Martin Vantage GT12	1:16.0	214	Yes
Nissan GT-R (2014MY)	1:16.9	210	Yes
Mercedes-AMG GT S	1:17.0	210	Yes
Porsche 911 Carrera S Powerkit (991)	1:17.6	201	-
Porsche 911 Carrera (991)	1:17.8	199	Yes
Porsche Cayman (981)	1:18.9	209	-
Aston Martin N430	1:19.1	210	-
Lotus Exige S (V6)	1:19.1	209	-
SEAT Leon Cupra 280 Sub8 (fastest hot hatch)	1:19.1	212	Yes
BMW M4	1:19.2	199	Yes
BMW i8	1:19.4	210	-
Honda Civic Type R (FK2)	1:19.5	212	-
Renaultsport Mégane Trophy 275	1:19.6	212	-
BMW M5 Competition Pack (F10M) (fastest saloon)	1:19.7	-	Yes
Audi TTS (Mk3)	1:19.9	209	-
Audi R8 V8 (Mk1)	1:20.1	201	-
BMW M135i	1:20.4	212	-
Nissan 370Z Nismo	1:20.5	209	-
Alfa Romeo 4C	1:20.7	209	-
Mercedes-AMG S65 Coupe	1:21.4	-	Yes
VW Golf R (Mk7)	1:21.6	212	-
Peugeot RCZ R	1:22.0	209	-
Toyota GT86 TRD	1:23.7	193	-
Jota Mazda MX-5 GT (Mk3) (fastest sports car)	1:24.6	193	-

BEDFORD AUTODROME WEST CIRCUIT

■ LOCATION Bedfordshire, UK ■ GPS 52.235133, -0.474321

■ LENGTH 1.8 miles (track reconfigured May 2015; earlier times not comparable)



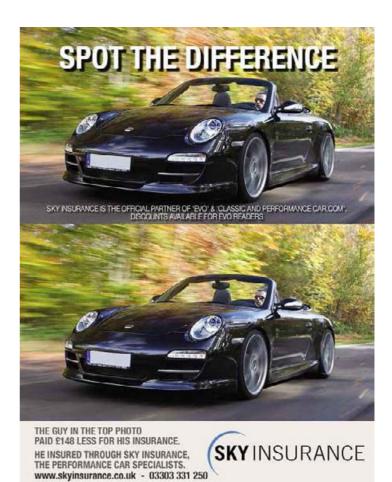
SEAT Leon Cupra 280 Ultimate Sub8 (fastest hot hatch)	1:23.1	215	_
BMW M3 (F80) (fastest saloon)	1:23.3	211	Yes
Renaultsport Mégane 275 Trophy-R	1:23.6	215	-
Mercedes-AMG C63 S Saloon	1:24.0	211	Yes
Honda Civic Type R (FK2)	1:24.9	215	-
VW Golf R (Mk7)	1:26.1	-	Yes
Audi RS3 Sportback (2015MY)	1:26.6	-	Yes
Ford Fiesta ST Mountune	1:29.5	213	-
Mazda MX-5 2.0i Sport (Mk4) (fastest sports car)	1:29.8	-	Yes
Toyota GT86 (fastest coupe)	1:29.9	_	Yes

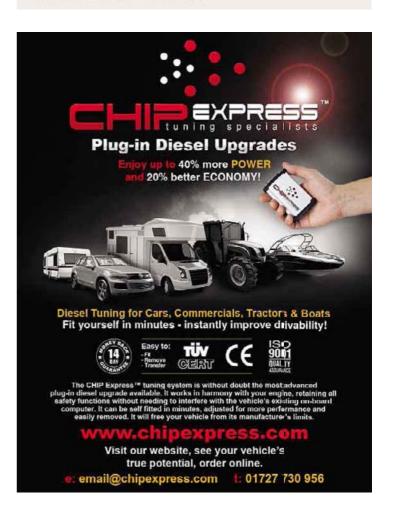
BLYTON PARK OUTER CIRCUIT

■ LOCATION Lincolnshire, UK ■ GPS 53.460093, -0.688666 ■ LENGTH 1.6 miles



Ariel Atom 3.5R (fastest sports car)	0:58.9	205	-
Radical RXC Turbo (fastest coupe)	1:00.4	205	Yes
BAC Mono	1:01.4	189	-
Porsche 911 GT2 RS (997.2) (fastest supercar)	1:01.8	204	Yes
Porsche 911 GT3 (991)	1:01.9	205	Yes
Caterham Seven 620R	1:02.1	189	-
Nissan GT-R Nismo	1:02.1	205	Yes
Mercedes SLS AMG Black Series	1:02.5	204	Yes
Pagani Huayra	1:02.5	177	-
McLaren 12C	1:02.7	187	-
Radical RXC	1:02.9	189	-
Ariel Atom 3.5 310	1:03.4	189	-
Audi R8 V10 Plus (Mk1)	1:03.4	-	Yes
Porsche Cavman GT4	1:03.6	221	Yes
Lotus Exige S (V6)	1:04.4	177	-
Porsche 911 Carrera (991)	1:05.1	177	-
Chevrolet Camaro Z/28	1:05.1	220	-
Porsche 911 GT3 (997)	1:05.2	-	Yes
Porsche Boxster S (981)	1:05.5	177	-
Porsche Cayman GTS (981)	1:05.5	-	Yes
Porsche Cayman S (981)	1:05.5	189	-
Caterham Seven 420R	1:05.7	220	Yes
laguar F-type S Convertible	1:06.5	-	Yes
/uhl 05	1:06.5	220	-
Zenos E10 S	1:06.6	214	-
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Black Series	1:06.9	177	-
Renaultsport Mégane 275 Trophy-R (fastest hot hatch)	1:07.3	205	Yes
SEAT Leon Cupra 280 Sub8	1:07.6	220	-
BMW M135i	1:07.7	177	-
Porsche Cayman (981)	1:07.7	-	Yes
BMW M235i	1:08.7	-	Yes
Mini John Cooper Works GP (R56)	1:08.7	181	-
Renaultsport Mégane R26.R	1:08.9	181	-
Ford Focus RS500	1:09.4	181	-
VW Golf GTI Performance Pack (Mk7)	1:10.3	192	-
Toyota GT86	1:12.8	177	-









Art of speed



Pirelli P7

by RICHARD LANE

hard to see why, not when the F40 connection is so strong. Neither should we forget that there hasn't been a time in the past 30 years when a hearty contingent of the world's fastest cars hasn't worn tyres bearing that special name, letter and written-out number. Porsche 996 GT2, Jaguar F-type R, Lamborghini Huracán Spyder... and those are just the P Zero-shod models sitting in the **evo** car park as these words fall on this page.

However, if the Pirelli P Zero is what you might rightly call exotic, then the P7 landed from another planet when it found a home on the Lamborghini Countach in 1978. Until that point Michelin's popular but high-sided XWX tyres in sizes 205/70 up front and 215/70 at the back had been tasked with containing the LP400's 375bhp, and they weren't up to it. The result was a chassis ready to snap viciously under heavy braking then get a swapper on if you tucked it in too cutely. Even Sant'Agata's chief tester, Bob Wallace, described them as 'terrible' for the car, although this remark doesn't seem to have made it into any sales material.

Then, in 1975, the P7 arrived after a successful period of development with the white-hot Lancia works rally team. As a low-profile, 205/60 fitment on Sandro Munari's Stratos, this 'wide radial' tyre represented a radical rethink, and only lightly homologated it could soon be found on the business end of Porsche's 3-litre 930 Turbo in even-lower-profile 225/50 form. Praise was quickly forthcoming, and one well-known magazine

lauded the way the P7 eradicated 'a slight vagueness induced by flexing sidewalls that one scarcely knew existed until it was removed'. British understatement at its finest – the P7 was an utter revelation.

There was considerably more to come, however, and when Lamborghini finally commissioned P7 rubber for a new Countach LP400S, staff at the Pirelli factory in Milan were probably wondering how they were going to weld two tread moulds together. The specified size was beyond belief, and wearing 345/35 Franken-tyres on the rear, the latest Italian dream machine looked more Can-Am torpedo than Cannes peacock. The P7s were ultra-low-profile, ultra-wide, and ultra-cool.

Redesigned to accommodate such immense width, the LP400's bodywork sprouted glassfibre wheelarch extensions that hid Dallararevised suspension pick-up points and new control arms to keep the tyres upright. The steering rack was also lengthened to connect to the 205/50 front tyres, and the tie-rod ends were shortened to cut out flex. Gandini's effortless lines were obliterated, but the payoff, wrapped tightly around Campagnolo telephone-dial wheels and with a crisp, helical tread pattern and an inflated script, is now seen by many as the greatest leap in sports car engineering ever made. This, remember, was at a time when a Ferrari 512BB still made do with 225/70 rear tyres.

Today a manufacturer favourite is to tell us its latest car has 'bespoke' tyres, but in the '70s Pirelli developed a tyre so extreme it necessitated a bespoke car. An all-Italian affair, it changed the supercar forever.

✓

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Warrantywise work in partnership with global feedback engine Feefo and were awarded their Gold Trusted Merchant award for 2015.





QUENTIN VIDEO GUIDE

Watch as motoring expert, Quentin Willson, explains the benefits of a used car warranty

Watch Quentin's Guide warrantywise.co.uk/guide





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587 LITRE BOOT

290PS CUPRA ENGINE

CUPRA DRIVE PROFILE

Model shown is a Leon ST CUPRA 290 Black with optional Sub8 Performance Pack and Nevada white metallic paint.









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Official fuel consumption for the SEAT Leon ST CUPRA in mpg (litres per 100km); urban 31.7 (8.9) - 33.2 (8.5); extra urban 50.4 (5.6) - 51.4 (5.5); combined 41.5 (6.8) - 42.8 (6.6). CO₂ emissions 158 - 154 g/km. Standard EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.