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STUART GALLAGHER

Time to flex some Yankee muscle

I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE THIS OBSESSION HAS sprung from. Up until three, possibly four months ago my interest in American muscle cars was passing at best. Corvettes were an interesting aside to Europe's honed sports cars but I never felt the urge to concoct a tenuous feature idea just so I could drive one. An original Plymouth Road Runner appealed because of the lunacy of the damn thing. But that's where my interest started and ended.

Then something clicked. My vision focused and muscle cars started filling my social media timelines. I began to lose hours to Chargers and Challengers and Camaros and even something called a Chevelle. That's the beauty of this new fascination: every click is an education.

This newfound interest resulted in me spending far too much time loitering on the Dodge stand at the Detroit Auto Show this January, pretending I was eight years old again and sitting in every example of a Charger (a toned, four-door saloon packing six- and eight-cylinder engines with up to 707bhp) and Challenger (its two-door counterpart) with an unlocked door, changing gear – yes, some are available with a stick – as I gripped the steering wheel. I may have made V8 noises in my head, too. I was hooked. Which inevitably led me to looking at how to source a car in the UK. Theoretically (and quite easily) I could have a 2015 Dodge Challenger SRT Hellcat (pictured) on my drive for £60,950.

An equivalent supercoupe from a German brand would cost the same, come with the peace of mind of full dealer support and the knowledge there would be someone who wanted to buy it when my attention switched to something else. But the Euro equivalent wouldn't have 707bhp, or 650lb ft of torque...

A Hellcat may not be as sophisticated as its European counterparts, but as we all know, the thrill of driving comes in all shapes and sizes. Now, where did I put the number for the Dodge press office?

*'An original
Plymouth Road
Runner appealed
because of the
lunacy of the
damn thing'*

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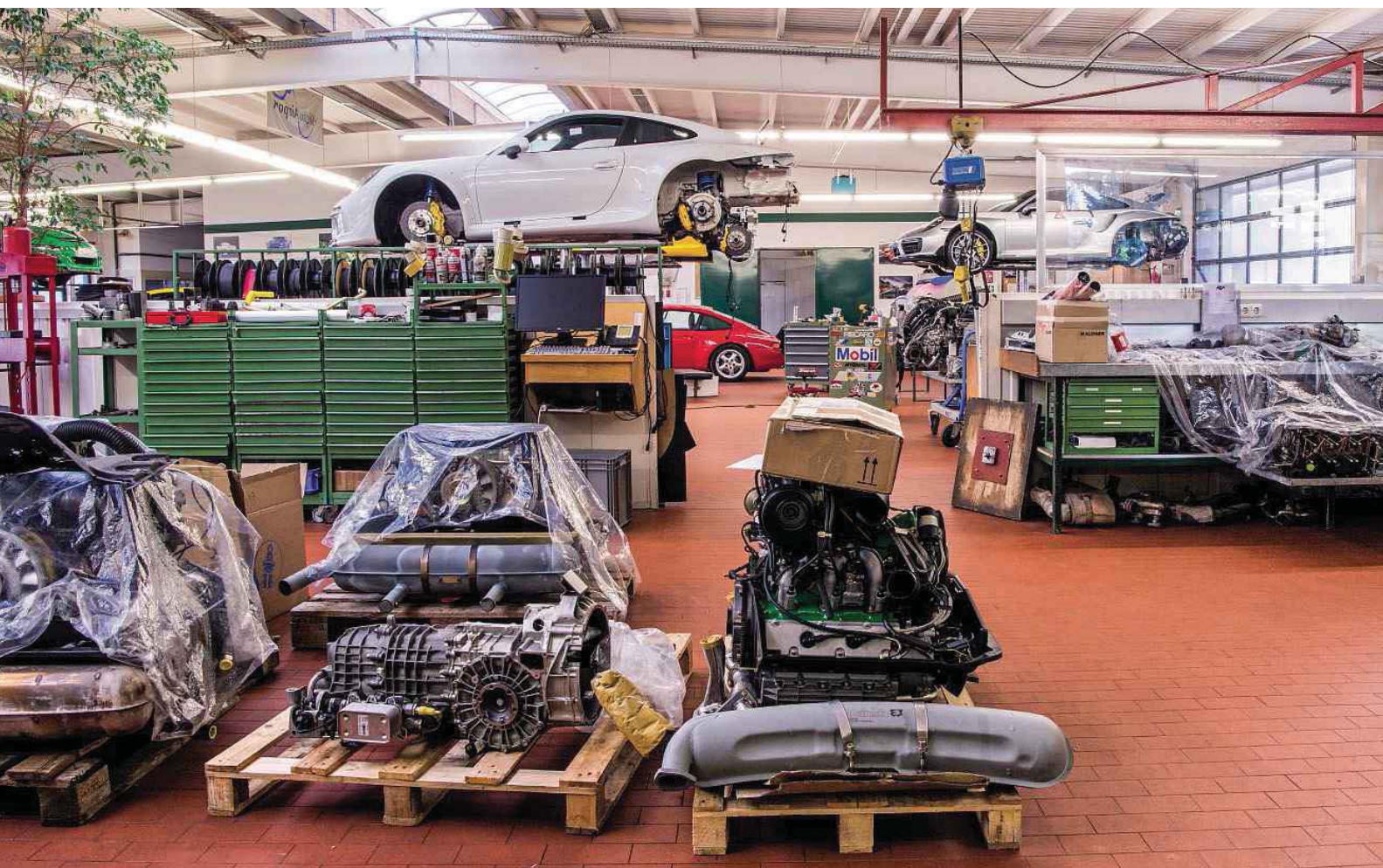


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AMG brings F1 to the road

**AMG hypercar to be powered by
genuine 1000bhp F1 power unit**

by DAN PROSSER

MERCEDES WILL CELEBRATE THE 50th anniversary of its AMG performance division throughout 2017. The company is planning an event at the Nürburgring 24 Hours in May, and at the Detroit motor show in January it unveiled a new version of the AMG GT, called the GT C, which slots in neatly between the GT S and the range-topping GT R (see page 56). Much more exciting than a birthday party and a derivative model, though, is AMG's forthcoming 1000bhp, Formula 1-engined road-legal hypercar.

I met up with AMG CEO Tobias Moers in Detroit to quiz him on the division's plans for the year and, of course, the car likely to be the highlight of 2017. What you need to know about Moers is that he gives forthright interviews. Ask him a question he doesn't want to answer and he'll give you a short, irritated reply, more often than not a single word, or maybe even just a glare.

'We will do an event at the Nürburgring,' he said, curtly, 'but I don't think we'll have a party at the factory and invite everybody.'

I've interviewed Moers enough times to know that you don't press him on something he doesn't want to talk about. I also know that when you do luck upon something he's actually interested in, he can give away far more than you ever dared hope for as the press officer who's with him squirms and winces.

That's how I know the new hypercar will have four electric motors, one on each wheel, with torque-vectoring on the front axle (where it's most effective) and active aerodynamics. It'll be a road-legal two-seater, costing 'two point something million euros', and 200-300 will be built. It will have a little over 1000bhp and weigh slightly more than 1100kg.

And its main propulsion unit will be a Mercedes Formula 1 engine...

'Project One is the working title for the hypercar,' said Moers, pushing a glossy black brochure my way. 'This is the brochure we're sending to prospective customers right now.' It's notepad-sized and just 12 or 14 pages thick. The copy inside only runs to a few hundred words, but most billionaire car nuts living in the Middle East or wherever will almost certainly wire over their deposits before they've even read it.

Both the 1.6-litre V6 turbo engine and the hybrid system will come from Mercedes' Formula 1 car. That's the same power unit that has dominated F1 for the past three seasons, winning consecutive teams' and drivers' titles as well as countless races along the way. The more one thinks about it, the more outrageous it seems to put

an F1 motor into a road car. 'It is crazy,' agreed Moers. 'It's never been done before. Mercedes is the only company that's capable of doing this.'

But it's just a derivative of the F1 engine and not the real thing, surely... Or it has the same basic mechanical layout but it's actually a new unit in its own right. 'No, it's the Formula 1 engine. Okay, the crank house is cast and not machined due to the volumes. And it is a little bit different because we've moved the idle revs down from 4000 to 2200rpm, but the red line is still above 10,000rpm. We have the split turbo. We have the same crank. We still have very good thermal efficiency. We're going to use the battery from the Formula 1 car, but in a bigger size. The one and only reason for doing this car is that it has the same engine as the Formula 1 car.'

Naturally, making an F1 power



unit road legal has been an enormous challenge for Mercedes' High Performance Powertrain (HPP) team in Brixworth, Northamptonshire, and despite the very low production numbers the car still needs to meet all the usual emissions regulations. 'There's no exemption,' said Moers. 'We've got to do it. Without tricks. It's a huge challenge for Brixworth. We've invested in a new bench there and we fired up the first engine in December last year.'

A couple of hours before my interview, Moers announced that the hypercar will have a 25km electric range, which means it'll have plug-in capability. He didn't care to discuss the prospective customers with me, but did say there are some famous names on the list, including a few we wouldn't expect. He also confirmed there'll be a driver training

programme, but was keen to point out that buyers won't need a team of technicians to start the car. 'Just turn the key and go for a drive.'

The Project One, to be unveiled at the Frankfurt motor show in September, was Moers' idea. 'I phoned Andy Cowell at HPP and asked him to do me a favour,' he explained. That's why Moers was so forthcoming when asked about it, so eager to reveal all the juicy details. The hypercar isn't a vanity project, though. It will serve a broader purpose for Mercedes, and that's to prepare you and me for hybrid-powered series production AMGs. They'll arrive after 2020.

With Aston Martin's own ultra-expensive, super-exotic, warp-speed hypercar – the Adrian Newey-penned AM-RB 001 – also on the way, it seems we're edging towards the most spectacular twin-test of all time.



Above: an informed rendering of what Project One could look like.

Below: the whole AMG GT family including, in yellow, the new GT C

The one and only reason for doing this car is that it has the same engine as the Formula 1 car



New Arrivals

2017 kicks off with new models from Porsche, Ford, Toyota, Bentley and McLaren



McLAREN MONOCAGE II

It might look like a 650S that someone left in an insalubrious area of town, but this is actually the central structure of the car that's set to replace the 650S.

Heralding the next generation of McLaren's Super Series cars – and the first of 15 new models promised by 2022 – the new carbonfibre MonoCage will result in a dry weight of just 1283kg for the 650S's replacement. That's 18kg less than the outgoing car, and a new active rear wing will help generate downforce equivalent to half the car's weight.

There'll also be more power, and a corresponding new name, when the car makes its full debut at the Geneva motor show (and on evo.co.uk) in March.



FARADAY FUTURE FF 91

The electric-powered FF 91 has been on the drawing board for some time, but its figures seem to come from the future, not the past: 1050bhp, 0-60mph in 2.4sec and a range of 378 miles. There's even facial recognition to unlock the car. Production is scheduled for 2018, but FF has an uphill struggle ahead: several of its execs have recently left, and Tesla aside, successful EV startups are notable mainly by their absence...



TOYOTA YARIS 210

Toyota will unveil a Ford Fiesta ST rival at the Geneva motor show with a '210bhp-plus' take on its Yaris supermini. The car, which features inspiration from the new Yaris WRC car, is based on a facelifted version of the now seven-year-old hatch. It will feature deep front and rear bumpers, a rear wing, a centre-exit exhaust and (hopefully optional) graphics similar to those of the Yaris WRC.



BENTLEY CONTINENTAL SUPERSPORTS

It takes just 3.4 seconds to go from rest to a mile a minute in the new Continental Supersports, making it the quickest Bentley ever. With 700bhp from its uprated 6-litre twin-turbo W12 (and 750lb ft of torque), it's also the

most powerful. Top speed is 209mph, while carbon-ceramic brakes bring the 2215kg four-seater coupe back under control. Forged 21-inch alloy wheels and carbonfibre aero elements mark out the Supersports from its stablemates.

PORSCHE 911 GTS (991.2)

GT and R models aside, GTS-badged Porsches are typically the pick of the range. Suspension upgrades are often to thank for this, and true to form this latest 911 GTS sits 10mm lower on its PASM-equipped chassis than other

PASM 911s. The Sport Chrono Package, including dynamic engine mounts, is standard, and the 3-litre twin-turbo flat-six gets a boost to 444bhp – 30bhp up from the Carrera S. Pricing starts at £94,316.





Brian Laban 1948-2016

Motoring writer and former *evo* contributor Brian Laban died on 28 December 2016. Friend and former *Performance Car* editor Jesse Crosse pays tribute to an extraordinary talent and one of motoring journalism's most popular characters

DURING THE SUMMER OF 1985, a freelance subeditor and writer with a riot of curly hair and a twinkle in his eye walked into the editorial office of *Performance Car* magazine and made himself at home. That man was Brian Laban and although neither of us knew it then, we would work closely together for the next four years, mixing the hard work of magazine publishing with a lot of laughs along the way.

Brian was already an established automotive historian with an encyclopaedic knowledge of cars. He was also a true petrolhead and before he was old enough to drive helped start a car club at school, deafened mates with model aeroplane engines in his parents' cellar and acquired a Morris 1000 project car.

He attended Wexborough Grammar School in his home county of Yorkshire and then studied physics in London, but in 1973 he followed his passion for cars and became a press officer for the British Automobile Racing Club. From the mid-1970s to 1980 he worked at Orbis Publishing on part-works such as *On Four Wheels*. In 1980 he joined the short-lived *Autoweek* and *Competition Car*, then in 1982 he freelanced for a while at *Automobile Sport*, published by Haynes.

“
Brian was a craftsman, his attention to detail was meticulous, and his goal was perfection. He didn't believe in 'using ten words when one will do'
”

Brian was a craftsman, his attention to detail was meticulous, and his goal was perfection. He didn't believe in 'using ten words when one will do'. We would feature a classic performance car every month, a slot that quickly became a showcase for Brian's ability to turn a phrase and paint a vivid picture of a beautiful car.

An example is an early feature entitled

'On the Blower', in which he drove a 1930 Blower Bentley. The story opened with these words: 'It sat alone in a wide open, gravel-surfaced space by the edge of a long, broad lake, dwarfed by tall trees and taller hills. Watery sunlight picked out the Union Jack on its deep flank and shone back almost yellow from the full curves of the nickel-plated radiator shell.'

When *Performance Car* closed in the late 1990s, Brian became a contributor to its spiritual successor, *evo*. He was the author of more than 40 books, and won the Guild of Motoring Writers' Pierre Dreyfus Award in 1991 and was shortlisted for many others, including Consumer Editor of the Year in the 2007 APA Awards.

Brian was perhaps best known to many as a specialist on Le Mans and he wrote the definitive book about it, *Le Mans 24 Hours*. He will be remembered for his immense talent, engaging personality, wit, and as one friend put it, for simply being 'unbelievably good company'.

Enjoying a pint one day many years ago, he was asked what he saw himself doing a few years hence. He replied that he loved what he did so much, he wanted to carry on doing it for the rest of his days. We are all profoundly glad that he did and the world of cars is better for it.

London Classic Car Show *evo* ticket offer

Save a little and see some gorgeous cars

This year's London Classic Car Show takes place on 23-26 February and you can save money on tickets with *evo*. Enter the code 'evo' at thelondonclassiccarshow.co.uk to book two tickets for £42 (normally £48 if booked in advance or £54 on the door).

The show, held at the ExCel exhibition centre in east London, will gather cars from the likes of Aston Martin Works, Alfaholics (who could forget the sensational GTA-R 270 we drove last year?) and Maserati. There will also be an

interview with six-time Le Mans winner Jacky Ickx, a 20-car strong celebration of 70 years of Ferrari and a 'live' runway, the theme for which is 'The Perfect 10' body styles. Last year's show saw 60 classic cars fired up for the catwalk and this year they will include a Lotus 21 and a Lamborghini Miura.

evo will also be hosting a concept cars stand along with sister magazine *Octane*, but you'll have to wait to find out what treasures we've pulled together.

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INSIGHT

The Racing Insider

The rise and fall of the robot drivers

LAST MONTH I WROTE about autonomous racing. It has since been pointed out to me that in recent years human drivers have been likened to robots, such is their polished PR demeanour and the guarded nature of their professional and personal lives.

The traditionalists miss James 'sex for breakfast' Hunt, Gilles 'drive it like you stole it' Villeneuve, Ayrton 'God is my co-pilot' Senna, and tales of derring-do by '50s playboys Hawthorn and Collins captured in brilliant books such as *Mon Ami Mate*. Another list could be made of outrageous team bosses, from Chapman to Jordan. And that's not taking into account characters outside Formula 1 such as saloon-car racer Gerry Marshall (pictured, with Hunt), who wins best title for a motorsport autobiography with *Only Here for the Beer*.

Then prefabricated drivers took over. Honed from a young age into sponsors' dreams, they looked great and said the right thing. Personality was hidden or was not there in the first place. Years of charisma-free characters followed – until 2016.

Last year was extraordinary, of course, even for F1. Ron gone, F1's private equity firm owner, CVC, on the way out and a new generation



Keystone Pictures USA / Alamy Stock Photo

“
*Prefabricated
drivers took over.
Honed from a
young age into
sponsors' dreams,
they looked great
and said the
right thing*
”

of drivers coming in. A changing of the guard. And amongst the tidal wave of disruption was a new trend: the drivers found their personalities. It was like school at the end of term. The previous head boy told the deputy head to 'eff off'; the current head boy was caught playing around with his phone in class, was continually told off for bullying the quiet one and ignored all threats of detention; the clean-living, cheeky one got drunk during class on his last day; and the quiet one who was always at the back of the lunch queue suddenly got all the attention and then told everyone he didn't care and was bunking off.

And the fans *loved* it. Coverage and opinions increased overnight, the latter completely divided over Hamilton's use of Snapchat and 'backing up' tactics and over Rosberg's retirement. For what it's worth, I would defend all three.

But why less robotic? It's always tough to establish cause and effect in such a complex environment, but from afar I see two related trends.

There is not just a changing of the guard amongst the drivers – some of the father figures of the sport have left, or their influence is waning. Bernie, Ron, Frank, Patrick, Ross and Luca are all imposing figures and no doubt influenced the mood and behaviour of not only their drivers but also the wider paddock.

And then there's the shift in attitude between the dour 'money men' at CVC and the upbeat 'content guys' at new F1 owner Liberty. It is night and day. Perhaps the drivers sense the need for F1 to be entertainment again and see the characters in NASCAR and other US sports as where the future is.

It looks like F1 drivers of the future will be less robot and more *Tallegada Nights*' Ricky Bobby.

Dakar Rally 2017

Carlos Sainz threads his Team Peugeot Total 3008 DKR through a dusty valley in Argentina during the third stage of this year's Dakar Rally. He's followed by Ibraheem Alrubaiyan, riding a KTM. The day after, Sainz crashed down a ravine, narrowly missing two spectators. Although he was able to finish the stage, he lost almost two hours to stage-winner Cyril Despres. The time loss was so significant that Sainz's chances of winning the 3000km rally raid were ruined and he retired.



WATCHES: MICROBRAND CHRONOGRAPHS



Straton Curve-Chrono

Price: \$499 (€£410) **From:** stratonwc.com

Crowdfunded into existence via Kickstarter, the Curve Chrono is Straton's homage to the lugless drivers' watches of the 1970s (think Omega Speedmaster Mark II, Heuer Montreal). It's powered by a thoroughly modern Seiko VK64 meca-quartz hybrid movement (half quartz, half mechanical) and, demonstrating the variety of choice that microbrands often offer, is available in five different colour schemes and two different case sizes (39.5 or 42mm), and comes complete with two additional straps of the buyer's choice from a range of seven. Phew.



Belmoto Track-Day

Price: \$500 (€£410) **From:** belmoto.gt

Belmoto is a young offshoot of New Zealand-based boutique watchmaker Magrette. Its bias is towards motoring-inspired pieces, and one of its first models is the Track-Day chronograph. It is also powered by the Seiko VK64 meca-quartz movement, and is offered with four different dial colour schemes that are complemented by cases in either bare stainless steel or with a black PVD or rose-gold finish. Said case measures 42mm, while other features include an anti-reflective crystal and a rotating inner bezel that's able to track a second time zone.



Autodromo Monoposto Chronograph

Price: \$1800 (€£1480) **From:** autodromo.com

The original Monoposto is now a sought-after piece second-hand, so it's no surprise to see the model return to Autodromo's line-up. This time it's a Chronograph (the original was a three-hander), but it's still clearly influenced by classic dashboard instruments – there's even a 'red line' marking on the crystal, just as you might find on the rev counter in a vintage race car. The case is 43mm in diameter and the movement a Seiko automatic, while three different colour schemes are available, spanning a total build run of just 500 units.



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TECH

Geometry lesson

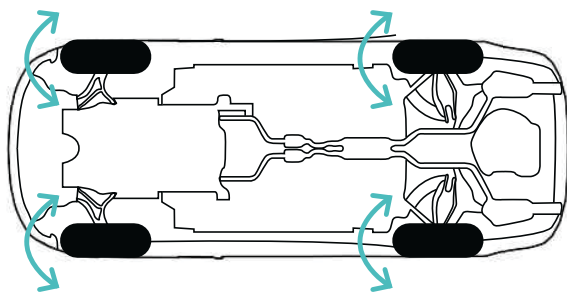
evo's simple guide to the whats and whys of altering your car's suspension geometry

THERE'S NO 'ONE SIZE FITS ALL' GUIDE TO ALTERING A car's suspension geometry. Every car reacts slightly differently to each change and different drivers will be looking to achieve different results. So what follows is a look at what's commonly adjustable and a basic idea of the results you might expect should you start experimenting with your car's geometry.

Manufacturers spend thousands of development hours and substantial amounts of money establishing the perfect angle for each wheel to optimise stability, tyre wear and performance. Diverting from these settings should be done incrementally and with consistency. Why do it at all, then? Because a manufacturer's geometry settings must accommodate the general needs of a very broad spread of its customer base, but as an individual *you* may be prepared to tolerate, say, poorer ride quality in exchange for superior body control, or regard a reduction in stability as a fair trade-off for sharper turn-in.

Adjusting a car's geometry is a long process; change one setting and another aspect will be affected and may need altering. But a setup that's been tailored to suit you can be well worth the effort.

TOE



Toe is the angle that the wheels point in relation to the car's direction of travel. Toe-in is when the front of the wheel is angled slightly inwards; toe-out is when the wheel is angled away from the car.

The front wheels' toe angles are adjustable; this is essential for setting the tracking so the car drives straight. Rear toe-angle adjustment is only commonplace on multi-link suspension setups and the range of adjustment is less.

Theoretically the ideal toe angle is zero, i.e. with the wheels pointing exactly in the direction of travel. This creates lower rolling resistance, reduces tyre wear and optimises efficiency. Yet most cars have a certain degree of front toe-in: front or rear, it aids straight-line stability.

Toe-out can make a car feel nervous, but this can be used to improve agility; on high performance front-wheel-drive models it also helps reduce understeer.

TYRE PRESSURES

The simplest change you can make. Although it won't solve any fundamental handling issues, nor increase grip, don't underestimate the effect tyre pressures can have on the balance of a car. By changing the pressures on each axle slightly, you can fine-tune a car to your style. Increasing pressure will, ever so slightly, reduce a tyre's grip. So putting two or three psi extra into the rear tyres will shift a car's balance towards oversteer. Doing the same at the front will reduce oversteer. Just be careful not to alter them dramatically – an incorrectly inflated tyre can deform, overheat and could puncture.

CAMBER

Camber refers to the angle a wheel sits away from pure vertical; zero camber is when the wheel is exactly perpendicular to the road. Positive camber is when the top of the wheel is angled away from the car and negative when the top angles towards it. Positive camber is never ideal, so we'll only discuss negative camber.

Negative camber maximises the amount of tread the outside tyres put onto the road in a corner. When cornering, the outside tyres deform, pushing the tread towards the centre of the car and the outer shoulder closer to the road. Negative camber pre-empt this by presenting the outside tyres at an angle that means their tread lies as flat as possible on the road surface during cornering.

Negative camber can increase wear on the inside edge of the tyre, compromise straight-line traction, and reduce acceleration and braking abilities, because it limits the tyre's



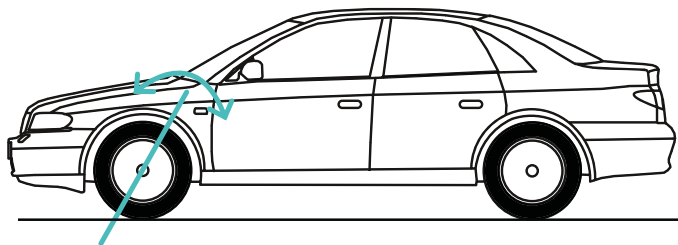
contact patch when the car isn't cornering. Advantageous purely during cornering, only a small amount of camber is of any real benefit.

MacPherson strut suspension, where the camber hardly changes during its full stroke of movement, responds well to a greater degree of negative camber. Double wishbone and multi-link setups offer more calculated amounts of negative camber as the suspension compresses, so often work just as well with less negative camber.





CASTER



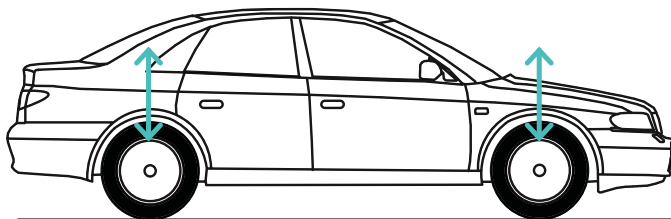
Caster generates the self-centring effect on the front wheels that ensures they automatically return to the straight-ahead position after steering, to the benefit of directional stability.

The caster angle is calculated by drawing an imaginary vertical line through the centre of the wheel, and bisecting it with the 'pivot line' – around which the steering turns – that runs through the centre of the wheel hub's upper ball joint to the centre of the lower joint. The angle between the

two lines is the caster angle. The pivot line's upper end leans rearwards, and the lower end hits the ground slightly ahead of the tyre's contact patch.

Caster creates negative camber on the outside wheel during steering, known as dynamic camber. As dynamic camber doesn't have a detrimental effect on straight-line traction, increasing positive caster isn't an issue, within reason – large amounts increase steering effort, so power-assisted steering will be needed.

RIDE HEIGHT



Altering the ride height lets you experiment with the car's weight distribution and centre of gravity – a subtle way of changing the handling balance. Lowering the front moves a small amount of weight towards the front of the car and lowers its centre of gravity in relation to the rear. This gives the front proportionally more grip than the rear. Lowering the rear axle has the opposite effect.

If you can, alter your car's ride height at each corner then, before you

start any other geometry adjustment, consider corner-weighting. The idea is that you adjust the height at each corner so that every wheel supports an equal amount of weight, making the car more predictable. It's rarely possible to equalise the weight on all four wheels, but matching the weight of the left side to the right – including the mass of the driver – is just as beneficial.

But be warned, adjusting the ride height will alter other settings such as camber and toe.

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1M » 411+ BHP
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F10 520D » 240 BHP
F10 530D » 305 BHP
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123D » 252 BHP

316D/216D/116D » 160 BHP
318D/218D/118D » 225 BHP
330D E90 » 296+ BHP
320D E90 » 215 BHP
420i/320i/220i/120i » 275+ BHP
435i/ F30 335i » 390 BHP
428i/328i » 295 BHP
535D / 335D / X5 SD » 355+ BHP
640D/335D/535D/435D » 390 BHP
730D » 305+ BHP
X5 4.0D / 740D » 370 BHP
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Renault's reality

I enjoyed last month's Renault Sport feature, and having been fortunate enough to have owned a Phase 2 Clio V6, a Mégane R26 and a Clio 200 Silverstone, I really do 'get' what Renault Sport delivers to the enthusiast driver.

The thing we do need to remember, though, is that the V6 and especially the R26.R were sales disasters. The R26.R was subject to a return across the water for 100-plus cars from the 250 originally allocated to the UK. (I missed out on one, available new for £18k, just before its French return.)

As enthusiasts we are the minority market, and models that please our very specific needs do not necessarily translate to sales successes and company profits.

That said, I do think they've missed a trick with the RS16...

Matt Riggall, Cleethorpes



RS4-ever

I was glad to see a B7 Audi RS4 in the magazine again ('£20k Heroes', *evo* 231). Might I make a couple of suggestions for anyone considering buying one?

The ride at low speeds is indeed firmer than when the car is up to speed, but some tyres exacerbate it. Goodyear Eagle F1s will smooth things off nicely whilst offering what feels like tailored grip in both wet and dry conditions.

I'd also recommend a DMS remap. This plumps up the mid-range torque while also giving a little more power and a slightly higher rev limit. There doesn't seem to be a penalty at the pumps, either.

Being honest, it isn't the most 'evo' car out there, but then I am not the most 'evo' driver. But as a genuine, everyday drive to tastefully fit all bills, I don't see anything else I'd prefer. Which may be why I've been driving mine for ten years.

Simon Bartlett



The A1 is A1

Yes, yes, yes! Finally someone has said it. Richard Porter, you are bang on the money about the A1 (Petrolhead, *evo* 230). I squeaked with delight as you reeled off those places that I always make a mental note of when doing the long slog 'oop north'. (Well the driving- and car-related bits anyway, not the 'specialist interest' stores, obviously... Cough.)

I don't know why anyone in their right mind would choose the monotony and mediocrity of the M1 when the A1 offers such delights. Sure, it's not the Stelvio or the Applecross pass, but the charms of the A1 remind me of a simpler, better time. Why would I want to sit in four lanes of traffic travelling exactly the same speed just south of Luton? Why would I want to negotiate the majority of Northamptonshire with the cruise control set to 50mph? No, the M1 is not for me.

Give me the A1 any day. Give me the cheesy American diners to stop at for a burger. Give me the art deco building, formerly occupied by a well-known roadside restaurant chain, now a Ducati dealership, in which to do a quick bit of window shopping. Give me the Tempsford approach chicane to the Black



LETTER OF THE MONTH

Carry on Clio

HAVING READ YOUR REPORTS ON HOW SUPERB THE CLIO RS16 could have been, and also been reminded how special so many of Renault Sport's past creations are (*evo* 231), I share the unanimous disappointment that the RS16 will not go into production.

I fully understand Renault's reasoning that funds and development time need to be concentrated on the forthcoming Alpine sportster, but I cannot help feel it has missed a massive opportunity to turn the hot hatch market on its head in a similar way that the Clio V6 did previously.

As an idea so we don't miss out, surely there must be an independent such as Prodrive who, with the sanction of Renault, could produce this little beast in small numbers – say 500 a year. The recipe and ingredients are already there, so it should not be beyond the bounds of a Prodrive to produce. Price it at around £35,000, then show me where to sign up.

Graham Colls, Worcestershire

The Letter of the Month wins an Aviator watch

The writer of this month's star letter receives an Aviator Airacobra Chrono. Inspired by the pilots' watches of the 1940s, it has a 45mm case, a Swiss-made quartz movement, and SuperLuminova indexes for outstanding legibility.





Cat. Give me the RAF bases and the roundabouts. Just watch out for that remodelled one at Biggleswade South because it's hugely off-camber...

Thom Bateman

Road rave

Paul Haynes' letter in **evo** 231 encourages us to seize the day and buy the types of car that may not be around forever. There is merit in this, of course. But your excellent feature in the same issue on driving a Ferrari F355 over the A939, and the fabulous photograph [above] of the ascent from Wells of Lecht to the ski centre, confirm that the thrill of driving is as much about the road as the car.

Roads like the A939 have been around a very long time and there is no reason to assume they won't be around for a very long time to come. You could drive that road in a Defender, an F-type, a Mini or a classic Ferrari. The experiences would be different, but they would always be thrilling.

I see you now have a BMW i8 at your disposal in Fast Fleet and you have several questions about it to answer over the coming months. Letting Adam Towler drive it over the A939 could reveal a lot about the core elements needed to create the thrill of driving in the future, and would also confirm if there really is electricity in the Highlands.

Paul Alexander

Adam Towler has suffered the same fate as many other car journalists, namely regurgitating incorrectly that the 348 was a stinker.

The 348 only became a 'stinker' when Luca di Montezemolo took over as the main man at Ferrari. Up until that point the 348 was received brilliantly. Once on board, Luca declared the 348 a failure and this then became the common language of all car journalists ever since. But as we know, senior managers, CEOs, etc have a habit of bad-mouthing previous performance so they can help the company move forwards...

I have had the pleasure of driving and owning four different 348s of various ages, and each one was an absolute joy. I would say that the 348 is a raw version of the F355. It even has the faster steering rack that Adam wished for in the F355.

Don't forget, the Dino was once a stinker, too...

James Hughes, Bristol

Poles apart

Darren Cox (The Racing Insider, **evo** 231) introduced us to an interesting possible future for motor racing in the form of Roborace. But while autonomous-vehicle races will offer a whole new set of challenges to marvel over, we must never, ever completely write-off racing with a human driver.

Robot competition could feel like watching somebody playing with toy racing tracks. Worse still, there could be no mistakes or accidents, just repetitive and predictable behaviour. Conversely, the moves of men covered in helmets and racing suits will never be easy and boring to guess. This is what makes this kind of sport so interesting for us to watch. In the end, we can relate to their wins and failures

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on the track, as we also gain and lose in everyday life.

Roboracing should therefore be introduced as a worthwhile addition to the racing world as we know it, but never as a full replacement.

And there's one more thing that needs to be considered: who gets the award on the podium at the end of the race? The robocar or its design team?
Jaroslaw Heczko

Irresponsible us

I don't care how good you are at driving, getting four wheels off the ground on a cold, wet and icy public road is irresponsible (BMW M2, issue 230 [pictured above]).

evo has a young, impressionable readership. There is no excuse for setting a bad example.

Steve Holley

The electric revolution

I have been a petrolhead since I was a small child. I've had some cool cars as an adult, including a few V8s, mainly because I love the sound of a good engine. But for my next car I am torn, because suddenly combustion engines feel so dated.

Why should I get something that belches noxious fumes and costs hundreds to run each week, when I might be able to have a car that has more useable torque, cruises in near silence and costs around \$10 a week to run? Electric cars just make too much sense to ignore now, and I have to admit I am excited by them.

In a few years what will be the point in a combustion engine? To make a nice noise for enthusiasts? Barely any new cars make a nice noise nowadays anyway...

Get ready for a massive change. I



predict **evo** Car of the Year 2026 will feature at least 50 per cent electric cars, maybe more. It's an exciting time to be 'a car guy'. (I would say 'a petrolhead', but that's a bit 2016.)

Mike Robbers, Wellington, New Zealand

The last (eCoty) word

I think everyone is just getting a bit hot-headed over your eCoty decision. Ultimately, a Car of the Year is just that. It should not be awarded to the car with the shortest waiting list or the cheapest price, it should be awarded to the best. If a 911 R is the best car of the year, then why should it not be handed the title?

Yes, it may be out of reach to 95 per cent of **evo** readers and impossible to get hold of even if you could afford one, but I don't think that is the point. We should all just appreciate the work and effort that goes into pulling the feature off, and perhaps it should act as an incentive to us all to work that bit harder, and maybe one day that 'unrealistic' **evo** Car of the Year may become a 'real world' car.

Ted Welford, North Yorkshire

eVoty

I very much enjoyed eCoty 2016 (**evo** 229). As the possibility of it competing was mentioned in the intro, it'd be great to see the judges' scores for photographer Dean Smith's Volkswagen Caddy van [pictured above], formerly of our fleet here at British Gas. Our fleet manager has recently bought an M2, which finished last at eCoty, so it might make him feel better if one of our old Caddys delivered 'the thrill of vanning'.

Pete Bell, fleet buyer, British Gas

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AC Schnitzer ACL2

Powered by a 562bhp version of the BMW M4's straight-six, is this one-off 2-series the equal of the M4 GTS?

Photography: Aston Parrott

A ALTHOUGH WE'VE RATED some variants of BMW's 2-series relatively highly, they still aren't perfect. The M235i and its M240i replacement lack focus and aggression, and while the M2 is more fun, its chassis often feels unhappy on UK roads and its engine is uninspiring, especially for an M-car. However, German tuner AC Schnitzer may have a solution with its ACL2. Based on an M235i, its body has been transformed with the addition of 70mm wider wheelarches, a front splitter, dive planes and an unabashedly huge wing. The result is a car that looks more 911 GT3 RS than M2. It even makes BMW's M4 GTS (see page 80) look a touch subdued.

The ACL2's aero and arches express an intent that is more than just skin deep. The original single-turbo 3-litre straight-six has been replaced by the twin-turbo version from the M3/M4. AC Schnitzer already offers a power upgrade for this engine to boost its output from 425bhp to 503bhp – some 10bhp more than BMW's M4 GTS boasts. With the help of a new downpipe and exhaust system it has raised this to 562bhp in the ACL2, with

torque soaring to 546lb ft, a 140lb ft increase over the standard M3/M4 engine tune. A top speed of over 200mph is claimed, with 0-62mph taking 3.9sec – just 0.1sec slower than the M4 GTS.

For it to cope with this performance, the ACL2 borrows the front and rear suspension, carbonfibre strut brace and optional carbon-ceramic brakes from the M3/M4. However, the limited-slip differential is a more conventional unit than the Active M Differential found in BMW's M-cars.

So far, so promising. However, despite the extent of AC Schnitzer's efforts, the ACL2 is just a one-off concept, designed simply to attract attention and demonstrate what the company is capable of. The car has an estimated value of €149,000, but you still can't buy one.

To keep weight down, the rear seats have been ditched (and not replaced with a roll-cage), while a lightweight battery, a carbonfibre bonnet and, most interestingly, a manual gearbox have been fitted. The result is a kerb weight of 1475kg, 20kg less than an M2. The manual 'box alone saves 25kg over the twin-clutch alternative, which is a



good reason to shun the DCT, but the performance these saved kilos might liberate isn't as intriguing as the influence the gearbox might have on the whole car. With very few manual M3s and M4s in the UK, and none available to us from BMW, the combination of its rabid twin-turbo six paired with a clutch and a gearstick has so far eluded us.

The interior has been subject to considerable modification, too, and the exterior's festive colour scheme continues inside. The heater control area and passenger airbag panel are both painted green, the latter topped with a large red ACL2 sticker. A pair of Recaro bucket seats have been trimmed with green leather centres then embroidered with a matching AC Schnitzer logo and red ACL2 script. There's also a set of brushed-metal pedals and a black anodised gearknob and handbrake lever straight from AC Schnitzer's accessories range, but one of the most obvious interior changes is the reprofiled steering wheel rim. I can't say I'm a fan of the way it looks – it's like something Sigourney Weaver

chopped off an alien – but it fits my hands perfectly when they hold it at the three and nine o'clock positions. Sadly it isn't as comfortable when you grab it elsewhere, which you do need to do on a regular basis – more on which later.

The manual gearlever is less contentious. The AC Schnitzer stick is a little taller than those in the M2 and lesser 2-series models, and that makes the throw just slightly longer, but the shift action is more defined and less rubbery.

Despite not having a DCT 'box, roll-cage or rough composite door cards, the ACL2 feels very much like a junior M4 GTS. The seats and seating position are remarkably similar to those in that car, as is the way the chassis manages to transmit terabytes of useful information through the seat.

Sadly, the ACL2 doesn't emit the same race car-style straight-six thunder that characterises the GTS, yet the exhaust fitted adds some volume and drama, especially when the engine reaches the top of its rev range. What the engine lacks in

'You find yourself needing to apply opposite lock more often and in greater amounts than you'd ordinarily think acceptable'

aural delight it more than makes up for in muscle; you can feel every one of its 562bhp. When traction is good the ACL2 instantly reacts to every minute movement of the throttle pedal, the engine promptly metering out the requested degree of thrust. When traction is limited, this linear power delivery ensures you have complete control of the rear tyres via measured use of the accelerator.

The manual gearbox adds to the car's relative obedience. The most frustrating thing about the M3 and M4, GTS included, is the abrupt fashion with which their DCT 'boxes make full-throttle upshifts. Even after you've dialled down the aggression of the gearchange, the DCT still bangs home the next gear with such unnecessary force that the rear tyres can't always cope with the spike of torque and traction is quickly broken. It makes you wary of changing gear, worried that it might not be the opportune moment and that you may have to deal with a large amount of unwanted oversteer. With a clutch you can control, the ACL2 is far more manageable than



Far left: a substantial surfeit of power over grip means this...

Left: M235i motor replaced with a tuned twin-turbo straight-six from the M3/M4 producing 562bhp.

Above: cabin trim apes exterior colours

even an M4 GTS, despite having 104lb ft more torque.

The ACL2 isn't equipped with the same super-sticky Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres that the M4 GTS uses. Instead it wears 285/25 R20 Michelin Super Sports, a tyre better suited to the cold, wet north German weather during our test. With equally wide tyres on the front as on the back, the ACL2 doesn't want for any more front-end grip and it changes direction with the same ferocious immediacy that it accelerates. It's extremely sensitive to every input: turn too keenly or accelerate with little sympathy for the rear tyres and the back end will lose grip instantly. This appetite for sliding means you find yourself needing to apply opposite lock more often, and in greater amounts, than you'd ordinarily think acceptable. And in doing so, you move your hands to parts of the steering wheel seemingly not designed for a human's grasp. This always-on-the-edge-of-sliding balance makes the ACL2 an incredibly agile car, but also

one that demands serious attention, sensitivity and respect.

The ACL2 equips you with everything you need for this, though. The short wheelbase, which could make things unmanageable, is countered by how accurate you can be with the throttle. The Drexler limited-slip diff also locks the rear wheels in a more gradual and natural way than the Active M Differential, allowing you to confidently use the throttle to help steer the car.

The engine, gearbox and diff make the huge power more approachable, and the communicative chassis helps you anticipate the ACL2's reactions. But despite the control you have, the car is still overwhelmed by its vast power. That makes it a real challenge to try taming, but as so many of its other attributes are a delight, they make the process of learning the ACL2 a pleasure.

If you missed out on a new M4 GTS, badger AC Schnitzer to build you one of these. ✕

Will Beaumont
(@WillBeaumont)

Specification

Engine	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight	Basic price
Straight-six, 2979cc, twin-turbo	562bhp @ 6100rpm	546lb ft @ 3500rpm	3.9sec (claimed)	205mph (claimed)	1475kg (388bhp/ton)	€149,000 (not for sale)

+ Deeply involving and exciting - You can't let your guard down; you can't buy one, either

evo rating ★★★★★





Toyota Tacoma TRD Pro

evo heads to Los Angeles to try something just a bit different

Photography: Aston Parrott

C HUCK YEAGER SAID THAT if you can walk away from a landing, it's a good one, and if you can still use the airplane the next day, it's an outstanding one.

My own landing – dropping two tons and 18 feet of pickup onto its skid-plate (see page 162) – certainly didn't feel outstanding, but given I both walked away from it and subsequently drove the vehicle in question for the next two weeks, I still, technically, met Chuck's criteria. A cursory look revealed a slight scuff on the quarter-inch-thick aluminium skid-plate but no further signs of misuse. An X5 would probably have set off its airbags and auto-dialled for emergency assistance.

I was already slightly smitten with the Toyota Tacoma TRD Pro even before testing the full extent of its

front suspension travel. In fact, I was quite taken by it as the valet pulled it out of the car park in Los Angeles. Tuned by Toyota Racing Development, at the front it's all pumped-up fenders and shark-style aggression, battleship-grey bodywork offset only by the black details of the snub-nosed grille. Then there are the purposeful 16-inch alloys and Goodyear Wrangler tyres, the squared-off wheelarches, the tinted windows and the matt-black 'hood scoop'. Amongst the hatchbacks and soft-roaders of the UK it would look gargantuan, vulgar, needlessly aggressive. In LA's near-perpetual sunlight and on roads suited to (and occupied by) vehicles of much grander scale, it looks almost lithe.

Climb up into the cabin and it's standard volume-Toyota fare: hard and

chunky black plastics, easy-to-read instruments, an ergonomic logic to the placement of controls, and a feeling it might last longer than you will. 'TRD Pro' additions include leather trim, of a quality and texture better suited to hosing down than dressing up.

It's even less sophisticated in the engine bay. Here you get a 3.5-litre naturally aspirated V6 developing 278bhp at the 6000rpm red line. The 265lb ft torque peak doesn't arrive until 4600rpm, which gives you an idea of the commitment required to make decent progress in this 2007kg truck with the aerodynamic properties of the garage it came out of.

The V6 has none of the feeling of studious refinement we're now used to from such units, and the six-speed auto (a manual is also available) slurs

between ratios like slushboxes of old. Controlled by modern electronics, it insists on changing up at the earliest opportunity and dropping the V6 well below its torque peak, making the TRD feel slow. But press the innocuous-looking 'ECT Power' button (that's ECT for 'electronically controlled transmission') and things improve, while higher revs transform the sports exhaust's ever-present drone to a satisfying trophy-truck bellow.

Dry-road handling is... well, hilarious. No messages whatsoever are transmitted through the low-geared steering and the 'all-terrain' labelling on the tyres clearly excludes asphalt. Nudging the transmission between second and third gears and with a better handle on the physics of such an object, I do enjoy a tyre-howling and

‘An X5 would probably have set off its airbags and auto-dialled for emergency assistance’



brake-cooking canyon road drive, but I spend much of the journey watching in my mirrors for quicker and nimbler opponents – an octogenarian in a Yaris, perhaps.

But the TRD Pro's main purpose in life is to excel on loose surfaces, and here its throwbacks to a simpler age are beneficial. Rear suspension is by semi-elliptical leaf springs(!), but those and the front coil springs are managed by 2.5-inch Fox internal-bypass dampers. The rear dampers have remote reservoirs, too, and the whole lot suspends the ladder frame

9.4 inches from the ground, so the going has to be pretty rough before it makes contact with terra firma.

The TRD is rear-driven for the most part but can be locked in AWD for tougher tasks, with low-range and a virtual LSD operable through controls in the cabin. The stability control can be turned off, but at higher speeds it turns back on, so the hang-it-out experience only goes so far.

As the tyres dig through sandy or rocky surfaces you get a better impression of what the front wheels are doing, and while the lazy engine

and transmission make the TRD feel slow on paved roads, you spend more time with your right foot buried when off-road, so there's enough power to ascend rocky slopes. Or get airborne...

The Tacoma TRD Pro is not a traditional **evo** car, but it does embody the thrill of driving better than many cars I've driven recently. You can't fail to develop a fondness for something so single-minded, and its ability in the rough stuff is every bit as impressive (and fun) as a Clubsport S Golf's talent for demolishing a B-road. ☒

Antony Ingram (@evoAntony)

Above left: aluminium skid-plate exhibiting barely a scratch after Ingram's antics. **Above:** huge wheel travel at the front axle courtesy of Fox internal-bypass dampers

Specification

Engine	Power	Torque	0-60mph	Top speed	Weight	Basic price
V6, 3456cc	278bhp @ 6000rpm	265lb ft @ 4600rpm	8.0sec (est)	113mph (limited)	2007kg (141bhp/ton)	\$40,760

➤ Looks, ability, indomitability and fun factor off the beaten track ➤ Never lets you forget it's a pickup truck on the road

evo rating ★★★★★



Alpine Adventure

Fri 16 - Tue 20 June, 2017

£2500 per car (2 people)



The Alpine Adventure is a 1500 mile, 5 day driving event that travels to Lake Lucerne, the San Bernardino Pass, the Julier Pass, St Moritz, the Umbrail Pass, the Stelvio Pass, the Bormio Pass, Lake Como, Monaco, the Col de Turini and the Route Napoleon, along the way staying in only the finest luxury hotels and chateau mansions. All cars are welcome.



California Run

Sat 16 - Sat 23 Sept, 2017

£6000 per car (2 people)



The California Run is a 1500 mile, 1 week driving event starting in Los Angeles, travelling to Las Vegas, Death Valley, Mount Whitney, the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the Yosemite National Park, San Francisco then finally down the Pacific Coast Highway back to Los Angeles. All participants get a 2017 Ford Mustang cabriolet for the week and are flown in to and out of Los Angeles.



Western Cape Safari

Sat 02 - Sat 09 Dec, 2017

£6000 per car (2 people)



The Western Cape Safari is a 1000 mile, 1 week driving event that travels along the Western Cape province of South Africa, starting at Cape Town, travelling to Cape Agulhas, Knysna, the Aquila Safari Park and back to Cape Town. All participants get a 2017 Jeep Wrangler cabriolet for the week and are flown in to and out of Cape Town.

Please visit our new website www.circuit-days.co.uk
for more information and to book.

Porsche Panamera 4S Diesel

A V8 diesel should be the perfect partner for Porsche's distance-devouring four-door. Emphasis on 'should'...



SINCE THE FIRST examples of Porsche's first four-door coupe were delivered in 2009, it has been clear that a torque-rich, blown V8 diesel would suit the car well. Such an engine would give the Panamera the perfect blend of range and performance, further enhancing its ability to cover monster miles in one sitting. Now that engine is here.

For its new Panamera 4S Diesel, Porsche has plucked the same 4-litre V8 from the VW Group's engine shelf as Audi uses for its SQ7 SUV. Although it foregoes the electric turbochargers of the Audi, it does feature 'hot-vee' turbos between the two banks of four cylinders. The resulting 416bhp peak power (2bhp more than a 996 Turbo) arrives at 3500rpm and hangs around through to 5000rpm, with the 627lb ft slab of torque waiting for you from 1000rpm through to 3250rpm. There's also a new eight-speed double-clutch gearbox driving all four wheels through Porsche's electronically controlled multi-plate-clutch four-wheel-drive system. There won't, however, be a rear-wheel-drive variant with this engine for now.

While the 4S Diesel comes equipped with conventional steel

springs and active dampers as standard, until autumn 2017 you can only order it with the optional £1541 air-suspension as per our test car, which is also fitted with £1478's worth of rear-axle steering and speed-sensitive power steering.

The original Panamera came in for a mixed response, primarily because it had looks only a mother could love and for some Porsche aficionados it wasn't a 928 replacement. It was, however, a mighty fine way to travel four-up at speed and not be disappointed when the autobahn stopped and the straight bits between the apexes got shorter. An M5 was sharper and more focused, but the Panamera was more rounded.

This new model is more resolved visually. The rear in particular is more bloated 911 (in a good way) than featureless saloon, while inside it's a design revolution. Out goes the Casio calculator-style button-fest, in comes an Apple-like touch-sensitive glass screen and enough tech and infotainment equipment to fill a PC World warehouse – Porsche has finally arrived in the 21st century when it comes to connectivity.

Further good news is that the Panamera still has a sports car feel

'The only letdown is the element I expected so much from: the engine'

to the driving position: low-slung, cockpit wrapped around you, steering wheel pulled tight to your chest, legs out straight. And it still flows down the road with a mix of grace and agility that a five-metre-long, 2050kg saloon has no right to exhibit, the rear-axle steering instantly making its presence felt on your first committed drive. The Panamera 4S Diesel is as intuitive to position in a corner, as quick to react to your inputs and as direct in its responses as many of Porsche's traditional sports cars.

The only letdown is the element I expected so much from: the engine. It's got plenty of power, a mountain of torque and the eight-speed PDK 'box is nicely matched, but unless you select Sport mode to sharpen



the throttle response and enliven the V8, it feels flat, unresponsive and no more potent than the old V6 diesel. Perhaps our test car needed more miles on it (it had covered fewer than 2000), but where I expected a surging shove and instant response there was a pause, a consideration and only a mildly stronger push in the direction you were heading.

It feels as though the car's potential is being handicapped by its three driving modes. A tweak to make the engine's Sport setting the norm would solve this issue, but shouldn't a Porsche feel sporty by default? Until it does, we'll stick with petrol-powered Panameras. ✕

Stuart Gallagher
(@stuartg917)

Specification

Engine	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight	Basic price
V8, 3956cc, twin-turbo	416bhp @ 3500-5000rpm	627lb ft @ 1000-3250rpm	4.3sec (claimed)	177mph (claimed)	2050kg (206bhp/ton)	£91,788

➤ Improved looks, sharp chassis, impressive tech ➤ Performance doesn't meet expectations

evo rating ★★★★★

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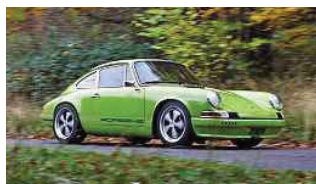


pace ward

RPM Technik Porsche 911

Backdated and updated, this 964-based narrow-bodied 911 is one man's vision made real – and it's a cracking drive

Photography: Gus Gregory



THE RESURGENCE OF restomodding, in particular of old 911s, has largely been driven by Singer Vehicle Design. The extraordinary creations from Rob Dickinson's crew in California have transformed the perception of what many would once have considered a grubby hobby.

The appeal of Singer's cars for many is the steroidal machismo imbued in the shape. They have a pumped-up look reflecting pumped-up performance. But what if you like the skinny-hipped appearance of an early 911 but desire the performance of a modern car? This conundrum, says Nick Fitch, informed his vision for the car he had custom-created for him, and which you see here.

'I'm lucky enough to have had a few 964s, and have always loved the narrow body and compactness of the shape,' explains Nick. 'It's something that you don't see anymore with 911s.'

This, combined with a fastidious attention to detail born from a career in jewellery design, all fed into 911 NJ. There are numerous visual modifications, but the truly exquisite, bespoke areas are the carbonfibre front and rear bumpers and roof panel, the heated front and rear windows



and the custom rear grille. A 911 2.7 RS bonnet and wings, louvred plastic rear side windows and Lume Technik LED headlights complete the look.

Nick's vision was built by the Special Projects team at RPM Technik in Hertfordshire. RPM's Ollie Preston reveals that 'Nick gave us free rein on technical solutions providing we stayed within budget.' A 964 was chosen as the base for Nick's car because, says Ollie, the platform is a great fusion of old and new but retains a very analogue driving experience.

You take a step backwards when Nick's car fires up, shocked by the engine's feral, mechanical anger. The motor is based around a 964 block, thoroughly overhauled and fitted with a lightened and balanced GT3 crankshaft, a 964 RS clutch and flywheel, plus custom-made conrods,

'Despite the machine-gun noises there's an appealing civility'

RSR-style headers and centre-exit twin tailpipes.

Impressive, if traditional, mods, right? Well, this 964 also has fly-by-wire throttle control and a ten-stage mapping system. You can dial up anything from 250bhp to a mighty 395bhp, with traction control and ABS assistance adjustable in stages, right down to fully off.

The cabin decor is expertly crafted, from the swathes of sweet-smelling aniline leather to the Alcantara headlining and the beautiful leather door-pulls. Details reveal themselves subtly, but then you can't stop looking at them – the minimalistic dash face is a particular delight.

But none of this is worth anything unless the car drives well. Nick is tremendously generous with the keys and lets me spend a day on greasy

roads exploring the car. I've driven a few fast 911s, but Nick's is rampant. Surprisingly, it contains the pace extremely well – the variable traction control is particularly effective and allows you to graduate from one performance level to the next.

From a handling perspective, there's no real pitch or roll, no sudden weighting-up from the non-assisted steering – a common problem with poorly set up and lowered 911s. Underneath, there is a hybrid set of parts that conspires to keep the car in check, including 993 RS uprights, GT2 Evo track-control arms and custom Öhlins suspension.

The grip-to-power ratio is pretty much spot-on, and you never feel as if the car is on a knife-edge. Despite the extrovert looks and machine-gun noises from the exhaust, there's an appealing civility about Nick's car. In short, it's a mesmerising machine.

And one with a tale to tell. Nearing the end of the build on a shakedown drive, disaster struck when Nick crashed the car. It was badly damaged – enough to warrant a full respray – so the paint was changed from Ivory to Chartreuse Green, a colour Nick thinks better reflects the car's character... ❧

Nick Trott

Specification

Engine	Power	Torque	0-60mph	Top speed	Weight	Price as tested
Flat-six, 3800cc	395bhp @ 7600rpm	295lb ft @ 5800rpm	4.5sec (estimated)	160mph (estimated)	1120kg (359bhp/ton)	£240,000

+ Beautifully engineered, exceptionally fast and capable - This kind of bespoke quality comes at a high price

evo rating ★★★★★

Mini JCW Clubman

Some John Cooper Works models live up to the badge. This isn't one of them



HERE'S AN INTRIGUING prospect: a Mini estate, in terms of brand if not size, with a 228bhp, 258lb ft 2-litre turbocharged engine hooked up to four-wheel drive and, in the case of this test car, an eight-speed automatic transmission. This could be the answer to a question nobody has ever asked...

The latest JCW Clubman boasts useful increases on the 189bhp and 206lb ft of the Cooper S Clubman by running new pistons that lower the compression ratio, enabling more boost from a modified turbocharger. The rest of the mechanical package has been upgraded to suit: there's a larger intercooler and a second cooling radiator, the suspension is firmer, there are Brembo brakes with four-pot calipers on the front, and fitted as standard is Mini's All4 all-wheel drive, an 'on demand' setup featuring an electro-hydraulically operated clutch. It's essentially front-wheel drive unless slip is detected.

First impressions of the JCW Clubman are positive. Styling is always subjective, but in spite of some rather gauche details, its hunkered down form over 18-inch rims does at least stand out on

'How can a car with a claimed 0-62mph of 6.3sec feel so uneventful?'

the road as something different. Clamber in and the all-black cabin is snug, almost claustrophobic, the window-lines high and the view out the front in typical letterbox style. It's a busy sort of cabin, full of plastic-chrome embellishment and elaborate switchgear, but again, it's certainly unmistakable, and the steering wheel adjusts right out for a decent driving position. Glance in the mirror and restricting rear vision is that thick central vertical bar created by the point where twin rear doors meet.

The overwhelming initial thought during the first few miles is, 'Just where have a sizeable proportion of those JCW horses trotted off to?' Rarely has a small car of this power felt so toothless, whether it's in the initial response to the throttle, hauling through the mid-range or revving at



the top end. Actually, you seldom bother with the top end as the engine feels like a spent force by the time it reaches 5000rpm. This languor is partly attributable to the car's weight, which stands at 1490kg in automatic guise (15kg less as a manual). But even then, it's a puzzle as to why a car with a claimed 0-62mph time of 6.3sec and a top speed of nearly 150mph can feel so uneventful.

Perhaps the manual 'box is a better fit, because while we've become accustomed to ZF's eight-speeder usually doing no wrong, even in Sport configuration here it feels ponderous during quick driving; it hates an upshift close to the red line and likes to remind you on downchanges that it – and only it – will decide when it's appropriate to engage the next gear.

Much of this would be tolerable

were the JCW Clubman an enthralling drive. It feels as though by trying to make a car with a longer wheelbase drive like a more traditional Mini, the steering has been artificially compromised. Turn one or two degrees and not a lot happens, but add a degree or two more and the nose darts towards the apex, often requiring an easing back of the wheel to avoid over-turning. It's very hard to be smooth as corners get divided into several bites, and this rapidly becomes irritating. The Sport setting adds artificial but reassuring weight to the steering over the standard 'Mid' setting, but the reluctance to self-centre remains.

Deploying the 258lb ft through all four wheels certainly quells torque-steer, and it gives the Clubman fine traction out of tight turns. But it's not terribly exciting. The Clubman is far happier being driven in a more relaxed fashion, the gearbox left in auto and with just the occasional squirt of torque to row you along – not the stuff of John Cooper Works legend.

All said and done, the JCW Clubman is a tough sell, particularly when there are good deals to be had on the excellent Golf R Estate. ❌

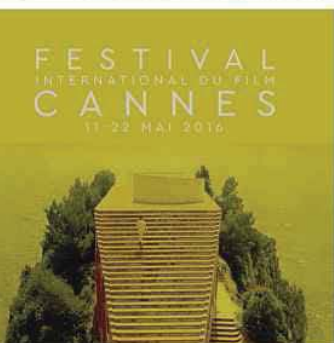
Adam Towler (@AdamTowler)

Specification

Engine	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight	Basic price
In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc, turbocharged	228bhp @ 5000-6000rpm	258lb ft @ 1450-4500rpm	6.3sec (claimed)	148mph (claimed)	1475kg (157bhp/ton)	£29,345

➕ Better looking than the standard Clubman ➖ A disappointing lack of urge and finesse

evo rating ★★★★★



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Coming soon: The home of Ferrari and backdrop to James Bond in Goldfinger - **Alpine Adventure** with pasta and famous wines of Modena.

Outside Line

RICHARD MEADEN



These days if you're searching for performance bargains you need to think big, reckons Meaden. 'Big' as in saloons and coupes, V8s and V12s

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN WE BOUGHT CARS safe in the knowledge that they would lose money. It was just a fact of life. Still is with the bread-and-butter stuff. But with money in the bank earning zero interest, in-demand cars have become assets and commodities. Much like buying your first house, this is all well and good if you're on the ladder, but if you've missed the boat, it sucks.

Fortunately salvation is at hand, but only if you're prepared to look where depreciation remains at its most savage. I'm referring, of course, to the particular joy and wonder of the used luxury supersaloon or coupe. Not *evo's* heartland admittedly, but the thrill you're chasing here is the gleeful satisfaction of getting lottery-win metal for lottery-ticket money, and, most likely, a car powered by a potent, big-capacity, multi-cylinder engine that laughs in the face of downsizing.

Given the potentially ruinous cost of fixing a stinker, it's a chase not without risk. Yet there's surely no better sport than trawling the online classifieds for one of these big beasts. Considering their makers intended them to be exclusive, high-end machines for luxury-loving plutocrats, the price of membership to this once-elitist club can be unbelievably low. Like £5k low if you're brave, prepared to stray from the obvious choices and have a bit of a fixation with VW Phaetons, as I do. You won't find a unicorn W12 for that money, but the V10 diesel is a cool consolation prize.

Of course, as with any budget-restricted activity, it's always tempting to take a peek at what you can get for a bit more money. Fortunately, with this game the stakes remain rooted in the real world. For example, £10k will potentially see you in a host of heavyweights, from old six- and eight-cylinder supercharged Jag XJRs, to the odd immaculate 750i Beemer and maybe even an 850i if you fancy one of BMW's '90s land sharks.

Creep to £15k and things get interesting. Audi's S8 has always been a sleeper. Never more than when it featured a version of Lamborghini's 5.2-litre V10. No, it's not a Gallardo, but it goes like stink, sounds like a muted noughties F1 car and is built with Audi's beady-eyed attention to detail. How much? The cheapest, but by no means scruffy and neglected examples, sit at a little under £14,000. That's half the price of a Golf R for an all-wheel-drive,

450bhp saloon built around a bespoke aluminium structure with genuine exotica in its DNA.

For similar cash you can get your hands on a good Maserati Quattroporte with full history. Or a tech-laden all-wheel-drive Lexus LS600h petrol-electric hybrid. A bit leftfield and worthy? How about a gas-guzzling S55 AMG? Or if that's too limo-like, the same money will buy you a CLS55 or E55, which are also propelled by Affalterbach's sledgehammer supercharged 500bhp V8.

Raise your stakes to £20k or thereabouts and you might as well be a millionaire, such is the ridiculous array of machines within your grasp. Had I not seen them with my own eyes I'd never have believed you could find Bentley Arnage Red Labels for this money, but they're there if you look for them. Big, beautiful,

under-stressed and over-engineered, these magnificent brutes feature Bentley's legendary turbocharged 6.75-litre V8 and offer a truly magical driving experience.

For some, however, only the very best will do. I once met a man who exclusively bought V12-engined cars. He was an ordinary bloke indulging extraordinary tastes by happily sinking his hard-earned cash into a succession of bargain-priced flagship Mercs and BMWs. Saloons or coupes, he wasn't bothered. Just as long as he was sitting behind a dozen purring cylinders he was sated. And who could blame

him, when for the price of a new tin-can hatchback he was enjoying the charms of a BMW 850i or 600 SEL.

Sadly, opportunities to own truly cheap V12s are getting slimmer by the year, but at the time of writing there are still some horribly tempting cars out there. Albeit at the upper end of the aforementioned budgets. Still, if you're going to go big, you might as well go really big, which is why I'm a little itchy at having found a 2004 CL65 AMG lurking in the classifieds.

Yes, a smidge under £25k is a chunk of change for a 13-year-old, 100,000-mile Benz, but from first-hand experience I know this spaceship of a coupe is the absolute daddy. I mean, tell me where else you could buy an apparently immaculate car with 604bhp, 738lb ft of torque and that's one of just a handful in the UK for that kind of money? Apart from the four-door S65 I've just found with half the miles for £19k. If 2017 doesn't see me smoking around in something vast (and fast) it'll be a bloody miracle. x

'It's the gleeful satisfaction of getting lottery-win metal for lottery-ticket money'

**“LIFE SHOULD NOT BE A JOURNEY TO THE GRAVE WITH THE
INTENTION OF ARRIVING SAFELY IN A PRETTY AND WELL
PRESERVED BODY, BUT RATHER TO SKID IN BROADSIDE IN A
CLOUD OF SMOKE, THOROUGHLY USED UP, TOTALLY WORN
OUT, AND LOUDLY PROCLAIMING...**

Petrolhead

RICHARD PORTER



Volkswagen is still making Sciroccos, reveals Porter, but no one's buying them. He thinks he knows where they're going, though – down to a watery grave

DO YOU REMEMBER THE VOLKSWAGEN Scirocco? The most recent one? Described by this very magazine as 'rounded', it was a Mk5 Golf in a slightly lower body and was perfectly pleasant in a sensible, not especially sporty way. If you hankered after a GTI with a bit less headroom, this was your car, and it seemed like quite the thing when it was announced back in 2008.

But there's something shocking you probably don't know about the Scirocco: it's still on sale today. If you were so inclined, you could walk into a Volkswagen dealer tomorrow and demand a brand new one. But of course, no one does. Why would they when the top version costs more than a Golf R but uses old-generation tech and looks no better?

Coupes are basically the kids' TV presenters of the car world, only in demand for as long as they can seem shiny and youthful. And the poor old Scirocco, never the best looker and about to enter its ninth year, really is past its best. For this reason, no one is buying it. They can't be. I mean, when did you last see one on a current plate, or indeed at all?

Yet down in Portugal there's still a factory turning out brand new Sciroccos by the transporter load. Since 2008 it has made around 260,000 of them, in line with a production target of 28,000 cars a year. And that figure is still current because you can't simply pause a modern factory or even slow it down for fear that all the companies making your seats, airbags, windscreens and so on will call you out for renegeing on hard-fought supply deals. So Volkswagen has to keep knocking out Sciroccos for as long as it deigns to keep this forgotten model on its books.

This problem is manageable if you're saddled with a factory making some wretched, Vectra-esque four-door fun-vacuum, because you've got a shot at unloading your surplus production onto hire fleets or large corporations looking to punish their lower-ranking reps. But no one carries a huge compound of Sciroccos for hire and they don't get given to that despondent chap in the Welcome Break café who didn't hit his targets again last month. Which raises a very big question. The factory is still turning out thousands of Sciroccos, no one's buying them, no one's taking up

the slack with a discounted fleet deal. So where are they going?

I mentioned this curious puzzle to James May, my *Grand Tour* colleague and sometime pedantic letter writer (*evo* 230). 'Well, it's perfectly simple,' he replied. 'They're throwing them in the sea.'

'Are you sure about this?' I asked, not unreasonably. 'Think about it,' May continued, earnestly removing his reading glasses in the manner of the only chap who has realised the dinosaurs will escape. 'Global car production is over-capacity. What can they do with them? I've seen those massive car transporting ships at the docks. They load thousands of brand new cars onto them and off they sail. They say they're delivering them to other countries. But

what if they're not? What if they're waiting until they're far enough from land that no one can see and then pushing them overboard?'

May made a compelling point. The factories are still running. The cars are still on the price lists. They can't delete these models because that would mean sacking factory staff and unpicking expensive supply contracts. They can't offload them to punters at massive discounts because that would undermine the company image, knacker resale and piss off dealers. What other solution do they have but *plop, plop, splash*, and problem solved. That's what they have to be doing with the Scirocco. And, for that matter, the Subaru BRZ. Down they go, into the deep, landing softly on piles of Hyundai Velosters and Peugeot RCZs.

Obviously the car companies can't admit to this. For one thing, environmentalists would be furious if they realised ocean levels are rising because the sea is full of Volkswagen Sciroccos. And it would do nothing for morale at the factory amongst all those people who tighten bolts, polish paintwork and assemble cars with pride, little guessing that their handiwork will be admired by nothing more than a school of deepwater dab. But I'm convinced this can be the only answer to the aching problem of unloved coupes, not least because James May suggested it and he's clever like that.

I apologise if this revelation comes as shock. You probably didn't even realise the Scirocco was still 'on sale'. But it is and every year it receives thousands of orders. Unfortunately, however, they're all from Davy Jones. ☒

'What if they're waiting until they're far enough from land that no one can see and then pushing them overboard?'

'WOW! WHAT A RIDE!'

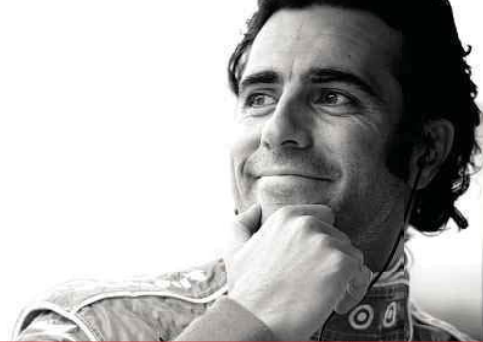
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DARIO FRANCHITTI



Dario's gearing up for what he hopes will be a fascinating year of motorsport, and he urges you to do the same

BIG CHANGES ARE AFOOT IN THE WORLD OF top-level motorsport. Formula 1 is without its world champion and is experiencing its most severe regulations upheaval in years. The World Endurance Championship, meanwhile, has lost Audi, the most successful team of the modern era, while Ferrari and Ford's rivalry has been reignited after half a century. Last year's accusations of deceit by Ford will overflow into the new season, too. Sounds tasty!

Let's start with F1 hardware. Wider, massively more robust tyres and a lot more downforce are going to have such a dramatic effect on the pace of the cars that McLaren says certain corners will be reclassified as straights. Most teams reckon we'll see an improvement of four seconds per lap on last year's cars, and they were no slouches. I pity the driver who hasn't hit the gym, because if what we're led to believe is true, 2017 will be more about going flat-out than conserving fragile Pirelli compounds. The physicality of these beasts, which promise much higher G loads, might catch a few of the guys out.

I'm also happy to hear a greater proportion of the aero will be generated by the underside of the body. This means the cars should be less susceptible to the effects of turbulent, 'dirty' air flowing off the car in front. In the past this has made overtaking savagely difficult, and there's nothing more frustrating than being quicker than the car in front but unable to close the gap. Every time you nudge to within two car lengths of a competitor it's like your front tyres have hit ice: you have to brake earlier, slow corner speeds to get the front to turn, and delay getting back to the throttle, and all the while the car in front is getting away. Wider and swept back, the new wings will look great. In fact, the cars should look epic in general.

It all kicks off in Melbourne on March 26 – the same weekend as the WEC's pre-season test at Monza. Endurance racing proper starts three weeks later with the 6 Hours of Silverstone, and for the first time in 19 years a prototype entry from Audi will be absent. The team's withdrawal – put down to the Volkswagen Group's current tribulations with diesel – is a massive blow given the calibre of racing that Audi, Porsche and Toyota gave us last year (those who witnessed the battle at Fuji will remember it forever).


'The WEC gave us some unreal racing last year, with victories decided by tenths of seconds'

It's a tense moment in the sport's history because if the board members of Porsche or Toyota decide they've had enough, and with the stomach-turning cost of entry deterring other manufacturers that might be interested in competing, then LMP1 is over, isn't it? Don't underestimate the significance of that: for many, myself included, these are the best racing cars on the planet right now.

At least the GT category is thriving. The crocodile tears of Porsche boss Frank Walliser on the weekend the returning Ford GTs 'sandbagged' their way to victory at Le Mans last year (*everybody* sandbags) added a bit of spice to proceedings, and there's always plenty of politicking for fans to try to stay abreast of. But the cars themselves, with their distinct characters, remain a fantastic spectacle. With Astons, Ferrari 488s, rumbling Corvette

Z06s and the Fords, at times the grid isn't far removed from an *evo* Car of the Year line-up. Admittedly, Porsche has muddied the waters a little with its new mid-engined 911 RSR, and allowing Porsche to build a racer not directly homologated from the road car is inviting the same situation we had in the late-'90s, when GT cars became thinly disguised prototypes (think CLK GTR and Porsche GT1). Amazing as those cars were, they ruined the series. Still, the RSR, with its enormous, new-for-a-911 downforce-generating venturi tunnels and an extruded underbody, is going to be one to watch.

Indeed, if you've never done so before, I implore you to do a little digging about the various cars and teams and try to follow the season from the get-go. Don't get confused or disillusioned by the often farcical Balance of Performance rules – they're a necessary evil in keeping cars with very different layouts competitive with one another. And if we were rid of them we'd end up with a grid of prototypes bearing no relationship to the cars the manufacturers sell, so bye-bye racing budget. In any case, the GT categories of the WEC gave us some simply unreal racing last year, with victories decided by seconds – *tenths* of seconds, even – after hours and hours of driving. It's worth investing your time, I promise.

As for F1, come Melbourne, wherever I am and whatever time it is, I'll be awake and watching in the *hope* that we're going to see the order shaken up and, finally, some consistently close racing. 

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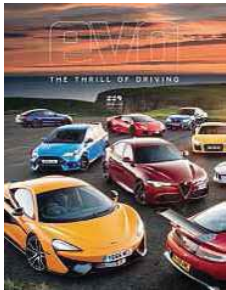
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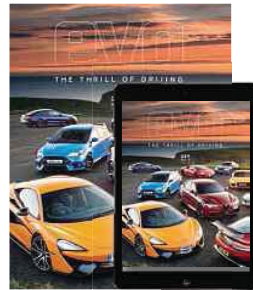
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Fast, capable, glamorous. Not words you'd instinctively associate with Kia, but that's about to change. evo travels to South Korea to meet the world-class designers and engineers behind the new Stinger GT four-door coupe, and to get behind its wheel

HIGHLY

by DAN PROSSER



STUNG





TEN YEARS FROM NOW YOU WILL have a very different opinion of Kia. That's what the execs in their suits and designers with their natty cravats tell me. Looking back, our perception of the company has already changed. Enormously, in fact,

because Kia is no longer a bargain brand but a challenger.

And soon enough it'll be an aspirational brand. That's what they say. In time, buying a Kia won't merely be a rational decision, but an emotional one, and the day will come when you and I will see a new Kia on the street and it'll make our hearts beat a little faster. That's what they tell me.

I wonder what sequence of events would have to unfold for that to be true of the typical *evo* reader. Significant ones, I imagine. But if Kia's objective seems unlikely, or just unrealistic, know that this march towards the aspirational isn't meaningless corporate fluff dreamt up by an over-lit, under-oxygenated marketing department in a battery-farm office. It's a determination that radiates through the entire company. Everybody at Kia takes it very seriously indeed.

You can see the scale of this ambition in the renowned designers and engineers Kia has poached in recent years, and in its new high-performance test facility, complete with a Nürburgring-lite handling circuit. It's also why I'm in Korea – to learn about and drive Kia's new gran turismo.

A great deal rests upon its shoulders. Called the Stinger GT, it's a rear-driven four-door 'coupe' with a twin-turbo V6 and a limited-slip diff. It'll arrive in the UK in September priced at around £43,000. There will be an AWD version (perhaps not for the UK), and a less powerful four-cylinder Stinger with watered-down styling will go on sale early in 2018.

It's no coincidence *evo* was the only UK title invited to Korea to drive an early development prototype. Kia hopes that you, as an *evo* reader, will want to own a Stinger GT.

Left: hints of the Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio, perhaps? That's no bad thing, of course, and it's the sort of desirability Kia is aiming for with this, the new Stinger GT



DESIGN

FRENCHMAN GREGORY GUILLAUME AND HIS TEAM designed the Stinger GT at Kia's European design centre in Frankfurt, overseen by Hyundai-Kia design director Peter Schreyer. Both former Audi men, Guillaume (pictured left) and Schreyer (right) are two of Kia's star signings.

'Our inspiration was the GT concept we showed in 2011,' says Guillaume. 'All of our concept cars have a purpose. They are not just designers' indulgences.' The overall likeness between road car and concept car is fairly strong, with the basic shape and proportions left intact. Certain design elements, such as the 'tiger-nose' grille – a Kia family motif – and the upswept window line have survived, although some of the more outlandish touches have been cast aside.

Guillaume's presentation includes mood boards and woolly phrases such as 'feeling inspired and wanting to inspire'. There is some substance, though, and over a slide that depicts a 911 Carrera RSR, a Miura and a Ferrari 250 SWB, he says, 'The Kia design team is truly passionate about cars. I suspect some of you might not have expected that.' There's a certain self-awareness about Kia, a humility in acknowledging other car companies and an understanding of the scale of the task at hand. Passionate about cars? Both Guillaume and Schreyer own Jaguar E-types.

'I was born in France in the '60s,' continues Guillaume, 'and in the early '70s there was this thing about driving from Paris to the south of France on the *autoroute du soleil* at high speed, to go for a weekend on the Côte d'Azur. I was keen on drawing inspiration from the iconic '70s GT cars. The original Maserati Ghibli is what I had in mind when we started the project – to find a modern interpretation, but as a four-door.'

'The moment you have a front-engined, rear-wheel-drive layout you get completely different proportions. Key to the Stinger GT's poise are the thrusting bonnet, short front overhang, the long distance between the front axle and the dashboard, the extended wheelbase and the long rear overhang, complete with broad shoulders. It's all about stance. The low roofline, cab-backward architecture and fastback silhouette are enhanced by the chrome accent line that runs from the A-pillar to the base of the rear screen. When you look from the side you don't notice the coke-bottle waist, but from the rear you see the car has proper hips.'

'All the aerodynamic features – the front air curtain, wheelarch gills, smooth underbody tray and integrated rear diffuser – are functional adornments, and they play a key role in ensuring high-speed stability.'

'The Stinger GT is a true *gran turismo*, a car for spirited long-distance driving. It's not about outright power and hard-edged dynamics at the expense of luxury, comfort and grace. It's all about the journey.'

ENGINEERING

THE HYUNDAI-KIA NAMYANG DESIGN CENTRE, 25 MILES south of Seoul, is a sprawling R&D facility, part gritty and industrial, part ultra-chic. We drive past a huge car park stuffed full of competitor cars, and in among the sea of monochromatic Passats and Mondeos I spot a BMW M4, a Lotus Evora and even a Porsche Cayman R.

Another of Kia's big-money transfers is Albert Biermann, the former head of BMW's M division. The affable German has the air of a man who is happy in his work, one who feels at home. At 6ft 4in tall and always decorated with a smile, he bounds around the presentation room at Namyang talking frankly and enthusiastically about the Stinger GT.

'The brief was to make a sporty car,' says Biermann, 'but it still needed to have good long-distance comfort. It could not be a harsh car. We make a big effort on isolation on all our cars, but the GT follows a different philosophy. It's more about precision, response and feedback, better wheel and chassis control. It's nicely balanced and precise, but still the isolation levels are high. That is what makes it an excellent car.'

The Stinger GT uses an adapted version of the Hyundai Genesis platform and the group's existing 3.3-litre twin-turbo petrol V6, modified extensively for improved response and sharper delivery. It develops 365bhp and 376lb ft of torque. The only transmission option is an eight-speed automatic, which Biermann claims offers better shift times than the ubiquitous ZF eight-speed 'box that the likes of BMW, Audi and Bentley fit throughout their ranges.

Kia quotes a 0-62mph time of 5.1 seconds, which comfortably makes this the fastest accelerating Kia to date, but in an age of sub-five-second hot hatches it's brisk rather than electrifying. At more than 1900kg the GT is quite a lump, partly because it's bigger in every dimension than its nearest rivals, BMW's 4-series Gran Coupe and Audi's A5 Sportback.

The MacPherson front suspension is all-new compared with the Genesis's and the multi-link rear end has been reworked, too, while additional bracing improves the stiffness of the steel body by two per cent at the front and 14 per cent at the rear. In a first for Kia, the Stinger GT uses adaptive dampers, while the Drive Mode Select system enables the driver to choose between five modes – Eco, Comfort, Sport, Smart (which adapts to your driving style) and Individual – that adjust all the usual parameters including steering assistance, damping, throttle response, gearshift strategy and ESC intervention.

The steering is an electronically assisted rack-type system, which is said to give better precision and response than a column-mounted setup, while braking is by high-spec Brembos. The standard-fit tyres are 19-inch Michelin Pilot Sport 4s. The Nürburgring was used for both durability testing and chassis tuning, and Biermann says he and his team will soon travel to our shores for UK-specific chassis tuning.

'A limited-slip differential is standard and, for those who like the drift sensation, the ESC can be switched off fully,' says Biermann. 'So you can have some drifting fun in a Kia. It's time you got used to this!'





THE OWNER

‘THE STINGER GT IS ONE OF OUR EFFORTS TO DELIVER what Kia stands for,’ says Spencer Cho, general manager of the overseas product marketing team. ‘We’re trying to be defined as the young and sporty brand.’ With that in mind, I wonder, why did Kia arrive at a four-door GT rather than a true sports car, perhaps a rival to the Boxster?

‘We believe that the four-door, four-seater model has much more potential from the market standpoint. Probably a two-door, two-seater looks much nicer, but in reality there are very small numbers of people who will actually buy that.’ It’s about volume, then. The Stinger isn’t just tasked with turning Kia’s image around, it must be a profit-making model line in its own right.

Cho won’t be drawn on other forthcoming models, but he does say the company is working on a number of cars in sectors Kia hasn’t explored before. Nothing should be ruled out for now and given that Kia’s revenues ran to \$43bn in 2015, nothing need be ruled out, either.

The Stinger GT is forecast to cost around £43,000 in the UK, which for many buyers will be quite a stretch for a car that wears the humble Kia badge, for so long a symbol of affordability and functionality – pragmatism, in other words.

‘This is not an easy task, we know,’ says Cho. ‘For this car we will deliver one of the best design languages we have ever had and a lot

‘WHY DID KIA ARRIVE AT A FOUR- DOOR GT RATHER THAN A TRUE A SPORTS CAR?’

of high-tech features and functions will be added. We know we have certain barriers of the brand to tackle.

‘People may not need this car, but people should love this car and want to have it regardless of how many cars they have in their garage. We have to deliver one of our best products as well as we can.’

Who, exactly, are these people?

‘Frankly speaking, I don’t think we can get people who have owned German premium vehicles into Kia easily,’ says Cho. ‘Of course we will get some, but probably we will get the mainstream buyers. We are trying to get more of the premium buyers, but we are not that naïve [to think it will be easy]. It will take time, but we will get there.’



Above: GT's cabin ergonomics seem reasonably sorted, but materials quality isn't up to German standards yet. **Right:** development car wears camouflage to disguise it from prying eyes





BEHIND THE WHEEL

ALLOWING A SELECT GROUP OF JOURNALISTS TO DRIVE such an important new car before it's even been revealed to the wider automotive press and the public is a bold move, but it also speaks of a certain confidence. That said, we each have less time behind the wheel than it would take to boil a small egg, but in those three minutes there is a thing or two to be learned.

The cabin feels spacious, with a good, low-slung driving position and plenty of room in the rear even for taller adults, while the high transmission tunnel helps to set a more sporting tone than in existing Kias. The dashboard layout is quite attractive, but the quality of the materials in this development car isn't yet up to German standards.

The first driving impression I scrawl in my notebook is that it's an easy car to drift – a long wheelbase, lots of power and a mechanical LSD will have that effect. Even in the firmer damper mode there is a fair amount of body roll, albeit a well-controlled sort of roll rather than the sloppy, wayward kind. That's a clear indication that this is a GT car rather than a true high-performance car.

The steering is crisp and direct, though, and what it lacks in absolute feel it makes up for in rate of response, which is very well matched to cornering grip and that pronounced body roll. Basically, it's easier to place the car into a corner than its size and weight might suggest.

There's decent grip with gentle understeer at the limit and good braking performance. The engine feels impressively strong and responsive, but it's done its best work by 6000rpm. The soundtrack is a bit flat for now and although the gearbox works well enough, I wouldn't endorse Biermann's claim about it being quicker shifting than the ZF unit just yet.

The very briefest of test drives, then, but all rather encouraging nonetheless. Should the Germans be worried? We'll find out for certain when we drive the production Stinger GT later in the year. ☒

'IT'S EASIER TO PLACE THE CAR INTO A CORNER THAN ITS SIZE MIGHT SUGGEST'



AMG has in the past failed to create a genuine 911 GT3 rival, but the new GT R should give all its rivals cause for concern

THE RIGHT STUFF

by RICHARD MEADEN





A

AMG builds some immensely likeable products. Of this there is no doubt. Master of the art of endowing entirely practical machines with larger-than-life characters, indecently potent engines and tyre-slaying performance, nobody does fast saloons and estates with more conviction or aplomb. Meticulous Germanic engineering with a wild shot of exuberance, AMG is your mate who drops a Jägerbomb in his pint of pilsner.

This maverick streak stems from AMG's origins as a tuner and racer. Much has changed in the last 50 years – the range now stretches to more than 30 models, and the Affalterbach factory is as far from a small tuning outpost as you can get – but you can see from the glint in boss Tobias Moers' eye that AMG hasn't forgotten its success lies in putting smiles on customers' faces. And black lines on the tarmac.

The GT was a new challenge for AMG. A truly dedicated sports car aimed squarely at the Porsche 911 and its numerous rivals, it was the moment AMG came of age. Yet it failed to hit the spot. Not through any lack of performance, but because it didn't muster the finely wrought cohesion and consistency that sets the very best apart in this hotly contested sector. Unfinished business, then.

All of which piles the pressure on the new AMG GT R. Tasked with raising Affalterbach's game to fight the 911 GT3, the new GT R promises great things. More power, more effective aerodynamics, less weight and a chassis honed for serious track work. It should be – has to be – the most complete, compelling and capable car AMG has ever made.

This is a very tall order. Not least because historically even AMG's extreme Black Series models have largely fallen short of delivering a convincing performance as road and track cars. The exception to this is the frankly magnificent SLS Black, which is a truly epic trackday weapon and a hard-as-nails yet surprisingly exploitable road car. But that was a limited-run unicorn, not a series-production model. If the R can capture that magic it will deliver on the GT's broken promises and give AMG the no-excuses halo car it craves.

As you'd expect, the heart of the GT R is AMG's stonking 4-litre biturbo V8. As befits the R's role as performance flagship, AMG has breathed on the motor to increase peak power to 577bhp (up 74bhp on the GT S), together with 516lb ft of torque (up 37lb ft) from just 1900rpm right through to 5500rpm.

To achieve this, the turbo internals have been modified, engine mapping revised and boost pressure increased from 1.2bar to 1.35. AMG's engineers have also altered the





Left: rear wing is larger and doesn't disappear into the bodywork; its angle can be adjusted manually.
Right: resculpted nose features larger side vents for increased cooling for the drivetrain



compression ratio, refined the exhaust port design, changed the way the boost pressure builds and fitted a new dual-mass flywheel that's 0.7kg lighter than that fitted to the GT S – all with the aim of sharpening throttle response.

The transmission is the familiar seven-speed dual-clutch paddleshift 'box fitted to the rest of the GT range, albeit with a taller first gear, shorter sixth gear and a lowered final-drive ratio for increased in-gear urgency. Top speed is 198mph (up 5mph) and 0-62mph takes just 3.6sec (0.2sec quicker).

As you'd hope from a car aimed at committed road and track use, the GT R is all about detail, with painstaking attention paid to the chassis, aerodynamics, weight reduction and structural rigidity. Beneath the skin are many trick lightweight components. Carbonfibre is used for the propshaft and torque tube and magnesium for part of the front structure. The battery is lithium-ion. The GT R is aimed squarely at drivers, but the meticulous nature of its construction shows that it's also an engineers' car.

The most obvious changes are to the bodywork. In carbonfibre and aluminium respectively, the wings have been stretched by 46mm at the front and 57mm at the rear to cover the GT R's wider track. The nose gains a distinctive new grille featuring vertical fins just like the GT3 version's, while the rear end wears an adjustable, full-width wing. In addition, active aerodynamics automatically lower a section of the underbody beneath the engine bay by 40mm at 50mph in Race mode, or 75mph in Comfort, Sport and Sport+, to create a venturi effect. This reduces front-axle lift by 40kg at 155mph and also feeds the large double diffuser at the rear. In total the aero package generates 155kg more downforce at maximum speed than the regular AMG GT.

The suspension features adaptive coilover dampers, which can be run in Comfort, Sport and Sport+ settings. Uniball spherical bearings are used to locate the lower rear wishbones for more precise control. There's also a thicker tubular rear anti-roll bar.

Big news is the R's active rear-wheel-steer system – a first for AMG. Up to 60mph the rear wheels turn in the opposite



'In total the aero package generates 155kg more downforce at maximum speed than the regular AMG GT'






Top left: gargantuan ceramic discs and calipers; race-style knob for nine-stage traction control.
Below: bellowing 577bhp twin-turbo 4-litre V8



direction to the fronts, increasing agility by effectively shortening the car's wheelbase. Above 60mph they turn in the same direction as the fronts to increase stability.

Also new is a nine-way traction control system. It's accessible once you disable the regular three-stage ESP and controlled via a yellow rotary switch on the dashboard. It looks incongruous until you appreciate it's very similar to that found in the GT3 race car... This being an AMG model, you can also work your way through the usual suite of driving modes to tailor engine response, damping and transmission characteristics via the Comfort, Sport, Sport+, Race and Individual modes. And, of course, there's a switchable exhaust mode to bring the thunder on-demand via the R's striking triple-exit system, which features a large central tailpipe flanked by a pair of smaller outlets hidden in the diffusers.

Other highlights include the (optional) lightweight forged aluminium wheels and ceramic-composite braking system. Featuring 402mm front and 360mm rear discs, the brake setup offers longer service life, greater resistance to fade and a significant 15kg saving in unsprung weight.



In its role as AMG's 911 GT3 you'd expect the R to look the part, but crucially it feels it, too. The manually adjustable seats grip you tight and place you low, but you still get a great view down the bonnet. As with all AMGs, the engine starts with a boom, pulses at idle and roars with every prod of the throttle. It's a loud and extrovert machine.

Our first taste of the GT R is on the challenging Portimão racetrack – quite an introduction to a 577bhp, near-200mph coupe, yet one that proves it is a car to be enjoyed rather than feared. With Race mode selected and the ESP active but in its most relaxed setting, you can work the throttle hard with confidence. The R is bullet-fast out of the corners and down the straights, aided by a DCT transmission that delivers clean upshifts and snappy downshifts, each complete with a fusillade of bangs and crackles through the exhaust.

But it's the grip, traction and balance that are truly impressive. Steering weight is moderate – a little lighter than expected – but you have a genuine sense of connection with the car's front end. It finds terrific bite, but never feels over-responsive, so you can really lean on it. And as there's absolute unity between the front and rear ends – something the GT S struggles to deliver – you can do so without fear of the tail failing to cope with the rate of response.

The R resists understeer brilliantly in tighter corners, just pushing as you chase the throttle, but then neutralising as you power from apex to exit. The ESP just nibbles away if you really push things, but it's not too intrusive. The GT R is equally adept through medium- and high-speed corners, with exceptional grip matched by steadfast stability in direction changes and awkward braking areas where you also need to steer the car.

Subsequent lapping sessions with ESP and traction control fully disabled reveal even greater ability. We'd hoped for echoes of the SLS Black Series, and aren't disappointed. Experience says AMG products always tend to struggle to deploy all their performance when given the opportunity to do so on track. The GT R is different. Very different. It finds so much grip on the way into a corner and so much drive on the way out, you really can enjoy working it to and beyond its limits, as you would a 911 GT3. When it eventually slides, it breaks away progressively (despite the considerable speed and lateral forces it's generating) and can be held at modest angles that are hugely satisfying while still maintaining your

'It finds so much grip on the way into a corner and so much drive on the way out, you really can enjoy working it to and beyond its limits, as you would a 911 GT3'





Mercedes-AMG GT R

Engine V8, 3982cc, twin-turbo
CO2 259g/km
Power 577bhp @ 6250rpm
Torque 516lb ft @ 1900-5500rpm
Transmission Seven-speed dual-clutch, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip differential
Front suspension Double wishbones, coilovers, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar
Rear suspension Double wishbones, coilovers, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar
Brakes Ventilated carbon-ceramic discs (option), 402mm front, 360mm rear
Wheels 10 x 19in front, 12 x 20in rear
Tyres 275/30 ZR19 front, 325/30 ZR20 rear
Weight 1555kg
Power-to-weight 377bhp/ton
0-62mph 3.6sec (claimed)
Top speed 198mph (claimed)
Basic price £143,245
On sale Now

evo rating: ★★★★★

‘It’s the car we’ve always wanted AMG to build, and in all likelihood the car its rivals have secretly hoped it wouldn’t’

Above: extensive and sophisticated aero package includes an ‘active’ flap beneath the engine bay that lowers at speed to create a venturi effect under the car

corner speed. Where other AMGs feel like blunt instruments on track, the GT R is a precision tool.

Understandably, given its domination of last year’s N24 endurance race, AMG has something of an obsession with the Nürburgring. The GT R spent much of its time in development at the famous circuit, pounding round for lap after lap. Even the retina-rattling launch colour is called AMG Green Hell Magno. It’s motor-industry law that you can’t drop the Ring into conversation without discussing lap times, so it’s a surprise when the press conference steers clear of quoted times. Later, almost in passing, Moers mentions that Germany’s *Sport Auto* magazine punted the GT R round in 7:10.9. That’s a second and a bit quicker than the Dodge Viper ACR, almost 4sec ahead of the Lexus LFA Nürburgring Edition and more than 24sec quicker than a regular AMG GT S. It’s also 15sec quicker than the SLS Black...

Out on the road the GT R feels truly hardcore. That’s as you’d hope, but it’s very firm, even in Comfort mode. On the plus side that means it’s sharp as a flick-knife, cutting a clean line through corners and revelling in rapid direction changes, yet thanks to the rear-steer it always feels controlled. There’s greater feel and connection, too, so tapping into this dynamism and agility doesn’t feel like a leap of faith. It’s fun and blisteringly fast, but doesn’t rely on pure speed to deliver a memorable driving experience.

It copes well with compressions, but has a tendency to skip across sharp bumps and crests, especially when you’re accelerating hard. Hit the wrong combination of road imperfections and it can feel a bit like a skimming stone. Not crashing from bump to bump, but just struggling for rear-wheel travel. You feel it and hear it in the slight rise and fall in the engine note as the rear tyres momentarily fight for traction. On the smoothest sections of fresh Portuguese tarmac, Sport mode is good and delivers tight body control, but on the whole Comfort is plenty stiff enough. The R could struggle for ultimate composure on crumbling British roads, but we’ll have to wait until the spring to find out.

What’s clear is that the GT R is far better equipped to deploy its power and unleash its performance on the road. Crucially, you feel more inclined to do so because you’re much more connected to the car. It’s an intuitive, instinctive machine to drive hard; one that communicates how much grip and traction is available. Few cars have more heart, or the ability to bring more heat when the opportunity arises. And there’s further good news: the GT R has inspired a series of upgrades and enhancements across the GT line-up.

With a starting price of £143,245 (closer to £160k when you add worthwhile options such as the composite brakes and forged wheels), the GT R enters an incredibly competitive sector that’s brimming with sensational cars. Its most obvious rival is the Porsche 991 GT3, the latest version of which is due to be revealed in March. It will no doubt be very hard to beat, but being a 911 it’s not for everyone.

Yet similar money also buys anything from an Audi R8 V10 Plus to an Aston Martin V12 Vantage S. And then there’s McLaren’s compelling 570S, which has really shaken things up. This first taste of the GT R suggests AMG’s new flagship is every bit as desirable as any of them. It punches as hard and delivers abundant thrills in its own distinct way. It’s the car we’ve always wanted AMG to build, and in all likelihood the car its rivals have secretly hoped it wouldn’t. The mother of all road-and-track shoot-outs beckons. Place your bets. ❏



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*It may be heading towards its tenth year
of production, but the R35 GT-R has no
intention of slowing down any time soon, as
this latest Nismo version demonstrates*

GROWING OLD



NISSAN GT-R NISMO



DISGRACEFULLY

by DAN PROSSER

PHOTOGRAPHY by GUS GREGORY



YOU WOULD NEED a wind tunnel and a pretty good understanding of aerodynamics to tell the difference, or at the very least a few pots of flow-viz paint and an awful lot of free time. One of the big technical improvements on this new Nissan GT-R Nismo compared with the previous version is the cleaner, less turbulent airflow around the rear of the car. And as much as I'd love to report that you can really feel the benefit of the improved airflow as the rev-counter needle buries itself into the red in fourth gear like a murderous mosquito's proboscis plunging into the back of your neck or whatever, I'm afraid I can't, because to claim such would be utter bollocks. You could drive this Nismo to Ulaanbaatar and back and never notice the improvement.

There have been some other changes. The front splitter, for instance, now has a sort of wave in it, rather than being mostly flat, which apparently makes it look more like the GT3

racing car. The dampers have been fine-tuned a bit, too, but the springs are unchanged. And that's it. Nissan will charge you £150,000 (for one), thank you very much.

Of course, the real difference between this Nismo and the one that came before is that it's based on the 2017 GT-R, which was the most significant model-year upgrade to the R35 GT-R since the car was first launched almost a decade ago. That means it gets the new-look front bumper and the much-improved dashboard, now trimmed in lovely Alcantara.

So this new GT-R Nismo has had a bit of a nip and a tuck and maybe a new haircut, but it's fundamentally the same as the previous version. Which is to say it's a furious, rabid, uncompromising, hard as nails, stiff as hell, weapons-grade monster of a car. Compared with the base model GT-R, which is now more accommodating and useable than ever, the Nismo gets much more focused Bilstein dampers with springs that are around twice as stiff, more downforce, a little less weight and a pair of tasty carbonfibre-backed Recaros. It

'THE NEW NISMO IS A FURIOUS, RABID, HARD AS NAILS, STIFF AS HELL, WEAPONS-GRADE MONSTER OF A CAR'







‘THE WHOLE CAR IS SO TAUT AND AGILE, FIZZING AND DARTING

also gets 20-inch forged Rays alloys and IHI turbos, shared with the GT3 car, which help lift power by 30bhp to 592bhp (the same peak output as the previous Nismo GT-R).

‘I wouldn’t say we’ve made a huge number of changes for this iteration,’ says Bob Laishley, programme director for Nismo. ‘We’ve made lots of small refinements, which is what we’ve always done with the GT-R. The big step forwards is the update to the interior.’

If that seems a little mean, the sales figures suggest the market isn’t being put off the new car. The sample size is rather small, though. In the two years the previous Nismo was on sale just 24 were bought in the UK, which makes it twice as rare as the McLaren P1. Sales of the new car have already passed that number, but when I suggest to Laishley that 50 Nismos might come to the UK in 2017 he says that figure is far too high. Global production will be capped at 400 units per year, which means the GT-R Nismo will always be a unicorn car. That, reckons Laishley, justifies the steep asking price.

It’s a wintry December morning when I arrive at Silverstone, and although it hasn’t

been raining today, the Grand Prix circuit is slick with moisture. And lots of rubber, and some oil, and perhaps even a bit of olive oil by the feel of it. There are outdoor ice rinks that would serve up more friction between surface and tyre right now. The track is so slippery that if I were an automotive engineer I’d say it was ‘low mu’, but because I’m a normal person I’ll go with ‘bloody slippery’.

The Alcantara dash looks fantastic and the Recaro seats clamp you in place rather well, but with a helmet on I’m a little short on headroom. Anyone much over six-foot might struggle. What follows is 30 minutes of me slithering around Silverstone like a furious eel on a greasy kitchen worktop, learning not a great deal about the Nissan GT-R Nismo.

It isn’t all for nothing, though, and regardless of how little grip there is out here it’s pretty obvious the Nismo has tremendous throttle response, at least once the crankshaft has started to spin above 2500rpm. It also has a ferocious top end, which is all too rare in modern turbo engines. The steering is brilliant, too, the constant stream of feedback painting a really

clear picture of how little grip there is through Copse. So many modern electrically assisted steering systems fail to give you an intuitive, confidence-inspiring sense of connection with the front axle, but the Nismo’s hydraulic rack does it beautifully.

The whole car is so taut and agile, fizzing and darting this way and that like a lightweight track car. It’s monumentally quick in a straight line, too, pulling with an urgency and an intensity that feels shocking every single time you stand on the throttle pedal. Whip-crack upshifts barely interrupt the forward surge.

There’s scarcely any body roll even in the softest damper mode, which isn’t really helping today but in better conditions would no doubt make the Nismo feel like a racing car. In fact, the ultra-stiff chassis setup makes for a brilliantly capable and exciting trackday tool, and with so much power on tap it’s also spectacularly quick around a dry lap.

I won’t get to drive the Nismo on the road on this occasion (Nissan allowed us to shoot the car in the Lake District, but not drive it – go figure), but given this latest version feels as stiff



THIS WAY AND THAT LIKE A LIGHTWEIGHT TRACK CAR'



Top: cabin ambience has improved, but it still doesn't feel £150k's worth. **Right:** each Nismo engine bears the name of the craftsman who hand assembled it





Top: our man Prosser at the wheel at a slippery Silverstone. **Above right:** unlike the regular GT-R, the Nismo's front bumper is made in carbonfibre

as the last one, there's no reason to expect it will behave any differently. Back in **evo** 199, we found the old car hunted out cambers and skipped its way along less-than-perfect tarmac thanks to its minimal wheel travel. Chances are, then, that this new one will also be completely untied by a bumpy road, but freakishly capable on a smooth one.

Back on the flowing, wide expanses of Silverstone, the GT-R Nismo is enormous fun – when you can persuade the front tyres to bite through the grease on the way into a corner. The key is patience, a painfully slow entry speed and lots of trail braking, which gets the nose into the apex and allows you to stand on the power really early. There's so much oversteer dialled into the four-wheel-drive system that you can exit every corner on half a turn of corrective lock, which is rather good fun. With the stability control in its 'R' mode you have enough freedom to

slither out of bends with your foot flat to the boards, but if the car reaches too great an angle the electronic safety nets cut in quite abruptly, which means most slides end in a clumsy and graceless crash into an invisible barrier.

We're under strict instructions not to disable the stability control fully today, but left to your own skill and judgement the Nismo would be a proper hoot around a slippery Formula 1 track, because you'd open the throttle fully at every apex, sending the car into a huge drift as you keep the throttle pinned, gradually unwinding the steering lock when the four-wheel-drive system eventually decides to sort out your mess.

The snappily branded Dunlop SportMaxx GT 600 DSST CTT tyres just aren't switching on today, but by hunting out the wet line it is at least possible to tease a little bit of lateral grip out of them. The wet line works best in the two fourth-gear right-handers at Copse and Abbey, where you turn in late and hang wide of the apex. It

feels so wrong being that far off-line, but the grip levels speak for themselves. The tight right-hander at Luffield insists on an unorthodox line, too, because if you try to get in to the apex the front end will wash wide with the whole car juddering violently as though you're driving over an enormous draining board. But if you stick to the middle of the circuit the tyres will find pretty good purchase.

Cars like the GT-R Nismo are special. Being built in such low numbers they're not bound by the usual road-testing criteria. Unburdened by the need to appeal to a wide customer base, Nismo has been able to do whatever the hell it wants, so if it rides too hard for you or you think the asking price is extortionate, it just doesn't matter because somebody else, somewhere in the world will absolutely love it. Nissan can't build enough of these cars to satisfy the demand, even at £150,000. In every objective sense that is way too much money for a Nissan



Nissan GT-R Nismo

Engine V6, 3799cc, twin-turbo **CO2** 275g/km **Power** 592bhp @ 6800rpm **Torque** 481lb ft @ 3600-5600rpm
Transmission Six-speed dual-clutch, four-wheel drive, limited-slip diff **Front suspension** Double wishbones, aluminium upper links, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar **Rear suspension** Multi-link, aluminium upper links, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar **Brakes** Ventilated discs, 390mm front, 380mm rear **Wheels** 9.5 x 20in front, 10.5 x 20in rear **Tyres** 255/40 R20 front, 285/35 R20 rear **Weight** 1725kg **Power-to-weight** 349bhp/ton **0-62mph** 2.7sec (claimed)
Top speed 196mph (claimed) **Basic price** £149,995 **On sale** Now

evo rating: ★★★★★

GT-R, but given that they'd still all be snapped up at £200,000, perhaps it's also too little.

As rare as the GT-R Nismo may be, though, it isn't the rarest of the breed. That honour falls to the GT-R Nismo N-Attack, the tricked-up version that set a ludicrous Nürburgring lap time of 7min 8.679secs back in 2013 with Mr GT-R, Michael Krumm, at the wheel. Nissan claimed a production-car lap record off the back of that, which seemed somewhat disingenuous as the N-Attack then simply fell off the radar. Nissan stopped shouting about it and the motoring press never got near one. The impression was that Nissan bolted a load of expensive go-faster bits onto a GT-R Nismo and deceitfully called it a production car.

So what happened to the N-Attack? 'We did sell it,' says Laishley. 'There are two here in the UK, one Kit A and one Kit B.' Ah yes, Kit A and Kit B. So to clarify, there's the Nissan GT-R, then there's the GT-R Nismo, the GT-R Nismo

***'IF IT RIDES TOO
HARD FOR YOU
OR YOU THINK
THE PRICE IS
EXTORTIONATE,
IT DOESN'T
MATTER BECAUSE
SOMEBODY ELSE
WILL LOVE IT'***

N-Attack, the Nissan GT-R Nismo N-Attack Kit A and... You get the point.

The N-Attack was even lighter than the Nismo and had more downforce, and although it didn't officially have any more power it did get very trick Öhlins suspension, which was actually more supple than the Nismo's Bilstein setup in order to deal with the Nürburgring's countless bumps. Kit A was the full English, doing away with the back seats and swapping the aluminium rear bulkhead with a lighter carbonfibre item.

Nismo isn't planning a new N-Attack, although Laishley says there's no technical reason the pack can't be fitted to the 2017 GT-R Nismo. As I slip and slide around Silverstone's treacherous bends, battling with acres of understeer and wrestling sudden stabs of oversteer, I can't help but think that more downforce and a softer chassis setup might be precisely what I need. ☒

40

YEARS *of*
WILLIAMS



Spectacular innovation is the norm for racing outfit Williams, and as it turns 40, evo charts the cars and the people that have made it a motorsport legend

by ANTONY INGRAM



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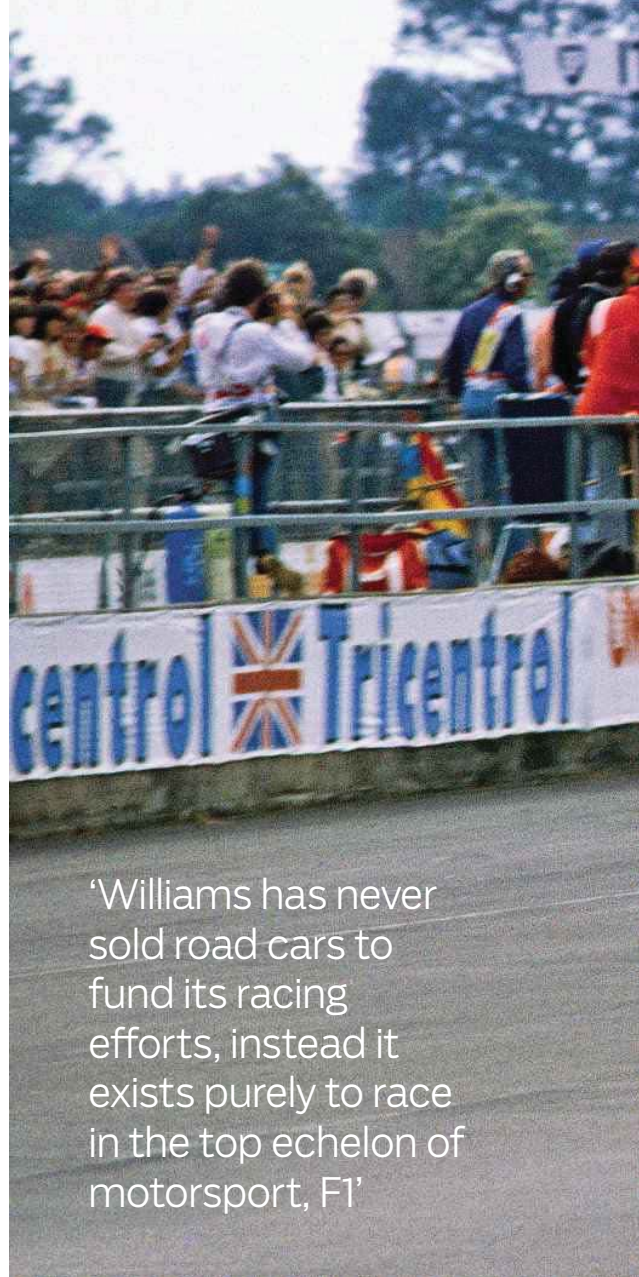
WILLIAMS GRAND PRIX ENGINEERING

celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2017. Established by Frank Williams in 1977 from the bones of Wolf-Williams Racing (itself formerly Frank Williams Racing Cars), it has defied its independent status by becoming one of the most successful Formula 1 teams of all time. It sits third, in fact, behind Ferrari and McLaren, but unlike either of those teams, Williams has never sold road cars to fund its racing efforts, instead – as the team itself puts it – it exists purely to race in the top echelon of motorsport, F1.

The team has taken nine constructors' titles and seven drivers' championships, and boasts a personnel roster that has included some of F1's biggest names. Drivers such as Alan Jones, Keke Rosberg, Nigel Mansell, Alain Prost and Ayrton Senna have all raced for the Wantage-based team, and that impressive roll call is only likely to increase as the team now works hard to regain its competitive streak.

Williams has enjoyed plenty of success outside Formula 1, too, tackling everything from Group B rally monsters to Le Mans-winning prototypes, achieving considerable success in touring cars, and working with the newly reformed Jaguar Racing to engineer one branch of motorsport's future: Formula E cars. With further arms in aerospace, defence, the energy sector and automotive engineering under the Williams Advanced Engineering banner, the company's contribution outside F1 can almost match its presence within the racing world.

Therefore, over the following pages we take a look at a handful of key people and moments from the team and company's first four decades.



ADRIAN NEWEY

EMPLOYED BY WILLIAMS BETWEEN 1991 AND 1996, F1 engineer Newey (pictured left, with Frank Williams) has a career in the sport as illustrious as any driver's. In recent years he's become known for his contribution to Red Bull and Sebastian Vettel's dominance, and prior to that he helped Mika Häkkinen score titles in 1998 and 1999, along with a constructors' win for McLaren in '98. But perhaps his best work was with Williams – in 1991 his then-new FW14 scored multiple victories in the hands of Nigel Mansell and Riccardo Patrese, and in 1992 the revised FW14B, one of the most advanced Grand Prix cars ever, dominated, with Mansell taking nine victories and Williams ten wins from 16 rounds. Prost then won in 1993, Damon Hill came close in 1994, and after a difficult '95, the Patrick Head and Newey-designed FW18 was again dominant: between them, Hill and Jacques Villeneuve won 12 of the season's 16 races.



1979 REGAZZONI VICTORY

FROM ITS DEBUT IN 1977, WILLIAMS WAS ALMOST immediately on the pace. The season itself was a learning year with Patrick Nève, but the hiring for the '78 season of Australian Alan Jones – who would subsequently take the title with Williams in 1980 – quickly brought points and podiums. Yet it was Swiss star Clay Regazzoni who gave Williams its first victory, at the 1979 British Grand Prix. Teammate Jones had put his Williams on pole and the two dived in the early laps, but a series of retirements, Jones included, put Regazzoni up front, where he took victory by 24 seconds over Renault driver René Arnoux. As if to prove the abilities of both himself and the Williams-Ford FW07, Jones took a hat-trick of victories in Germany, Austria and the Netherlands, and another in Canada, landing him third in the 1979 standings.

Above: Swiss driver Clay Regazzoni gives Williams its first ever GP victory – at Silverstone in 1979

OVERALL STATS

First team race
1977 Spanish GP

F1 starts
665 (655 as a constructor)

F1 pole positions
128

F1 race victories
114

F1 Constructors' World Championships
1980, 1981, 1986, 1987, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1997

F1 Drivers' World Championships
1980 (Jones), 1982 (Rosberg), 1987 (Piquet), 1992 (Mansell), 1993 (Prost), 1996 (Hill), 1997 (Villeneuve)

F1 fastest laps
133

Le Mans victories as a constructor
1999

BTCC titles as a constructor
1995, 1997

FW14B

THE EARLY TO MID-1990s WAS A PURPLE PATCH for Williams Grand Prix Engineering, and the FW14B remains one of the most successful F1 cars of all time. A revision of the Adrian Newey-designed FW14 that dominated the mid-to-latter stages of the 1991 season, the FW14B of 1992 was a technical marvel. Power came from a 3.5-litre Renault V10 – rumoured to make as much as 30bhp more than rival engines – while Nigel Mansell made best use of the newly introduced active suspension to take nine wins and secure the championship with six races remaining. The suspension allowed the car to run at the perfect height for both straights and corners, and Mansell and the FW14B just clicked: in his home race at Silverstone, the Brit's pole position time was a full 1.9sec ahead of teammate Patrese's best, and he in turn was nearly eight tenths ahead of Ayrton Senna's McLaren.



Above: against all odds, Pastor Maldonado was a winner in F1. **Below:** Mansell's credentials, meanwhile, were rarely, if ever, in any doubt

2012 LATEST WIN: MALDONADO

FEW OF WILLIAMS' SIGNINGS HAVE BEEN quite as controversial as Pastor Maldonado. The Venezuelan, widely derided as a chequebook driver, showed undoubted pace during his time in F1, but also continued his dubious reputation for calamity in lower series with a string of incidents, collisions, penalties and fines. All of that was briefly forgotten at the Spanish Grand Prix in 2012, where Maldonado showed his other face: that of someone with the pace and resolve to put the car on pole and lead from lights to flag. In the process he fended off Fernando Alonso, took his only F1 race win, and broke an eight-year Williams drought since Juan-Pablo Montoya's victory at the Brazilian Grand Prix in 2004. The team hasn't won since, but Felipe Massa and Valtteri Bottas have managed to score several podiums in recent years.





'Few will forget Murray Walker's lump-in-throat moment as Hill took the title in Japan'

DAMON HILL

IF YOU'RE EVER FACED WITH SOMEONE complaining about a single team dominating F1, then remind them that such situations have occurred nearly as often as they haven't. In 1996 the driver pairing of Damon Hill and Jacques Villeneuve took 12 victories from the available 16 races, making the FW18 one of the team's most successful chassis. And it was the Brit who had the upper hand, scoring eight of those wins and revelling in the FW18's reliability, strong Renault engine and Newey-designed aerodynamics. Few will forget Murray Walker's lump-in-throat moment as Hill – always something of an underdog, supporting Prost in '93, leading the team after Senna's death in '94, and narrowly losing out to Schumacher that same season – took his only title in Japan. Tough times followed, but Hill and Williams did everything they needed to in 1996.



Left and above: Hill and Villeneuve dominated in the FW18 in '96. **Below:** Williams flywheel from the hybrid 911 GT3 R race car




OUTSIDE THE F1 Paddock

WILLIAMS' ROSTER OF EXTRA-CURRICULAR activities is nearly as impressive as its GP results. Did you know, for instance, that it developed the mighty MG Metro 6R4 rally car in 1984, and the Le Mans-winning BMW V12 LMR of 1999? Few will forget Williams' impact on the British Touring Car Championship in the 1990s – when it took over Renault's team in 1995, it turned the already competitive Laguna into a championship winner, resulting in driver and manufacturer titles in 1997. The early '90s also saw the launch of the Renault Clio Williams, though this one wasn't actually a Williams product, instead being the work of Renault Sport. More recently, the firm's expertise has seen it develop flywheel hybrid systems, as used in the Porsche 911 GT3 R Hybrid, and work with Jaguar in Formula E and Nismo on the GT-R. ❧

BMW M3 GTS v M4 GTS





by JETHRO BOVINGDON

PHOTOGRAPHY by ASTON PARROTT

Roads to Redemption

It took us time to warm to the M3 GTS of 2010, and its recent successor, the militant M4 GTS, got off to a rocky start, too. Can two spectacular routes in the Pyrenees help BMW's M division set the record straight?



The Road.

We spend a lot of time discussing The Road. As soon as we know what cars we're shooting and why, the next topic of conversation is The Road. Strangely enough it doesn't have to be that long, just quiet and as bent out of shape as possible. I like bumps and compressions to test out body control, a good mix of slow and medium-speed corners and, most importantly of all, no traffic. We love driving but we don't really enjoy upsetting locals with our noisy engines and big rear wings.

Much as the doomsayers predict the end of driving enjoyment, you often don't have to look too hard to find these quiet, challenging routes – although I have to admit that in the last few years most decent stretches of tarmac in Europe have become suffocated beneath thousands of acres of Lycra and a baffling level of indignation from those wearing it. Anyway, The Road. For this particular twosome we've travelled some distance to visit a couple of absolute belters in the Pyrenees. The NA-137 from Isaba in Spain that runs up to La Pierre Saint Martin in France, and the NA-2011 north of Izalzu in Spain that becomes the D26 at its peak when you cross the border. We're staying in Roncesvalles, 30 miles west of these incredible roads, and soon it becomes apparent that driving to The Road involves driving on roads that could well be The Road. This area is full to bursting with simply staggering driving routes.

So why are we here? Mostly because we want to re-examine the M3 GTS and M4 GTS. These cars represent the M division as it wants to be seen – with motorsport and driving excitement at its very core. Cars that care more for tactility and handling balance than anything else. They are the ultimate foil for models such as the X5 M and demonstrate the M division's passion for creating real drivers' cars. More tellingly, they span an era where the M division really has changed its ethos in so many ways.

The M3 GTS arrived in 2010, just after the launch of the X5 M and X6 M and before the 1-series M Coupe. Back then



the M3 was still called an M3 in four- or two-door form and still had a naturally aspirated V8, while the M5 and M6 had normally aspirated V10s and all BMWs still had an internal codename starting with an 'E'. All of these cars routinely whipped the equivalent Mercedes-AMG or Audi RS in group tests, just as it ever was. Simple times.

Now the M3 coupe is an M4 and has a modified production straight-six twin-turbo engine rather than a bespoke screamer. It's not even that good. The M2 is better but still slightly muddled. The M5 and M6 are storming but they only come alive at great speed. The X5 and X6 M are actually annoyingly brilliant, but if M's stars are two hulking SUVs, the world is horribly out of whack. So the M4 GTS is more than just a slightly irrelevant road-racer. It should tell us whether M division still has the magic.

Now, the M3 GTS hasn't won the universal affection of something like Porsche's 997 GT3. There was a sense at launch that it was cynically priced and lacked authenticity. On the face of it that conclusion was justified. Here was an M3 stroked to an extra 362cc and 30bhp, seemingly stripped back to the bare essentials and yet weighing just 50kg less than the standard car. And back in 2010 the M3 GTS cost £117,630 when an M3 Competition Pack was £55,365. Crazy. Of course, it didn't help that the M3's roots were in real motorsport and that the E30 M3 had become so utterly iconic that an orange V8 coupe weighing 1530kg and with zero racing provenance was a perfect pantomime villain. The thing is, if you drove an early M3 Sport Evo and this car back-to-back, it's probably the V8 imposter you'd remember most...

You see, the M3 GTS does feel authentic. Completely. I'll admit the little rear wing that looks strangely back-to-front is a bit meek. But otherwise the GTS radiates a toughness and a complete lack of pretence. It looks small, crouched

'The M4 GTS is more than an irrelevant road-racer. It should tell us if M division still has the magic'



low to the ground, and the matt-black wheels and minimal ride height create a look that's refreshingly free from artifice or decoration. Swing open the door and it's the same story. There is a bit of carbonfibre trim on the dash and an orange roll-cage, but the no-frills vibe is further enhanced by the simplicity of the dash architecture and the small, fat-rimmed and perfectly round steering wheel. Ahead, the rev counter is marked yellow at 7800rpm and red at 8500rpm.

That 4361cc V8 generates 444bhp at 8300rpm and 324lb ft at 3750rpm and runs through an M DCT 'box that was specially calibrated for the GTS and hits harder and faster than the contemporary M3's does. It is a quite wonderful motor. But let's not get ahead of ourselves. Push the oblong key into the slot on the left side of the steering wheel, press the start button above it and the V8 rips into life. It's not especially loud (certainly not compared with the M4 GTS, which is a real ear-bleeder), but there's a quality to the sharp-edged noise that streams from the titanium silencers. Select first with the paddle and it clunks into gear, then you scrabble away, rear M Differential grabbing and shunting. It feels very different to the mannered car on which it's based and early signs are that the driving experience will be as honest as the tough-guy aesthetic.

We nose out of Roncesvalles and then turn east onto the NA-140, the quickest route over to our chosen roads. Within ten minutes our destination seems completely by the by and I'm up to my neck in the M3 GTS – everything that it does and everything that it demands. The road rolls gently at first and then plunges into dense woodland and chases through a valley, the turns coming thick and fast and the GTS mainly stretching out in third gear with the odd foray into fourth and gratuitous downshift to second for the tightest corners. You need to rev it to really get the car flowing fast, but the rewards are rich and plentiful, and the performance right up at the top sparkles clean and true. The M3 GTS is capable of 0-62mph in 4.4 seconds and does 190mph all out... It doesn't feel that fast at first but when you really commit, it grows in stature and intensity.

The same can be said of the chassis. The M3 feels narrow and very light. It changes direction beautifully and the way it communicates through steering and seat encourages you to push and push at the front end. Because the motor isn't a torque monster, every corner is fully linked. Don't turn in slow, wait a split second and then feed in the power, just throw it into the turn then jump on the gas. Even in M Dynamic Mode the stability control remains slightly too

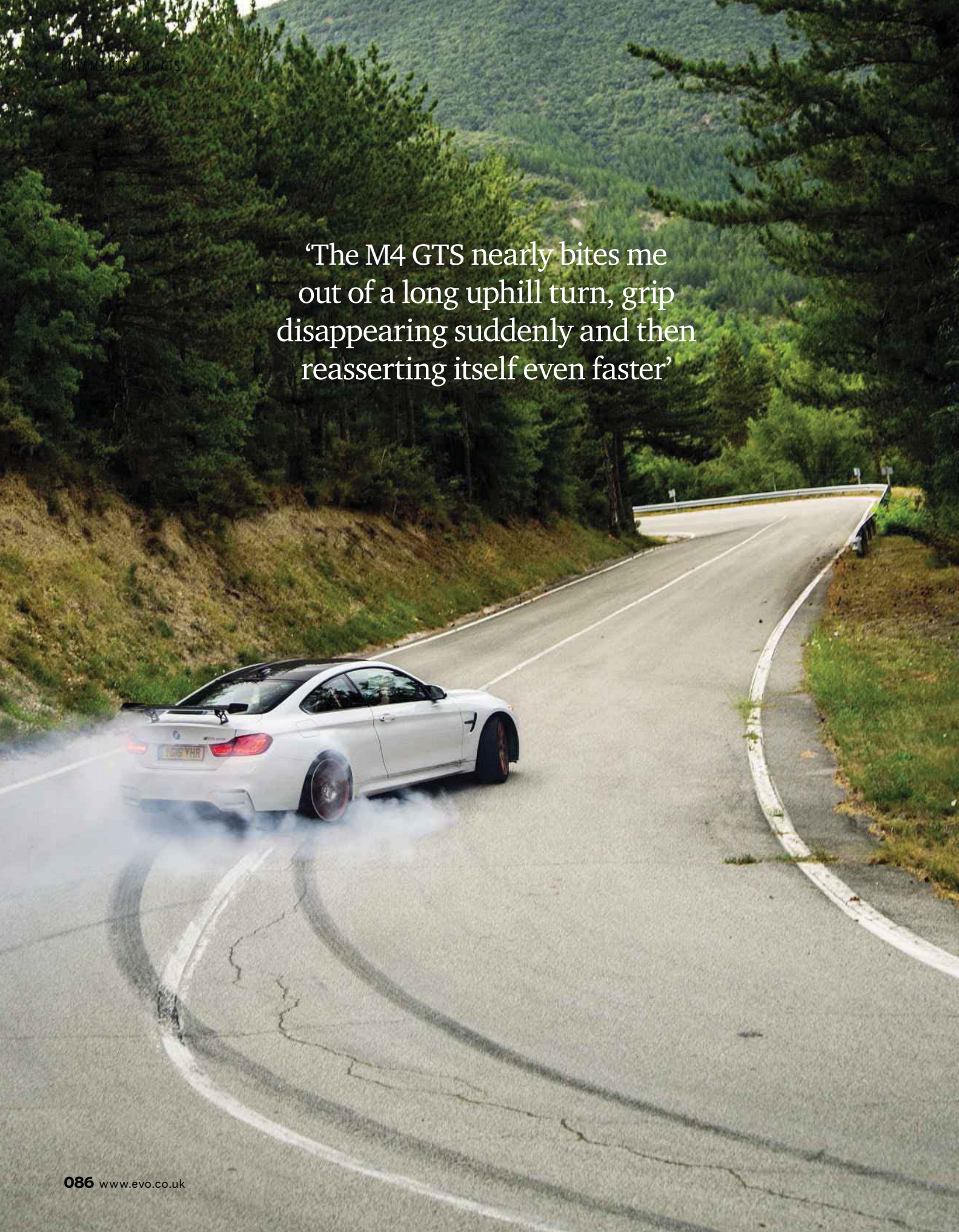


restrictive; with dry, warm roads and a chassis this balanced, it's almost surplus to requirements. Best to turn it off and let the car go, carrying speed, gently working in a malleable phase between gentle understeer on corner entry and then exquisite, almost imperceptible oversteer as it exits. There's something seamless but deeply satisfying about how the M3 deconstructs a road. It feels sensationally fluid. I'm hooked.

We take a breather near Ezcároz and top up the cars with super. The M4 in particular drinks fuel at a staggering rate, so we want it brimmed before heading up into the mountains. Much as I love the slimmed-down look of the M3 GTS, I must admit the more brazen M4 GTS appeals, too, and the sculpted bonnet is a beautiful mix of art and anger. The rear wing still needs work, though. Inside it's infinitely more polished than the M3: the steering wheel is huge and quite fat, but there's lovely stitching everywhere, Alcantara draped over most surfaces and the same Recaro seats are now shelled in shiny, perfect carbonfibre weave and trimmed in leather and Alcantara. If you backed off the dampers a bit this could almost feel like an everyday car.

Above: arriving on the Continent.
Above right: M4 GTS (in white) has a particular thirst for fuel. **Right:** M4's splitter is adjustable





‘The M4 GTS nearly bites me
out of a long uphill turn, grip
disappearing suddenly and then
reasserting itself even faster’



Left: it takes some determination, and no small amount of confidence, to get the locked-down M4 GTS out of shape. **Above:** M3 GTS's cabin is relatively plain, but this reflects the car's sense of focus

It certainly doesn't sound like one, though. The titanium exhaust really adds a layer of character to the otherwise slightly dull 3-litre twin-turbo straight-six. It howls and crackles and is very definitely OTT, and perhaps its sheer volume is an admission that this engine needs lots of aural drama to ramp up its flat delivery, but it's hard not to smile when you select Sport or Sport+ mode to get the full noise.

The engine itself isn't wildly different to that of a standard M4 – same internals, same turbos. However, the water-injection system decreases charge temperature significantly, reduces thermal load and allows boost pressure to be raised from 1.2 to 1.5bar for a maximum output of 493bhp (up from 425bhp) at 6250rpm and 442lb ft (up from 406lb ft) at 4000-5500rpm. The carbon bonnet, carbon-ceramic brakes, titanium exhaust and the loss of rear seats and other lightweight bits result in a kerb weight of 1510kg, just five less than the standard car. Blame the cage and the water tank and plumbing for the water-injection system for that.

Like the M3 GTS, this M4 has adjustable KW suspension and you can tweak ride height, bump-and-rebound and camber. The splitter and rear wing are also adjustable. A 7min 28sec Ring time says this thing is fast, but can it match the flow and interactivity of the old charger? The NA-140 takes us east, past one of our chosen roads, the NA-2011, to the NA-137, but guess what? The 140 is brilliant, too! Soon I'm chasing the M3 and giving the newer car everything.

The M4 shares some traits with the M3 but it feels wider and more stable, carrying even more speed to the apex and then allowing outrageously early throttle application on the way out. Considering there's much more torque, it's seriously impressive, and the M4 can steal time on the M3 in terms of exit traction and because of its excellent ceramic brakes. There are surprises, though. The old car might lack for torque but it has reach, and if the road opens up and Henry Catchpole can wring the 4.4-litre V8 right out, it holds the M4 GTS at

arm's length, maybe even slipping away ever so slightly.

It's fascinating watching the gap ebb and flow over this road but outright speed is barely worth worrying about. Both cars get a move on and maximising their performance carries risks that are too high even on a road as fantastic and quiet as this. What is of consequence is the quality of what the M4 GTS is doing. And it's sky-high. The damping is supremely controlled, holding the car in this lovely zone where you're connected to the road completely but it's also absorbing all the nastiest bumps and keeping wheels and body in perfect check. The Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres offer astonishing turn-in speed and cope with the motor's big hit of low-end torque. You can shock the car into oversteer but it takes some effort and strangely it doesn't feel right.

That isn't to say it's all proficiency and no fun. It's just that the enjoyment comes from the car's neutral balance, the sense of agility and the rollicking soundtrack. It's not quite as tactile as the M3 GTS and the multifunction steering wheel isn't great to hold, but there's this inner strength to the experience that's so exciting. I also know that playing with the suspension can uncover a playful side, because the last M4 GTS I drove was more eager to relinquish grip and felt very natural to control beyond the limit. By the time we get to the NA-137 I'm enjoying myself so much that the fuel gauge is worryingly low and the ceramics are starting to feel the pace. Yep, the roads are *that* good.

Henry looks happy, too. 'Wow. Just wow,' he says. 'I was worried this car wouldn't be as good as I remembered, but if anything it's better. It feels so agile. If you had to point to a car with the perfect balance of performance and grip then the M3 GTS might just be it. It dances. It really does.'

The 137 is fantastic, starting fast and open and gradually coiling in on itself as it climbs. The surface has a few rough frostbitten sections but mostly it's textured and grippy but not bumpy. Both cars rise to the challenge. The M3 GTS is

all fast-twitch response and creamy progression; the M4 GTS feels like it's ploughing furrows into the surface, such is the grip it generates. It nearly bites me once out of a long uphill left, grip disappearing suddenly and then reasserting itself even faster, but for the most part it feels ludicrously within itself. I wish the engine had the top-end rush to match the mid-range muscle (and the soundtrack), but while it loses out to the M3 on that front, it scores with a much faster and more decisive DCT gearbox and its sheer relentlessness.

France announces itself loudly and rudely with a sudden drop in surface quality. The road narrows and is cracked and dilapidated, so I grab the M3 GTS again for the return leg towards our other target road, the N-2011, and we decide not to run in convoy, just to ensure nobody gets carried away. Jumping from the newer car to the older one and vice versa over and over again highlights something different each time. This time it's the steering. I'm not going to pretend it is the last word in detail, but after the slightly mute M4 system, the M3's breeds such confidence. Sure, the limit of grip is lower (this feels down to the less-aggressive Pirelli P Zero Corsa tyres), but you can drive right up to it and then choose to back away, hold it there, or jump up and down all over it and bring the rear into play. With so many revs to play

with and no turbos in the way, everything comes together to create a platform of endless options. It really flies when you can use all of those revs, too. And the noise!

The NA-2011 is narrower and steeper than the 137 and I know the M4 GTS would cope better up here. There's not the visibility to deploy the V8's top-end power and it can feel a little breathless running out of the slower turns. Even so, the M3 emits all the right noises, and it feels special as the tight diff locks up and the M DCT 'box hits another gear home. I park up and wait for the M4. Dozens of griffon vultures are circling overhead and then soaring to a feeding spot on a steep drop a hundred yards from the road. It's all vaguely bizarre and I know that this area really is magical when a group of cyclists stop for a chat and seem happy to see the M3 GTS and the M4 that's just pulled up. Incredible scenes.

Henry and I are both in agreement that these cars are absolutely in their element. The M3 GTS motor is probably, all told, the star of the show. 'Once the V8 is on song, the older car actually feels the faster,' says Henry. 'It's not that it just sounds faster, the rush of revs at the top end really does feel like it's pinning you to your seat harder.' I reckon he's right but I'm more dialled-in to that grip-to-power ratio. It's so sweetly judged in the M3 and that means you can drive



BMW M3 GTS (E92)

Engine V8, 4361cc
Power 444bhp @ 8300rpm
Torque 324lb ft @ 3750rpm
Transmission Seven-speed dual-clutch, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip diff, DTC
Front suspension Double-joint spring-strut axle, coil springs, adjustable dampers, anti-roll bar
Rear suspension Five-link, coil springs, adjustable dampers, anti-roll bar
Brakes Ventilated discs, 378mm front, 380mm rear, ABS, CBC, DBC
Wheels 9 x 19in front, 10 x 19in rear
Tyres 255/35 ZR19 front, 285/30 ZR19 rear
Weight 1530kg
Power-to-weight 295bhp/ton
0-62mph 4.4sec (claimed)
Top speed 190mph (claimed)
Price new £117,630 (2010)
Value now £120,000+

evo rating: ★★★★★

BMW M4 GTS (F82)

Engine In-line 6-cyl, 2979cc, twin-turbo
Power 493bhp @ 6250rpm
Torque 442lb ft @ 4000-5500rpm
Transmission Seven-speed dual-clutch, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip diff, DSC
Front suspension Double-joint spring-strut axle, coil springs, adjustable dampers, anti-roll bar
Rear suspension Five-link, coil springs, adjustable dampers, anti-roll bar
Brakes Carbon-ceramic discs front and rear, ABS, CBC, DBC
Wheels 9.5 x 19in front, 10.5 x 20in rear
Tyres 265/35 R19 front, 285/30 R20 rear
Weight 1510kg
Power-to-weight 332bhp/ton
0-62mph 3.8sec (claimed)
Top speed 190mph (limited)
Price new £120,500 (2016)
Value now £150,000+

evo rating: ★★★★★

it at maximum attack while enjoying everything else that's happening. There's balance shot through this entire car.

The newer GTS, at least with this setup, is more aggressive, less keen to slide, and you need to raise your game just in case all that torque takes hold of the rear wheels. I like its edge but know you can find more progression in this chassis just by fiddling with the dampers. I'd say this one is 90 per cent there for road driving but places too high a premium on outright grip. However, on these roads and on this day, neither car leaves you feeling short-changed in the slightest. I know the M4 GTS is a divisive beast but up here there's no questioning the challenge it offers, or the rewards.

Fat chewed, we head on to the border. The road climbs again and soon we reach the peak. Cloud hangs thick below us, the sun is gone and suddenly we're in the rainforest, on another continent, in another time. By now we're genuinely speechless. What a place. The M3 GTS and M4 GTS match the location, if anything on four wheels really can. Something of the purity of the old car with its hard-edged engine and delicate handling has been lost, but the brutally effective M4 GTS shows that the M division still understands. But we need a regular M-car with this level of excitement and ability now, please. We know you can do it, M. ☒





POWER HAUS

*Thanks to its famous 911-based Yellowbird, Ruf is renowned as a Porsche tuner extraordinaire. But it also ranks as a car manufacturer in its own right and tackles restorations and servicing, too. **evo** was granted a tour of its fabled workshops*

by WILL BEAUMONT

PHOTOGRAPHY by ASTON PARROTT



Top: not even Porsche's ultimate, the 918, escapes Ruf's attentions. **Opposite page, top:** servicing areas have a wonderful 'worked in' feel. **Right:** motorsport-standard componentry and construction at the back end of a RUF CTR3

THE ENVIRONMENT IN which we expect cars to be manufactured has changed. The vision of grimy, industrial factories of the '60s and '70s has been replaced by clean, clinical spaces. Car factories now look like medical laboratories lined with shiny white tiles. Robots production assemble with little human interference, and the few people who are involved are dressed so uniformly that they are almost unidentifiable from one another. This aesthetic has filtered down to every level of car production, regardless of scale. It's supposed to suggest efficiency, modernity and that cars are built with the same level of care and attention to detail that you'd find in an operating theatre.

So when photographer Aston Parrott and I arrive at Ruf's factory in Pfaffenhausen, southern Germany, and peek through the slightly murky plastic windows to see terracotta floors, raunchy calendars, oily engine parts, and proper tools left on benches, it is a pleasant surprise. As is spotting a Volkswagen T3 bus rubbing shoulders with a RUF CTR3 supercar, an immaculate Porsche 993-based Turbo R and a Porsche 918 Spyder.

Yet there are no employees to be seen, something that is emphasised when we reach an

empty reception area. Turns out we've turned up just as everyone sits down for their daily buttered pretzel at 9.40am. This happens in the world's most captivating storeroom, at a long table surrounded by an array of obsolete original Porsche parts and rare Ruf spares, and with a carbonfibre 964 bodyshell suspended overhead.

Pretzels consumed, staff return to creating some of the world's finest Porsches, and Marcel Groos, son of company owner Alois Ruf, commences our guided tour. Alois still runs the company he helped found from his father's garage nearly 60 years ago. Often thought of as merely a tuner, Ruf actually qualifies as a car manufacturer under German regulations, and thanks to a close relationship with the Porsche factory is able to ship in brand new bodysells to which it attaches its own VIN plates. But as we're about to discover, Ruf has many more strands to its business.

It takes a while for us to be dragged away from a CTR Yellowbird – the model made famous by a showboating Stefan Roser in the 1989 video *Faszination on the Nürburgring* – that's 'just in for a service', but we finally make it to the corner of the workshop dedicated to engines. As well as manufacturing new cars, Ruf also performs restorations on old Porsches, so one side of this area is full of crusty, black and oily engines that





are yet to be rebuilt. As you look from one side of the bench to the other you can track the evolution of an engine's renovation, the components becoming cleaner and shinier until finally you get to fully built engines wrapped in clear plastic, as if brand new. After inspecting the two dyno rigs that every engine is tested on before being installed in a car, we are directed across the road to meet the inspiration behind the company, Alois Ruf.

On the other side of the street is an official Porsche service centre. It too is owned by the Ruf family and, despite a Porsche-branded reception, the service bays have the same Ruf character that was obvious across the Strasse. The business started servicing and restoring Porsches back in 1960, and in 1974, following the death of Alois's father's, the company focused its attention solely on Porsches. The first Ruf-enhanced Porsche arrived in 1975, the first Ruf model two years later.

Alois's clear vision of what Ruf is capable of achieving and the standards it needs to maintain are abundantly clear. I eye-up an immaculate early 911 Targa that looks to be a high-quality restoration and am about to praise the work when Alois interjects. 'That's not one of our restorations,'

he says. 'We wouldn't have been happy with that finish.' I admit I thought it looked pretty good, so he shows me another Targa that *has* been restored by Ruf. It gleams brighter somehow, and despite Alois opening doors and removing panels to show me deeper into the Targa's internals, there's not a single blemish to be seen.

Next we're taken inside a vast room where customer cars are waiting to be repaired, restored or serviced, or are just being temporarily stored. As well as a number of standard Porsches there are some race- and rally-prepared 911s and a remarkable collection of Ruf models from the last four decades. 'We'd rather you didn't take photos in here,' says Alois before Aston has chance to raise his Nikon. 'It's not as organised as we'd like.' Respect for customer privacy is a contributing factor in Ruf's success.

Away from the storage areas, we walk up a short corridor and I can smell hot metal. I don't need to be told we're heading for the bodywork and fabrication department. Sure enough, when the door opens, men are operating lathes and drills, and you can hear the crack and buzz of welding. Everything here is reassuringly traditional and

Above: one of Ruf's own – a CTR3 in build. **Top right:** engine repairs and rebuilds are key parts of Ruf's operations. **Bottom right:** Ruf SCR 4.2 boasts 518bhp at 8370rpm and a top speed of 200mph



if it weren't for the bare 991 Carrera bodyshell, with its integrated roll-cage visible and holes in its haunches ready to have new Ruf air intakes welded into place, you could be convinced you had been taken back to 1967.

As if to remind us that this is still the 21st century, a host of laptops are plugged into what looks like a 964, only more modern. It's a Ruf SCR 4.2, so although I wasn't wrong with my 964 guess, it's actually a new car with a carbonfibre body and powered by a modified, water-cooled Mezger engine. Looking even more modern next to it is a half-built CTR3 – Ruf's mid-engined supercar. Its tubular spaceframe rear end

‘RUF PERFECTLY ILLUSTRATES THAT CLEAN WHITE SPACES AND LABORATORY CONDITIONS AREN'T NEEDED TO CREATE INCREDIBLE CARS’

supports a billet aluminium crossmember and pushrod-actuated suspension. It wouldn't look out of place on an LMP1 car and is as immaculate as it is technologically impressive.

Finally, a visit to the paint shop serves up a surprise in the form of a Jaguar E-type. 'One of our customers didn't trust anyone else to paint it, so we've made an exception,' Alois explains.

There's no false veneer of competency at Ruf, no superficial layer of faux organisation. Instead what is apparent is an abundance of expertise and quality. It's obvious in the confidence and skill with which the employees work, the technical sophistication of the cars and the exceptional standard of finish they're built to. Ruf perfectly illustrates that clean white spaces and laboratory conditions aren't needed to create incredible cars.

But I can't leave without investigating the VW T3 bus further. A set of deep-dish 964 Cup-style wheels hint at its provenance: it's one of 15 T3s built by Porsche in the 1980s, used to transport its race team and fitted with a 3.2-litre flat-six from a 911. It's here because no one else can restore it as fastidiously as Ruf can. ❌

PURRFECTION



by HENRY CATCHPOLE

PHOTOGRAPHY by DEAN SMITH

EAGLE SPYDER GT



Say hello to Eagle's fourth evolution of the Jaguar E-type – the Spyder GT. With stunning curves, effortless pace and open-air versatility, it might just be the ultimate in re-imagined classics

SUNLIGHT IS SPEARING THROUGH the tall pine trees and dappling the long, pale blue bonnet in front of me, mirroring the sky above. Released from the pressure to live up to temperatures associated with summer, the autumn air ruffling my hair and spilling into the cabin is fresh and clean. Roots stretching beneath the road have ridged and rumpled the tarmac so that it resembles a grey blanket thrown across a lumpy duvet, and the Spyder GT's steering wheel is keeping up a constant conversation with my hands as a result. It sounds almost too good to be true, but Eagle's Spyder GT has a silver-screen quality that makes you feel like you're living in some perfect film of your own life.

You're probably aware of what Eagle is, but in case not, the short version is that the small East Sussex company is one of the best restorers of Jaguar E-types in the world. It fettles, replaces, reconditions and, if you want, updates and improves upon the original 1960s formula. The ultimate examples of its work are the special editions with new but sympathetically sculpted aluminium bodywork replacing the original steel. These started with the Speedster, which has emerged from the workshops in standard and lightweight specifications (featured in *evos* 137 and 162 respectively). Up next, the Low Drag GT (195), a car more beautifully slippery than a soapy supermodel. And now we have the Spyder GT, which is closely related to the Speedster but has the added practicality of a roof as well as a few other updates and changes.

Paul Brace, who with Henry Pearman has masterminded Eagle, drove the Spyder up from Sussex this morning. We might have insured it for a cool £1million, but that doesn't mean it has to be treated like a crystal vase. It is designed to be driven and apparently owners really do use their Eagles on long European trips and even for commuting. Like taking part in falconry rather than just having an aviary.

Brake, blip, shift down into second and turn the long nose into the rough, sandy car park we're using as a base. As I pull to a halt, photographer Dean Smith asks me to inch back a bit, then forward the other way a fraction as he lines the car up for his Nikon. Once the car is in position, I flip up the central armrest and pull-release the fly-off handbrake concealed within. Then it's a simple quarter anti-clockwise turn of the small key in the dash to quell the engine before

swinging the featherweight door open and getting out over the relatively high sill.

While Dean busies himself, I simply gaze at the shape basking in the sunshine in front of me. There really isn't a bad angle on it, and I say that as someone who isn't head over heels about the standard E-type. Study it and you notice that the rear arches are a little more bulbous and the tail seems to sweep up a little more quickly. The lack of seams smoothes the shape, too. Unlike the Speedster, this car has a normal-height windscreen, but it has been given a few degrees more rake, pushing the base of the glass about five inches further away from the driver. This not only imparts a sleeker appearance, but also means just two rather than three windscreen wipers can be fitted. Unhitch the leather tonneau (the owner of this car requested to have leather rather than the usual mohair), unfurl the fabric roof and you might notice that the canopy has had an extra spar added, in order to improve the shape subtly.

Release the catches and the bonnet tilts forwards exposing gleaming internals, like opening the lid on a treasure chest full of freshly minted silver. These days we generally open the bonnet of a car (if it has one), take a quick reference photo, perhaps note how far forward or back the engine is mounted and then close it up. There's nothing to see. With the Spyder GT I feel like I could look at the pipes and billet cam covers and carburettors for hours. The view is so much more complex yet more mechanically understandable than in modern cars.

The engine is Eagle's all-aluminium 4.7-litre straight-six. If we could peer inside then we'd see a bespoke billet crankshaft, special rods and new forged pistons. The gearbox is also cast in aluminium instead of steel, while other lightweight options include a magnesium diff casing, magnesium rear uprights, tubular driveshafts and tubular lower rear wishbones. Currently there is a 2.5-inch stainless steel exhaust, but a titanium version is on the way. Power stands at 330bhp at 4800rpm, while the torque figure is 340lb ft at 3600rpm – enough for 0-60mph in under five seconds.

The first Speedsters ran Reiger dampers but the Low Drag and now the Spyder have switched to Öhlins. These work in conjunction with the rest of Eagle's sports suspension setup to give the car distinctly more control. Braking is taken care of with an oversized servo powering AP discs and calipers. Despite the rear discs being mounted inboard, Paul says they seem to stand up well to hard use without overheating.

After almost every angle has been committed to memory card, we discuss what to do next. As the Spyder needs some

'As the bonnet tilts forward it's like opening the lid on a treasure chest full of freshly minted silver'





Left: engine is cast in aluminium instead of iron, and is 4.7 litres in capacity instead of the original 3.8.
Above: paint finish on this car is an updated version of Jaguar's Opalescent Silver Blue from the 1960s, with added sparkle

fuel, we agree that I should go and fill it up and then meet Dean and Paul at another location, giving me a chance for a proper drive. I post my legs in underneath the big wheel with its special enamel badge, twist the key, press the starter button and enjoy feeling carb-fed cylinders come to life.

This first Spyder is quite tall-g geared, as the owner (who hasn't driven it yet!) wants it for touring. As a result I find myself naturally settling into the sort of flow where you change up relatively early, using the torque to pull easily through the first few thousand revs. Weighing just a smidgen over 1000kg dry, the Spyder always feels eager and strong because the response to the throttle, even at relatively lazy revs, is instant. It's the same story with the middle pedal, which has much more power and solidity underfoot than you expect in something with 50-year-old foundations.

You can enjoy pottering slowly through villages and meandering down narrow lanes because the weight of the steering (unassisted here, but speed-sensitive electric assistance is an option) and the sound of the engine make you feel involved even at lowly speeds. And let's face it, the interior of the Spyder is just a lovely place to be – you sit snugly amongst the sweeps of machined aluminium with a view out over that long bonnet. I'm a big fan of driving without a roof above me. It means you can hear all the noises much more clearly, whether they are from the exhaust, tyres, brakes or just the change in air pressure with speed and proximity to buildings, hedges and walls. You also tend to take more interest in the world that you're travelling through, feeling a greater connection to the people and places that you pass. And at the end of a drive the sheer invigoration of having been exposed to the elements leaves you with a rewarding bodily sense of fatigue.

Turning out of the trees and onto a wider road, there's a chance to really stretch the Eagle's legs. Hold on to second gear, push past your previous change-up point and the straight-six suddenly develops a whole new character. The blaring sound from the twin exhaust pipes not only increases in volume, but also takes on the classic racing note of ripping calico. It's the sort of unfiltered mechanical rasp that you just don't hear emerging from modern cars, and the hairs on the back of your neck stand to attention at the same rate the smile inevitably spreads across your face. Holding on for 5000rpm might not seem like much, but it sounds and feels it. Up to third and enjoy it all again.

With more pace the Spyder seems to settle dynamically, too. Pottering around at lower speeds, the damping feels

**'The blaring
sound from the
twin exhaust
pipes not only
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volume, but takes
on the classic
racing note of
ripping calico'**



EAGLE SPYDER GT



‘The Eagle has such a solid sense
of connection that you feel confident
pushing it hard’

Eagle Spyder GT

Engine Straight-six, 4969cc **Power** 330bhp @ 4800rpm **Torque** 340lb ft @ 3600rpm

Transmission Five-speed manual gearbox, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip differential

Front suspension Double wishbones, torsion bar, adjustable dampers, anti-roll bar

Rear suspension Double wishbones, twin spring/adjustable dampers units, anti-roll bar **Brakes** Ventilated discs, 315mm front, 280mm rear

Wheels 16in front and rear **Tyres** 225/55 R16 front, 235/60 R16 rear

Weight (dry) 1029kg **Power-to-weight (dry)** 326bhp/ton **0-60mph** Sub-5.0sec (claimed) **Top speed** 170mph-plus (claimed)

Basic price £834,000

evo rating: ★★★★★

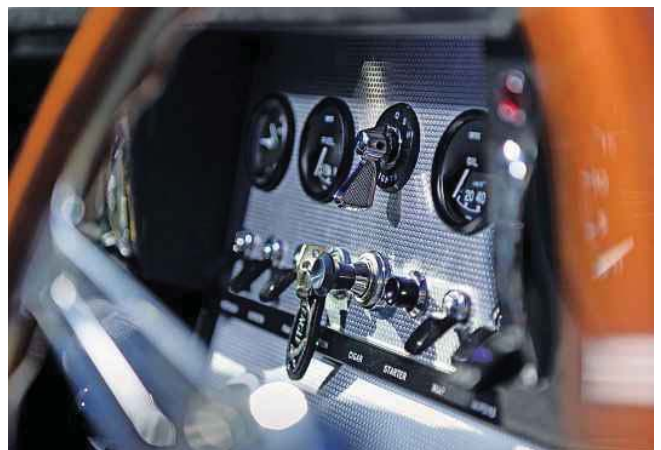
Left: owner of this car specified a full leather interior and a leather hood cover; sweeping, integrated centre console is a neat Eagle touch carried over from the Speedster

firm and the steering still quite heavy, but as you push on, so the dampers come into their own and the steering lightens until the whole car suddenly feels at ease with itself. It's the same tangible shift when slicks switch on or muscles have loosened up halfway into a run. This is a car that enjoys being driven quickly with load going through the suspension.

The surprising thing is how direct and easy to place it is. Most cars with a thin, wooden-rimmed steering wheel can feel a little flimsy, but the Eagle has such a solid sense of connection and so little slop around the straight-ahead that you feel much more confident pushing it hard. If you're not used to it, then the spindly wheel, with its polished surface and flat metal spokes that push into your thumbs, can feel like a curiously hard thing to grasp compared with chunkier modern wheels, but the lack of dilution via any squidgy foam or even leather means it's wonderfully uncorrupted. There's surprisingly little roll, too, so the chassis responds and settles quickly as you point the distinguished nose into corners. Just as precise is the gearshift. It's not a shift you feel that you can rush, but equally it's not ponderous and it's lovely feeling the varying pressure of the dinky black sphere that sits neatly in your palm as you push it across the gate.

A flick of the spindly indicator stalk and I dive off left back amongst the trees. This time there are more oak and beech providing the canopy, while high earth banks either side have roots wriggling through them like veins in the back of a hand. The natural tunnel-effect magnifies the terrific sound of the engine and, despite the road's meandering, there's a clear enough line of sight to keep the throttle pinned through a couple of upshifts. Then it's hard on the brakes, down a gear and steer the Eagle with both wheel and pedal as the tarmac chicanes right and left for no apparent reason.

I keep driving and Dean keeps pressing the shutter release until the light softens and evening begins closing in. If Paul didn't need to get home it would be tempting to press on into the night and see how darkness magnifies the music. But we have to call it a day somewhere, so as camera kit gets packed away, I reluctantly come to a stop one last time. As I silence the engine and bring this all-too-brief movie version of my life to an end, all I can think is that to be the fortunate owner of this car, and to never have to see the closing credits roll in your mind's eye, would be very, very special indeed. ☒





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Market

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ANALYSIS BUY THE RIGHT TRACKDAY CAR FOR YOU

Tempted by the prospect of an affordable trackday car you can also drive on the road?

Here are five ideas to get you started

by Adam Towler

IF YOU WANT TO GET SERIOUS ABOUT TRACKDAYS, you need the right car. Forget powerful, expensive and rare (particularly if you're on a learning curve), and buy something that can be moulded to the task and that will have endurance: the right tool for the job.

As confirmed in the following advice, it's the brakes that will be the weak point on most road cars, quickly – and expensively – stopping play. Regular road tyres will also soon overheat, damaging the tread; a stickier tyre will not only perform better but last far longer.

Upgrading the suspension is likely to be on your list, too, both to make the most of the tyres and also to create a more precise, reactive, enjoyable car. More power, you'll note, only comes later.

So here are five options, covering front-wheel-drive and rear-wheel-drive, and various price points, plus the lowdown on the changes you should make, straight from the experts' mouths. ➔

MAZDA MX-5 (Mk3)

Neil McKay
BBR-GTi
bbrgti.com

'You can find a reasonable early Mk3 2-litre Sport for £3000-4000. Check for corrosion underneath and around the wheelarches, and make sure there's no knock from the main bearings due to running low on oil.

'Do the suspension first. There are lots of cheap coilover kits on the internet but a main brand is much better – you get what you pay for. For a 50:50 road and track car, I'd suggest going for our Koni dampers and spring combination [£695]; the fixed-rate spring coilover is really for trackdays only. Öhlins are great, but expensive [£1800]. If you're going for stickier rubber – I'd recommend Michelin Cup 2s and put them on a slightly wider, lighter wheel – fit upgraded anti-roll bars. The great thing is that the car's geometry is completely adjustable, so you can get the setup you want.

'Another really good aspect is the standard brakes – both the discs and the calipers. We just change the pads: EBC Yellow for occasional track use, Mintex or Ferodo for anything more. Then it's really about power and removing weight. Our Super 180 conversion [£995] consists of a new exhaust manifold and remap, while the Super 200 [£1695] adds cams.'

VW GOLF GTI (MK5)

Matt Walker
Volkswagen Racing
racingline-performance.com

'Find a decent car, but it doesn't need to be one-owner or low mileage. The suspension can be baggy and the brakes worn, as you'll be replacing those anyway; £4000-5000 should get something useable.

'Give the car a service first, and make sure it's mechanically sound, including checking that the fuel-pump cam follower has been changed. Then think about slowing down; only add power after that.

'You want this car to last all day at a track. If you're on a tight budget you can just upgrade the pads for £200, but you'll never really be able to get



the heat out of the standard calipers, whereas our big-brake kit [£2300] – the same as on the race cars, with six-pot calipers and 360mm discs – will allow you to lap all day.

'Tyres? Either a quality set of Yokohamas or Toyo 888s, or a cheap set of used slicks you can change to when you arrive. There is a huge range of suspension options to fit all budgets, from a £200 set of springs through to £10,000 competition suspension. However, our Tracksport kit is similar to that of our race cars and costs £2500. It includes adjustable top mounts on the front.

'A complete kit to polybush the car is £400, and adjustable anti-roll bars are £500 a pair. Power upgrades are easy, starting at £500 for a remap with an extra 50bhp, but it's worth changing the engine mounts to stiffen up the front end of the car.'

MINI COOPER S (R56)

Emma Dutton
Lohen
lohen.co.uk

'I'd seek out the later N18 engine over the original N14 – they don't suffer from the same coking around

the injectors. Avoid sunroof cars, check for timing-chain "death rattle" – mainly on the N14 – and also the condition of the high-pressure fuel pump. £6000-7000 should buy a good car.

'Often customers want more power first, but we'd always suggest starting with brakes, suspension and tyres. The standard braking setup is small, so while there are a range of pad and disc upgrades for those just starting out, in the longer run a big-brake kit – our AP Racing option costs £1958 plus £180 fitting – will pay for itself through less wear. Consider that standard wheels don't have the offset to clear the bigger brakes, so a set of lightweight OZ rims is a great first step, combined with a sticky tyre, such as the Kumho V70A.

'For the suspension, ideally we'd suggest our KW Clubsport kit, which includes adjustable top mounts and full bump-and-rebound adjustment. This is firm but still reasonable for road use. A proper geometry setup with corner weighting is a must.

'From there, it's about power and measures to cope with it. Our Performance Pack 2 [£1895] adds 75bhp. At that power level a limited-slip differential is wise; either a Quaife ATB [£690] for someone who

wants to use the car daily – these were also used in the Mini Challenge, so they're still good on track – or a Tran-X unit for the ultimate in trackday performance. These are adjustable, but we'd probably refresh them as a service item at the end of the trackday season, and they can be clonky at low speed. It depends on the mix between road and track driving the customer wants to do.

'When fitting the differential [£450 labour], we'd always say change the clutch and flywheel at the same time, for only an extra half-hour's work. They will suffer on track at this power, so a Helix clutch kit and single-mass flywheel are advised – the six-paddle clutch is a good compromise.

'Beyond this you're into forged engine internals and saving weight. We do lightweight door cards, which you'll need if you want to fit a cage.'

BMW M3 (E46)

Sunny Panikker
BHP Motorsport
bhpmsport.com

'I'd only consider a manual-gearbox example for a trackday car conversion. When buying, look for cracking



around the differential mounts, VANOS issues and, these days, head gaskets and worn bottom ends. If you can afford it, buy a 53-plate-onwards car – the engines are stronger. Buy the best car you can, even though it's for the track.

'I'd flush the engine oil through and change the gearbox and differential oil. Then the number-one issue will be the brakes. If you can afford it, the AP Racing six-pot calipers and discs are great. If not, try an aftermarket disc, and if not that, just try harder pads, uprated Brembo brake fluid and braided lines – the standard fluid will boil. Add some brake cooling at the front axle with a flexi-hose.

'Check the suspension bushes for wear, particularly the trailing arms. If you are replacing these, use polybushes. Dampers are important, but even race cars can use the standard anti-roll bars. KW or Bilstein coilovers, at £1500 upwards, are nice – cheap stuff isn't worth it. You'll also need a track-geometry setup [£400], and grippier tyres will make a difference, too. You can put the rear wheels on the front axle to broaden the track, but they're heavy – it's worth investing in a lighter set.

'You can get around 350bhp out of these cars [up from 338bhp when

the car was brand new] with a new induction kit, exhaust and ECU remap, but the next stage is really about removing weight from the car – rear bench out, bucket seats, removing the luxury items and so on.'

LOTUS ELISE 111R

Greg Lock
Hangar 111
hangar111.com

'A lot comes down to budget, but a decent 111R at £17,000 should be fine. Drive it, check all the electrics work, and perhaps find a basic car without many luxuries.

'There are a lot of cars out there already modified for the track, some good, some very bad. However, if starting from the bare bones I'd go for a pair of race seats with harness holes [£1000-2000], harnesses [£200-300] and a harness bar [£150 – fitted behind the roll bar].

'To upgrade the brakes you can either go for a cheap solution of upgraded discs [£150 per pair] or an AP Racing setup with our own alloy bells. These are £650 for a front pair, but some race for two seasons on them. Good pads cost £150.

'A quick steering rack [£460] transforms the car, and should be combined with a geometry setup [£160]. The standard anti-roll bars wear quickly, whereas our five-way adjustable ones [£150] won't. Most 111Rs had the skinny, 175-section front tyre; you can fit a bigger tyre on the rim but ideally you'd go for wider wheels to stop the tread block rolling under during hard cornering. If you can afford the LTS-compound Yokohama A048R, they're brilliant, but Toyo R888s or Avon ZZRs are also good.

'There are so many combinations of aftermarket dampers, from £800 to £5000 and even more. The more complicated solutions do need to be setup properly with testing, though. I'd say £1200-1400 would get you some good Nitrons for road and track use, but the best would be the JRZ setup at £1920. A rear toe kit [£450-600] tightens up the rear of the car and won't wear out.

'Engine-wise, you'll spend a lot of money for small gains – hint, it's better to supercharge. But check the car has oil rads fitted, and an induction kit, sports cat manifold and remap will speed up the changeover to the top cams and lower the rev point at which this happens.'

FIVE TO BUY

MAZDA MX-5 2.0 SPORT

£3895
2006, 88,000 miles
fuscovehiclesales.com



VW GOLF GTI

£4690
2005, 74,000 miles
autocap.co.uk



MINI COOPER S

£5990
2007, 57,000 miles
bransonscars.com



BMW M3 COUPE

£11,993
2005, 88,000 miles
gocars.co.uk



LOTUS ELISE 111R

£19,990
2005, 37,000 miles
safwatcars.co.uk



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Increased
return of
£10,000

Porsche Cayman GT4

Part exchange valuation	£85,000
Guaranteed buy price in 30 days	£88,000
SOLD FOR	£95,000
Returned customer (less fee)	£93,500



Increased
return of
£19,995

Ferrari 599 GTB

Part exchange valuation	£100,000
Guaranteed buy price in 30 days	£110,995
SOLD FOR	£119,995
Returned customer (less fee)	£118,495



Increased
return of
£12,995

Porsche GT3

Part exchange valuation	£67,000
Guaranteed buy price in 30 days	£72,000
SOLD FOR	£79,995
Returned customer (less fee)	£78,495

Why sell your car privately or get below trade 'book' price from dealers when you can sell your car this way?

Example stock cars



Porsche 911 GT3 RS 4.0
£279,995



Ferrari California
£108,950



Aston Martin Vanquish
£159,995



Bentley Continental GT V8
£96,995



Porsche Panamera Turbo S
£89,995



Porsche 911 Carrera 4S
£106,995

USED RIVALS V12-ENGINEED SUPERCARS

by Adam Towler



LAMBORGHINI LP640

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine	V12, 6496cc
Power	631bhp @ 8000rpm
Torque	487lb ft @ 6000rpm
Weight	1665kg [385bhp/ton]
0-62mph	3.8sec [claimed]
Top speed	211mph [claimed]
On sale	2006-2011
evo rating	★★★★★

EXAMPLE



2007 £154,990

vvsuk.co.uk

An e-gear coupe in the much-loved Lambo colour of Arancio Borealis. 19,000 miles from new with a rear parking camera and lifting gear for the front axle.

BUYING ADVICE

'A specialist will save you money on labour rates, but the parts are eye-wateringly expensive. The clutch doesn't last long and it's an engine-out job at £7000-8000. Throttle bodies fail and can be expensive, but we can rebuild them. The trim wears over time, and replacement parts can be hard to get hold of. Plenty of the spaceframe chassis is exposed, so watch for corrosion. The brakes were much improved on the LP640, but a full set of optional ceramics is at least £20,000. Beware niggles with the e-gear hardware, but otherwise electrically they're pretty good. The engines are immensely strong, but they sometimes need valve-clearance shimming, which is very expensive.'

Neil Panikker, bhpmport.com



ASTON MARTIN DBS

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine	V12, 5935cc
Power	510bhp @ 6500rpm
Torque	420lb ft @ 5750rpm
Weight	1695kg [306bhp/ton]
0-62mph	4.3sec [claimed]
Top speed	191mph [claimed]
On sale	2007-2012
evo rating	★★★★★

EXAMPLE



2009 £125,000

Nicholas Mee

A manual DBS in Onyx black with black hide interior and grey 20-spoke alloy wheels. 19,500 miles with a full AM service history and new clutch.

BUYING ADVICE

'The DBS is a very well sorted car – and a monster of a car. There are no horror stories with them, just look at the provenance, the service history and the car itself. The carbon brakes will be £10,000-plus to change, but if they're looked after they don't wear. They need to be used properly, and find out the previous owner's cleaning regime: wheel cleaner can kill them – soap and water is best. Any damage to the carbon body panels will be expensive to put right and paint. The engines are robust, but you need to keep an eye on the oil level. The clutch is also strong, but it's worth checking that the Sport button and the electronic-damper button actually work.'

Peter Martin, martinsastonservices.co.uk



FERRARI 599 GTB FIORANO

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine	V12, 5999cc
Power	611bhp @ 7600rpm
Torque	448lb ft @ 5600rpm
Weight	1688kg [368bhp/ton]
0-62mph	3.6sec [claimed]
Top speed	205mph [claimed]
On sale	2006-2012
evo rating	★★★★★

EXAMPLE



2008 £149,850

Bramley Motor Cars

A sinister-looking GTB in Nero Daytona with the HGTE handling pack fitted (including carbon-ceramic brakes) and just 9100 miles on the clock.

BUYING ADVICE

'There are no engine issues; the V12 should just require regular servicing. The 'box has no major problems either, but the oil must be changed every two years. Clutch wear needs to be read electronically – remember the percentage number is how much it's worn. Be smooth, let the car warm up, and a clutch should last 25,000-30,000 miles. The magnetic dampers need to be replaced in pairs if one goes, and they're not cheap – £1500 each – but by far the most common suspension issue is worn rose joints, and they're easy to check. Overall, build quality is very good. The 599 wears well, and we never see shabby examples. The paint is quite thin, though, so be careful when polishing it.'

Spencer Herbert, barkaways.com

BUYING JOURNEY

evo reader Paul Knowles shares his 37-year history of ownership hits and misses

THE CARS

1980	Mini (1963)
1984	VW Scirocco GLS Mk1 (1979)
1986	VW Golf GTI 1.8 Mk1 (1981)
1989	Peugeot 205 GTI 1.9 (1989)
1997	Nissan 200SX (1995)
1999	BMW M3 Evo Saloon E36 (1995)
2003	Alfa Romeo 147 2-litre Selespeed (2003)
2007	Renault Sport Clio 182 (2004)
2009	Mercedes C-class Estate 2.7 CDI (2007)
2009	Mini John Cooper Works R56 (2009)
2010	Ford SportKa (2008)
2011	BMW Z4 Coupe 3.0 (2009)
2011	Porsche 924 Carrera GT (1981)
2012	VW Golf R32 Mk5 (2009)
2012	Lotus Exige 240 PP (2009)
2013	Audi A4 Avant 2.0 TDI (2012)
2014	Renault Sport Mégane 250 (2012)
2014	Mini John Cooper Works R56 (2012)
2016	Porsche Boxster Spyder 987 (2011)
2016	VW Golf R Mk7 (2015)
2016	Abarth 500 (2015)

PAUL BEGAN, LIKE SO MANY, WITH A decrepit Mini. Riddled with rust, it came back to him two years after he sold it and ended its life being thrashed around a field. A Mk1 Scirocco was his first proper car, and was replaced by his first performance car, a bodykitted Mk1 Golf GTI. His first new car, and company car, was a 205 GTI 1.9. 'The senior partner at my firm was a car nut and I convinced him to upgrade the order from a 1.6 to a 1.9,' recalls Paul. A few spins didn't put him

off it, and along with the Golf, the Pug instigated a lifetime of loving small hot hatches.

A Nissan 200SX taught Paul rear-wheel drive, and an E36 BMW M3 continued the tail-out antics, but he never bonded with the 'cramped', hard-riding Z4 he owned later. An Alfa 147 proved 'just horrible' and he wasn't even a fan of his RS Mégane 250. But a Clio 182 was a hit, as were two separate JCW Minis. His current fleet includes Golf R and Abarth 'dailies' and a duo of rare Porsches.



Porsche 924 Carrera GT

'I fancied something older and interesting. I bought this at auction for less than the guide price of £14,000-20,000, and although I did wonder if I'd done the right thing as it had a few issues, it's all sorted now. It's fun, if heavy to drive. I actually bought the Boxster Spyder to replace it, and have had an offer to sell, but I think I'll keep it for now.'



Lotus Exige 240 PP

'I'm also into bikes – last one I had was a 1098 Ducati. The Lotus was about finding something safer to replace that thrill, and I planned to get into trackdays. It was a lovely car, with the Performance Pack, and I bought it just before Christmas 2012. Unfortunately, one cold night a few months later it snapped on me on a roundabout and ripped a wheel off, being written off in the process. I felt physically sick.'

Porsche Boxster Spyder (987)

'I bought this when the market was flat. It's PDK. I guess I should have got a manual, but you can't wait too long for the right car. It's quite subtle – you have to know your cars to know it's something special. It only did 500 miles last year, as you do get locked into the market where you don't want to drive it. But this year I'll just use it more – have some fun in it.'



WHAT NEXT?

'I keep looking at 997 GT3s – if I chopped both Porsches in I could get one. But although it would be a great thing to have, I'm not sure I could just potter around in it like you can with the Spyder. I really fancy a Ferrari 430 Scuderia, but that would be madness financially! I think in reality another bike beckons – but a slower one.'



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Buying guide

FERRARI 458 ITALIA 2009-2015

It's one of Ferrari's greatest road cars, one of its most reliable too, and you could be driving one from £120,000

by Peter Tomalin

WHEN THE 458 REPLACED THE F430 in 2009, it was the latest in a line of 'junior' Ferrari supercars that could be traced back to the late-'60s Dino. But 'junior' somehow didn't really suit the 458, not when it packed a 4.5-litre V8 pumping a mighty 562bhp at 9000rpm, enough to launch it to 124mph faster than the contemporary 599 GTB (10.4sec v 11sec) and on to a 202mph maximum. It also lapped Fiorano as quickly as the hardcore 430 Scuderia, despite weighing 135kg more and being on regular road tyres.

That sort of speed couldn't just be down to brute force: the 458 was also packed with cutting-edge tech. ➔





CHECKPOINTS

ENGINE

The 4.5-litre V8 is proving extremely reliable and generally issue-free. And there are no cambelts to worry about, so no especially scary service bills lurking. Tracking down electronic glitches can be the biggest headache, so any workshop without the latest diagnostics equipment is going to struggle. That's one reason most 458s stay within the dealer network and – while values remain buoyant – are likely to continue to do so for some time.

From 2011, new 458s came with a seven-year

service plan that was transferable between owners. So there's no excuse to accept anything less than a full Ferrari service history.

Many 458s will now be out of the standard three-year manufacturer warranty – and even the extended four- or five-year warranty, if the previous owner coughed-up for that – but provided the mileage is under 56,000 and the history and condition passes all the Ferrari checks, you can get what Ferrari calls its New Power warranty, which covers all major

components. The current cost is £2821 per year, and cars are eligible right up to their 11th birthday.

TRANSMISSION

The Getrag-built twin-clutch gearbox is a development of the unit first seen in the California (it was also used by Mercedes in the SLS AMG) but with shorter ratios and recalibrated shifts. As with the engine, it's proving robust and largely issue-free. A few cars have suffered clutch glitches, but these have usually been cured by resetting the clutch-positioning

sensors and updating the software. Clutch life can be checked, and, with a clutch kit costing the thick end of 20 grand, it would be wise to find out how much life is left on it.

SUSPENSION, STEERING, BRAKES

Check for leaking dampers. The 458's standard adaptive units cost more than £1500 each and can only be bought in pairs. Leaks are generally not covered by warranties, either.

Potentially the most serious threat to your financial

health, however, are the brakes. Carbon-ceramics were standard on all 458s and they're fearsomely expensive. A set of front pads alone is £656.50, and if you need to replace the discs you'll be looking at a bill of over £10k. So you need to know they've been checked for wear and condition.

These cars also have a healthy appetite for tyres, so a recent set of new boots (rears are £250 a corner) is a plus. Also check the wheels for any damage (including on the inside edges for damage from potholes) as replacements are around £2500 apiece.

BODY, INTERIOR, ELECTRICS

It's too early for any corrosion issues, so you're looking for signs of accident damage, including variable panel gaps or respray paint lines or blend-in lines. Check under the front spoiler for scrapes, and around the nose for paint chips.

Check all the toys and electronics work – TFT screens have occasionally given problems.

When the 458 was new, a number caught fire – the rear-wheelarch liners at fault have all been replaced.

The screaming V8, boasting direct injection, a high, 12.5-to-one compression ratio and graphite-coated pistons, drove the rear wheels through a seven-speed dual-clutch paddleshift transmission (no longer was there a conventional manual option). The chassis featured adaptive magnetic dampers along with the latest E-Diff and F1-Trac stability and traction control. The beautiful Pininfarina upper surfaces combined with underbody aero to produce up to 360kg of downforce, while the winglets in the front air intakes moved down by 20mm at speed to clean up the airflow. Inside, there were sophisticated multi-mode TFT screens and a minimalist dash that saw even more controls migrate to the steering wheel, including (and not to everyone's liking) those for the indicators and wipers.

The odd carping about switchgear aside, the 458 was received with something approaching rapture. Not only was it searingly quick and dynamically brilliant, but the sense of quality and refinement at all speeds was a revelation. And, of course, you had the instant response and yowling soundtrack of a high-revving naturally aspirated Ferrari V8 – one of the last of its breed.

A Spider version with a retractable aluminium hardtop was launched in 2011, and in 2014 came the stripped-out, 597bhp 458 Speciale, simply one of the greatest supercars of any era, but also fearsomely expensive today.

A 'regular' 458 isn't exactly a bargain – you won't find many for less than £120k – but then these cars were often £200k-plus when new. Although the list price was a smidge under £170k in 2010, Ferrari knows how to charge for options, particularly for all that lovely carbon trim, and it wasn't uncommon for cars to be specced with up to fifty-grand's worth of extras. The reason for the strong prices, though, is simple: sheer, jaw-dropping brilliance.



WHAT TO PAY

Values remain strong: 2010/11 cars with a full Ferrari history and a good spec start at c£140k, though you might find one privately for £130k. A few are around £120k but there's usually a reason – LHD, high miles, less saleable colour combo, etc. Most 458s do very low mileages, and cars with four owners aren't uncommon. Popular options include carbon-shelled seats, carbon trim, front suspension lift and Scuderia badges. Spiders start at c£170k. Speciale prices seem to have levelled off but, unfortunately for us, at a level not far short of £300k.

INFORMATION

SPECIFICATION

Engine	V8, 4497cc
Max power	562bhp @ 9000rpm
Max torque	398lb ft @ 6000rpm
Transmission	Seven-speed dual-clutch, rear-wheel drive, E-Diff
Weight	1485kg
Power-to-weight	384bhp/ton
0-62mph	3.2sec (tested)
Top speed	202mph (claimed)
Price new	£169,545 (2010)

PARTS PRICES

Prices from dicklovett.co.uk. Tyre price from blackcircles.com. All prices include VAT but exclude fitting charges.

Tyres (each)	£198.12 front, £252.37 rear
Front pads (set)	£656.50
Front discs (pair)	£5664.00
Front dampers (pair)	£3240.02
Clutch kit	£19,517.20
Wheel	£2443.84 front, £2583.51 rear
Spark plugs	£231.64

SERVICING

Every 12,500 or 12 months, whichever is sooner. Prices from dicklovett.co.uk, including VAT. (NB: post-2011 cars include seven-year service pack.)

Annual oil change	£795.96
Brake fluid change (every two years)	£215.50
Aux belt replacement	£171.25
Full service	£1562.29

USEFUL CONTACTS

FORUMS, ADVICE, EVENTS

ferrariownersclub.co.uk
clubscuderia.co.uk
ferrarichat.com

SPECIALISTS

dicklovett.co.uk
hrowen.co.uk
meridien.co.uk

CARS FOR SALE

pistonheads.com
classicandperformancecar.com





'I BOUGHT ONE'

SIMON GEORGE

'As regular *evo* readers will know, my car was bought primarily to run on 6th Gear's supercar driving experience events, although in the early days I also used it for my regular commute between the office in Tamworth and home just north of Sheffield.

'We got off to a shaky start when a faulty fuel sender left the car stranded on the hard shoulder of the M1. I also found the on-board computer unnecessarily complicated, and didn't get on with the wheel-mounted indicator buttons. But as the months went by I couldn't help marvelling at the car's range of talents. Here was a Ferrari that in auto mode my mum could literally drive to the shops, and the very next day it could be hammering around Castle Combe.

'There have been a few electronic glitches and recurring warning lights, mostly relating to the traction control. But the only major issue was when it developed a serious-sounding rattle from the top of the engine at around 60,000 miles. When Graypaul Ferrari investigated, they found significant camshaft damage. Fortunately, Ferrari UK agreed to authorise a repair under warranty.

'In nearly six years, it's covered around 80,000 miles - more than half of those on track and with literally thousands of different drivers. Remarkably, it's lost none of its pace and, what's more, the classic magnolia interior is virtually unmarked and the interior rattle-free. Its maintenance records over the last couple of years show it's

nipping at 6th Gear's Audi R8 V10s in terms of reliability. It's certainly head and shoulders above the F430 we used to run, which quickly exhibited signs of fatigue after sustained track use.

'The 458 has confirmed my belief that modern Italian supercars benefit from mileage - there's no need to fear putting big miles on a 458, except of course for the accelerated depreciation. It's just a shame more owners don't really drive and enjoy them.'



IN THE CLASSIFIEDS

2010 458 ITALIA £119,995

20,000 miles, Rosso/Rosso, left-hand drive, 12-month Power warranty, 20in dark forged rims, fixed carbon racing seats, LED steering wheel

josephshaw.co.uk



2012 458 ITALIA £146,460

22,979 miles, Nero Daytona/Nero, Scuderia shields, 20in diamond-finish rims, front/rear parking sensors, full electric seats

manchester.ferrari dealers.com



2011 458 ITALIA £157,995

7000 miles, Rosso Corsa/Nero roof/Nero, Scuderia shields, 20in forged dark rims, rear parking sensors, carbon racing seats, LED steering wheel

meridien.co.uk



WHAT WE SAID



FIRST DRIVE, JANUARY 2010

'It's clear within the first few miles that Ferrari's decision to use a double-clutch gearbox was the correct one. Less than 50 milliseconds after you flick either paddle, the gear engages. The real advantage is at low speed - you can dawdle in the 458 with no clunking actuators and no rancid clutch smell.

'Heading up into the hills, the roads are wet and the surface cratered with poor repairs - not a place you'd normally want to be in a 562bhp Ferrari - but the 458 is about as tame as this type of vehicle can be under such circumstances. Its electronic chassis armoury is now impregnable - F1-Trac melds with E-Diff3 to create an acronym of unparalleled dynamic brilliance.

'The 458 also sets new standards of straight-line performance in this class. It pulls convincingly from 2000rpm and builds so strongly in the mid-range that by the time you're waiting for the final, frenzied attack on the rev-limiter you're left a little disappointed that you don't sustain some manner of neck injury.

'The 458 continues what must be the finest patch of road-car form Ferrari has ever enjoyed.' - *evo* 139

RIVALS

McLAREN 12C

Closest rival to the 458 in terms of performance and ability, the 592bhp 12C is even quicker and more capable, but not quite as involving. Good value from around £100,000.

LAMBORGHINI GALLARDO

The 552bhp LP560-4 ('08-'13) and lighter, lazier, 562bhp LP570-4 Superleggera ('10-'13) match the 458 for drama and presence, if not outright ability. From £100,000.

PORSCHE 911 GT3 RS (997)

Whether it's the 997.1 ('07-'09) or the 997.2 ('10-'11) or the ultimate, 493bhp 4.0 version ('11-'12), the GT3 RS encapsulates the pure thrill of driving. From around £130,000.

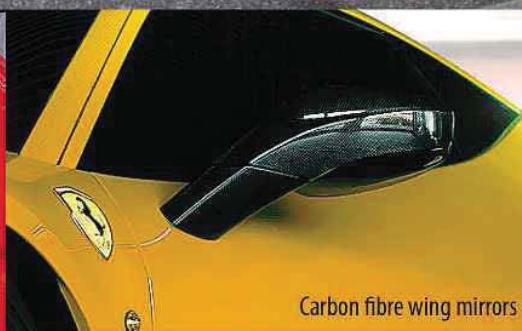
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Factory 458 Speciale wheels fitted to 458 Italia with Novitec variable-rate sport springs



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Carbon fibre wing mirrors



Carbon fibre front winglets for Italia & Spider



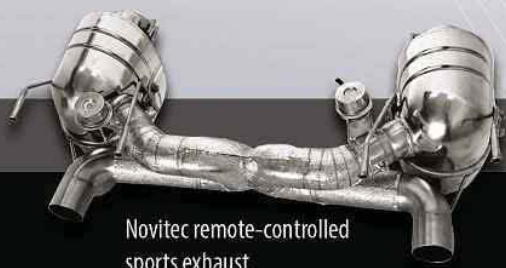
OE-spec carbon fibre rear diffuser and carbon fibre side fins



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EXPERT VIEW

RICHARD BAXTER

BMWCARCLUBGB.UK

'E34s have dropped out of the food chain now. A lot have high mileages and it's very expensive to do anything with the engine; they need to have been maintained throughout their life. You can pick up a dog of one for £5000, but nice cars are £15,000, maybe a bit more if it's something special with low mileage. There's more interest in the later 3.8-litre cars, but the 3.6 is less expensive to look after, and a good one can also command strong money.'

'You don't tend to see E39s for less than £10,000 now, and that figure has probably doubled. Really good low-mileage cars can reach £35,000. They can be very expensive to run if a lot of things need doing, and BMW isn't always the best with the parts supply for older M-cars.'

'There are still quite a lot of E60 M5s around, but most people will only buy one if it has a warranty – few are prepared to take the risk. It's one hell of a car, but not really for the UK: the revs need to be kept up for it to be exciting, and it uses a lot of fuel.'

LUCAS HUTCHINGS

MILLENNIUMHEROES.COM

'Good E34s are around £15,000 now: the most desirable are the early 3.6-litre cars on the "turbine" wheels and the late 3.8s with the six-speed manual gearbox. Their values are stationary at the moment, and remember BMW made a lot more of these than the earlier E28 models. The E34 M5 is one to keep an eye on, though: they're a lot of fun to drive, but are expensive if they need restoring, and a lot have high mileages and rust issues.'

'The E39 M5 has a really strong following. The engine has loads of torque and it's mated to a beautiful six-speed manual gearbox – they offer a very mechanical, connected driving experience. Their numbers have started to dwindle, they also suffer from rust, and the mileages keep going up, of course. The best are now outstripping the E60 in value terms, with prices ranging from £6500 to more than £30,000. They're in demand.'

'With its 5-litre V10, the E60 M5 is very much a supercar engine in a saloon body. It's great above 7000rpm and the gearshifts are good at high engine speeds, but it has no low-down torque and the seven-speed sequential manual transmission is bad around town. [A conventional manual was offered in the US, but not in Europe.] Saloons now cost from £10,000 to £20,000, with the more rare estate versions worth a bit more. These are a supercar bargain.'

MODEL FOCUS

BMW M5 (E34, E39 AND E60)

THE M5 REMAINS THE BIG SPORTS saloon with that magic cachet. Although BMW's German rivals have muscled in on its territory in recent years, when the original E28 model arrived in 1985 it offered Ferrari pace in a sober-suited saloon body, opening up a whole new market niche. Therefore expectations with any new M5 are always sky-high.

If E28s are now bona fide classics, the later E34 (below right), E39 (below left) and E60 (above) are at differing stages of their lives. With straight-six, V8 and V10 power respectively, each has its own style, and the pricing structure may surprise you.

Built between 1989 and 1995, the E34 M5 needs to be treated as a classic purchase, even if values make it hard to justify pouring cash into

The original supersaloon has plenty of driver appeal, but with big performance can come big bills

by Adam Towler

restorations. You'll want to, though, because these are beautiful cars to drive when they're right.

It's the V8 E39 (1999-2003) that has really found its feet in the market, though, even if you can still pick up tired cars for surprisingly little. That's largely because turning bad into good can be very expensive, and not as easy as you might think. At the top of the market, values are even surpassing those of its successor.

That successor would be the glorious if misguided E60 M5 (2005-2010). With a 5-litre V10 it's a truly spectacular car, but as we've talked about in Market before (*evo* 215), also one that can cripple your wallet on so many levels. One in fair condition can now be had for less than £15,000, but do go in with your eyes wide open.



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Lamborghini Murcielago LP670-4 SV
Ceramic Brakes High Level Rear Wing Small Decal option 4,000 miles 2009, **£399,990**



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Lamborghini Huracan LP 610-4 Spyder
Bi colour Sportivo Interior, sports exhaust and branding Pk, 1000 miles, 2016 **£219,990**



Lamborghini Murcielago LP640 Coupe
Ceramic brakes, Hemera Alloys, Reverse Camera, Just 3,900 miles, 2009, **£209,990**



Lamborghini Huracan LP 610-4 Coupe
20" Giano alloy wheels, ceramic brakes, branding PK, orange callipers, 2,000 miles 2014 **£174,990**



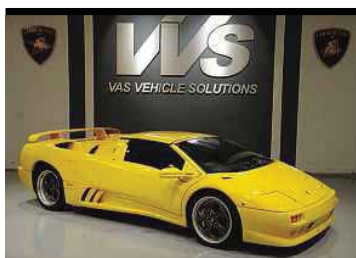
Lamborghini Murcielago LP640 Coupe
Ceramic brakes, Carbon Driving Zone, Alcantara Roof Lining, Only 9,000 miles, 2007, **£169,990**



Lamborghini Murcielago LP640 Coupe
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Lamborghini Murcielago LP640 Coupe
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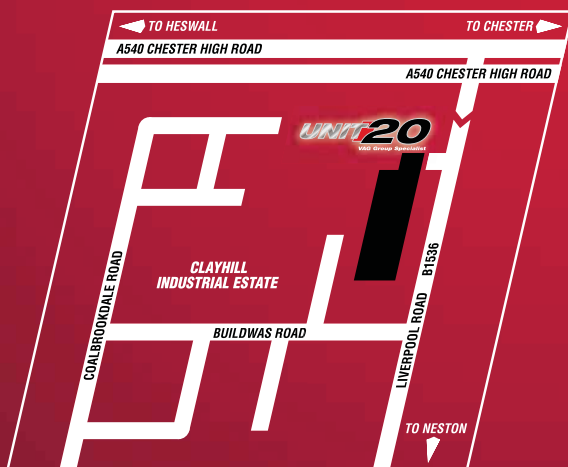
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THE ROUND-UP

New motoring products that have caught our eye this month



PRINT

My Fairlady Z
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[japanesenostalgiicar.com](http://japanesenostalgiocar.com)

Another unique print by Japanese artist San Mamiya, this time depicting a classic Nissan Z through different eras – from a brand-new car in the 1970s, through a modified 'Kaido racer' in the '80s and neglect in the '90s, to a present-day restoration. Measures 12x12 inches.



T-SHIRT

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petrolthreads.co.uk

Each of Singer's 're-imagined' Porsche 911s is named after the locale of its owner, which explains the name of this T-shirt designed by Auto Illustrated. What it can't show you are the amazing mint green seat-centres of the Moscow car...



BOOK

Steve McQueen in Le Mans
£28

mcqueenlemans.com

Le Mans: essential viewing for petrolheads, interminable for anyone else. This new graphic novel, based on the film, might have more appeal, however. The work of an artistic team led by Sandro Garbo, it's absolutely stunning to behold.



GAMING

'Blizzard Mountain' expansion pack for Forza Horizon 3
£16.74

microsoft.com

'Storm Island' was the highlight of *Forza Horizon 2*, so the new 'Blizzard Mountain' expansion pack for the third game in the series should considerably up the fun-factor. Eight new vehicles are available, plus a new snow-covered map. Available for PC and Xbox One.



LUGGAGE

Topo Designs Mountain Duffel
\$229.00

topodesigns.com

evo staff snapper Aston Parrott is currently using one of these to lug around his non-camera gear and he rates it highly – quality is excellent, the design looks slick and its capacity is over 60 litres, making it ideal for weekend trips away or storing kit for trackdays.



TRAVEL

Thule Motion XT
From £375

thule.com

Some of the cars featured in *evo* aren't particularly suitable for winter getaways or summer jaunts, and most roof-boxes look pretty nasty. The Motion XT range from Thule looks good and gives you extra luggage options. Available in either black or silver.



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PORSCHE 911 SC // KIA PROCEED GT // PEUGEOT 308 GTI 270 // AUDI RS6 AVANT PERFORMANCE

NEW ARRIVAL

Audi R8 Spyder

We've taken delivery of a fabulous 533bhp, naturally aspirated V10 engine – and something to carry it around in, too



A ALL THE CARBONFIBRE bits and the rubbery bits and the countless metal bits – be they oily and out of sight or painted and brightly polished. All the components and electrical hardware and everything else that wraps itself around the engine. All of that doesn't really matter to me. It's the V10 that I'm most interested in. As far as I'm concerned, this isn't so much an exercise in living with an Audi R8 for six months, but more a matter of living with that utterly brilliant 5.2-litre, ten-cylinder, 533bhp banshee of a motor.

The R8's 8500rpm power unit could well be one of the last truly great normally aspirated engines before turbocharging and hybridisation and all that really take hold, you see, so it seemed like a pretty good idea to add one to the Fleet before it was too late. Our V10 came wrapped up in a Dynamite Red Spyder body with anthracite wheels, and peering at it from the elevated vantage point of my living room window, I have to say I think the car looks superb.

The Spyder is only available with the 'regular' 533bhp version of Audi's V10 engine rather than the full 602bhp, 9000rpm screamer that powers the V10 Plus coupe. Maybe we've got the wrong R8, then. But

'The convertible roof surely means the Spyder is the very best way to indulge in that V10 engine'

surely the convertible roof means the Spyder is the very best way to indulge in that V10, no matter which version it is? I guess we'll find out.

The basic price of the Spyder is £129,990, which is around £10,000 more than the entry-level coupe and £5000 or so less than the V10 Plus. Quite a lot of money, then. On top of that, our car has some extras. More than £30,000-worth of extras, in fact, taking the total on-the-road price to £167,740. Splutter. The Rotor Grey bucket seats in nappa leather cost £3000 (there'll be much more to say about these seats over the coming months, not all of it good), the carbon-ceramic brakes are £7700 and the gloss-carbon exterior styling pack is £4900. The 20-inch ten-spoke forged alloy wheels, meanwhile, are £2350 and replace a 19-inch five-arm V-spoke design.

There are lots of other bits and

pieces of optional equipment for me to write about in forthcoming reports, too, such as the laser headlights (£3150) and the Sport Plus Pack (£3500), which includes Audi's three-mode magnetic adaptive dampers, Dynamic Steering and, crucially, a sports exhaust. Between the engine, the near-endless list of rather expensive extras and, you know, the car itself, I don't think I'll be running out of stuff to tell you about.

Anyway, bring on the next six months. The early signs are very good because the Spyder is one of the most convincing decapitation efforts I've ever come across – in simple terms, over a bumpy road surface the car's structure doesn't wobble about like a melting jelly – and the soundtrack is sensational. And although most of my driving has been on the motorway during the last couple of weeks, I really don't think 24mpg is all that bad. Not that this is about fuel economy. This is about living with a V10 engine, pure and simple. **x**

Dan Prosser (@TheDanProsser)

Date acquired	November 2016
Total mileage	1700
Mileage this month	3200
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	24.0

BMW i8

Gallagher turns his home into a fuel station, sort of

I I THINK IT'S CALLED 'bonding'. When you get a new car and within only a few hundred miles it feels like you've driven it all your life. Like the RS6 that went before it (see p140), the i8 has slipped into my daily driving with barely a ripple. And it appears the i8 can be as conventional or new-world as you want it to be, but it does help if you 'connect' with the car.

With BMW's i Remote app on my phone and synced with the i8, I can now enjoy some of the peripheral benefits of owning a plug-in hybrid, such as pre-heating the cabin on cold days, sending destinations to the satnav from my phone and, for reasons I don't think I'll ever discover, flashing the headlights. Many of these functions are available on conventional top-end cars, too, but what a normal car can't do when I'm sat on my sofa is refuel. The i8 can.

It's meant having a charging point installed at home, which from calling



Lancia Integrale

The Lancia re-emerges to get some new rubber

T THIS CAR ONLY DOES a couple of thousand miles a year, so it's rare for it to get a fresh set of tyres. People such as **evo** columnist Dario Franchitti will renew the rubber on their cars every two years, regardless of condition, and that's the proper thing to do. But the Lancia doesn't have the tetchy firepower of a Ferrari F40 and I don't have the budget of a four-time IndyCar champion, so my cloth is cut with a touch more economy.

Pod Point (the founder lives near to me and supporting a local firm felt right) to the installation took less than a week. The install itself took less than two hours.

I went for the S7 charger (£485), which in EV-speak means a 7kW unit that delivers around 30 miles of range per hour of charge – plenty for the i8. It's actually over-specced and Pod Point's S3 would have been more than up to the job, but chances are I'll need to charge full EVs (such as a Tesla) in the future and the S7 means I'll be ready for that.

When plugged in, the i8 can charge immediately, be scheduled to take advantage of cheap energy tariffs, or I can open the app and charge the car with a swipe of my finger. This is a godsend when I remember the petrol tank was on vapours when I pulled up on the drive. Some things never change. ☒

Stuart Gallagher
(@stuartg917)

Date acquired	November 2016
Total mileage	6369
Mileage this month	819
Costs this month	£485 charging point
mpg this month	39.4



It means the stakes are high. Astute allocation of funds can pay dividends for a car's handling. But with a single performance tyre now representing a three-figure investment, crap rubber – or even

good rubber that doesn't suit a car – is a numbing experience.

The Integrale complicates the issue (what a surprise). It's not yet old or valuable enough to warrant modern re-mouldings of period

tyres, and yet its modest power and dreamy AWD balance can be neutered by the tarmac-crimping grip of contemporary compounds.

This problem afflicts lots of cars from the 1980s. At a track evening last year, one driver told me of the devastation a set of Michelin Cup 2s had wrought to the adjustability of his Porsche 964. He might as well have brought along an Audi S3, and if that doesn't strike you as a tragedy, not much on planet *evo* will.

So I hunted down some brochure-spec Michelin MXVs, right? Went for the low-rolling-resistance approach Subaru takes by fitting Prius rubber to the BRZ? The latter was a serious consideration, though the trade-off in feel might be as pernicious to the car's strengths as flypaper rubber.

No, as it turns out – and truly this is remarkable – Pirelli still makes the P Zero Asimmetrico in the tragically

small 205/50 R15 fitment the 'Gale's pepper-pot wheels take. From this point there was no turning back.

The wheels' polished edges can be brittle so I took no chances and drove to a Pirelli Performance Centre, where Avon ZV5s made way for a set of tyres sticky enough for a supercar. Idiot. The romance of Lancia and Pirelli, P6 prototype rubber and the Stratos rally car had been too much. But the P Zeros do look *good*, and they relay through the thin-rimmed steering wheel a veneer of extra feel absent with the Avons. Too grippy? Hard to tell so far. I've been a fool, but I may have got away with it. ☒

Richard Lane (@_rlane_)

Date acquired	August 2013
Total mileage	89,531
Mileage this month	122
Costs this month	£538 four tyres
mpg this month	25.2



Volkswagen Golf GTI Clubsport Edition 40

It's a Clubsport by name, but is it a Clubsport by nature?

T THIS MAY NOT BE WHAT you'd expect to hear about a car with 'Clubsport' in its name, but the overriding thought during my first few weeks with the Edition 40 has been just how easy it is to live with. Yes, it has back seats and five doors and a decent boot, but what I'm really talking about is the way it goes down a road.

The Clubsport may have retuned suspension (the optional DCC adaptive setup in the case of our car) and its ride is certainly what most people would call firm, but it's not the kind of firm that causes

you to lose fillings or to wince at the sight of lumps and craters up ahead. Rather it's the kind of firm that offers excellent control over less-than-excellent tarmac.

The final few miles of my run in to the new **evo** office have no shortage of just such tarmac. On these roads, in the noticeably stiffer Civic Type R that I ran prior to the Golf, my pace would always be tempered by the quality of the surface, my eyes busy scanning the road in front of me, my right foot dabbling the brakes to trim speed and minimise the Honda's hopping and skipping.

'The damping will soak it all up and the body won't ever get out of sync'

Volkswagen Golf GTI 16v Mk2

Oil starvation during cornering calls for new hardware

N NOT LONG AGO THE GOLF went through something of a handling transformation at engineering outfit Qprep, and the time since spent behind its steering wheel has truly been great fun.

However, there was a knock-on effect of sharpening up the chassis: through long corners a buzzer would sound and the oil light would flash. I checked the oil level – all good – so was it just a coincidence that this

started happening since stiffening up the car?

Turns out not. I discovered that the buzzer was an indication of low oil pressure, which was causing the cylinder head to be starved of oil. A couple of VW specialists suggested installing a new oil pump and fitting a baffled sump pan as a fix.

I ended up ordering the full works from VW Heritage, including a new oil pump, filter, sump and a



baffled pan. One of the great things about the Mk2 is that reasonably priced, high-quality parts are readily available, so you never need to skimp or cut corners on repairs or upgrades. It's perhaps for this reason that I decided to unleash a little more performance from the naturally aspirated 16-valve engine at the same time by fitting a Pipercross induction kit.

The kit works with the car's original K-Jetronic fuel injection system and replaces the bottom end of the airbox with a filter, increasing the amount of cold air available.

Oddly satisfying, and definitely involving, but not, if I'm honest, as quick as it could be.

In the Golf, on the other hand, I can mostly ignore the lumps and bumps, safe in the knowledge that the damping will soak it all up and the body won't get out of sync either. It's impressive stuff.

There is the Sport setting for the dampers, of course, which ought to ramp up the excitement, but I have to confess that with Normal being so darned good at what it does, Sport has barely had a look-in so far.

Slippery surfaces hold no fear in the Clubsport, either. Where something like the Civic might squirm and slip a fraction here and there, the Golf generally just bites and goes. OK, so it has a little less power and torque, especially in the first two gears, where the overboost doesn't come into play, but its clever electronically assisted limited-slip diff undoubtedly deserves praise for helping to keep things tidy.

All good stuff then, especially at this time of year. Now I'm just praying for some drier, warmer roads on which to experience what the Clubsport has to offer in more optimal conditions. ☒

Ian Eveleigh

Date acquired	October 2016
Total mileage	4666
Mileage this month	1098
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	31.4

With all the new parts now fitted, the oil feed issues have been eradicated, while throttle response has been improved – a very successful fix all round! ☒

Aston Parrot (@AstonParrott)

Date acquired	April 2012
Total mileage	179,710
Mileage this month	28
Costs this month	£109 induction kit £28.30 oil sump £25.20 baffle pan £5.80 oil filter £45.70 oil pump
mpg this month	28.0

Mercedes-AMG C63 S Coupe

The highs and hindrances of life with a 503bhp V8 are revealing themselves

THE C63 S COUPE IS WELL and truly under my skin. I thought the novelty of its big, ballsy twin-turbo V8 would have begun to wane by now, but it makes me smile every time I push the silver start button. That's probably because I still can't resist waking the V8 with its exhaust in Sport mode.

I'm less taken with the stop-start function, mostly because even I get tired of the V8 shutting off and firing up repeatedly in sticky traffic. It just makes such a meal of already vexatious traffic conditions. If I'm in a proper jam, I'll switch it off. Likewise, the 'sailing' mode when cruising is annoying. I like the WEC lift-and-coast connotations, but the sensation of effectively dipping the clutch while travelling at 70mph feels odd. I could tolerate that if the way drive is re-engaged was seamless, but it isn't. So I switch it off.

With winter now in full swing I'm finding cold, wet, leaf-strewn roads are less and less receptive to taking 500-plus bhp and a swell of turbo-fattened torque. A switch to cold-weather tyres would help, or at least make the arrival of wheelspin more progressive, but I've no doubt that the throttle would still need to be treated with respect.

When not slithering around corners (and occasionally fishtailing down the straights) I've had a play with the Drive Select modes and have been surprised by how well judged the suspension increments are, from Comfort through to Race. The gearbox gets a bit punchy when you ramp things up – always banging back down into a low gear and holding it as if the car is priming you for a Hamilton-esque restart after a safety-car period – but it's not a big issue as I tend to use the paddles if I'm really up for it. Besides, with the option to knock the 'box back a few notches while keeping everything else fired-up, I'm close to settling on my ideal Individual mode. With the exhaust set to loud, naturally. ☒

Richard Meaden
(@DickieMeaden)



'Cold, wet, leaf-strewn roads aren't receptive to 500-plus bhp and a swell of turbo-fattened torque'

Date acquired	October 2016
Total mileage	2214
Mileage this month	646
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	22.0

Porsche 911 GT2

Power is nothing without control, they say, and in a GT2 you want all the control you can get

HAVING BEEN BUILT IN 2002, my GT2 dates from the days when electronic dampers were still a real rarity. Hence it doesn't have them.

I, meanwhile, have a love-hate relationship with electronic damper systems, much of it born from a chat with a German test driver and engineer who insisted you should never select the Sport suspension mode on any car when driving at the Ring. Another engineer, this time British, explained that the key advantage of selectable damping on some of the supercars he developed was that they made them more tolerable when driving in a city – the

place he grudgingly admitted that the majority of the cars he worked on were sold.

So I hate the fact that the purpose of these systems seems to be to appease town driving, not enhance enthusiastic driving, but then I also respect how the best systems have evolved. Indeed, Ferrari's SCM 3

'A GT2 needs an oscillating effect like a phall needs extra habaneros'



magnetorheological damping is spookily brilliant – and I also love that the default setting is Sport and you select 'bumpy road' to relax the damping when required.

So back to the GT2. It has a stiff ride, of that there is no doubt. If memory serves, it's not quite as harsh as the 996 GT3 RS that arrived in 2003, but at low speeds and on broken surfaces it does thump and crash. On the flip side, when speed rises and the road smooths out, the GT2 surfs along quite nicely.

However, I started to feel the damping effect erode a few months back. It started at the right rear with a slight lack of body control on the upstroke that created a mild oscillating effect. A GT2 needs this like a phall needs extra habaneros. Upon investigation a leaky damper was discovered – turns out that at some point the rod had been clumsily pinched and scored with a mole grip and so the rubber seal had been slowly scratched away.

A call to Bilstein's technical centre in Leicester revealed that custom-built replacement dampers were an option, and a very tempting one too, but in the end I decided against that and chose to go down the rebuild route – I want to keep this car as Porsche intended. ✕

Nick Trott

Date acquired	June 2015
Total mileage	28,299
Mileage this month	34
Costs this month	TBC
mpg this month	20.2



Porsche 911 SC

New wheels and tyres are the finishing touch for the SC

AT LAST, THE SC IS READY. The rebuilt engine and gearbox are in and the car is MOT'd. However, I'd been holding off on picking it up because I'd had a set of wheels in for a refurb and I didn't want to drive the car until everything was in place.

The idea of changing the huge, Turbo-spec Fuchs alloys (fitted by a previous owner) for a narrower set came about when I realised the

tyres generated too much grip. To get the car dancing meant driving at crazy speeds – not ideal.

Talking to specialist RPM Technik led me to look at reducing the tyre footprint from a 245-section to a 225 on the rear, and from 225 to 205 at the front. This would mean shrinking the wheels from eight to seven inches wide at the back, and at the front either dropping from seven to six inches, or sticking





with sevens and fitting a narrower tyre. Either way, the search was on for a new set of wheels, and I had my heart set on the retrofabulous cookie-cutter design. I found a buyer for my Fuchs then asked RPM Technik to broker a deal for £2000 plus a set of used cookies (all four of them seven inches wide).

The new (to me) wheels then went to exelwheels.co.uk for refurbishment. Wheels this old tend to have had multiple refurbs, often bad ones, but Exel reassured me that older wheels are generally very well made and despite their age

often come up like new. They weren't lying – I'm blown away by how good they now look.

While Exel worked on the refurb, I looked for tyres. As you may have heard, Pirelli has been working with Porsche to develop new tyres that match its older cars. These tyres are marked with the 'N' certification, designating them as homologated by Porsche. They look like the originals but the compounds and construction techniques are modern. They even meet EU noise criteria and (get this) were tested by Porsche legend Walter Röhrl.

In another twist of serendipity, I buried myself in some old books and found out that the tyres that would fit nicely on my car – Cinturato P7s – were originally developed by Pirelli in 1974 for the Porsche 911 Turbo and Carrera 3.0, the latter of which would evolve into the 911 SC. It was the world's first low-profile tyre.

So the refurbished wheels took a trip to Porsche Centre Swindon's Classic department, where a set of Cinturato P7 N4s were fitted – 205/50 R15s for the front and 225/50 R15s for the rears. And just look at them! The new/old vibe fits perfectly

with what I'm trying to achieve with the SC – the character of the original but updated.

The freshly shod wheels are now back with the car at RPM Technik, where some 10mm spacers will be fitted to push them out a touch for a perfect appearance. Then, finally, I'll be able to drive the SC again. ☒

Nick Trott

Date acquired	March 2014
Total mileage	90,993
Mileage this month	0
Costs this month	£1017.60 four tyres
mpg this month	n/a



END OF TERM

Kia Proceed GT

It was widely liked and effortlessly capable, but did this Korean hot hatch do enough to secure our affections?

EASY TO APPRECIATE, hard to love. It seems flippant summing up 12 months of driving in six words, but they do neatly encapsulate my feelings for Kia's most serious performance car to date.

Our Yellow Flame Proceed GT arrived in December 2015. We'd only recently let go of our previous Proceed GT long-term, but a sprinkling of updates combined with that earlier car's general usefulness meant few of us were disappointed to see one back on the fleet.

Those changes were only minor: the 195lb ft torque peak arrived a scant 250rpm earlier, a new sound generator added verve to the 1.6-litre engine's aural qualities and the interior received some mild quality

improvements. But instantly the car felt a little more special, while the previous version's best qualities (foolproof handling, neat styling, ease of use) were all still present and correct.

I was never as keen on the Kia's styling as some of my colleagues were – it's certainly sleek but I have a sneaking suspicion it won't age well. That said, virtually all of us agreed that the cabin was a pleasant space in which to while away the miles, and multiple airport runs and a supporting role at *evo* Car of the Year 2016 bore that out.

Everything inside performed brilliantly, too. Some other car makers – many of which sell cars a great deal more expensive than our £23,105 Proceed – have much

to learn from Kia about delivering a simple user experience. Selecting a destination via the satnav, plugging in a smartphone to listen to music, or setting the climate control just so were all the work of seconds.

As was finding a suitable driving position and getting to grips with the controls once underway. Hopping from car to car can sometimes involve a little acclimatisation time, but the Kia always seemed to fit like a glove regardless of what I'd been driving beforehand, and drive with utter predictability. The gearchange was slick and well defined, the pedal responses were linear, and the steering's rate and response always felt natural.

More than once I compared the GT to the Golf GTI. It has that same

'More than once I compared the GT to the Golf GTI. It has that same sense that someone, somewhere, understands the bond between man and machine'



Below: other than an unlucky puncture, our Kia proved mechanically problem-free. **Below right:** it was surprisingly enjoyable on track, too



sense that someone, somewhere, understands the bond between man and machine. More than that, they understand that control positions and weights are also important. From a brand with no sporting history, it was a surprise to discover the Kia's throttle and brake pedals were perfect for heel-and-toe gearchanges.

So why, then, have I described the Proceed GT as 'hard to love'? Well, like the GTI, it perfectly illustrates the theory that there's far more to a car – and far more to a car's **evoness** – than simply being good at what it does. That Kia has played it safe with its first hot hatchback is understandable, but it also felt like a car with untapped potential.

The engine, for example, never

quite felt up to hauling the relatively heavy (1359kg) Proceed down the road. Most cars of this size now have at least 50bhp more than the 201bhp Kia, and those with similar power can weigh 200kg less. Of course, more power would require more expense in the form of grippier tyres or a limited-slip differential (or both), but it's hard not to imagine a new GT owner very quickly craving more.

Oddly, the deficit to similarly sized cars seemed less of an issue on the three **evo** trackdays at which the Kia appeared. There the car's qualities seemed to gel, though a chance to compare it with the cheaper Renault Sport Clio 220 Trophy (by no means a class leader itself) showed just how tame the Kia is in relation to some of the other options available.

Spending a few weeks in our Nissan Juke Nismo RS long-term (see page 142) highlighted another of the Kia's demerits: character. The Juke is flawed but it has a bubbling, underlying personality that the Kia simply lacks. The Nissan is rowdier, less becalming and ultimately less competent, but it's infused with the sort of fizz that Kia hasn't yet figured out the recipe for.

There's an emotional disconnect, too. There's none of the heritage, history of engineering innovation or partisan appeal that makes cars from rival brands inherently engaging before you even get behind the wheel. It's all emotional baggage, but if you're reading this magazine then emotion will probably influence your car purchases.

In my first report on the Proceed GT I stated that I was looking forward to spending 12 months with it. I appreciated every drive and thoroughly enjoyed several, but I'm not sure I ever really looked forward to them. When Kia produces a car that can manage that, though, its rivals really will have something to worry about. ✕

Antony Ingram (@evoAntony)

Date acquired	December 2015
Duration of test	12 months
Total test mileage	17,402
Overall mpg	31.7
Costs	£251.45 two tyres & one puncture repair £128.28 service
Purchase price	£23,105
Value today	£14,500-17,000

Skoda Octavia vRS 230

A mega-mileage trip sees the Skoda in its element

THE SKODA DID ME proud on a recent road-trip to Germany. Staff writer Will Beaumont and I set off on a Sunday afternoon and arrived in Calais at 4pm, and immediately the vRS made life easy by automatically adapting the headlights for driving on the right.

We may have underestimated the distance to our first overnight stop, though, as we both did a double-

take when the satnav displayed an *eight-hour* drive to Gerlingen, near Stuttgart. Thankfully the vRS's fully adjustable leather sports seats are exceedingly comfortable, and Will's 1990s music mix made for a

surprisingly enjoyable schlep. We arrived just before midnight.

Over the next seven days we covered serious ground, visiting several tuning companies (one of which, Ruf, is featured in this issue). Despite the car's decent fuel economy we very nearly ran out of petrol twice – it seemed that each time we agreed to pull in at the next services we wouldn't come across one until the engine was practically running on fumes. We also slowly watched the interior turn into a dumping ground for empty sweet wrappers and coffee cups. The sliding glass roof provided some much-needed ventilation.

Since our return, the Octavia's cabin has been thoroughly cleaned, but the exterior is starting to win awards for dirtiest car on the road.

Keeping a car clean isn't easy when you're doing hundreds of miles a week at this time of year, but thankfully I reckon there's something rather cool about a black-on-black estate that's this filthy.

Other observations this month? The reversing camera is proving particularly useful when parallel parking in extra-tight spots, the satnav seems a bit laggy in giving directions, and the heated door-mirrors are great on frosty mornings – all the better for checking out the vRS's grubby flanks. ☒

Aston Parrott (@AstonParrott)



Date acquired	November 2016
Total mileage	7486
Mileage this month	6462
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	32.4

Peugeot 308 GTi 270 by PS

Our Pug gets a new custodian – now it just needs some new tyres

PHOTOGRAPHER DEAN Smith, until now the keeper of our 308 GTi, has declared it unusable. Apparently it's too stiff for him to take photos from. Well, he could hardly blame himself for all those out-of-focus shots...

This means that I will be looking after the car from now on. My expectations were huge. Everything

I've so far driven that's been fettled by the Peugeot Sport team, I've loved. There's a fluidity to the RCZ R that's addictive, and despite both Dickie Meaden and Dan Prosser declaring various Fiesta STs better than the 208 GTi by Peugeot Sport, the rambunctious French hot hatch is the one I'd have. Its limited-slip diff, sticky rubber and excellent damping make it feel so special even at low speeds, but it then revels in being driven hard and is so malleable and involving close to the limit.

So it perhaps isn't really fair on the 308 that my first exposure was after it had been subjected to 13,000 photographer miles, which are sort of like dog years, where one real mile has the effect of seven. After

a thorough clean, though, it's clear the interior has coped well and the vivid blue of the exterior is still very luscious. However, the front Michelin Pilot Super Sports have lost their edge and the winter's wet tarmac is exacerbating their lack of bite.

Reluctantly, I have to agree with Dean that the suspension is hard, and although this creates exceptional body control, it doesn't translate to the same sort of fun and adjustability I crave from a car stamped with 'by Peugeot Sport'. Hopefully the tyres are to blame for the slightly tame balance and something can be done to liberate that Peugeot Sport magic. ☒

Will Beaumont
(@WillBeaumont)



Date acquired	July 2016
Total mileage	13,021
Mileage this month	2343
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	30.0

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I IT WAS NEVER GOING to be easy handing the key back to Audi UK. Not when that key opened the door of a £100,000 super-estate and fired up a 597bhp twin-turbo V8. Life with the RS6 was no hardship, but breaking up with it certainly was.

I had the luxury of selecting the spec of **evo's** RS6, which meant hours agonising over the pros and cons of a carbonfibre engine cover that no one would see, and wondering whether I could get away with another grey long-term. The answer to the latter was no and I forewent the former, too. The £14,175 of Audi's money I did spend on top of the £84,675 base price went on a few luxuries such as keyless entry and hands-free boot opening (£750 well spent) and the Connect infotainment and phonebox (£750 less well spent). I also traded the external titanium trim for gloss black, for no charge. Some may consider the £9375 ceramic brakes a bit excessive, but I'll come to why I don't share that view in a moment. And as for switching the standard air suspension for £1000 of RS Sport Suspension with Dynamic Ride Control and a locking rear diff, well, it felt like the **evo** thing to do.

RS6 Performance models want for very little. A 21-inch wheel comes as standard, as does rear privacy glass – something I'd rather have foregone, but blagging journalists

can't have it all their own way. Painted in Sepang Blue, KU16 MRX looked as angry as a black-cab driver ordered to give way to a cyclist. Aggressive, muscular and with presence aplenty, on late-night runs home with the standard LED matrix headlights turning night into day, few cars could clear lane two of the M11 like the RS6.

It wasn't how the RS6 looked or how welcoming its cockpit was that impressed the most, however. It was how it drove that dominated every journey. The twin-turbo V8 could be made to be soothing or angry. Left in Comfort or Auto mode, the 4-litre engine's tone and the sports exhaust's note amounted to nothing more than a sophisticated burble. Switch the exhaust to Dynamic and the pops and bangs increased and the noise level was raised a notch or two, but it wasn't until you went to full Dynamic mode for the engine that you got the 21-gun salute with every upshift or lift of the throttle.

I tended to leave the suspension, engine and gearbox in Auto but used Dynamic for the exhaust, diff and steering (this wasn't the hateful variable-ratio Dynamic Steering, by the way). It was a perfect combo for the majority of driving I do. The car felt tied down without feeling overly stiff, and generated enough feel that you could enjoy its performance on roads more suited to a hot hatch. The diff didn't induce understeer

END OF TERM

Audi RS6 Avant Performance

A moment's silence, please, as one of the most complete cars ever to grace the Fast Fleet departs



'Every journey felt special, whether it was a weekend run-around or a trip to Le Mans'

Clockwise from right: our RS6 went to Le Mans in convoy with its C5 RS6 forebear; infotainment felt dated, but interior is otherwise ageing well; twin-turbo V8 was epic

if the speed dropped, and in a fast sweeper or on the exit of a tighter turn it brought a smoothness to the rear axle that made the traction control all but redundant. This car wasn't the most precise on turn-in and the slow-in approach was the only option, but with 553lb ft on tap, exit speeds weren't an issue.

At just 50kg shy of two tons, the RS6 wasn't delicate. It responded best to consistent and committed inputs. You had to modulate the brakes deep into the corner as if your daughter's kitten lived under the pedal – the relentless stopping power of the ceramics made them worth every penny – then roll off them once the front Pirellis had



bitten. Driving like this, you could pour the RS6 smoothly through any given corner. You'd need to be pretty ham-fisted to unstick it.

Drawbacks? It was rather thirsty, averaging 23.9mpg, and the 70-litre tank was too small for a decent day's driving (300 miles tops). By today's standards the infotainment system felt ancient, too. I didn't suffer any of the buckled-wheel issues some owners have experienced, despite a low-frequency vibration through the steering (because of worn tyres).

BMW's M5 is the drivers' car in this segment and Merc-AMG's E63 the more ferocious performance machine. This explains why the RS6 rarely wins a group test. But it is the

car most testers would take home. It's a no-compromise car: it will lug a family around and entertain a keen driver. Every journey in mine felt special, whether it was a weekend run-around or a trip to Le Mans. That the RS6 also renders 'fast' SUVs redundant is the icing on the cake. I'm going to miss it, I really am. ✕

Stuart Gallagher
(@stuartg917)

Date acquired	June 2016
Duration of test	6 months
Total test mileage	14,122
Overall mpg	23.9
Costs	£0
Purchase price	£98,850
Value today	£74,000-80,000

Nissan Juke Nismo RS

END OF TERM

Impressive on the spec sheet and with plenty of character, was our jacked-up hot hatch a surprise hit?

AFTER NINE MONTHS ON Fast Fleet, our Juke Nismo RS has returned to Nissan. The question is whether this SUV-cum-hot hatch really delivered on its promise of blending practicality with genuine driving thrills, all for a modest basic price of £22,180.

With its quirky looks and interior details, this Juke frequently sparked chatter in the **evo** office. It was well equipped (our car also had the £900 Tech Pack fitted, which added xenon headlights, lane and blind-spot warnings and a bird's eye view from the many parking cameras) and was largely trouble-free, with minimal maintenance required beyond a new set of tyres after a setup issue saw the originals wear unevenly.

There were some fundamental problems, though. The available storage space (for photography equipment, in my case) was minimal, and the Nismo's hard ride made it a pain to take car-to-car photographs from. Furthermore, the small fuel



'You soon discovered that this car needed more concentration than you might think'

tank meant I spent a lot of time at petrol stations. Granted, some people may not care about all of those things, but they are still serious concerns for a supposed daily driver.

As a big fan of German engineering it was refreshing to have a taste of something different. The Juke's spec was right on the money with its 215bhp turbocharged 1.6-litre four-pot powering the front wheels through a limited-slip diff. Indeed, if you covered ground at a reasonable pace you soon discovered that this car needed more concentration than you might think.

Despite the firm ride there was more body roll than I expected, which made the car feel heavy in corners, but the diff did a good job of maintaining traction. It could become unruly under full power, though, something that was confirmed by none other than Corvette works racing driver Oliver Gavin when he had the pleasure of driving the Juke back from the shoot for our Three Peaks Challenge feature (**evo** 227). He sent a text

saying: 'Not much torque-steer on this Juke then! I've nearly wrecked three times... #GrabbingGears.'

We also took the Juke on track (well, it is a Nismo). Road test editor Dan Prosser explained that here the lack of flat-bodied response limited the car's dynamic potential. As you turned into a corner the car would lean then push into understeer, and despite the diff there was still wheelspin from the inside front wheel, which triggered the traction control. The gearshift was one of real quality, though.

To answer that initial question, then, the Juke Nismo RS was an interesting car to live with, but sadly not one practical or capable enough to take on the best hot hatches. ❌

Aston Parrott (@AstonParrott)



Date acquired	March 2016
Duration of test	9 months
Total test mileage	17,944
Overall mpg	33.0
Costs	£400 tyres £100 alignment
Purchase price	£24,380
Value today	£15,000-16,500

NEXT MONTH



NSX

Is it a cut-price
Porsche 918?

ISSUE 233

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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 manufacturers' 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	★★★★☆
Abarth 695 Biposto	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 talent... - ...but 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	13	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 option	★★★★☆
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	11-'12	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	★★★★☆
DS 3 Performance	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	★★★★☆
Ford Fiesta ST200	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 altar of economy - Gets ragged when really pushed	★★★★☆
Ford Focus ST	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	295/1750	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	★★★★☆
Ford Focus RS (Mk3)	229 R	£31,250	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 - Needs to be driven hard	★★★★☆
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	10-'11	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	★★★★☆
Honda Civic Type R	227 R	£30,000	4/1996	306/6500	295/2500	1378kg	226	5.4	12.4	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, diff steering	★★★★☆
Kia Proceed GT	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 Integrare	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	★★★★☆
Mazda 2.1 S Sport	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	★★★★☆
Mini Cooper (F56)	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	★★★★☆
Mini Cooper S (F56)	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	★★★★☆
Mini John Cooper Works (F56)	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	★★★★☆
Mini John Cooper Works Challenge (F56)	224 R	£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	11-'15	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	11-'14	4/1995	141/4000	225/1750	1150kg	125	8.0	-	134	114	65.7	+ A quick diesel Mini with impressive mpg - But no Cooper 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)	231 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'	★★★★☆
Nissan Juke Nismo RS	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 5.4k more than a Fiesta ST Mountune	★★★★☆
Peugeot 308 GTi 250 by Peugeot Sport	223 R	£26,855	4/1598	246/6000	243/1900	1205kg	207	6.2	-	155	139	47.1	+ A very capable hot hatch... - ...that lacks the sheer excitement of the best in class	★★★★☆

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OUR CHOICE

Volkswagen Golf R. In Mk7 form the 'R' Golf has finally become a model it's possible to *really* get excited about, because joining the usual class, quality, four-wheel-drive security and impressive pace is a truly engaging driving experience. There's even an estate version, too.



BEST OF THE REST

If the Golf R is too mature to appeal, try the Ford Focus RS (pictured), or if front-drive is your thing, consider the Golf GTI Clubsport Edition 40 or SEAT's Leon Cupra 290. Amongst the smaller hatchbacks, the Fiesta ST Mountune just edges the Peugeot 208 GTI by Peugeot Sport.

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	
Peugeot 308 GTI 270 by Peugeot Sport	229 R	£28,890	4/1598	266/6000	243/1900	1205kg	224	6.0	-	155	139	47.1	+ Thrilling and engaging on smooth roads - A real handful on bumpy ones	★★★★★
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	★★★★★
Renault Twingo GT	231 D	£13,755	3/998	109/5750	125/2000	1001kg	111	9.6	-	113	115	54.3	+ Nippy performance - Less fun than a rear-engined Renault Sport-fettled car should be	★★★★☆
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	229 D	£22,425	4/1618	217/6050	206/2000	1204kg	183	6.6	-	146	135	47.9	+ Willing chassis - Awful paddleshift gearbox	★★★★★
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	231 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	231 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	'16	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	-	'16	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-'15	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	'14-'15	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	231 R	'14-'15	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 chassis... - partially 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 FI 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 - FI Team stickers in dubious taste	★★★★★
Renaultsport Mégane R26.R	231 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	227 R	£28,380	4/1984	286/5900	258/1700	1300kg	224	6.4	13.4	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)	077 R	'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 would 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 STI... - ...but 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 sound... - ...but 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)	229 R	£28,515	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1276kg	173	6.5	-	153	139	47.1	+ Brilliantly resolved - Lacks the punch of newer rivals	★★★★★
VW Golf GTI Clubsport Edition 40 (Mk7)	230 D	£30,935	4/1984	286/5350	280/1700	1300kg	224	6.3	-	155	162	40.4	+ A faster, sharper, more entertaining GTI - Some rivals are more exciting on track	★★★★★
VW Golf GTI Clubsport S (Mk7)	229 R	'16	4/1984	306/5800	280/1850	1285kg	242	5.8	12.8	165	172	38.2	+ Runner-up at evo Car of the Year 2016 - Only 400 built	★★★★★
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 just 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	1446kg	187	5.7	-	155	199	33.2	+ Great engine, tremendous pace and poise - High price, adaptive dampers optional	★★★★★
VW Golf GTI (Mk5)	195 R	'04-'09	4/1984	197/5100	207/1800	1336kg	150	6.7	17.9	145	192	35.2	+ Character and ability; the GTI's return to form - Lacking firepower?	★★★★★
VW Golf R32 (Mk5)	087 R	'06-'09	6/3189	246/6300	236/2500	1466kg	170	5.8	15.2	155	257	26.4	+ Traction's great and you'll love the sound/race - We'd still have a GTI	★★★★★
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	★★★★★
VW Golf GTI (Mk1, 1.8)	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	★★★★★
Volvo C30 T5 R-Design	122 R	'08-'12	5/2521	227/5000	236/1500	1347kg	165	6.6	16.9	149	203	32.5	+ Good-looking, desirable Volvo - Lacks edge of best hatches. Avoid auto	★★★★★

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BEST OF THE REST

Mercedes-AMG's new E63 S 4Matic+ (pictured) has set the bar high for the next M5, while Porsche's Panamera Turbo feels good for its 7min 38sec Ring time. Move down a size and Mercedes-AMG's C63 S is a highly desirable package, although some may prefer the more focused feel of BMW's M3.

	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE Cyl/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	CO2 G/KM	EC MPG	EVO RATING
Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio	229 R	£59,000	6/2891	503/6500	443/2500	1524kg	335	3.9	-	191	198	40.3	★ If Ferrari built a saloon (really) - Lacks the final polish of German rivals ★★★★★
Alpina D3 Biturbo (F30)	192 D	£47,950	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	£57,450	6/2979	404/5500	442/3000	1630kg	252	4.3	-	190	177	37.2	★ Understated appearance, monster performance - E90 M3 is better on the limit ★★★★★
Aston Martin Rapide S	201 D	£147,950	12/5935	552/6650	465/5500	1990kg	282	4.2	-	203	300	21.9	★ Oozes star quality; gearbox on 2015MY cars a big improvement - It's cosy in the back ★★★★★
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	£32,330	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1430kg	210	5.3	-	155	162	26.4	★ On paper a match for the original S4 - In reality much less interesting ★★★★★
Audi S4 (B9)	225 D	£44,000	6/2995	349/5400	369/1370	1630kg	218	4.7	-	155	166	38.7	★ Strong response and delivery from turbo engine - Chassis feels softer than before ★★★★★
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)	231 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	★ Effortless pace - Not the last word in agility. Bends wheel rims ★★★★★
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	£79,505	8/3993	552/5700	516/1750	1935kg	290	3.6	8.2	155	223	29.4	★ Performance, foolproof powertrain, beefy looks - Feels a bit one-dimensional ★★★★★
Audi RS6 Avant Performance (C7)	224 D	£86,420	8/3993	591/6100	553/2500	1950kg	311	3.7	-	155	223	29.4	★ As above, but with even more power - A stern test of self-control ★★★★★
Audi RS6 Avant (C6)	116 R	08-10	10/4991	572/6250	479/1500	2025kg	287	4.3	9.7	155	333	20.2	★ The world's most powerful estate - Power isn't everything ★★★★★
Audi 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	£84,485	8/3993	552/5700	516/1750	1920kg	292	3.9	-	155	229	28.8	★ Stonking performance, great looks - Numb driving experience ★★★★★
Audi S7 Sportback	171 D	£64,380	8/3993	414/5000	406/1400	1945kg	216	4.6	-	155	225	-	★ Looks and drives better than S6 it's based on - Costs £8000 more ★★★★★
Audi S8 Plus	217 D	£98,395	8/3993	597/6100	553/2500	1990kg	305	3.8	-	155	229	28.2	★ Fantastic drivetrain, quality and refinement - Dynamic Steering feels artificial ★★★★★
Audi RS Q3	246 D	£46,120	5/2480	335/5300	332/1600	1655kg	206	4.8	-	155	203	32.1	★ Surprisingly characterful; better than many RSs - High centre of gravity ★★★★★
Bentley Flying Spur V8	200 D	£132,800	8/3993	500/6000	487/1700	2342kg	217	4.9	-	183	254	25.9	★ Effortless performance with real top-end kick - Determinedly unsporing ★★★★★
Bentley Flying Spur V8 S	230 D	£142,800	8/3993	521/6000	502/1700	2342kg	226	4.6	-	190	254	25.9	★ Old-school approach to comfort and luxury - Old-school tech ★★★★★
Bentley Flying Spur	185 D	£154,900	12/5998	616/6000	590/1600	2400kg	261	4.3	-	200	343	19.0	★ More power than old Flying Spur Speed - Feels its weight; engine sounds dull ★★★★★
Bentley Bentayga	217 D	£162,700	12/5950	600/5000	664/1350	2365kg	258	4.0	-	187	296	21.6	★ Sublime quality, ridiculous pace - Inert driving experience, SUV stigma ★★★★★
Bentley Mulsanne	178 F	£229,360	8/6752	505/4200	572/1750	2610kg	197	5.1	-	184	342	19.3	★ Drives like a modern Bentley should - Shame it doesn't look like one too ★★★★★
Bentley Mulsanne Speed	223 F	£252,000	8/6752	530/4200	811/1750	2610kg	206	4.8	-	190	342	19.3	★ Characterful; superb build quality - A bit pricey... ★★★★★
BMW 330d M Sport (F30)	180 D	£37,800	6/2993	254/4000	413/2000	1540kg	168	5.6	-	155	129	57.6	★ Great engine, fine handling, good value - Steering confuses weight with feel ★★★★★
BMW 340i M Sport Touring (F31)	228 D	£41,635	6/2998	321/5500	332/1380	1615kg	202	5.1	-	155	158	41.5	★ Feelsome rear-drive chassis - Easy to drive it beyond its comfort zone ★★★★★
BMW 328i (F30)	165 D	11-15	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 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	£56,605	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1520kg	284	4.1	8.6	155	204	32.1	★ Looks, performance, practicality - Body control on rough roads; engine lacks character ★★★★★
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	-	★ Saloon chassis + weight savings + GTS engine = best E90 M3 - Just 67 were made ★★★★★
BMW M3 (F10M)	208 R	11-16	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1870kg	300	4.3	-	155	232	28.5	★ Twin-turbocharging suits M5 well - Can feel heavy at times ★★★★★
BMW M5 (E60)	129 R	04-10	10/4999	500/7750	384/1600	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	£95,665	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1875kg	299	4.2	-	155	232	28.5	★ Enormous performance, stylish looks - Price tag looks silly next to rivals, M5 included ★★★★★
BMW X5 M50d	191 D	£65,240	6/2993	376/4000	546/2000	2190kg	155	5.3	-	155	173	42.8	★ Straight-line pace - Driving experience identical to standard X5, despite the M badge ★★★★★
BMW X6 M	212 D	£93,100	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	£633,000	12/6233	720/5100	811/2100	1850kg	395	3.8	-	217	-	-	★ Seven hundred and twenty bhp - Three hundred thousand pounds ★★★★★
Cadillac CTS-V	148 R	£67,030	8/6162	556/6100	551/3800	1928kg	293	3.9	-	191	365	18.1	★ It'll stand out among M-cars and AMGs - The novelty might wear off ★★★★★
Cadillac CT6	226 D	£69,990	6/2997	411/5700	409/2500	1950kg	214	5.7	-	149	223	28.2	★ Caddy's S-class rival scores on comfort - But not on driver involvement ★★★★★
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 XE 2.0d AWD	227 D	£33,825	4/1999	178/4000	317/1750	1615kg	112	7.5	-	140	123	60.6	★ Great chassis gets more traction - Shame the engine isn't as polished ★★★★★
Jaguar XE S	213 D	£44,865	6/2995	335/6500	332/4500	1615kg	208	4.9	-	155	194	34.9	★ Neat handling, neat design - V6 loses appeal in the real world ★★★★★
Jaguar XF S	214 D	£49,945	6/2995	375/6500	332/4500	1735kg	223	5.0	-	155	198	34.0	★ Outstanding ride and handling balance - Engine lacks appeal ★★★★★
Jaguar XF S Diesel	219 D	£49,945	6/2993	296/4000	516/2000	1750kg	172	5.8	-	155	144	51.4	★ Great chassis, good looks, better engine than V6 petrol - It's still a diesel ★★★★★
Jaguar XFR	181 D	09-15	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1800kg	284	4.8	10.2	155	270	24.4	★ Brilliant blend of pace and refinement - Doesn't sound as special as it is ★★★★★
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 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	★ Style, packaging, refinement - We can think of sportier vehicles ★★★★★
Lexus GS F	221 D	£69,995	8/4969	470/7100	391/4800	1790kg	267	4.6	-	168	260	25.2	★ Superb engine, exploitable chassis - Gearbox is off the pace ★★★★★
Lexus IS F	151 R	07-12	8/4969	417/6600	372/5200	1714kg	247	4.7	10.9	173	270	24.4	★ Shockingly good Lexus - The M3's available as a (second hand) four-door too ★★★★★

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	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE Cyl/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	CO2 G/KM	EE MPG	EVO RATING	
Lotus Carlton	170 R	'91-'93	6/3615	377/5200	419/4200	1658kg	231	4.8	10.6	176	-	17.0	+ The Millennium Falcon of saloon cars - Every drive a work-out	★★★★★
Maserati Ghibli	186 D	'52-'65	6/2979	325/5000	406/1750	1810kg	182	5.6	-	163	223	29.4	+ Bursting with character; good value compared to Quattroporte - It's still a big car	★★★★★
Maserati Ghibli S	198 D	'63-'66	6/2979	404/5500	406/4500	1810kg	227	5.0	-	177	242	27.2	+ Stands out from the crowd; sounds good too - Chassis lacks finesse, engine lacks reach	★★★★★
Maserati Quattroporte S	184 D	'80-'11	6/2979	404/5500	406/1750	1860kg	221	5.1	-	177	242	27.2	+ Tempting alternative to V8 - Feel-free steering, ride lacks decorum	★★★★★
Maserati Quattroporte GTS	226 D	'10-'11	8/3798	523/6800	479/2250	1900kg	280	4.7	-	193	250	26.4	+ Still pretty - Off the pace dynamically	★★★★★
Maserati Levante Diesel	221 D	'12-'13	6/2897	271/4000	442/2000	2205kg	125	6.9	-	143	189	39.2	+ Impressive blend of ride and handling - Diesel performance is mild for a Maserati	★★★★★
Maserati Quattroporte S	137 R	'08-'12	8/4691	425/7000	361/4750	1990kg	216	5.1	12.1	174	365	18.0	+ A QP with the bhp it deserves - Grille is a bit Hannibal Lecter	★★★★★
Maserati Quattroporte Sport GTS	141 R	'08-'12	8/4691	433/7000	361/4750	1990kg	221	5.1	-	177	365	18.0	+ The most stylish supersaloon - Slightly wooden brakes, unforgiving ride	★★★★★
Maserati Quattroporte	085 R	'04-'08	8/4244	394/7000	333/4500	1930kg	207	5.1	-	171	-	17.9	+ Redefines big-car dynamics - Don't use auto mode	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz 190E 2.5-16	185 F	'89-'92	4/2498	201/6750	177/5500	1360kg	147	7.2	-	142	-	24.4	+ M-B's M3 alternative - Not as nimble as the Beemer	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz CLA45 AMG	186 D	'12-'20	4/1991	355/6000	332/2250	1510kg	239	4.6	-	155	161	31.0	+ Strong performance, classy cabin - Pricy compared to A45 AMG hatchback	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG	205 R	'14-'15	4/1991	355/6000	332/2250	1510kg	239	4.8	-	155	175	31.7	+ An aggressive and focused sports crossover - Low on driver interaction	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG C43 4Matic Estate	228 D	'14-'15	8/2996	362/5500	383/2000	1660kg	222	4.7	-	155	181	35.8	+ Incredibly fast and composed - Difficult to engage with	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG C63	209 D	'15-'16	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	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG C63 Estate	216 R	'16-'17	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	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG C63 S	211 R	'16-'17	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 S 4Matic+ (W213)	231 R	'16-'17	8/3982	603/5750	627/2500	1880kg	326	3.4	-	155	203	31.7	+ Fast, refined, effective and fun - At nearly two tons, it's not 911 nimble	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG E63 S (W212)	208 R	'13-'16	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	465/3200	1765kg	298	4.5	-	155	295	22.4	+ As below, but with an extra 1lbhp and squarer headlights - Steering still vague	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W211)	096 D	'06-'09	8/6208	507/6800	465/3200	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	'11-'13	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	'16-'17	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	516/1750	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	'16-'17	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	'16-'17	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	'16-'17	8/5461	518/5250	516/1750	2270kg	232	4.7	-	155	276	23.9	+ Great engine, surprisingly good dynamics - E85K buys a Boxster and an ML350...	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz G63 AMG	172 D	'12-'14	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 ever... - About 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	031 R	'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 Tommi Mäkinen Edition	231 R	'00-'01	4/1997	276/6500	275/2500	1365kg	205	4.6	-	150	-	-	+ Our favourite Evo - Subtle it is not	★★★★★
Porsche Panamera Turbo	227 D	'11-'13	8/3996	542/5750	568/1960	1995kg	276	3.6	-	190	212	30.4	+ Searing pace with body control that's a real step up; superb rear wing, too - Still very heavy	★★★★★
Porsche Panamera GTS	208 R	'11-'16	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	'10-'16	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	'14-'16	6/2997	333/5500	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	'15-'16	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	'15-'16	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	'12-'13	6/3604	434/6000	442/1650	2110kg	209	5.2	-	163	228	28.3	+ The driver's Cayenne... - ...but why would a driver want an SUV?	★★★★★
Porsche Cayenne GTS (Mk2, V8)	173 D	'12-'15	8/4806	444/6500	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	'13-'14	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	'11-'16	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 S4	160 D	'14-'16	4/1999	237/6000	251/1900	1670kg	144	7.0	-	135	199	-	+ Striking looks, sporting dynamics - Hefy price, and petrol version is auto-only	★★★★★
Range Rover Sport SDV8	222 FF	'10-'13	8/4367	334/3500	546/1750	2359kg	144	6.5	-	140	219	33.6	+ A brilliant long-distance machine - Doesn't live up to the 'Sport' branding	★★★★★
Range Rover Sport V8 Supercharged	186 D	'14-'16	8/5000	503/6000	460/2500	2335kg	219	5.0	-	155	298	21.7	+ Deceptively quick and capable sports SUV - It's still got a weight problem	★★★★★
Range Rover Sport SVR	212 D	'15-'16	8/5000	542/6000	501/3500	2335kg	236	4.5	-	162	298	21.7	+ Characterful drivetrain; genuine off-road ability - Not a match for its rivals on the road	★★★★★
Range Rover SDV8	180 D	'10-'13	8/4367	334/3500	516/1750	2360kg	144	6.5	-	140	229	32.5	+ Lighter, more capable, even more luxurious - Diesel V6 model feels more alert	★★★★★
Rolls-Royce Ghost	186 D	'12-'16	12/6592	563/5250	575/1500	2360kg	242	4.7	-	155	317	20.8	+ It's quicker than you think - It's more enjoyable driver slowly	★★★★★
Rolls-Royce Phantom	054 R	'10-'13	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	201 R	'10-'13	4/2457	296/6000	300/4000	1534kg	196	5.2	-	158	242	27.2	+ Fast Subaru saloon returns (again) - Without a power increase	★★★★★
Subaru WRX STI	151 D	'10-'13	4/2457	296/6000	300/4000	1505kg	200	5.1	-	158	243	26.9	+ Fast Subaru saloon returns - Without the blue paint and gold wheels	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza WRX GB270	109 D	'07	4/2457	266/5700	310/3000	1410kg	192	5.2	-	143	-	-	+ Fitting final fling for 'classic' Impreza - End of an era	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza STI	090 R	'05-'07	4/2457	276/6000	289/4000	1495kg	188	5.3	-	158	-	25.9	+ Stunning to drive - Not so stunning to look at	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza RB320	105 R	'07	4/2457	316/6000	332/3750	1495kg	215	4.8	-	155	-	-	+ Fitting tribute to a rallying legend - Too hardcore for some?	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza WRX STI PPP	073 R	'03-'05	4/1994	300/6000	299/4000	1470kg	207	5.2	12.9	14				



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OUR CHOICE

Lotus 3-Eleven. It may not be groundbreaking but it is hugely exciting. 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

Jaguar's F-type (pictured) impresses in most forms, and we'd defy anyone not to be charmed by Aston Martin's V8 or V12 Vantage S Roadsters. Unsurprisingly, you won't find a driver in Lotus's Elise and Exige Roadster ranges, and the same goes for Caterham's evergreen Seven.

	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CY/C	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	COE 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	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Alfa Romeo 4C Spider	223 R	£60,255	4/1742	237/6000	258/2200	940kg	256	4.5	-	160	161	40.9	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Alfa Romeo 8C Spider	161 R	'09-'11	8/4691	450/7000	354/4750	1675kg	273	4.5	-	181	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Alpina D4 Biturbo Convertible	212 D	£54,950	6/2993	345/4000	516/1500	1815kg	193	5.0	-	171	156	47.9	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Alpina B4 Biturbo Convertible	227 D	£62,950	6/2979	404/5500	442/3000	1840kg	223	4.5	-	187	186	35.3	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ariel Atom 3.5 Supercharged	180 D	£38,000	4/1998	310/8400	169/7200	550kg	573	2.7	-	155	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ariel Atom 3.5R	205 R	£64,800	4/1998	350/8400	243/6100	550kg	647	2.6	-	155	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ariel Atom 3 245	113 D	'08-'12	4/1998	245/8200	155/5200	500kg	498	3.2	-	150	-	33.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ariel Atom 3 Supercharged	138 R	'09-'12	4/1998	300/8200	162/7200	550kg	554	3.3	-	155	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ariel Atom Mugen	165 R	'12-'13	4/1998	270/8300	188/6000	550kg	499	2.9	-	150	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ariel Atom V8 500	165 R	'10-'12	8/3000	475/10,500	284/7750	550kg	877	3.0	5.8	170	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ariel Nomad	210 R	£33,000	4/2354	235/7200	221/4300	670kg	365	3.4	-	134	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Aston Martin V8 Vantage Roadster	130 R	£89,994	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1710kg	250	4.7	-	180	328	20.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Aston Martin V8 Vantage S Roadster	161 R	£108,995	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1690kg	258	4.6	-	189	299	21.9	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Aston Martin V12 Vantage S Roadster	212 R	£147,000	12/5935	565/6750	451/5750	1745kg	329	4.1	-	201	343	19.2	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Aston Martin V12 Vantage Roadster	175 R	'12-'14	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1760kg	294	4.4	-	190	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Aston Martin DB9 Volante	150 D	'05-'15	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1815kg	263	4.6	-	190	368	18.2	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Aston Martin DBS Volante	133 D	'09-'12	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1810kg	286	4.3	-	191	388	17.3	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Audi TTS Roadster	207 D	£41,085	4/1984	306/5800	280/1800	1450kg	214	5.2	-	155	169	38.7	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Audi TTS Roadster	122 D	'08-'14	4/1984	268/6000	258/2500	1455kg	187	5.6	-	155	189	34.9	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Audi TTS Roadster	133 D	'09-'14	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1510kg	225	4.7	-	155	212	31.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Audi R8 V8 Spyder	186 D	'11-'15	8/4163	424/7900	317/6000	1660kg	259	4.8	-	187	337	19.6	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BAC Mono	189 R	£124,255	4/2261	280/7700	206/6000	540kg	527	2.8	-	170	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Bentley Continental GT V8 Convertible	168 R	£150,200	8/3993	500/6000	487/7700	2395kg	212	4.7	-	187	254	25.9	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Bentley Continental GT V8 S Convertible	194 D	£160,500	8/3993	521/6000	502/7700	2395kg	221	4.5	-	191	258	25.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Bentley Continental GT Speed Convertible	187 D	£181,000	12/5998	626/6000	605/7700	2420kg	263	4.1	-	203	347	19.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BMW Z4 sDrive 35i M Sport (Mk2)	186 D	£43,005	6/2979	302/5800	295/1300	1505kg	240	5.2	-	155	219	30.1	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BMW Z4 sDrive (Mk1)	094 D	'06-'09	6/2996	265/6600	232/2750	1310kg	205	5.7	-	155	-	32.9	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BMW Z4 M Roadster	099 R	'06-'09	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1410kg	244	4.8	-	155	-	23.3	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BMW M Roadster	002 R	'98-'02	6/3246	325/7400	258/4900	1375kg	240	5.3	-	155	-	25.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BMW 435i Convertible	194 D	£45,680	6/2979	302/5800	295/1200	1740kg	176	5.6	-	155	190	34.8	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BMW M4 Convertible (F83)	202 D	£61,145	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1750kg	247	4.6	-	155	213	31.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BMW Z8	026 R	'00-'03	8/4941	400/6600	369/3800	1585kg	256	4.8	11.1	155	-	14.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Caterham Seven 160	205 R	£19,710	4/660	80/7000	79/3400	490kg	166	6.9	-	100	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Caterham Seven 270	219 R	£23,795	4/1596	135/6800	122/4100	540kg	254	5.0	-	122	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Caterham Seven 310R	227 D	£24,995	4/1596	152/7000	124/5600	540kg	286	4.8	-	126	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Caterham Seven 360	209 R	£27,795	4/1999	180/7300	143/6100	560kg	327	4.8	-	130	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Caterham Seven 420	223 R	£30,795	4/1999	210/7600	150/6300	600kg	381	4.0	10.3	136	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Caterham Seven 620S	220 D	£44,995	4/1999	310/7700	219/7350	610kg	516	3.4	-	155	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Caterham Seven 620R	187 R	£50,795	4/1999	310/7700	219/7350	572kg	551	2.8	-	155	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Caterham Seven CSR	094 R	£47,295	4/2261	256/7500	200/6200	565kg	460	3.8	-	155	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Caterham Seven Roadsport 125	105 R	'07-'14	4/1596	125/6100	120/5350	539kg	235	5.9	-	112	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Caterham Seven Roadsport	165 R	'11-'14	4/1596	140/6900	120/5790	520kg	273	4.9	-	120	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Caterham Seven Supersport R	180 D	'13-'14	4/1999	180/7300	143/6100	535kg	342	4.8	-	130	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Caterham Seven Superlight R300	150 R	'09-'12	4/1999	175/7000	139/6000	515kg	345	4.5	-	140	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Caterham Seven Superlight R500	123 R	'08-'14	4/1999	263/8500	177/7200	506kg	528	2.9	-	150	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Caterham Levante	131 R	'09-'10	8/2398	550/10000	300/8500	520kg	1074	4.8	8.2	150	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Caterham Seven R300	068 R	'02-'06	4/1796	160/7000	130/5000	500kg	325	4.7	-	130	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Caterham Seven R500	200 R	'99-'06	4/1796	230/8600	155/7200	460kg	510	3.6	8.8	146	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ferrari California T	229 D	£155,254	8/3855	553/7500	551/7450	1729kg	324	3.6	-	196	250	26.9	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ferrari California	171 D	'08-'14	8/4297	483/7750	372/5000	1735kg	283	3.8	-	193	299	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Fiat 124 Spider	228 R	£19,545	4/1368	138/5000	171/2250	1050kg	134	7.5	-	134	148	44.1	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Honda S2000	118 D	'99-'09	4/1997	237/8300	153/7500	1260kg	191	6.2	-	150	-	28.2	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Jaguar F-type Convertible	186 R	£56,260	6/2995	335/6500	332/3500	1587kg	214	5.5	-	161	234	28.8	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Jaguar F-type S Convertible	183 R	£66,260	6/2995	375/6500	339/3500	1604kg	238	5.3	-	171	234	28.8	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Jaguar F-type R Convertible	-	£92,310	8/5000	542/6500	501/3500	1665kg	331	4.0	-	186	255	26.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Jaguar F-type SVR Convertible	230 D	£115,485	8/5000	567/6500	516/3500	1720kg	335	3.5	-	195	269	25.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Jaguar F-type Project 7	212 R	'15	8/5000	567/6500	501/2500	1585kg	363	3.9	-	186	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Jaguar F-type V8 S Convertible	183 R	'13-'14	8/5000	488/6500	461/2500	1665kg	298	4.3	-	186	259	25.5	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Jaguar XKR Convertible	130 R	'09-'14	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1725kg	296	4.6	-	155	292	23.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Jaguar XKR-S Convertible	167 R	'11-'14	8/5000	542/6500	502/2500	1725kg	319	4.2	-	186	292	23.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
KTM X-Bow GT	183 D	£95,880	4/1984	281/6400	310/3200	875kg	326	4.1	-	144	189	34.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
KTM X-Bow R	165 R	£87,480	4/1984	296/5500	295/3300	818kg	368	3.6	-	144	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
KTM X-Bow	138 R	'08-'12	4/1984	237/5500	229/2000	818kg	294	3.8	-	137	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lotus Elise Sport	-	£35,880	4/1598	134/6800	118/4400	866kg	157	6.0	-	127	149	45.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lotus Elise Sport 220	-	£43,800	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	924kg	239	4.2	-	145	173	37.7	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lotus Elise Cup 250	224 R	£45,600	4/1798	243/7200	184/3500	931kg	265	3.9	-	154	175	37.7	★ ★ ★ ★ ★



RUF R TURBO

Back in 2001, a 213mph top speed made this 520bhp Ruf the fastest production car on sale. David Vivian held on tight

The engine note at idle is deliciously gruff and hollow – a goose-pimply prelude to the first- and second-gear slam. This blast-off ferocity is probably more than matched by Porsche's standard all-drive Turbo, though – savage but bearable. It's the Ruf's fourth- and fifth-gear shove that

projects it into the realm of the supernatural. 'Tickle the throttle at 100mph in these gears and the Ruf appears to put on 30mph in the blink of an eye. All that torque, negligible turbo lag and so little resistance. Not so much acceleration as instantaneous

displacement. The effect is extraordinary, exhilarating and unforgettable. I honestly can't remember driving a car in which I felt more inclined to hang a sign out of the window apologising to other drivers for the disturbing rate at which they were being overtaken.'

ISSUE 038, DECEMBER 2001

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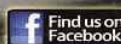


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	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE Cyl/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	CO2 G/KM	EC MPG	EVO RATING	
Lotus Elise 1.6 Club Racer	183 R	11-15	4/1598	134/6800	118/4400	852kg	160	6.0	-	127	149	45.0	+ Even lighter, even more focused - Are 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 thrilling 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 S1.8	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	044 R	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	4/1796	118/5500	122/3000	731kg	164	6.1	18.5	126	-	39.4	+ A modern classic - A tad impractical?	★★★★★
Lotus Exige Sport 350 Roadster	221 R	£55,900	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1125kg	312	3.7	-	145	235	28.0	+ An Exige with added sunny-day appeal - A Boxster would be more practical	★★★★★
Lotus Exige Sport 380 Roadster	231 R	£67,900	6/3456	375/6700	302/5000	1110kg	343	3.5	-	178	242	27.2	+ As above, but faster and even purer - As above	★★★★★
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 - 981 Boxster 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	★★★★★
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-racer... ..that 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 uninvolved	★★★★★
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-5.1.5 (Mk4)	230 F	£18,495	4/1496	129/7000	111/4800	975kg	134	8.3	-	127	139	47.1	+ Lightest MX-5 since the Mk1 - Lacks intensity	★★★★★
Mazda MX-5.2.0 Sport Nav (Mk4)	228 R	£23,695	4/1998	158/6000	147/4600	1000kg	161	7.3	-	133	161	40.9	+ Brilliant basic recipe - The desire for stiffer suspension and more power	★★★★★
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-5; 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 ragtop doesn'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	-	-	+ AMG gets serious - Dull-witted 7G-Tronic auto box, uneven dynamics	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG C63 S Cabriolet	226 D	£68,115	8/3982	503/5500	516/1750	1850kg	276	4.1	-	155	208	31.7	+ A born hooligan - Body flex takes away some control	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG SLC63	228 D	£114,115	8/5461	577/5500	664/2250	1770kg	331	4.1	-	155	234	28.0	+ Effortless performance - Needs more involvement to go with the pace	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLC500	169 D	12-16	8/4663	429/5250	516/1800	1710kg	255	4.6	-	155	212	31.0	+ Wafty performance, beautifully engineered - Lacks ultimate sports car feel	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLC63 AMG	171 D	12-16	8/5461	530/5500	590/2000	1770kg	304	4.3	-	155	231	-	+ Monster performance, lighter than before - Still heavy, steering lacks consistency	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLC63 AMG	183 D	13-16	12/5980	621/4800	737/2300	1875kg	336	4.0	-	155	270	24.4	+ Chassis just about deals with the power - Speed limits	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLC63 AMG	177 D	08-13	8/6208	518/6800	464/5200	1970kg	278	4.6	-	155	328	20.0	+ More focused than old SLC55 AMG - Lost some of its all-round appeal	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLC63 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	167 R	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	★★★★★
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	14-16	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 GT4s	★★★★★
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 S (986)	070 R	99-04	6/3179	256/6200	229/4600	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	260/8000	680kg	687	3.2	-	168	-	-	+ Fastest road car around the Nordschleife - Convincing people it's road legal	★★★★★
Renault Sport Spider	231 R	96-99	4/1998	148/6000	136/4500	930kg	157	6.5	-	131	-	-	+ Rarity, unassisted steering - Heavier than you'd hope; disappointing engine	★★★★★
Rolls-Royce Dawn	222 D	£250,000	12/6592	563/5250	575/1500	2560kg	223	4.9	-	155	330	20.0	+ Effortless driving experience - Driver involvement not a priority	★★★★★
Toyota MR2	187 R	00-06	4/1794	138/6400	125/4400	975kg	141	7.2	21.2	130	-	38.2	+ Tight lines, taut dynamics - Minimal luggage space	★★★★★
TVR Tamora	070 R	01-07	6/3605	350/7200	290/5500	1050kg	338	4.5	-	160	-	-	+ Well-sorted soft-top TVR - Awkward styling	★★★★★
TVR Tuscan Convertible	091 R	05-07	6/3996	365/6800	315/6000	1100kg	337	3.8	8.1	195+	-	-	+ Spirit of the Griff reborn - Over 195mph? Really?	★★★★★
TVR Chimaera 5.0	007 R	93-03	8/4988	320/5500	320/3750	1060kg	307	4.6	-	167	-	26.4	+ Gorgeous noise, tarmac-rippling grunt - Details	★★★★★
TVR Griffith 4.3	068 R	92-93	8/4280	280/5500	305/4000	1060kg	268	4.8	11.2	148	-	-	+ The car that made TVR. Cult status - Mere details	★★★★★
TVR Griffith 500	009 R	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	066 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	★★★★★

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I40 DMH	£1600	FV J74	£795	W9 HER	£595	HJ2 H44	£495	B5 LAW	£1600	MCR IR	£1900	NEZ 90	£595
P4 DMR	£695	R31 FLO	£595	HEZ I23	£695	ILJ 343	£395	R26 LAW	£595	R6 MDB	£595	GB NGB	£595
DCD 83K	£595	T18 FL7	£695	HLI 878	£1100	ILJ 7323	£495	S80 LAW	£595	4010 ME	£1600	NI 5555	£2900
35I DCB	£2400	P21 FLY	£695	HLI 7580	£595	JIL 6P	£695	LAW 646W	£595	MEG 38W	£1300	700 NK	£3300
S30 DOD	£595	R23 FLY	£595	I418 HJ	£1200	H9 JJC	£595	368 LIR	£595	ES78 MEG	£595	P21 NKS	£695
K4 DON	£1700	24 FN	£2900	D3 HUM	£595	D4 HLW	£1100	849 IDE	£695	A92 MEL	£1300	479 NMT	£595
DON 4IL	£1400	594 F0H	£495	W2 HJM	£595	JIM 144C	£695	L5 LE	£595	P121 MEL	£595	NN 727	£4300
W8I DON	£795	700 FOX	£995	80 HJX	£695	P21 JLLC	£3200	79 LE	£3300	DI MEP	£1300	49N	£2900
X32I DON	£595	R29 FRA	£595	625H HK	£595	P29 JMB	£895	R21 LEA	£795	YI MES	£595	P31 NNN	£595
472 DON	£2900	J40 FRA	£595	2094 HL	£1100	C16 MID	£595	P24 LEA	£595	P24 MES	£795	44 NNS	£2300
B3 DOT	£695	FRE 545	£1200	37 HN	£3900	P24 JMG	£595	P24 LEE	£1500	79 WFB	£595	P29 NNY	£595
W8I DOT	£595	FRY 70Y	£695	P21 HOG	£695	IZ JMR	£595	R24 LEE	£1500	737 MFL	£595	P321 NNY	£795
994 DOT	£1600	L99 FRY	£595	W6 HOG	£595	P23 JMR	£595	V777 LE	£1200	7835 MG	£1700	R23 NOR	£595
YI DOW	£595	2378 FS	£1600	R12I HOL	£595	P74 JMS	£695	LEN 6X	£2900	MG6 VY	£495	NO5 IIA	£595
J3 DCR	£795	3333 FS	£3300	K4 HOP	£795	N3 JMT	£695	D9 LEN	£1700	420 MHO	£595	300 NP	£3700
CR DCP	£695	III FV	£3200	F6 HOT	£895	P24 JMW	£595	S23 LEN	£595	77 MHW	£595	920 NPA	£495
DS 7804	£1500	FW 804I	£1800	I990 HS	£2400	4457 JN	£1400	V29 LEN	£795	MI1 864	£595	213 NPK	£495
R4 DSD	£695	847 FWN	£495	II5 HTA	£1500	952 JOD	£1400	N33 LEN	£695	I969 MJ	£2700	222 NR	£4300
DSW 942	£695	44 FXJ	£795	I6 HU	£5300	R23 JOE	£1300	LEN 408	£1800	Y77 MJB	£795	NRC 757	£1300
IX DSD	£595	55 FY	£3200	W4 HUG	£695	M80 JOE	£1400	P26 LEO	£595	P200 MJM	£595	L7 NSH	£595
Y9 DTB	£595	A3 GAK	£595	HUI 383	£495	R26 JON	£1600	T0 LES	£895	W27 MJC	£595	477 NVO	£595
DT5 DBN	£1300	V4 GAM	£595	N77 HUW	£595	JON 386W	£1200	A16 LES	£1400	R29 MJD	£695	NKH 230	£495
P24 DUB	£595	A14 GAM	£595	30 HV	£3300	P777 JON	£1400	P90 LES	£795	P25 MJG	£595	90 NY	£4300
DUB 672	£1300	P21 GAR	£695	I21 HW	£3600	R27 JOY	£595	LES 35IX	£595	P121 MJH	£695	270 NY	£3700
61 DY	£3900	GAS 319	£2100	444 HXY	£695	G18 JOY	£595	M15 LEW	£595	MJ1 5610	£595	60 NYW	£695
H9 EAL	£795	R32I GAV	£595	ICZ 434	£495	R28 JOY	£595	R23 LEX	£1100	P3 MJL	£595	R27 OAK	£595
EB T12	£3700	II CGC	£695	ICZ 85	£695	243 JOY	£1900	ILHM 607	£1100	R29 MJL	£595	156 OFT	£595
83I EBY	£1700	300 CGC	£995	ILZ 750	£595	E3 JPD	£795	ILB 883	£795	R27 MJM	£795	869 OHW	£695
EC 826I	£1400	90I CGC	£895	ILZ 770	£495	M8 JPD	£695	LIW II	£895	P121 MJM	£595	W77 OLY	£695
EC2 494	£595	CGW 2W	£595	IRZ 696	£495	EB JRC	£795	449I LJ	£795	R24 MPJ	£595	R32I OLY	£595
IT DDD	£2200	GDN 49	£595	E19 JAB	£695	P26 JRS	£695	R24 LJ5	£595	R32I MJJ	£595	PA ONA	£595
T20 EDJ	£695	R24 GEF	£595	P27 JAB	£595	IRZ 349	£495	JI LM8	£1100	Y99 MJR	£595	82 OOB	£995
W9 EDW	£595	P27 GEM	£895	P23 JAC	£1400	C3 JSC	£895	VE LOC	£595	P32I MJR	£595	F4 OOL	£595
R21 EDY	£595	GEM 31Y	£1300	T77 JAC	£1300	N3 JSF	£595	470 L00	£695	R69 MJW	£695	86 OR	£4700
L16 EGF	£595	GE0 IR	£2900	M30 JAC	£1100	JSI 6W	£695	R21 LOR	£695	S333 MJW	£595	OR7 728	£695
9930 EFC	£795	P23 GED	£595	T0 JAD	£595	JA JTC	£595	R0 LOT	£595	M5 MKP	£595	333 OVX	£595
A090 EFH	£1600	R28 GED	£695	K6 JAF	£795	J3 JTH	£795	GI L0T	£795	M60 MMC	£595	99 OYR	£595
E1B 8V	£795	P25 GER	£595	Y7 JAG	£1500	67 JTW	£695	R3 L0U	£1400	P21 MMS	£795	4000 P	£3600
600 EJX	£495	GER 148	£1400	T55 JAG	£1100	P23 J2L	£595	880 LPJ	£895	508 MMU	£495	NA PAB	£3100
43 EK	£3100	C8 GES	£595	X400 JAG	£595	R26 J2L	£595	X3 LRA	£595	R23 MOG	£795	247 PAD	£1600
EKF 617	£495	TI GFH	£695	R29 JAK	£1300	JUN 3N	£1700	831 LS	£4100	X200 MOG	£595	L2 PAM	£1400
T8 EKS	£795	779 GFR	£595	O027 JAK	£595	364 JYX	£695	R24 LUC	£595	R24 MOL	£695	V25 PAM	£795
I637 EL	£895	M86 GS	£6100	S222 JAK	£595	EB JWB	£695	P55 LUC	£695	7 MOL	£595	V333 PAM	£695
R17 ELI	£595	G1B 5847	£495	R26 JAM	£795	555 JYJ	£795	P32I LUC	£595	R25 MOR	£595	PAM 651M	£795
R21 ELS	£695	G1L 8659	£795	L900 JAM	£595	NI KAB	£595	N5 LUK	£795	P27 MOR	£595	S6 PAN	£895
R24 ELY	£695	333 GK	£3200	78 JAN	£1700	E9 KAB	£595	P29 LUK	£695	R23 MOS	£695	T14 PAR	£695
ELZ IO	£795	424 GLY	£895	E68 JAN	£595	T6 KAD	£595	555 LUC	£695	R12I MOS	£595	R29 PAR	£695
ELZ 2595	£595	I990 GHM	£2800	449 JAN	£595	IZ KAP	£695	555 LTF	£695	W5 MPG	£595	R32I PAR	£595
P25 EMA	£695	N6 GMB	£595	89 JAP	£895	WIO KAR	£795	LYN 21M	£2500	MR 6646	£2700	P24 PAS	£695
P25 EMM	£695	GN 486I	£1800	D9 JAR	£1200	Y12 KAR	£595	P29 LYM	£1200	R24 MCR	£595	P12I PAS	£695
R121 EMM	£595	GNH 904	£495	M70 JAR	£695	K444 KAR	£695	31 LYN	£595	P123 MKR	£595	A98 PAT	£1200
Y35 EMS	£1300	I79 GNM	£495	P24 JAS	£1100	R26 KAS	£595	P23 LYN	£595	X15 MRS	£595	D98 PAT	£1200
R121 EMS	£695	G1I GOW	£795	R121 JAS	£895	P24 KAT	£595	1972 M	£5200	N MSA	£595	A304 PAT	£695
57 EN	£3100	A7 GPH	£695	JAT1 49S	£595	L14 QAY	£1200	P24 MAC	£1400	NI MSD	£1400	PAT 351	£2900
24 EO	£4400	46 GPW	£795	W9 JAW	£1300	P23 KAY	£895	R29 MAC	£595	YI MSTR	£595	H3 PAW	£595
EO 8769	£695	I966 GR	£2700	DI JAW	£795	KAZ 6694	£495	P23 MAD	£7195	N6 MST	£695	P21 PAW	£595
86 EP	£4400	T33 GRA	£695	VIII JAJ	£795	X5 KBB	£595	W27 MAD	£695	P23 MUD	£595	El PBB	£895
479 EPB	£795	R12I GRA	£595	P321 JAX	£595	IO 692	£3500	MAD 546	£1200	DII MUM	£595	PBB 335	£1300
30 ER	£4500	Y8 GRE	£595	P25 JAY	£595	59 KE	£3800	R700 MAD	£595	MUM 77V	£795	102 PBP	£495
Y9 ERC	£595	C3 GRW	£695	88 JCA	£595	P23 KEL	£795	98 MAF	£595	S99 MUM	£695	PBZ 41	£895
CI ERH	£695	GTF 559	£1100	P24 JCB	£595	KEN 22P	£1400	C3 MAG	£1500	R7 MUR	£595	1978 PC	£2700
NA ERN	£695	729 GTV	£495	D8 JCI	£595	Y35 N2S	£1200	S19 MAG	£895	W29 MUR	£595	6C PCB	£595
421 ES	£2900	24 GU	£4100	Y6 JCK	£695	X40 KEN	£1300	T666 MAG	£695	1759 MW	£2300	R3 PCH	£695
ESK 937	£695	975 GUB	£495	D4 JCL	£695	86 KEN	£3500	P28 MAH	£595	VE MWH	£595	A4 PCW	£895
RS ESP	£695	C9 GUN	£1400	R23 JDB	£595	T32I KEN	£895	R28 MAK	£595	8539 MY	£895	1978 PD	£3100
FSS 8V	£1400	G7 GUS	£995	V8 JDO	£595	R23 KER	£595	R31 MAK	£595	2002 MY	£1300	MI PDT	£595

G37 GUY	\$895	P24 JDM	\$695	J27 KEV	\$995	P21 MAL	\$1100	222 MYX	\$795
200 GXJ	\$695	P21 JED	\$695	KEZ TAZ4	\$995	R23 MAL	\$1100	1851 MZ	\$695
71 GY	\$3900	P23 JED	\$595	4692 KF	\$1300	M40 MAL	\$1300	W2 NAB	\$695
GZ 7348	\$495	Y5 JEF	\$1500	167 KHW	\$495	I03 MAL	\$2600	C15 NAN	\$595
8179 HA	\$1500	JEF 348N	\$795	862 KKN	\$495	C777 MAL	\$895	NAR 594	\$895
HAG IAI	\$595	R900 JEF	\$595	P2 KOO	\$595	S13 MAR	\$795	P23 NAT	\$595
R21 HAI	\$595	R7 IEL	\$695	C1 KOS	\$595	R121 MAR	\$695	W444 NAT	\$795
K12 HAM	\$595	P24 JEM	\$795	RP 8655	\$1600	P23 MAS	\$695	48 NC	\$4700
R25 HAS	\$595	P21 JEN	\$1800	3898 KR	\$1700	R121 MAS	\$595	87 ND	\$4700
J10 HAT	\$695	V444 JEN	\$1300	KRM 893	\$1500	P27 MAT	\$595	6973 ND	\$1400
R21 HAT	\$595	K99 JER	\$595	1970 KS	\$2500	D139 MAT	\$795	AD NDW	\$895
R24 HAY	\$795	P25 JES	\$1100	548 KTW	\$895	K222 MAT	\$895	90 NDY	\$895
Y31 HAY	\$695	C77 JES	\$1300	KUI ILO	\$595	R23 MAW	\$595	70 NDY	\$795
HAG 5212	\$595	B166 JES	\$695	694 KWL	\$595	R26 MAX	\$1300	53 NE	\$3300
C1 HCW	\$695	JES 735X	\$595	P23 KYM	\$695	V444 MAX	\$995	R29 NET	\$1200
52 HE	\$4600	P2 JGB	\$695	R123 KYM	\$595	V50 MAY	\$595	P8 NET	\$795

A12 PIV	\$595	X002 RON	\$595	P26 SUE	\$1500
697 KO	\$595	R9 RON	\$2500	E889 SUE	\$795
P27 PMB	\$595	R21 RON	\$1500	SUI 656	\$485
P23 PMC	\$695	E50 RON	\$395	S15 SY	\$6700
A6 PMH	\$695	R0N 993R	\$695	J55 SYD	\$595
B5 PMH	\$795	P20 R00	\$595	M50 SYL	\$595
W9 PMJ	\$595	K4 R05	\$1700	R27 TAP	\$595
L2 PMS	\$695	W17 R05	\$395	D5 TAL	\$895
97 PN	\$4500	R65 R05	\$595	EG TAM	\$1100
PP 992P	\$1900	S21 R02	\$595	R23 TAM	\$695
SN P8P	\$795	PI R0Y	\$1400	R23 TAP	\$595
PI PPT	\$695	W23 ROY	\$795	P25 TAR	\$595
PI2 PPY	\$695	F300 ROY	\$695	TBX 743	\$495
PI21 PPI	\$595	481 ROY	\$2800	THY 415	\$795
AI PRM	\$795	W9 RPB	\$695	312 TD	\$1300
B6 PRC	\$695	BI RPS	\$1400	K16 TED	\$895
PSF 942	\$595	L5 RPS	\$695	P999 TED	\$795
PS1 583	\$795	RRG 374	\$895	P25 TEF	\$795
30 PV	\$4600	P24 RRR	\$595	F17 TEL	\$895
GR PWR	\$595	ER RSP	\$595	P21 TEL	\$695
222 PWF	\$795	Y5 RSW	\$595	R555 TEL	\$595
40 PYX	\$695	P7 TRT	\$795	A8 TEN	\$895
S55 PYH	\$595	R8 RUB	\$595	T23 TER	\$595
2195 RA	\$1600	P21 RUN	\$695	S555 TER	\$895
RAB 404	\$1300	R29 RUN	\$595	6557 TF	\$1500
RIE RAC	\$595	R66 RUS	\$595	733 TH	\$3700
S86 RAC	\$595	RH 483	\$595	TLI 757	\$495
R21 RAC	\$595	RXV 879	\$595	RI 606	\$495
R21 RAF	\$695	I4 RY	\$5300	PI THM	\$895
R42 RAH	\$2400	R2 6374	\$695	783 TMP	\$895
D20 RAG	\$595	1962 SA	\$2600	639 THU	\$595
T20 RAG	\$795	S11 SAC	\$595	XII TNY	\$1100
T10 RAJ	\$595	P31 SAD	\$895	R23 TOM	\$1400
K55 RAR	\$795	SAD 66W	\$695	P24 TOM	\$1300
N99 RAM	\$695	L19 SAF	\$695	TOM 211Y	\$1500
M39 RAT	\$695	SIY SAF	\$595	P28 TOM	\$595
R23 RAN	\$595	SAL 2Y	\$5500	J7 TOP	\$795
J19 RAV	\$695	R23 SAL	\$595	I25 TR	\$3800
V88 RAV	\$695	P21 SAM	\$2200	R24 TRT	\$795
R29 RAY	\$1400	SAM 50Y	\$3300	A3 TOT	\$695
IRP 167V	\$695	SAM 50Y	\$1300	P26 TTY	\$695
P200 RAY	\$595	P23 SAN	\$595	4025 TU	\$1500
V321 RAY	\$795	Y11 SAN	\$795	24 TV	\$4400
R42 213	\$795	S121 SAN	\$595	S6 TVE	\$795
2222 RC	\$3500	P25 SAR	\$595	TVI 195	\$795
RC 5420	\$2500	X88 SAR	\$595	359 TVW	\$695
ES RCC	\$595	R29 SAT	\$595	TXI 656	\$495
PI21 RCE	\$595	S12 SAT	\$595	G3 TVE	\$695
CI2 RCH	\$795	SAW 689	\$1900	TYF 422	\$595
RCJ 717	\$1400	S8U 823	\$595	8601 UA	\$495
66 RCW	\$595	P28 SC0	\$795	UD0 62	\$795
E6 RRD	\$795	SC0 265T	\$595	UF7 977	\$695
RT RDM	\$795	C5 SCR	\$695	P28 ULL	\$595
LI RDP	\$595	1970 SD	\$2600	600 ULL	\$795
F19 RDS	\$795	SDD 332	\$1500	P31 UMX	\$595
E9 RDR	\$595	L2 SPD	\$595	URK 780	\$795
R28 RDY	\$695	GT SEA	\$695	I7 US	\$4700
K17 RED	\$695	W9 SEN	\$695	USH 44R	\$895
R23 RED	\$795	J333 SEN	\$595	720 V	\$4300
CI REF	\$695	P25 SER	\$595	VAB 63	\$1500
B7 REG	\$895	BIH SEW	\$595	MIU VAL	\$1100
V99 REG	\$595	SE2 636	\$495	S30 VAL	\$595
200 REG	\$1800	L2 SFC	\$595	N100 VAL	\$595
REG 751	\$1500	P2 SPG	\$595	349 VAL	\$695
W7 REL	\$595	P25 SHA	\$595	VAL 438Y	\$595
P23 REN	\$595	R28 SHA	\$595	8853 VB	\$1400
R23 REN	\$595	S123 SHE	\$795	1055 VC	\$1600
R28 REV	\$695	V666 SHE	\$595	90 VE	\$4700
TTTT REV	\$1500	H3 SHM	\$695	VF 3092	\$1300
H6 REX	\$795	777 SHY	\$1800	720 VFC	\$795
PI1 REX	\$595	PI23 SJJ	\$595	VIL 750	\$695
786 RF	\$2900	A222 SJD	\$595	VJR 458	\$895
5204 RF	\$1400	P21 SJG	\$595	A18 VOL	\$795
REG 890	\$595	PI21 SJJ	\$795	B7 VON	\$895
J3 RGD	\$695	E12 SJR	\$595	2799 VT	\$1200
N9 RGM	\$695	P23 SJS	\$595	400 VXH	\$695
RHJ 895	\$495	P29 SJJ	\$595	333 VYF	\$595
R1I 535	\$495	P27 SJJ	\$695	S3 WAC	\$595
PI21 RJH	\$595	P23 SJW	\$595	R21 WAG	\$595
W24 RJC	\$595	A6 SKA	\$695	R21 WAL	\$695
P3 RJH	\$595	N7 SKP	\$695	N49 WAL	\$595
PI21 RJH	\$595	R23 SKY	\$595	P23 WAN	\$695
924 RJH	\$1600	P28 SKY	\$595	R321 WAT	\$595
R1I 656	\$495	P25 SLB	\$595	WCA 421	\$495
N99 RJM	\$695	R84 SLK	\$595	J3 WDS	\$595
P23 RJM	\$695	P25 SMC	\$695	6729 WE	\$1300
P23 RJS	\$595	X6 SMD	\$895	Y1I WE	\$695
200 RK	\$3900	H3 SMF	\$595	A14 WEB	\$1100
B9 RKH	\$595	E4 SMR	\$595	R121 WE	\$595
476 RKP	\$595	SN7 S7	\$895	WEI 346	\$1200
P26 RKR	\$595	P31 SON	\$795	R21 WEN	\$595
P27 RKS	\$595	R31 SON	\$595	V33 VEN	\$595
P28 RKY	\$695	PI23 SON	\$795	WES IYI	\$3300
5000 RM	\$3300	SRP 463	\$895	R29 WES	\$595
R28 RMC	\$595	P77 SSA	\$595	S31 WES	\$595
991 RMF	\$1400	I59 STA	\$1800	WEZ 353	\$695
W6 RMJ	\$595	RI STD	\$595	WJA 608	\$795
42 RO	\$3700	204 STD	\$595	E1 WJB	\$795
4126 RO	\$1300	ST1 STE	\$795	WJ1 757	\$495
J10 ROB	\$1700	DI0 STR	\$595	WJ0 986	\$695
P27 ROB	\$695	STU 8T	\$6600	WKR 364	\$695
G8I ROD	\$795	P26 STU	\$1500	WOC 922	\$595
R28 I75W	\$695	S400 STU	\$1100	K8 WRC	\$595
286 ROD	\$1700	STU 52U	\$795	WYB 502	\$595
R20 537R	\$695	P610 STU	\$595	WY1 919	\$695
R29 ROE	\$595	M888 STU	\$895	9N WYN	\$595
RGD 404	\$1900	555 SU	\$4700	90 XEA	\$895
W700 ROE	\$1900	J9 SUE	\$2700	XJ1 956	\$495
D43 ROL	\$1300	ME09 SUE	\$595	3650 XJ	\$695

RATINGS ★ Thrill-free zone ★★ Tepid ★★★ Interesting ★★★★ Seriously good ★★★★★ A truly great car



OUR CHOICE

Porsche 911 R. GT3 RS engine, manual gearbox, no wing and a lightweight build ethic. It sounded like the perfect 911 on paper, and in physical form it has proved to be just that – or very close to it – for many. Hence its win at eCoty 2016 against some particularly strong rivals. Pity about those premiums...



BEST OF THE REST

Lower down the 911 range, the 991.2 Carrera and Carrera S haven't been ruined by the addition of turbos. Elsewhere, Jaguar's F-type R Coupe (left) is a real hoot, and we'd take a Mercedes-AMG C63 S Coupe over BMW M4, while Lotus's Exige and Evora continue to offer sublime handling in all guises.

	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CY/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	COE 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 B4 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	+ More fluid than the M4; better traction, too - Not as precise as the M-car over the limit	★★★★★
Aston Martin V8 Vantage	169 D	£84,995	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1630kg	262	4.7	-	180	328	20.4	+ 2012 upgrades keep the V8 Vantage on song - Starting to feel a little dated, though	★★★★★
Aston Martin V8 Vantage N430	218 R	£89,995	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1610kg	271	4.5	-	189	321	20.5	+ Malleable, involving, can still hold its own - Never feels rampantly quick	★★★★★
Aston Martin V8 Vantage S	168 R	£94,995	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1610kg	271	4.5	-	189	299	21.9	+ Keener engine, V12 Vantage looks - Slightly sluggish auto only	★★★★★
Aston Martin Vantage GT8	229 R	£165,000	8/4735	440/7300	361/5000	1530kg	292	4.4	-	190	-	-	+ Enough drama to fill a Netflix mini-series - Just 150 being made	★★★★★
Aston Martin V12 Vantage S	224 D	£138,000	12/5935	565/6750	457/5750	1665kg	345	3.7	-	205	343	19.2	+ Amongst the best Astons ever made - Old-school automated 'box (so get the manual)	★★★★★
Aston Martin Vantage GT12	214 R	£250,000	12/5935	592/7000	461/5500	1565kg	384	3.5	-	185	-	-	+ The GT3-style Vantage we've been waiting for - Only 100 being made	★★★★★
Aston Martin V12 Vantage	146 R	'09-'13	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1680kg	308	4.4	9.7	190	388	17.3	+ The car we hoped the V8 Vantage would be - Erm, a tad thirsty?	★★★★★
Aston Martin DB11	230 D	£154,900	12/5204	600/6500	516/1500	1770kg	344	3.9	-	200	333	19.8	+ An excellent GT - Suffers in outright handling terms as a result	★★★★★
Aston Martin DB9 GT	214 D	£140,000	12/5935	540/6750	457/5500	1785kg	307	4.5	-	183	333	19.8	+ More power; still has bags of character - Needs eight-speed auto 'box	★★★★★
Aston Martin DB9	178 R	'04-'16	12/5935	510/6500	457/5500	1785kg	290	4.6	-	183	368	18.2	+ A great start to Gaydon-era Astons - Automatic gearbox could be quicker	★★★★★
Aston Martin DBS	142 R	'07-'12	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1695kg	306	4.2	-	191	388	17.3	+ Stupendous engine, gearbox, brakes - Pricey. Can bite the unwary	★★★★★
Audi TT 2.0 TFSI (Mk3)	204 R	£29,915	4/1984	227/4500	273/1650	1230kg	188	6.0	-	155	137	47.9	+ Desirable, grippy and effortlessly quick - Still not the last word in interaction	★★★★★
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	+ Looks, interior, decent performance and handling - Lacks ultimate involvement	★★★★★
Audi TTS (Mk3)	209 R	£38,790	4/1984	306/5800	280/1800	1365kg	228	4.9	-	155	168	38.7	+ Dynamically interesting (for a TT) - Still not as interactive as a Cayman	★★★★★
Audi TT RS (Mk3)	230 R	£51,800	4/2480	394/5850	354/1700	1440kg	278	3.4	-	155	187	34.4	+ Soundtrack; tremendous point-to-point pace - A bit one-dimensional in the long run	★★★★★
Audi TT RS (Mk2)	158 R	'09-'14	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1450kg	235	4.4	11.1	155	209	31.4	+ Sublime 5-cylinder turbo engine - Rest of package can't quite match it	★★★★★
Audi TT RS Plus (Mk2)	185 D	'12-'14	5/2480	355/5500	343/1650	1450kg	249	4.3	-	174	209	31.4	+ Stokingly fast cross-country - Shockingly expensive for a TT	★★★★★
Audi S5	231 D	£47,000	6/2995	349/5400	369/1370	1615kg	220	4.7	-	155	170	38.2	+ Chassis rewards commitment... - ...but doesn't offer a challenge. Plain engine, too	★★★★★
Audi RS5	206 R	£59,870	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1715kg	263	4.5	-	155	246	26.9	+ Brilliant engine and improved chassis - Lack of suspension travel; inconsistent steering	★★★★★
Audi R8 V8	201 R	'07-'15	8/4163	424/7900	317/4500	1560kg	276	4.1	9.9	188	332	19.9	+ A true 911 alternative - Exclusivity comes at a price	★★★★★
Bentley Continental GT V8	178 R	£140,300	8/3993	500/6000	487/1700	2220kg	229	4.6	-	188	246	27.0	+ A proper drivers' Bentley with decent economy - V12 suddenly seems pointless	★★★★★
Bentley Continental GT V8 S	204 F	£149,800	8/3993	521/6000	502/1700	2220kg	238	4.3	-	192	250	26.4	+ An even better drivers' Bentley - Vast weight makes its presence felt in harder driving	★★★★★
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	230 D	£168,900	12/5998	633/5900	602/2000	2245kg	286	4.1	-	206	338	19.3	+ 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 M240i Coupe	229 D	£35,090	6/2998	335/6800	369/1520	1470kg	232	4.8	-	155	179	36.2	+ Adjustable and plenty of fun - Lacks finesse and precision	★★★★★
BMW M235i Coupe	225 R	'14-'16	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	230 R	£44,080	6/2979	365/6500	369/1450	1495kg	248	4.5	-	155	199	33.2	+ More progressive chassis balance than the M4 - Feels unsettled on rough tarmac	★★★★★
BMW M4	218 R	£57,055	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1515kg	285	4.3	-	155	204	32.1	+ Ferociously fast - A handful on less-than-perfect or less-than-bone-dry roads	★★★★★
BMW M4 Competition Package	226 R	£60,065	6/2979	444/7000	406/1850	1515kg	298	4.3	-	155	204	32.1	+ Better tied-down than the regular M4 - Torque delivery still rather abrupt	★★★★★
BMW M4 GT5	229 R	£120,500	6/2979	493/6250	442/4000	1510kg	332	3.7	8.0	190	199	34.0	+ Vast improvement on lesser M4s - So it should be at this price	★★★★★
BMW M3 (E92)	196 R	'07-'13	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1580kg	266	4.3	10.3	155	290	22.8	+ Fends off all of its rivals - ...except the cheaper 1-series M	★★★★★
BMW M3 GT5 (E92)	171 R	'10-'11	8/4361	444/8300	324/3750	1530kg	295	4.3	-	190	295	-	+ Highly exclusive, one of the most focused M-cars ever - Good luck trying to find one	★★★★★
BMW M3 (E46)	066 R	'00-'07	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1495kg	230	5.1	12.3	155	-	23.7	+ One of the best BMWs ever. Runner-up in eCoty 2001 - Slightly artificial steering feel	★★★★★
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	-	-	+ Still superb - Changes from the automated single-clutch 'box are... a bit... sluggish	★★★★★
BMW M3 Evolution (E36)	148 R	'96-'98	6/3201	321/7400	258/3250	1515kg	215	5.4	12.8	158	-	25.7	+ Performance, image - Never quite as good as the E30	★★★★★
BMW M3 (E30)	165 R	'86-'90	4/2302	212/6750	170/4600	1165kg	185	6.7	17.8	147	-	20.3	+ Best M-car ever! Race-car dynamics for the road - Prices have got out of hand	★★★★★
BMW Z4 M Coupe	097 R	'06-'09	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1420kg	242	5.0	-	155	-	23.3	+ A real drivers' car - You've got to be prepared to get stuck in	★★★★★
BMW M6 (F13)	218 R	£93,150	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1850kg	303	4.2	-	155	231	28.5	+ Mighty ability, pace, technology - You'll want the Competition Package upgrade too...	★★★★★
BMW M6 (E63)	106 R	'05-'10	10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1635kg	311	4.8	10.0	155	342	19.8	+ Awesome GT, awesome sports car - SMG gearbox now off the pace	★★★★★
BMW i8	210 R	£99,590	3/1499	357/5800	420/3700	1485kg	244	4.4	-	155	49	134.5	+ Brilliantly executed concept; sci-fi looks - Safe dynamic set-up	★★★★★
Chevrolet Camaro Z/28 *	220 R	£71,750	8/7008	505/6100	481/4800	1732kg	296	4.2	-	175	-	-	+ Scalpel-sharp engine, great chassis (really) - Feels very stiff on UK roads	★★★★★
Chevrolet Corvette Stingray (C7)	197 R	£62,470	8/6162	460/6000	465/4600	1496kg	312	4.4	9.4	180	279	23.5	+ Performance, chassis balance, supple ride - Body control could be better	★★★★★
Chevrolet Corvette Z06 (C7)	227 R	£89,620	8/6162	650/6000	650/3600	1598kg	413	3.7	-	196	291	23.1	+ 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	+ Ninety per cent as good as the V8 - Missing ten per cent is what makes the Mustang	★★★★★
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	+ Looks, noise, performance, value, right-hand drive - Comes undone on rougher roads	★★★★★
Ginetta G40R	165 R	£35,940	4/1999	175/6700	140/5000	795kg	224	5.8	-	140	-	-	+ A race-compliant sports car for the road - Feels too soft to be a hardcore track toy	★★★★★
Honda Integra Type R (DC2)	200 R	'96-'00	4/1797	187/8000	131/7300	1101kg	173	6.2	17.9	145	-	28.9	+ Arguably the greatest front-drive car ever - Too raw for some	★★★★★
Honda NSX (NA2)	188 R	'97-'05	6/3179	276/7300	224/5300	1410kg	196	5.5	-	168	-	22.8	+ The useable supercar - 276bhp sounds a bit weedy today	★★★★★
Honda NSX-R (NA2) *	100 R	'02-'03	6/3179	276/7300	224/5300	1270kg	221	4.4	-	168	-	-	+ Evo Car of the Year 2002 - Hard to find in the UK	★★★★★
Infiniti Q60S	228 D	£42,990	6/2997	400/6400	350/1600	1799kg	226	5.0	-	155	208	31.0	+ Impressive tech - Electronic systems reduce feeling of involvement	★★★★★
Jaguar F-type Coupe	204 D	£51,260	6/2995	335/6500	332/3500	1567kg	217	5.5	-	161	234	28.8	+ Drop-dead looks, brilliant chassis, desirability - Engine lacks top-end fight	★★★★★
Jaguar F-type S Coupe	211 D	£60,260	6/2995	375/6500	339/3500	1584kg	241	5.3	-	171	234	28.8	+ Exquisite style, more rewarding (and affordable) than roadster - Scrappy on the limit	★★★★★
Jaguar F-type R Coupe	218 R	£85,010	8/5000	542/6500	501/3500	1650kg	334	4.0	-	186	255	26.4	+ Looks, presence, performance, soundtrack - Bumpy and boistrous	★★★★★
Jaguar F-type R Coupe AWD	227 D	£91,660	8/5000	542/6500	501/3500	1730kg	318	3.5	8.1	186	269	25.0	+ Better than the rear-drive R in the wet - Less involving in the dry	★★★★★
Jaguar F-type SVR Coupe	224 D	£110,000	8/5000	567/6500	516/3500	1705kg	338	3.5	-	200	269	25.0	+ A marginally better drive than the AWD R - Not by enough to justify the extra outlay	★★★★★
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	+ Faster and wilder than regular XKR - The F-type R Coupe	★★★★★
Lexus RC200t F Sport	225 R	£36,495	4/1998	242/5800	258/1650	1675kg	147	7.5	-	143	168	39.2	+ Fluid ride - Lacks body control and outright grip	★★★★★
Lexus RC F	226 R	£59,995	8/4969	470/6400	391/4800	1765kg	271	4.5	-	168	251	26.5	+ Great steering, noise, sense of occasion - Too heavy to be truly exciting	★★★★★
Lexus LC500	231 D	£85,000	8/4969	470/7100	398/4800	1935kg	247	4.4	-	168	-	-	+ Glorious engine, rewarding chassis for a GT car - Numb steering, messy ergonomics	★★★★★



VOLKSWAGEN GOLF R (Mk6)

Why would you?

Because the switch from the V6 in the Mk5 R32 to a turbo in-line four resulted in a lighter, more powerful and more entertaining four-wheel-drive Golf range-topper. Zero to 62mph takes 5.5sec with DSG, and remaps to over 300bhp aren't uncommon.

What to pay

£16k is the starting point for cars with average miles and a good history; £20k will get you a late, low-mileage example.

What to look out for

Premature wear of the fuel pump can follow from the camshaft; replacing the follower

is inexpensive, and if it's been done it suggests that the car has been well cared for. Check the cambelt has been changed every four years or 60,000 miles. The oil and filter for DSG boxes needs changing every 40,000 miles, too. Leaking water pumps aren't uncommon. (Full guide, [evo 226](#).)

SPECIFICATION

Years 2010-2013

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1984cc, turbo

Power 266bhp @ 6000rpm

Torque 258lb ft @ 2500-5000rpm

0-62mph 5.7sec

Top speed 155mph

Rating ★★★★★

KW clubsport

„For me KW suspension gives me the most success and confidence when driving the Nürburgring.“



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		ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/C	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	COC G/KM	EC MPG	EVO RATING	
Lotus Exige Sport 350	221R	\$55,900	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1125kg	312	3.7	-	170	235	28.0	+ Further honed Exige, with vastly improved gearshift - Still not easy to get into and out of	★★★★★	
	231R	\$67,900	6/3456	375/6700	302/5000	1110kg	343	3.5	-	178	242	27.2	+ Intense, absorbing and brilliantly capable - Perhaps not an everyday car	★★★★★	
Lotus Exige S (V6)	209R	'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)	105R	'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)	200R	'00-'01	4/1796	192/7800	146/5000	780kg	247	4.6	-	136	-	-	+ Lights and goes like Elise racer - A tad lacking in refinement	★★★★★	
Lotus Evora 400	216R	\$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	★★★★★	
Lotus Evora Sport 410	230R	\$82,000	6/3456	410/7000	310/3500	1325kg	314	3.9	-	190	225	29.1	+ Even lighter and sharper Evora - Engine and gearbox behind the best at this price	★★★★★	
Lotus Evora	138R	'09-'15	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 - The Evora S	★★★★★	
Lotus Evora S	168R	'10-'15	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 911L	★★★★★	
Maserati GranTurismo	114R	\$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	188R	\$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	193R	\$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	★★★★★	
Mercedes-AMG C43 4Matic Coupe	225D	\$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	229R	\$69,205	8/3982	503/5500	516/1750	1725kg	296	3.9	-	155	200	24.8	+ Mouth-watering mechanical package; better than an M4 - Light steering	★★★★★	
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Coupe	162R	'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	171R	'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-AMG S63 Coupe	205D	\$125,595	8/5461	571/5500	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	209D	\$183,075	12/5980	621/4800	731/2300	2110kg	299	4.1	-	186	279	23.7	+ Almighty power, fabulous luxury - Nearly £60k more than the S63!	★★★★★	
Mercedes-AMG GT	227D	\$98,195	8/3982	456/6000	442/1600	1540kg	301	4.0	-	189	216	30.4	+ A true sports car that also does luxury - Takes time to reveal its talents	★★★★★	
Mercedes-AMG GT S	216R	\$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	204R	\$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	209R	\$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 GT-R (2017MY)	230R	\$79,995	6/3799	562/6800	470/3600	1752kg	326	2.7	-	196	275	24.0	+ More refinement, much improved interior, still fast - Feels a touch less alert	★★★★★	
Nissan GT-R Track Edition (2017MY)	229D	\$91,995	6/3799	562/6800	470/3600	1745kg	327	2.7	-	196	275	24.0	+ GT-R regains its sharpness - Getting pricey these days	★★★★★	
Nissan GT-R Nismo	205R	\$125,000	6/3799	592/6800	481/3200	1720kg	350	2.6	-	196	275	24.0	+ Manages to make regular GT-R feel impraise - Compromised by super-firm suspension	★★★★★	
Nissan GT-R (2012MY-2016MY)	218R	'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 GT-R Track Edition (2016MY)	223R	'15-'16	6/3799	542/6400	466/3200	1740kg	316	3.4	7.7	196	275	24.0	+ GT-R recreates much of the Nismo's ability, without the rock-hard ride - Interior feels dated	★★★★★	
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)	196R	'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	155R	\$27,150	4/1958	191/5500	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	209R	\$32,250	4/1958	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	229D	\$39,878	4/1988	296/6500	280/1950	1335kg	225	5.1	-	170	168	47.1	+ Chassis remains a dream - Engine feels strangled and sounds horribly harsh	★★★★☆	
Porsche 718 Cayman S	230R	\$48,843	4/2497	345/6500	310/1900	1355kg	259	4.4	-	177	184	26.4	+ Faster and better to drive than ever - Turbo four-cylinder is utterly charmless	★★★★★	
Porsche Cayman S (981)	202R	'13-'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 GT5 (981)	219F	'14-'16	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)	231R	'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)	221F	'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)	158R	'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)	218R	\$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)	217R	\$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)	201R	'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)	179R	'13-'15	6/3800	394/7400	324/5600	1465kg	273	4.5	-	185	233	28.5	+ More satisfying than rear-drive 991 Carrera - Choose your spec carefully	★★★★★	
Porsche 911 Carrera 4 GT5 (991.1)	208D	'15	6/3800	424/7500	324/5750	1470kg	293	4.4	-	189	233	28.5	+ The highlight of the 991.1 Carrera line-up - Pricy for a Carrera	★★★★★	
Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.2)	121R	'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)	070R	'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 GT3 (991)	206R	\$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)	223R	\$131,296	6/3996	493/8250	339/6250	1420kg	353	3.0	7.1	193	296	22.2	+ Sensationally good to drive - They won't all be painted Ultra Violet	★★★★★	
Porsche 911 R (991)	229R	\$136,901	6/3996	493/8250	339/6250	1370kg	366	3.8	-	200	308	21.2	+evo Car of the Year 2016 - Limited availability	★★★★★	
Porsche 911 GT3 (997.2)	182R	'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)	200R	'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)	187R	'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	★★★★★	
Porsche 911 GT3 (997.1)	182R	'07-'09	6/3600	409/7600	298/5500	1395kg	298	4.3	9.4	192	-	-	+ Runner-up evo Car of the Year 2006 - Ferrari 599 GTB	★★★★★	
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (997.1)	105R	'07-'09	6/3600	409/7600	298/5500	1375kg	302	4.2	-	193	-	-	+evo Car of the Year 2007 - A chunk more money than the brilliant GT3	★★★★★	
Porsche 911 GT3 (996.2)	221R	'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)	068R	'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)	182R	'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	189R	\$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	205R	\$129,000	6/3496	454/6000	500/3600	940kg	491	2.6	-	185	-	-	+ Eats GT3s for breakfast - Might not feel special about this price	★★★★★	
Radical RXC Turbo 500	209D	\$143,400	6/3496	530/6100	481/5000	1000kg	490	2.6	6.8	185	-	-	+ Huge performance, intuitive adjustment, track ability - Compromised for road use	★★★★★	
Radical RXC Turbo 500R	227D	\$201,000	6/3496	600/6700	465/4200	1070kg	561	2.8	-	185	-	-	+ Immense accessible performance - Fit, finish and detailing lacks finesse at this price	★★★★★	
Rolls-Royce Wraith	205D	\$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	204R	\$22,495	4/1998	191/7000	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	223R	\$22,495	4/1998	191/7000	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	★★★★★	
VW Scirocco GT 2.0 TSI	155R	\$26,125	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1369kg	158	6.5	-	153	139	47.1	+ Golf GTI price and performance - Interior lacks flair	★★★★★	
VW Scirocco R	200D	\$32,580	4/1984	276/6000	258/1500	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 Supercervo form, while the Pagani Huayra rivals it for theatre (albeit at four times the price) and was our joint 2012 **evo** Car of the Year.

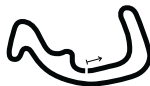
	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LG FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	COE G/KM	EC MPG	EVO RATING
Aston Martin Vanquish (Mk2)	203 R	£192,995	12/5935	568/6650	465/5500	1739kg	332	3.6	-	201	298	22.1	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Aston Martin Vanquish S (Mk2)	231 D	£199,950	12/5935	595/7000	465/5500	1739kg	348	3.5	-	201	302	21.6	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Aston Martin Vanquish S (Mk1)	110 R	105-07	12/5935	520/7000	425/5800	1875kg	282	4.9	10.1	200	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Aston Martin One-77	179 R	10-12	12/7312	750/6000	553/7600	1740kg	438	3.7	-	220+	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Audi R8 V10	228 D	£119,520	10/5204	533/8250	398/6500	1595kg	340	3.5	-	198	272	24.8	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Audi R8 V10 Plus	229 R	£134,520	10/5204	602/8250	413/6500	1555kg	393	3.2	-	205	287	23.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Audi R8 V10	181 D	10-15	10/5204	518/8000	391/6500	1620kg	325	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	134 R	05-11	16/7993	1000/6000	922/2200	1950kg	521	2.8	5.8	253	596	11.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Bugatti Veyron Super Sport	151 R	10-14	16/7993	1183/6400	1106/3000	1838kg	654	2.5	-	268	539	12.2	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Bugatti EB110	078 R	91-95	12/3500	552/8000	451/3750	1566kg	358	3.4	-	212	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
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	228 R	£183,964	8/3902	661/6500	561/3000	1475kg	455	3.0	-	205+	260	24.8	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ferrari 488 Spider	216 D	£204,400	8/3902	661/6500	561/3000	1525kg	440	3.0	-	203+	260	24.8	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ferrari 458 Italia	221 R	09-15	8/4497	562/9000	398/6000	1485kg	384	3.2	6.8	202	307	20.6	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ferrari 458 Speciale	203 R	14-15	8/4497	597/9000	398/6000	1395kg	435	3.0	-	202+	275	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	1530kg	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	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ferrari 360 Challenge Stradale	068 R	03-04	8/3586	420/8500	275/4750	1280kg	333	4.1	-	186	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ferrari F12 Berlinetta	190 R	£241,053	12/6262	730/8250	509/6000	1630kg	455	3.1	-	211	350	18.8	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ferrari F12tdf	230 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 GTD	161 R	11-12	12/5999	661/8250	457/6500	1605kg	418	3.4	-	208	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ferrari 575M Fiorano Handling Pack	200 R	02-06	12/5748	508/7250	434/5250	1730kg	298	4.2	9.6	202	-	12.3	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ferrari 550 Maranello	169 R	97-02	12/5474	485/7000	415/5000	1716kg	287	4.3	10.0	199	-	12.3	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ferrari GT4 Lusso	225 D	£230,430	12/6262	680/8000	514/5750	1920kg	360	3.4	-	208	350	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	445	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	8/2936	471/7000	426/4000	1100kg	437	4.1	-	201	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ford GT	200 R	04-06	8/5409	550/6500	500/3750	1583kg	353	3.7	-	205	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Hennessey Venom GT	180 R	£900,000	8/7000	1244/6500	1155/4000	1244kg	1106	2.5	-	270	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Honda NSX	229 R	£132,75	6/3493	573	476/2000	1776kg	328	2.9	-	191	228	28.2	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Jaguar XJ220	157 R	92-94	6/3498	542/7200	475/4500	1470kg	375	3.7	-	213	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆
Koenigsegg Agera R	180 R	c£109m	8/5032	1124/7100	885/2700	1435kg	796	2.8	-	273	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Koenigsegg One:1	202 R	c£2.0m	8/5065	1341/7500	1011/6000	1360kg	1002	2.9	-	273	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lamborghini Huracán RWD Coupe	229 R	£155,400	10/5204	572/8000	391/6500	1389kg	418	3.4	-	199	278	23.7	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lamborghini Huracán Coupe	209 D	£186,760	10/5204	602/8250	413/6500	1532kg	399	3.2	-	202+	290	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 Gallardo	094 R	06-08	10/4961	513/8000	376/4250	1520kg	343	4.3	9.4	196	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lamborghini Aventador Coupe	194 R	£260,040	12/6498	690/8250	509/5500	1575kg	445	2.9	-	217	370	17.7	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lamborghini Aventador SV Coupe	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	3.8	-	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	019 R	00-02	12/5992	550/7100	457/5500	1625kg	343	3.8	-	200+	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lexus LFA/LFA Nürburgring	200 R	10-12	10/4805	552/8700	354/6800	1480kg	379	3.7	-	202	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Maserati MC12	079 R	04-05	12/5998	621/7500	481/5500	1445kg	437	3.8	-	205	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆
McLaren 540C	228 R	£126,000	8/3799	533/7500	398/3500	1311kg	413	3.5	-	199	258	25.5	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
McLaren 570S	229 R	£143,250	8/3799	562/7500	443/3500	1440kg	397	3.1	-	204	249	26.6	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
McLaren 570GT	228 R	£154,000	8/3799	562/7500	443/3500	1495kg	382	3.4	-	204	249	26.6	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
McLaren 650S	196 R	£195,250	8/3799	641/7250	500/6000	1428kg	456	3.0	-	207	275	24.2	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
McLaren 675LT	228 R	£259,500	8/3799	666/7100	516/5500	1328kg	510	2.9	-	205	275	24.2	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
McLaren 675LT Spider	222 D	£285,450	8/3799	666/7100	516/5500	1368kg	495	2.9	-	203	275	24.2	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
McLaren 12C	228 R	11-14	8/3799	616/7500	442/3000	1434kg	435	3.1	-	207	279	24.2	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆
McLaren P1	228 R	13-15	8/3799	903/7500	664/4000	1490kg	616	2.8	-	217	194	34.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
McLaren F1	228 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	204 R	13-15	8/6208	622/7400	468/5500	1550kg	408	3.6	-	196	321	20.6	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren	228 R	03-07	8/5439	617/6500	575/3250	1693kg	370	3.7	-	208	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆
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 S7.3	096 R	02-05	12/7291	555/5900	553/4050	1250kg	451	3.6	-	197	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Pagani Zonda F	186 R	05-06	12/7291	602/6150	575/4000	1230kg	497	3.6	-	214	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Pagani Zonda Cinque Roadster	147 D	09-10	12/7291	669/6200	575/4000	1400kg	485	3.4	-	217+	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 Turbo S (991.2)	223 R	£145,773	6/3800	572/6750	553/2250	1600kg	363	2.6	6.0	205	212	31.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 Turbo S (991.1)	217 R	13-15	6/3800	552/6500	553/2250	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	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
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	-	22.1	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 Turbo (996)	017 R	00-06	6/3600	414/6000	413/2700	1540kg	273	4.1	10.0	190	309	21.8	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 GT2 (996.2)	072 R	04-06	6/3600	475/5700	472/3500	1420kg	338	4.0	8.3	198	309	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	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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
BAC Mono 2.5 (fastest sports car)	1:07.7	229	Yes
Radical RXC Turbo 500 (fastest coupe)	1:10.5	-	Yes
McLaren P1 (on Pirelli 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
Ferrari 488 GTB	1:12.8	228	Yes
McLaren 675LT	1:12.8	228	Yes
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (991.1)	1:13.6	-	Yes
Porsche 911 Turbo S (991)	1:13.6	-	Yes
Ferrari 458 Speciale	1:14.2	198	Yes
McLaren 570S	1:14.5	-	Yes
Porsche 911 Turbo (991.1)	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 (991.1)	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 TT S (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	-
VW Golf R (Mk7)	1:21.6	212	-

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
Mercedes-AMG C63 S Saloon	1:24.0	211	Yes
VW Golf GTI Clubsport S	1:24.1	227	-
SEAT Leon Cupra 290 (on optional Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres)	1:24.2	227	-
Ford Focus RS (Mk3, on optional Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres)	1:24.6	227	-
Honda Civic Type R (FK2, on Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres)	1:24.6	227	-
Renaultsport Mégane 275 Trophy-R	1:25.1	227	-
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

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 Cayman 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	Yes
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
Jaguar F-type S Convertible	1:06.5	-	Yes
Vuhti 05	1:06.5	220	Yes
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	-



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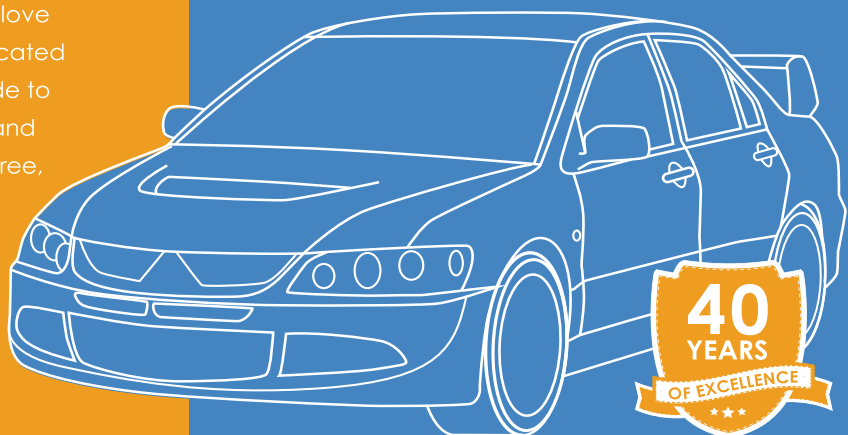
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Photographed by Aston Parrott at El Mirage, California (see page 32)



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