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Ed speak

THERE WILL NEVER BE ANOTHER MONTH LIKE IT. SO said a magazine coverline 30 years ago. Of course, there have been plenty of months just like it, with a new Lamborghini, Ferrari, Porsche and Aston Martin often launched within a few weeks of each other. This month, however, there was a single day when these brands, plus Alpine, McLaren, Pagani, Ruf, Ford, Honda, Toyota, Audi (you get the picture) all launched cars so rich in evoness that walking through the halls of the Geneva motor show without being drawn to another headline-grabbing performance car was an impossible task.

Geneva never fails to deliver. The exotica rubs shoulders with the luxurious, which sidles up to the hottest mainstream goods, and all want their five minutes of fame. In 2017 they somehow managed to get it, and now there's just the small matter of evo getting the keys to them and delivering the verdicts that matter.

There was much to get excited about in Geneva. McLaren's 720S is a wonder, the 911 GT3 evolution continues at a frightening pace, Ferrari's commitment to the V12 is to be applauded, and Alpine making sports cars once again has to be a good thing, doesn't it? It is what's happening at the other end of the price scale that really caught my attention, however. Honda's Civic Type R is unashamedly brash, Ford's switch to a three-cylinder motor for the new Fiesta ST is intriguing, and then there's Toyota, who confirmed it's back in the performance car game, the Yaris GRMN being just the start of its adventures. Hopefully there'll be plenty more months like this one to come.

There are a few new faces to introduce to evo this month. On evo.co.uk Steve Walker joins as website editor and Tom Wiltshire as web producer, and I'm delighted to be able to welcome back John Barker, a member of evo's founding team.

Stuart Gallagher, Editor ————— @stuartg917

'It's what's happening at the lower end of the price scale that really caught my attention'

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GT86 v RF

Mazda's new 'retractable fastback' MX-5 is put to the test by an updated version of the Toyota GT86. At around £25,000, both machines are tempting propositions at a price point dominated by front-wheel-drive hot hatches, but which one is the pick of the pair: the laser-focused Toyota or the lighter, more versatile Mazda?

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Woking's latest weapon develops 710bhp and can hit 212mph. *evo* gets under its skin to see whether Ferrari et al should be scared

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HONDA CIVIC TYPE R

We loved the last Civic Type R for its no-messing approach to hot-hatch thrills. Now there's a new one, with looks that could kill

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911 GT3 & ALPINE A110

Two sublime drivers' cars return this year, but should you be more excited about Porsche's trackday treat or Alpine's revived coupe?

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Richard Wheeler sold his 650S to fund a habit for one of Japan's favourite exports. What drives a man to collect eight GT-Rs?

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FINAL FRAME

Sometimes no words are required – we pick a photograph that has given us pause to reflect this month

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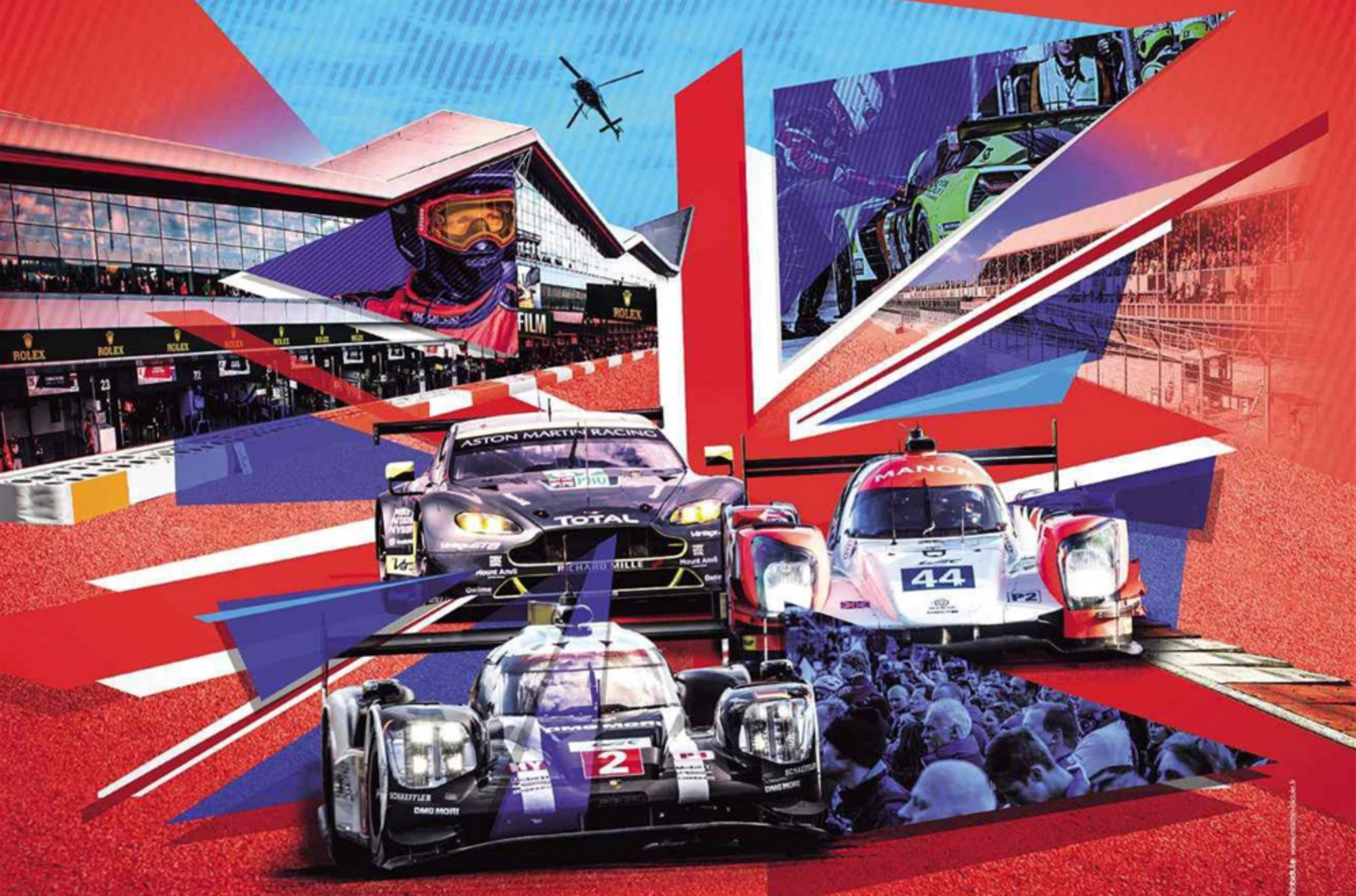


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briefing

VANDA LEADS THE CHARGE

by ANTONY INGRAM

Williams-developed electrically powered supercar heads our Geneva motor show roundup

IN SOME WAYS IT IS A LITTLE easier to make a new supercar today with electric technology. What is challenging from an engineering perspective is putting the average user in mind – who'll get in, start up and drive at whatever speed for as long as they want to drive. That's the challenge: range versus weight. Developing an electric vehicle is more straightforward, though, without spending tens of millions developing an engine.'

Ian Cluett is head of programmes at Williams Advanced Engineering, the team behind one of this year's Geneva motor show stars, the **Vanda Dendrobium**. The new Singaporean supercar was one of several at Geneva that used





“A top speed of over 200mph and a 0-62mph time of 2.7 seconds are projected”

electricity rather than combustion for propulsion, but surprisingly Cluett had never before considered our question: is developing an electric supercar easier than developing a conventionally powered one?

Given the glut of electric supercars to have debuted over the past 12 months, each boasting a 0-62mph time beginning with a 2 and asphalt-rippling torque figures, it's not hard to imagine we'll see an increasing number of electric rather than petrol-powered performance cars in the coming years. And it's not so much an environmental imperative as it is down to the physics of electric

propulsion: so prohibitively expensive is the process of developing and type-approving a conventional powerplant with Chiron-troubling performance, electric power seems increasingly attractive. Producing an electric car with more power and more torque boils down to incorporating bigger electric motors and managing the temperature of the batteries that feed them.

Projected performance figures for the Dendrobium (1) are predictably impressive: a top speed of over 200mph and a 0-62mph time of 2.7 seconds. Power and torque figures aren't yet quoted, mainly because

Vanda and Williams haven't yet finalised the specification. The prototype shown at Geneva uses a single, rear-mounted motor, but the production car will have another powering the front wheels. A range isn't quoted, either: by the time the Dendrobium reaches production, Williams expects battery technology to have moved on further, rendering any current guesses moot. Cluett does have a weight target though: a competitive 1750kg.

The car looks impressive in the carbonfibre, as you'd expect with a name like Williams behind it. Far from being a cobbled-together showpiece,

it's a working prototype (albeit not at full performance just yet) with a Bridge of Weir hide-trimmed cabin, intricate details and a crowd-pleasing trick – the rear-hinged doors open like the petals of the flower from which the Dendrobium gets its name.

Unique entrance options were a recurring theme among Geneva's electrically powered stars, from the **Techrules Ren's** three-canopy cockpit (2) to the **Pininfarina H600's** pillarless clap-hands doors (3). Techrules, a Chinese R&D firm, commissioned Giugiaro to style its car, which uses a brace of range-extending turbines as part of an



3



electric drivetrain. The key figures here are 1269bhp and 1725lb ft across two axles, 2.5 seconds to 62mph, and 199mph flat out.

Coincidentally, Pininfarina's handsome hybrid-powered saloon concept also posits the use of a turbine, with 20,000 hours of maintenance-free running promised and the ability to run on pretty much any fuel. Squint and it could be the next Maserati Quattroporte.

German firm **Artega** is in on the electric act, too, with the Scalo Superelletra (4). Expect 50 cars from 2019 (if Artega manages to remain afloat – of which there's no guarantee), a Dendrobium-matching 0-62mph time and sleek coachwork by Carrozzeria Touring Superleggera.

Bentley's EXP12 Speed 6e (5) is almost conventional in comparison. Effectively an electric, convertible version of the EXP10 Speed 6 unveiled at the 2015 Geneva show – and featuring an aged red leather and copper-finished interior that suggests someone in Bentley's

design department is reading too many steampunk novels – it's a sign of Bentley's intention to offer more electrification across its range. Despite its concept look, the styling of this year's new Continental GT won't be hugely different.

Continuing the electric charge is **Renault**, still exercising its policy (seemingly shared with Peugeot) of introducing achingly desirable concept cars that haven't a hope in hell of ever reaching production.

Latest to give the netherworld a chill is the Zoe E-Sport (6), which takes the meek and mild Zoe EV and splices in a pair of Renault's Formula E motors for 456bhp and all-wheel drive. It looks brilliant. Chances of production? That clanking sound you can hear is Satan turning up the central heating.

Thankfully, both **Ford** and **Toyota** have announced spicy hatchbacks that you'll actually be able to drive, and possibly even afford. Dressed in blue is Ford's new Fiesta ST (7), which trades the existing

4



6



5





car's 1.6-litre turbo four for a 1.5-litre boosted three. Expect 197bhp and an impressive 214lb ft, as well as cylinder deactivation technology, which allows the ST to fire on two cylinders at light loads.

Toyota's take is rather different, with the new Yaris GRMN (8). You not only get an extra cylinder over the Ford and 1.8 litres of swept capacity, but also a supercharger instead of the class-standard turbocharger. A power figure of 'over 205bhp' seems conservative given the mechanicals but, if Toyota's claim of a class-leading 0-62mph figure is correct, expect that number to be 6.4 seconds or less. The car is three-door only and features a reinforced shell, Sachs dampers and a Torsen limited-slip differential. And 'GRMN'? It stands for 'Gazoo Racing tuned by Meister of Nürburgring', a nod to Toyota's motorsport division and the test drivers who have developed the car at said German racetrack. Toyota is certainly taking its first hot hatch since the unloved 2007 Corolla T-Sport seriously...

Hopefully, **Suzuki** will take its next hot hatch seriously too. The latest Swift Sport wasn't on display

in Geneva, though it's expected in around a year. Signs are promising though, since the new Swift (9), which made its first European appearance in Switzerland, is up to 180kg lighter than the already-fleet outgoing model. It's also lower, wider and shorter, and could pack as much as 140bhp in Sport form.

Ruf's latest CTR (10) – a tribute to the famous Yellow Bird of 1987 – makes five times that output. To call it a 911 would be a great disservice, given it has an entirely bespoke carbonfibre monocoque, carbonfibre bodywork, pushrod double-wishbone suspension front and rear, and a custom six-speed gearbox for its 3.6-litre, twin-turbo powerplant. Geneva's most desirable car?

Over at **Aston Martin**, the British firm's upcoming hypercar made its first public appearance and did so with a new name: Valkyrie (11). Alongside it were the first models in Aston's new AMR line, a series that draws closer links with its racing efforts. Makes plenty of sense with the Vantage AMR Pro, which has 500bhp and wears Michelin's Cup 2 tyres. Less so the Rapide AMR (12),

though there's a curious kind of appeal to a Rapide with carbonfibre seats and an enormous neon lime stripe down the headlining.

Across the way at **Ferrari** was the new 812 Superfast (13). Its 6.5-litre naturally aspirated V12 howls to the tune of 789bhp at 8500rpm, with 526lb ft at a heady 7000rpm, punching it all the way to 211mph and breaking the 62mph mark in 2.9sec.

The F12tdf's Virtual Short Wheelbase four-wheel steering returns, as does the astonishing, hero-making Side Slip Control. Whether the fully electric power steering system – the first such setup in a Ferrari – is true to Maranello's usual dynamic standards remains to be experienced.

Lamborghini has been grabbing the limelight in a different way, comprehensively smashing the





10



13

Nürburgring Nordschleife lap record with its Huracán Performante (see p170). It nips 40kg off the weight of the standard car and has an extra 29bhp, taking the total to 631bhp. 'Aerodinamica Lamborghini Attiva' – active aerodynamics, to you and me – are as much responsible for its lap time though, a ludicrous 6:52.01.

The man who set that time is Italian GT3 racer Marco Mapelli, who'd already confirmed his star status by sliding the Aventador SV to a 6:59 in 2015. The Performante's time is around five seconds quicker than Le Mans-winner Marc Lieb's lap in a Porsche 918 Spyder, which

goes some way to illustrating Mapelli's commitment. Rumours that Lambo's footage was sped up seem to have been unfounded – Porsche Motorsport boss Frank Walliser told *evo*'s Dan Prosser that he put the time down to little more than four years of extra tyre development.

Other Geneva stars included the new **Pagani Huayra Roadster (14)**, which has 753bhp, an 80kg weight saving over the coupe and a £2million price tag. The **Porsche Panamera Sport Turismo (15)** is undoubtedly the best-looking Panamera yet – and the first to offer a full five seats. The new **Audi RS5**

is similarly appealing, even if it drops an eight-cylinder engine for a twin-turbo V6, but the Q8 sport concept – a revision of the Q8 shown in Detroit – seemed lazy, with just a colour change and a new grille to differentiate it from the non-sport concept at the American show.

Much better, and one of Geneva's sure-fire stars, is the **Mercedes-AMG GT Concept (16)**. Think four-door, four-seat AMG GT and you're not far wide of the mark. There's 800bhp from a turbocharged V8 with – as is clearly becoming the norm – a little assistance from electrical power.

“
The Ferrari 812
Superfast's V12
howls to the tune
of 789bhp at
8500rpm
”



14



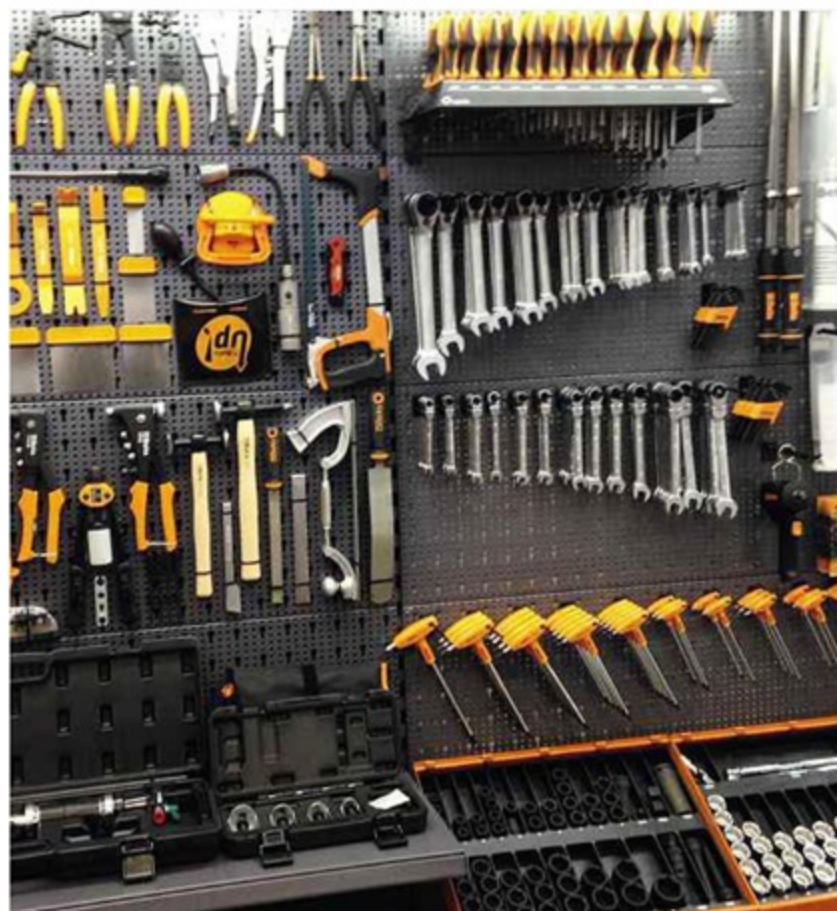
15



16



Left: oil collection systems are just the thing to go with your four-post ramp.
Below: Christ offers car-washing solutions: it's what Sunday mornings were made for, after all...



ALTERNATIVE GENEVA

Finding heaven in Palexpo's Hall 7

From air-tools to full four-post ramps, Hall 7 of the Geneva motor show is a real Aladdin's Cave if you're into accessories

CHRIST: THE SON OF GOD and a manufacturer of car washing equipment. This and other treasures await in Hall 7 of the Geneva motor show.

Most visitors to the show head for the upstairs hall to dream. That's where you'll find much of the weird and wacky stuff from eccentric *carrossiers* like Rinspeed. Lamborghini is there, too, virtually opposite Bugatti, where sticky finger marks are being dusted off the new Chiron. You'll find me among them, probably headed for the Porsche stand, but every year you'll also find me on a personal pilgrimage around the Aladdin's Cave that is Hall 7

This is where the accessory

manufacturers ply their wares. Need to buy a new four-post ramp (and all my life I've wanted one)? You'll find a good selection on display in Hall 7. And if you're lucky enough to have a ramp, you'll probably want one of those brilliant devices that you can drain oil into. Meclube makes a nice range of blue ones. Owning your own tyre-changing machine might be going a bit far, though if you do a lot of trackdays in a tyre-eating car it might be handy.

But the real porn is to be found among the toolmakers. Here's a nerdy question for you: which tool company sponsored Italian racing driver Vittorio Brambilla? Beta Tools is the answer, and



if you're the right age you'll remember Brambilla's bright orange March with Beta written on it. Beta has racks and racks of tools on its stand and, all I can say is, it's a damned good job that the company appears to have not brought a credit card reader with it.

French toolmaker Facom, itself no stranger to F1 sponsorship, has a lovely line of air-tools and rechargeable torque-guns for speedy undoing of wheel nuts. Again, thankfully there are no signs of payment facilities.

There is no elbow jousting in Hall 7. It's a very polite place, unlike the main halls, where video crews stab you with tripod legs

and you're liable to be barged out of the way by arrogant people who aren't even motoring journalists! In the tranquillity of Hall 7 you can blag a complimentary beer and perhaps a sandwich or two if you have the front to pretend that you're in the market for a brake disc skimming machine.

It's best to avoid playing this trick with companies that produce very expensive items, though, as they won't let you go so easily. And while I'd like to have a four-post ramp and an oil draining machine, Mrs Goodwin might have something to say if I came home with a car washing system. Even if it was made by Christ.

Colin Goodwin

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INTERVIEW

Stefano Domenicali

A Ferrari career man who worked his way up to lead the F1 team, Stefano Domenicali then crossed the road to lead Lamborghini. *evo* sits down with him to discover if he's the right man for the job
by Steve Sutcliffe

STEFANO DOMENICALI FIZZES WITH energy when he speaks. Like many Italians he talks fast. Frantically so, which means you need to work hard mentally just to keep up.

He wears a pair of trademark glasses by Ray-Ban, and when he talks he also smiles for much of the time, and he looks you straight in the eye.

He loves his cars but also his motorbikes, too, having been the race director at the Mugello Moto GP circuit for two years before assuming his more famed roles at Ferrari. Those roles culminated with him becoming principal of the F1 team in 2008. And it's been almost exactly one year now since he took charge at Lamborghini.

But is he, I wonder, just a good old-fashioned petrolhead at heart who happens to have one of the best jobs in the world, or is there a hard-nosed businessman behind the infectious enthusiasm?

'In the position that I am in now, I know I have to transform,' he readily admits. 'I have to transform the car guy that is in my heart into a businessman guy. It's hard work for me because when you reach this position you need to consider a wider picture.'

'You have to see what is the benefit of something in terms of cost versus income, in terms of strategy, application and timing. It's all about the balance and it's not easy. But for me, this is actually a nice challenge. Because we are not just talking about a car industry here – Lamborghini is more than that. And so I always have to see things in a parallel way: of what I'm thinking in terms

of my enthusiasm, and then as a businessman. And that's the key in my view. That way we keep Lamborghini very special, because it has to be.'

Born in Imola in 1965, the son of a banker, Domenicali graduated from the University of Bologna with a Business Studies degree in 1991, whereupon he went straight to work for Ferrari in its finance department. But his passion for cars, and specifically racing, started young.

'It started when I was 14,' he says. 'I was watching all the races at Imola. I was at school during the week and then at the track at the weekends, and I knew all the people in the F1 paddock because I was parking the trucks. I still have the smell of fuel in my nose today.'

I ask whether his passion for, and career at, Lamborghini's arch rival in Modena had any influence on his acceptance of the job at Sant'Agata. Was there ever any doubt in his mind about going to work for The Enemy?

'To be honest, I said to myself, "I am a very lucky guy here," because to be an Italian who was able to be the leader of the Ferrari F1 team,

personally. But you see lots of people taking selfies of themselves every second of every day – because they want to show other people what they are doing, what they are driving. And when you are someone who wants to buy a Lamborghini, you want to be seen.'

And heard. 'Yes! The music of the engine, the vibration: it's unique to our cars. And our future.'

So is the naturally aspirated V12 engine safe for a while yet? 'Our goal is to keep the V12 alive as long as possible,' says Domenicali. 'And this is one task that we have to be totally clear on in our minds.'

Will the V12 stick around long enough to get some hybrid assistance in the future?

'Hybridisation will be part of Lamborghini in the future, but the investment required for this is very big, and we need to be moderate in terms of our approach to the future while also being flexible, because electrification will heat up the world of the super-sports car.'

Right now, of course, the word on everyone's lips at Sant'Agata is 'Urus'. The SUV goes on sale

“Our goal is to keep the V12 alive for as long as possible. And this is one task we are totally clear on”

and for that to be part of my history because I was there for 23 years, and then to have the chance to become responsible for Lamborghini! I was thinking I'm very, very lucky,' says Domenicali.

'But for me now at Lamborghini it's also a reference for us, because it's part of our competition. I've always had the approach to competition that you need to have respect for the other guys, not just regard them as the enemy.'

'So that was my real reaction when I took charge. And now that I'm here, I am totally focused on Lamborghini. I think the brand will become even stronger, above all outside of Italy.'

Is he concerned that while Lamborghini has got bigger and more successful over the last ten years, it's also become a bit bling?

'Not today,' he says. 'When the Murciélago was around, perhaps. I believe we are giving our customers exactly what they want. The average age of a Lamborghini owner today is 30 to 35, so they are young people. Bright colours have also always been in the DNA of Lamborghini, and the lines of our cars need to be recognised, too.'

I ask him to expand a bit on this. 'Look, I'm 52 this year,' he says. 'So maybe I'm not like this

later this year. By 2019 Domenicali predicts that Lamborghini will sell 3500 Uruses each year, doubling the brand's overall output to 7000 cars, with the UK the third biggest potential market.

The Urus will cost £180k-plus and will be powered by a twin-turbo 4-litre V8. Inevitably it will be four-wheel drive but it will also have four-wheel steering, much like the new Aventador S. It will be, according to the boss, 'a super-sports car inside an SUV', which sounds pretty mouthwatering as a fundamental concept.

Even so, Domenicali remains realistic about his new car's longer-term potential, despite the fact that the order books are already swelling. For the first two years, he admits, Urus demand might be 'a little bit crazy'. But it's what happens after this honeymoon period that matters most, which is when the businessman-guy in Stefano Domenicali will need to step up. Because he knows full well that once the music stops and the launch fever has faded, the real hard work sustaining the interest in a £200k SUV truly begins. 'But it's an exciting time for us,' he says.

Right man for the job? Oh yes, there can be very little doubt about that.

NEWS IN BRIEF

evo trackdays

The days are getting longer, the evenings lighter, which means it's time to book yourself a place on a 2017 **evo** track evening in association with GT Radial.

This season we have four dates at two locations for you to pick from. The action starts on Thursday 11 May at Rockingham Motor Speedway, with two further dates at the Corby venue on Thursday 15 June and Friday 18 August. On Friday 1 September we'll be back at Bedford Autodrome. To book your space, visit evo.co.uk.

2017 Driver Power survey



If you're reading **evo** it's a given that you like your car, treasure it and treat it like an extension of the family. But like all family members we understand they don't always behave as well as they should. The annual Driver Power survey, run by our sister magazine *Auto Express*, is your chance to get off your chest the frustrations you have with your performance car. Simply complete the online survey at autoexpress.co.uk/driver-power and you can help others benefit from your experiences – good or bad.

Buying guide

If you were tempted by the Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG in last month's buying guide, we should have told you it was supplied by HR Owen Ecurie, the new venture of leading performance and luxury car specialists HR Owen.

Specifically set up to deal with pre-owned high performance vehicles, HR Owen Ecurie can source everything from pre-owned Porsches to McLarens, Bentleys and Lamborghinis, and every performance and luxury car brand in between. At the time of writing, its stock ranged from the aforementioned SLS AMG (in rare Sepang Brown) to a Lotus 3-Eleven.

Based in Cheltenham, HR Owen Ecurie can be found at hrowen.com/ or contacted on 01242 504871.



Roger Becker

1945-2017

Engineer extraordinaire, Becker's legacy at Lotus and in the wider automotive world will see him remembered as one of the greats

by John Barker

FOR ALMOST 44 YEARS ROGER BECKER was the constant at Lotus, its North Star, the champion and keeper of the company's precious dynamic DNA. There were times when aspects of the cars were a bit sketchy, times when the very company was teetering on a financial precipice, but the one thing you could always rely on was that the road cars would drive superbly, and that was down to Becker.

When he retired in 2010 he had been Lotus's engineering director for two decades. Not bad for someone who started out on the shop floor aged 20, with an ONC in engineering. The boss, Colin Chapman, soon recognised his potential and moved him across to development to work on the Europa Twin Cam. From then, Becker was

instrumental in every road car, helping shape the Elite, Excel and Esprit, the Elan, the innovative Elise and, finally, the Evora. As different as they were, what characterised them all was their remarkable blend of handling precision and uncanny ride quality.

This effortless, dynamic fluidity seemed to be some kind of alchemy and was Lotus's hallmark and business card. It helped win engineering contracts from other carmakers, some of which were visible, such as the Lotus Carlton and the Isuzu Piazza, and many others that were not. Becker once explained that the front-drive 'M100' Elan, a dead-end in the Lotus road-car timeline, was an incredibly valuable project because it taught the company how to engineer

front-wheel drive and so opened up a whole new field of contract-engineering opportunities.

Affable and down to earth, Becker loved problem solving and, in common with similarly influential contemporaries such as Mike Cross, was a skilled driver, too. That's how he ended up in the movie *The Spy Who Loved Me*. He was only supposed to deliver the white Esprit but, having shown he could get more out of it than the stunt driver, ended up doubling for Roger Moore.

Becker's legacy is four decades' worth of sublime road cars and also a great number of engineers that have learned from him and carried those skills into the wider industry. They include his son, Matt, who is now chief of vehicle-attribute engineering at Aston Martin.

WATCHES: DESIGNED BY CAR DESIGNERS



MHD CR1

Price: £300

From: matthewhumphriesdesignwatches.com

Matthew Humphries is perhaps best known for penning models such as the AeroMax during his time as chief designer at Morgan, but these days he's also strongly associated with the drivers' watches that bear the initials of his design consultancy. We've featured the CR1 in *evo* before, but for 2017 this quartz-powered, 42mm model has evolved with the introduction of versions with 'panda' and 'reverse panda' (as pictured) dials. The price remains competitive, too, especially given only 500 CR1s will be made.



Issey Miyake W Automatic

Price: from c£525

From: isseymiyake.com

Satoshi Wada was a senior designer at Audi for over a decade, and is the man responsible for the brand's signature single-frame grille as well as models such as the original Q7 (but we won't hold that against him). Today he runs his own design studio and applies his talents in other fields – including watches. This latest addition to his 'W' line for the Issey Miyake brand has a compass-inspired design, an automatic movement and a 45mm case in either bare stainless steel or with a black coating.



Seiko Rider's Chronograph

Price: c£320

From: seiko-watch.co.jp

Back in the 1980s, Giorgetto Giugiaro (BMW M1, VW Golf Mk1, Lotus Esprit S1, etc) worked with Seiko on several out-of-the-ordinary watches.

Among them was the Rider's Chronograph, which had a dial tilted by 15 degrees and rising up away from the wrist towards its right-hand side, thus improving readability when riding or, presumably, driving. The model has now been reissued in steel instead of plastic, with a choice of colour schemes. Numbers are limited, and, officially at least, it's only on sale in Japan.

Like watches? Read *Chrono*, the digital watch magazine for iOS and Android, available **FREE** inside the *evo* app.

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MANAGEMENT



Daytona 500

THIS YEAR'S DAYTONA 500, THE 59TH RUNNING OF NASCAR'S blue riband event, was plagued by accidents. Kyle Busch lost control of his no. 18 Toyota on the 105th lap, causing a four-car crash (pictured) that included race leader Dale Earnhardt Jr. The race was red flagged, but all four drivers were uninjured. Busch blames a loss of pressure in a rear tyre for the accident, but tyre maker Goodyear has refuted the claim that the tyre was responsible.

After the race restart, it wasn't long before another incident occurred. While trying to defend his position, Jamie McMurray collided with Jimmie Johnson, the two cars then blocked the track at turn three, causing a 16-car pileup.

Kyle Busch's older brother Kurt managed to avoid the multiple incidents and went on to win the race after taking the lead on the last lap. This was the 17th, but only successful attempt by the older Busch to win the Daytona 500.

GETTY IMAGES







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*conditions apply. Model shown ACS2 Sport based on BMW M2 (F87). E&OE. Finance available subject to status.

Stick situation

Dan Prosser's excellent review of the new Porsche 911 Carrera GTS (Driven, *evo* 233) was nicely crafted and, as it should, made me want to sell a kidney to own one. However, I would take issue with his opining that the 2S with a manual gearbox is the best new GTS available.

There is a lot of bluster about manual and semi-auto gearboxes and a lot of unnecessary reference to what is the 'manly' choice. I would disagree that it is less masculine to option the excellent and, let's face it, faster PDK 'box. If you have the luxury of owning your 911 purely to thrash around a circuit I can see the attraction of three pedals, but seven speeds sounds very laborious and, frankly, a bit old fashioned. Also, I would venture that most 911 owners also use their cars to travel, often in traffic, where the versatility of PDK makes it by far the better option. In my opinion, of course.

Please don't change anything, though. Loving your work.

Andrew Lally



Olden wonder

Your article 'Age Concern' (*evo* 233) raised some interesting issues. The amazing Mr Attwood [pictured above] trading times with a much younger race-winning driver was particularly heartening, as I'm approaching bus-pass age myself. Driving well is a perishable skill and he shows clearly the advantages of regular practice and physical and mental fitness to maintaining it into old age.

I think the question of physical and mental fitness should be

applied to all drivers, particularly as we get older. Perhaps the concept of holding a driving licence as a right until the age of 75 without further testing is outdated. The Human Performance Lab tests, or some equivalent, should be a necessary part of retesting all drivers at regular intervals beyond a certain age.

Also, *evo*'s tests involved three professional drivers who clearly possessed great skills and had recent race experience. I was left wondering how well I would have coped with them. It would be interesting to see how three ordinary people chosen at random would fare against their benchmark.

Rob Speak

We did consider conducting similar tests with 'ordinary' drivers. However, there would be no way to tell how typical their skill levels were, nor if the abilities of the older drivers had been affected by age or if they had always been substandard in the areas being tested. By comparing three racing drivers we could be sure we had a more level playing field. – Ed



Hard cell

'Tesla's P100D [pictured above] with Ludicrous mode will reach 60mph in 2.5sec,' says Stuart Gallagher in his editor's letter (*evo* 233). 'This from a four-door, five-seat Panamera rival. It will also travel up to 300 miles on a "tank" of fully charged batteries, a similar range to that of an M5.' Will it though? Really? I want to believe it will, but the massive cynic in me still doubts it.

I want to believe that electricity is the future. I've even ordered a plug-



LETTER OF THE MONTH

Cheap thrills

I READ YOUR ARTICLE RECOMMENDING CARS suitable for trackdays and appropriate modifications for them (*evo* Market, 232) with a sinking feeling. I am not convinced that going ever faster in your expensively modified track car is the answer. My preference is for the Disposable Trackday Car. The conditions? Maximum cost of the car £1500 and preferably less than £1000. Must be rear-wheel drive. Must be reliable. Any single upgrade must be limited to £100.

Back in the '90s I bought an ex-police BMW 528i with a couple of mates. It went very sideways and took a beating for a couple of years, then we sold it for what we paid. I then became an addict and moved on to Caterhams and, at my worst, racing in the JCC 100 Mile Centurion series.

Recently I returned to a cheap BMW, this time a 2002 330i. With the exception of the EBC brake discs and Yellowstuff front pads, all my mods have been under £100. Highlights have been a spare set of alloys with decent tyres at £90, rear pads at £10 and a front strut brace for £28.

Given the overall expenditure I am convinced that I am so much more relaxed at trackdays than those in their valuable cars and therefore enjoying myself more. And if I do stuff it or blow it up I'll simply take off the good bits, chuck it and start again.

James Fielding

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.



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INBOX



in hybrid E-class (to sit alongside the screaming, naturally aspirated 205bhp 1300cc Ducati motor in the garage). I'm trying to be 'future', I really am.

How about you get a Tesla on the **evo** long-term fleet and let us know what the typical range is after 12 months? Or won't they give you one? Draw your own conclusions.

Paul Brown

Our editorial director has a P85D, which we'll be putting to the test soon. – Ed

Limiting factor

In reply to Marcus Waldo's letter (Inbox, 233) regarding unobtainable Porsches, **evo** replied that the new 911 GT3 [pictured above] will not be a limited edition.

However, I called a Porsche dealer to ask how I may place an order for said GT3 and was told that it was not worth my efforts. They predicted an allocation of circa 6-8 cars in total and already had well over 40 customers who had expressed an interest. Once the dealer's allocation was confirmed, they would look at all those customers and allocate cars based on which had purchased the most cars through them over the years – not on a first-come, first-served basis.

So the GT3 may not be a limited edition, but I am in no doubt it will have a limited build run, and that means it will once again be unobtainable for the majority.

Robert Dubsky

Size matters

I read 'Cubic Capacity Fights Back' (Briefing, **evo** 233) with interest and would like to add a few comments.

Firstly, the theory for engine downsizing has never been sound.

Driving a car over any test cycle requires various levels of power, which depends to a large extent on the car's weight. This power is obtained by burning fuel in air, and capacity is only one method of controlling the amount of fuel used.

Secondly, the efficiency of how this power is achieved is critical. Using a small engine and increasing the rpm to obtain the power significantly increases friction losses, thus reducing efficiency. The option of boosting a small engine inevitably leads to it requiring richer fuelling to keep the temperatures within bounds, which significantly reduces the efficiency (outside of the test cycle area, of course).

A large capacity, naturally aspirated engine can achieve the required power output, using lower rpm and running with the correct fuelling for the catalyst to minimise emissions over its entire operating range and not just some artificial test cycle. It also reduces the stress on the engine structure, enabling lightweight engines to be made. There are fewer breathing problems at lower rpm, hence the 'need' for complicated, expensive and bulky valvetrains is reduced; the money and space can be better used by improving the efficiency of the air that is burnt in the engine with technologies such as GDI, twin-spark, variable compression ratio, etc, all of which are well known.

Large capacity, low power, high torque 'economy' engines have never really been tried, except as diesels, but the technology now is better than ever for a petrol option to succeed. The thought of a naturally aspirated 4-litre V8 petrol-engined 'shopping trolley' might be a pipe dream, but the technology isn't.

Colin Andrews



Precious metal

On a recent romantic trip to Berlin my fiancé and I visited Classic Remise, a converted railway shed housing the most utterly amazing collection of cars I have ever seen. Veyron? Check. 918 Spyder? Check. [See above.] Carrera GT? Check. Everything from a Mini Traveller to an Enzo, and all sorts in between. Not only were we free to walk around and drool over some of the most exotic machines ever made, but entry was free of charge. As an absolute car nut I have to say I could not recommend it more.

Best of all, despite spending almost all day there, I'm still on speaking terms with the fiancé!

William Cameron

Self improvement

I love cars, I love driving. My 2016 Audi RS3 is a hoot – way too much power and grip to really enjoy safely on the roads, but whatever. That's not what this is about.

I ride a motorbike into the West End of London most days, and it's really here where I've witnessed how abysmal driving standards have become. Phone use, poor indication, poor road sense, inappropriate speed (too high and low), poor road positioning and a general lack of awareness make London's roads clogged with traffic and a thoroughly unpleasant place to drive.

I'm not evangelising here. I also have bad habits at the wheel, but I'm courteous, use speed appropriately, always allow safe braking distances, keep up with the flow of traffic, and position my vehicle well to gain the best view of the road. After passing my test in the early '90s, I sat and passed the IAM and RoSPA tests, too. The very fundamentals that these



courses teach aren't rocket science, but when applied to everyday driving could make things so much better in our cities.

There will always be those who can't be bothered and/or don't care, but if as many people as possible made the small investment into a skill that is most likely used every day and for over 50 years of our lives. The payback is huge and you might even start enjoying driving again. Especially when you are somewhere where you can make progress.

Daniel Lindsay

Chimaera correction

Not sure if it has already been raised by people with bushy beards and adenoidal voices, but please be aware that your TVR article (evo Market, 233) spells Chimaera wrong from beginning to end. Whilst Chimera is correct in mythology, TVR elected to spell it with the additional 'a'.

Al Dawson

Losing it

I think evo should give Dan Prosser a pay increase. Reading issue 233, it seemed that almost every other article was written by him. He must be overworked and not thinking straight any more. Proof of this perhaps comes in his fifth article, halfway through the magazine, entitled 'Beyond Hybrids', in which Prosser suggests going full EV for high performance cars rather than having 'noisy, oily, smoky and smelly' hybrids. I know he also says no electrification at all would be better, but surely PIs and 918s with their internal combustion engines – for their sound alone – far outstrip the electric-only alternatives.

Pieter van der Westhuizen



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SHARKWERKS CAYMAN GT4 // SEAT LEON
CUPRA 300 // ALFA ROMEO STELVIO //
ALFA ROMEO GIULIA 2.0 TURBO SUPER //
MERCEDES-BENZ E400 4MATIC COUPE

Bentley Continental Supersports

The current Continental bows out
with 700bhp, enough torque to move
mountains, and the the most agile
chassis yet fitted with a W12



FOR THE FIRST century and a bit of the motorcar's existence, it was an inalienable fact that the rate at which any given car could accelerate was determined, in part, by such things as load, surface conditions and incline, as well as more mechanical factors such as engine speed and which gear happened to be selected at the time.

As of 2017, though, concurrent with the launch of the 700bhp Bentley Continental Supersports, that ceases to be true. It is now possible, I'm convinced, for a car to accelerate at the same rate

completely irrespective of how heavily it is loaded with golf clubs and trophy wives, how slippery or steep the road is, how fast the engine is turning over and whether it's in second gear or sixth, just as long as it is fitted with this very engine.

The Supersports is so catastrophically powerful – not to mention torquey, given its 750lb ft peak – that it accelerates with unrelenting violence regardless of everything else. I think you could marginally slow its rate of progress if you anchored its rear towing eye to a cathedral, but you'd need a very sensitive inbuilt gyroscope

to notice the difference.

The first Continental GT was launched in 2003 and since then close to 60,000 of the things have been sold globally. If you parked each one of them nose-to-tail the chain would go on for 180 miles. It's been a tremendous success story for Bentley, and Crewe wants to celebrate that success in suitable fashion before the all-new Continental GT arrives sometime next year. Allowing the old-timer to bow out with the dual titles of fastest and most powerful Bentley ever seems to be appropriate.

This Supersports will be limited to just 710 units across coupe

and convertible body styles – the 621bhp 2009 version was churned out willy-nilly in comparison, with 1800 built – and at £212,500 the fixed-roof version, tested here, carries a £43,600 premium over the deposed range-topping Continental model, the 633bhp, W12-engined GT Speed.

The twin-turbocharged 12-cylinder engine has been reworked for the Supersports with new intake and exhaust systems and bigger turbochargers, plus strengthened main and conrod bearings. That gargantuan 750lb ft torque figure is available between 2050 and 4500rpm, which is where





the car's massive overtaking punch comes from. With the four-wheel-drive system, which gives it limitless traction, and the eight-speed automatic gearbox carried over from the Speed, the Supersports clocks 60mph in 3.4 seconds, despite its 2205kg kerb weight. Staggeringly, this version is a full 1.7 seconds quicker to 100mph than the previous Supersports, setting a time of 7.2 seconds.

The nominal torque split between the front and rear axles is 40:60, although around 85 per cent of that torque can be sent either way in extreme conditions. The Supersports also becomes the first W12 Continental to use torque vectoring. It borrows the 'by braking' system that was developed for the 2014 Continental GT3-R, and Bentley

says it makes the car much more lithe and agile.

With chassis settings carried over from the Speed, the Supersports sits 10mm lower than a standard W12 Continental GT and its springs and anti-roll bars are stiffer. Carbon-ceramic brakes are standard fit, saving 22kg, which contributes to a 40kg weight loss over the Speed.

Befitting its head-of-the-family status, the Supersports is arguably the most distinctive-looking Bentley Continental yet. It certainly isn't subtle and in brighter shades it could be accused of being just a touch attention-grabby, but in calmer hues it does look suitably menacing. The rear wing, incidentally, can be deleted. Those buyers who want to turn even

more heads will be interested in the Specification X package, which includes a range of eye-popping two-tone paint schemes and garish tri-tone interior trim options. Let's just say Bentley knows its customers well.

Unlike the previous Supersports, this version remains a four-seater, Bentley having responded to feedback from owners. The cabin is a slightly curious mix of rock-solid build quality and slightly flimsy minor switchgear, but overall the Supersports' cockpit is one of its strengths.

With springs that are 25 per cent firmer and anti-roll bars 50 per cent stiffer than a regular W12's, the Supersports is demonstrably not the best-riding car in the line-up, but it's still supple enough on its air springs

to give it that relaxed, cossetting gait over really long distances. There are, however, other, newer cars in the sector that do a better job of reducing wind and road noise to a hush, notably the Mercedes-AMG S65 Coupe.

Those more focused chassis settings do give the Supersports an unusually taut sort of body control given the car's mass, and this forms the basis of its freakishly nimble handling. Rather than being a lazy, wallowy old bus, it's actually a rather agile and entertaining thing to peddle along a twisty road. Continental GTs have always had a surprisingly neutral chassis balance – they don't merely plough on into acres of understeer and, in fact, they actually feel quite agile and responsive – and the same is true

Specification

Engine	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight	Basic price
W12, 5988cc, twin-turbo	700bhp @ 6000rpm	750lb ft @ 2050-4500rpm	3.5sec (claimed)	209mph (claimed)	2205kg (323bhp/ton)	£212,500

+ Massive performance, surprisingly agile dynamics - Styling and soundtrack far from discreet; still very heavy

evo rating ★★★★★

‘I wouldn’t have much reason to doubt your integrity if you told me the Supersports was 20 per cent lighter than it really is’



Above: optional tri-tone interior trim won't be for everyone, and the switchgear shows the Continental's age, but it's still a regal place from which to drive



here. It means you can get the car turned into a corner very sharply. The steering is also light and very direct, which further helps to disguise the impression of weight.

Clearly the Supersports is never going to handle like a 1400kg sports car, but I wouldn't have much reason to doubt your integrity if you told me it was 20 per cent lighter than it really is. Much of that must be attributed to the torque-vectoring system. Now, it isn't one of the better systems that uses clever differentials to actively divert torque to where it's needed most, but by tweaking a brake here and there on the way into or out of a corner it does reduce the sense of inertia. In fact, the Supersports is genuinely good fun to drive.

The engine, of course, is a powerhouse. It feels sharp and responsive in the lower reaches and it revs out all the way to the red line quite keenly, but you're better off short-shifting to get back into the meat of the torque band and feeling that vast, tidal acceleration

all over again. The eight-speed gearbox works well enough and feels pretty snappy in manual mode, but quite why it ever needs to shift down a gear when you flatten the accelerator, given the massive torque on offer, is anybody's guess.

When a car looks as fearsome and goes as fearsomely as this one, it needs the soundtrack to match. The Supersports gets a titanium exhaust system that isn't particularly tuneful under acceleration, but when you lift off the throttle or shift down a gear it emits the most comically overwrought pops and bangs. It actually sounds as though the entire exhaust system has fallen off and is being dragged along behind you.

In some ways that over-the-top soundtrack describes the Continental Supersports rather well. It isn't at all subtle and some will find it crass, but despite your better judgement you just can't help but like it. The Supersports is the best 12-cylinder Continental GT ever, which is some kind of farewell. ✕

Dan Prosser (@TheDanProsser)

SharkWerks Cayman GT4

No car is perfect – even Porsche's sublime Cayman GT4. Can 425bhp and some RS-style modifications elevate it to new heights?

Photography by Aston Parrott





IT CHEWED UP AND SPAT out the McLaren 675LT and Ferrari 488 GTB, but still we reckoned the Porsche Cayman GT4 lacked bite. The setting was a dimly lit hotel bar in the far north of Scotland, and as the eight judges cast their votes after a solid week of back-to-back testing in the Highlands, it soon became clear Porsche's sublime mid-engined coupe had pulled off something of a giant-killing act. It had even taken care of its faster, more illustrious brother, the 911 GT3 RS.

The hardcore Cayman won *evo* Car of the Year in 2015 for good reason. Each one of us emerged from the GT4 on more than one occasion shaking our head in disbelief, muttering incoherently about body control or steering precision. Its chassis was shot through with such quality that not even the latest from McLaren or Ferrari, cars costing three or four times as much, could get the better of it. But once we had all stopped spewing praise and affection upon the thing, we did all have one small criticism to make.

The GT4's drivetrain could use just a little more... snap.

California-based SharkWerks has been modifying 911s for more than a decade. In recent years the company has become recognised for its big-power GT3 engine conversions (see *evo* 203), but here it has turned its attention to the Cayman.

'This is our interpretation of what a Cayman GT4 RS might be like,' says founder Alex Ross. 'Look at the differences between a 911 GT3 and a GT3 RS – lighter flywheel, more aero and more power. That's exactly what we've done to the GT4.'

SharkWerks set out to rectify the car's two main weaknesses: the 380bhp 911 Carrera S Powerkit engine, which lacks the intensity of a Porsche Motorsport unit, and the gearing, which is simply too long. The engine upgrades are limited to intake and exhaust systems for now, which liberate an additional 45bhp, but the company's engineers are busy developing a 4.3-litre conversion with a custom billet crank, liners and bespoke pistons.

Adjusting the gear ratios wasn't



simply a case of reducing the final drive, or swapping out each of the cogs. In fact, it all proved to be fairly complicated. First and second are untouched, while third, fourth and fifth are now much shorter. Sixth can either be reduced or left alone. The first two ratios are on the main shaft and changing that would be fiendishly expensive, but Ross actually prefers those ratios being reasonably long because you can still comfortably use both in tight corners, particularly with the car's auto-blip function.

In the standard GT4 you tend to use second and third gears on a typical flowing back road, and with third stretching to around 100mph there's hardly any need to engage fourth. Now, says Ross, you generally use third and fourth, which means shifting forward and back in one plane rather than the slightly awkward third-to-second or second-to-third shift across two planes.

The Angeles Crest Highway wends through the picturesque San Gabriel Mountains to the north of Los Angeles, twisting and turning through sweetly cambered bends for 60 miles or so before dropping into the valley on the far side. It's a magnificent stretch of road, and being within such easy reach of Downtown LA it draws countless car enthusiasts out of a city that has long been in love with driving. You see all sorts of performance machinery up here, plus countless everyday beaters and SUVs being driven on their door handles. We follow one expertly pedalled Hyundai saloon for mile after mile in the GT4, feeling no need whatsoever to find a way past.

Even the Highway Patrol seem to be in on it. Having heard us tearing along the road from several miles away before stopping to take some photos, one young police officer simply pulls up alongside us in his

heaving Crown Vic, asks us to be sure to stick to our own side of the road, then tells us to go enjoy ourselves.

With the blessing of the locals, the weather and the law, the Angeles Crest Highway is the perfect place to put SharkWerks' upgrades to the test. Parked in one of the many lay-bys along the road's length, every one of them decorated with swirls of black tyre marks, this GT4 looks spectacular. The styling of the standard car is one of its many strengths, but with a higher rear wing, a small Gurney flap and those demonic, horn-like dive planes, it looks tougher than ever.

The new exhaust system, developed in collaboration with German tuning outfit Cargraphic, makes the car sound more purposeful than ever, too. In fact, the new exhaust finally gives the GT4 a soundtrack that befits a Porsche Motorsport product, with much more of the serrated, hard-edged

howl of a GT3 or RS. The engine itself isn't any more thrilling than the standard car's, though, slightly sharper responses aside, and it still revs to just shy of 8000rpm rather than surging on towards 9000rpm. In the grand scheme of things, this 3.8-litre flat-six is a wonderful engine, but it's roundly shown up by the more exotic units in hardcore 911s. We impatiently await SharkWerks' 4.3-litre upgrade...

The revised gearing, meanwhile, does make a huge difference. The gearshift itself is one of the very best in the business, particularly with the switchable auto-blip function, and with second and third gears now so tightly stacked, there's something brilliantly motorsport about that upshift, engine note barely changing as you slot third. It's a little snapshot of a rally car's close-ratio gearbox, and it never fails to raise a smile. In the hills above LA, third and fourth gears are perfectly spaced, so you

'The new exhaust finally gives the GT4 a soundtrack that befits a Porsche Motorsport product'

Right: new uprights lift the rear wing (the end plates of which have enough space to express a preference for pedals, not paddles). **Left:** diveplanes add some attitude up front. **Below right:** rear ducktail has gained a Gurney flap

press along, snapping forward and back between the two ratios, the more muscular engine burly enough to pull third gear away from the road's tightest bends. The biggest difference between the standard car and this version is that you simply change gear more often. For a car that was sold on the interaction of its (delicious) manual transmission, that has to go down as a useful improvement.

SharkWerks hasn't touched the GT4's chassis – Ross says this is the first time he hasn't felt the need to upgrade a single suspension component on a Porsche – but there is an uprated differential that's more durable than the stock item.

The transmission modifications, including gearing, LSD, flywheel and clutch kit, cost \$15,000 (c£12,250). The engine upgrades run to \$6000 (c£4900), while the aero changes cost \$2500 (c£2050).

These are not modest sums of money, but if there's any subset of car enthusiasts who'll find value in those upgrades it'll be the Porsche Motorsport crowd. For a GT4 owner who wants their car to have more of the bite of the GT3 RS they almost certainly have parked alongside it in their garage, the SharkWerks upgrades are very well executed. Fitting that it should take a shark to give the Cayman its teeth. ☒

Dan Prosser (@TheDanProsser)



Specification

Engine	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight	Price
Flat-six, 3800cc	425bhp @ 7400rpm	339lb ft @ 4750rpm	3.8sec (estimated)	180mph (claimed)	1363kg (317bhp/ton)	See text

➤ Improved soundtrack and shorter gearing ➤ Expensive; engine still lacks intensity

evo rating ★★★★★

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SEAT Leon Cupra 300

It's priced halfway between Golfs GTI and R, but does this latest SEAT Cupra have the ability of either?



THE CURRENT SEAT LEON Cupra began with either 261bhp or 276bhp, in models called 'Cupra' and 'Cupra 280' respectively. Then it moved to just one car at 286bhp – the Cupra 290. Now, well, go on, have a guess. As the name implies, it has 300 PS, or 296bhp. All of this just as the Golf R slips tantalisingly ahead again, rising to 306bhp in the soon-to-be-released Mk7.5 version. How very convenient, politically speaking.

No matter: these Cupras have always been rabid in a straight line, and with the TSI motor's torque rising by 22lb ft to 280lb ft between 1800 and 5500rpm, that should be even more so the case now. The quickest hatchback Cupra 300 (three doors, DSG transmission) gets to 62mph in just 5.6sec – a tenth quicker than the equivalent 290.

More intriguingly, and in spite of SEAT's reluctance to relay the information, the Cupra has also had detail changes to the chassis settings, gets faster shifts time for the DSG gearbox, and has a more theatrical soundtrack both inside and out.

All of this is based on the recently facelifted Leon, and there are some changes to the range structure as



'The Cupra 300 remains a more coolly efficient character than the flamboyant old Mégane RS'

well. The Cupra is still available in three-door (SC), five-door and estate (ST) guises, the last of those offered only with four-wheel drive and DSG. It's a true rival to the Golf R Estate, and the only version to get 4WD.

As before, a Performance Pack is available, with either black or orange detailing. It brings side-skirts, bigger Brembo brakes, and lightweight 19-

inch alloys. Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres are a further option.

What changes there are to the Cupra's chassis are minor and would take a back-to-back drive with the older car to pinpoint. Essentially, it's business as usual here. The Cupra – particularly in lighter, SC guise – demolishes a challenging road, generating very high levels of grip and finding impressive traction via its electronically controlled limited-slip differential. As before, all sorts of parameters can be adjusted – either via preset modes or an 'Individual' setting – including the engine characteristics, damping, steering weight and even the response of the diff. Set the suspension to its most comfortable and the car rides with a sophisticated control that suggests it would be very easy to live with.

Certainly, the Cupra 300 could never be called dull, but it remains a more coolly efficient character than the flamboyant old Mégane RS, especially in 4WD ST form. Indeed, the new wagon is a ludicrously rapid way to move lots of luggage; 0-62mph takes just 4.9sec. It has naturally weighty steering, but the added length and altered weight distribution mean it doesn't quite

have the same sense of agility as its hatchback relations.

Here's a thought, though. Just imagine if SEAT had left the engine alone and concentrated instead on refining the driving experience rather than massaging mere numbers. As it stands, the manual gearchange has a notchy resistance partway through its throw (on our test car, at least), a sensation exaggerated by the delayed return of the clutch pedal through its arc (a characteristic shared with some rival VW Group cars) and a disappointingly light and mushy brake pedal, even with the optional Brembos. It all makes heel-and-toe downchanges virtually impossible.

That, sadly, means the Cupras are best sampled in DSG form, and highly efficient they are too, but the up- and downshift of the DSG gearlever is arranged counter-intuitively, and the automatic upshift in manual mode is plain annoying. It's this lack of subtle refining – that attention to the details that really matter to people who enjoy driving – that separates a very good fast car from a truly special one.

That said, this Leon Cupra 300 is still a 155mph car starting at under £30k. Game on, new Civic Type R. **x**

Adam Towler (@AdamTower)

Specification

Engine	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight	Basic price
In-line 4-cyl, 1984cc, turbo	296bhp @ 5900rpm	280lb ft @ 1800-5500rpm	5.7sec (claimed)	155mph (limited)	1300kg (231bhp/ton)	£29,840

➤ Seriously quick; impressive grip; strong equipment levels ➤ Should be even more engaging to drive

evo rating ★★★★★

Alfa Romeo Giulia 2.0 Turbo Super

The Quadrifoglio version wowed us at eCoty 2016; now the entry-level Giulias have arrived in the UK



W E'VE ALREADY RAVED about the 503bhp Quadrifoglio. The question here is, do similar levels of ability and character flow through the gene-pool to models at the opposite end of the Giulia range?

This is a market dominated by diesel (for now, at least), and Alfa has a pair of diesel-engined Giulias primed for battle. But, for private buyers and those less concerned with CO2 numbers, there's the 2-litre petrol Giulia, available in either standard 'Giulia' or higher-spec 'Super' trim. Both put a turbocharged 197bhp through the rear wheels only.

The new all-alloy engine features MultiAir technology – hydraulically actuated variable valve timing – along with direct fuel injection and a twin-scroll turbocharger. Peak torque of 243lb ft is available from just 1750rpm and is deployed through an eight-speed torque-converter transmission, Alfa UK having opted for an all-auto range.

On paper, certainly, the Giulia has plenty going for it: 50:50 weight distribution; rear-wheel drive; an emphasis on structural rigidity and weight-saving, with aluminium for



'It's the sort of car that encourages a brisk, enthusiastic driving style'

the doors, wings and much of the chassis. The carbonfibre propshaft, a standout feature of the Quadrifoglio, is here too, and the result is a kerb weight of 1429kg: impressive, given a 2-litre Jaguar XE comes in at over 100kg more. There are double wishbones at the front and a multi-link rear. In terms of raw ingredients, this is as good as it gets.

On the road, too, the Giulia gets a great many things right. For starters, the driving position is excellent, the steering wheel rather lovely, and there are no awkward ergonomics. While the cabin detail lacks the wow-factor of the German opposition, it all works perfectly well and is especially pleasing with some of the optional wood and leather trims.

On the move, the car is nicely refined and instantly likeable. The £1950 Performance Pack brings variable dampers, paddles behind the steering wheel for manual shifting, and a limited-slip differential. The damper modes are selected via the now-familiar Alfa DNA switch, which also affects other attributes such as the throttle and steering. In its regular setting the suspension gives a ride that's firm but very well controlled, and there's a sense that the taut shell is allowing it to get on with the job at hand.

With the optional 18-inch alloy wheels there's an unyielding quality to the Alfa's low-speed ride around town that a more generous tyre sidewall may mitigate, but it's not something that anyone interested in a sports saloon would balk at, and it's more comfortable than a Jag XE.

What really gives the Giulia its own personality is its quick steering. It takes a period of acclimatisation, but it has a natural weight and feel and it's not so extreme as to make the car feel nervous. You soon learn to make small, precise inputs, entirely in keeping with the inherent poise and fine balance of the chassis. It's the sort of car that encourages a brisk, enthusiastic driving style almost everywhere.

The engine is a good partner for the chassis, pulling strongly from low down but maintaining a real zest at higher revs. The performance claims are 0-62mph in 6.6sec and a top speed of 146mph, and the Giulia feels every bit that quick, the auto 'box responding well to manual control and firing smartly through the ratios.

If anything, Alfa could – should – be a little more confident; allow the ESP to be slackened off and reconsider a manual gearbox. The Giulia is that sort of car.

But I know what you're thinking. Was there nothing weirdly old-Alfa-centric about it? Well, the brake pedal was curiously oversized and easy to unwittingly snag. There. That's about it. Well done, Alfa. **x**

Adam Towler (@AdamTowler)

Specification

Engine	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight	Basic price
In-line 4-cyl, 1995cc, turbo	197bhp @ 5000rpm	243lb ft @ 1750rpm	6.6sec (claimed)	146mph (claimed)	1429kg (140bhp/ton)	£31,180

➤ Keen engine, enjoyable handling ➤ Firm low-speed ride, options packs soon add up

evo rating ★★★★★

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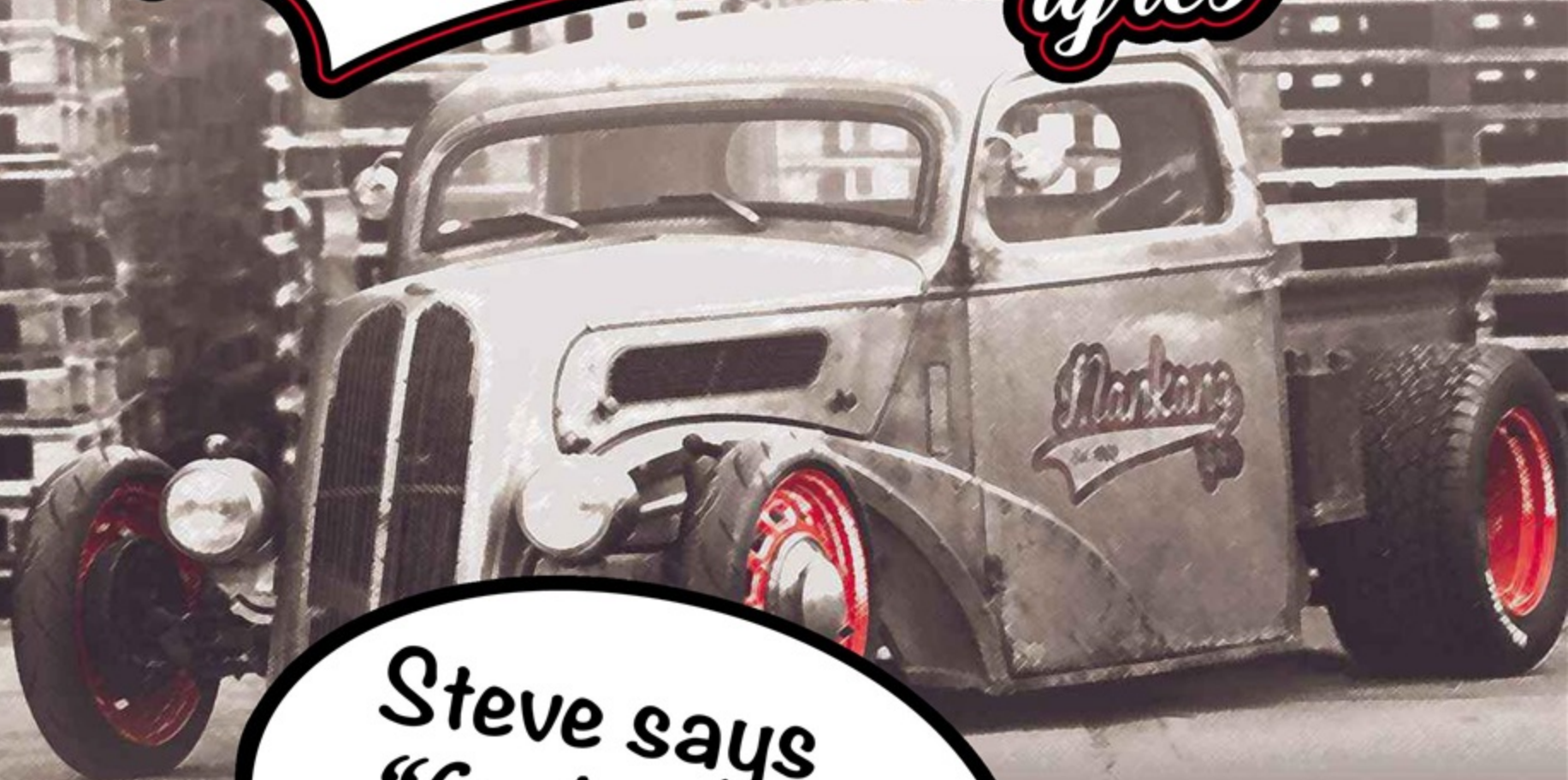
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Alfa Romeo Stelvio

Photography by Aston Parrott

Alfa's first SUV is a good-looking and entertaining new entry to a hotly contested sector



Driven

IT'S THE THOUGHT THAT counts. Launch a car named Stelvio, allow the press to drive it on the Stelvio pass, and watch the column inches pile up.

If you're Alfa Romeo though, it's not quite that simple, particularly when the Stelvio tourist board's own website confirms that the pass is closed from November to May. Happily, other alpine routes are kept open, ensuring throngs of people in brightly coloured Gore-Tex can pile into the region each winter in their Q5s, X3s and GLCs. So launching a striking new SUV here is a shrewd move. The attention seems positive, too. Without the Quadrifoglio's bodykit, the Stelvio's shape and compact proportions are actually quite easy on the eye.

Alfa claims best-in-class interior space, and both ergonomics and quality are a step up for the brand, as they are with the Giulia. There's ample adjustment for seats and wheel, and the pedals are well spaced. The transmission-selection lever does look rather like a Chinese copy of the one you'd find in a BMW, but the steering wheel, with its Ferrari-style column-mounted aluminium paddles, lends the cabin a special feel.

Engines at launch include a 207bhp 2.2-litre four-cylinder diesel and a 276bhp 2-litre twin-scroll



turbocharged petrol, while a ZF eight-speed auto is the only gearbox. The diesel will inevitably be the big-seller and does suit the SUV element of the Stelvio's character, offering brisk acceleration (0-62mph in 6.6 seconds) and official combined economy of 58.9mpg.

The petrol, however, is the more entertaining. It's also the choice of the head of Alfa Romeo in Europe, Fabrizio Curci, who tells us that his personal Stelvio is the petrol 'and it's the one I have recommended my family and friends buy, too'. The Stelvio feels more urgent – more Alfa-like – with petrol power, and, while neither engine is particularly refined, the petrol at least compensates with a rorty engine note.

The Stelvio is at its most entertaining in manual mode and

with Alfa's DNA switch clicked around to Dynamic. Those Ferrari-style paddles are a joy to interact with and, while there's an unnecessary thump with each up- and downchange in Dynamic, shifts are quick – as fast as 20 milliseconds. Braking is less joyful, with a spongy feel to the pedal. The stopping power is there but, despite Alfa's fine efforts to reduce weight (at 1660kg, the petrol is 185kg lighter than a 2-litre Macan), the stoppers feel the strain on alpine descents.

Dynamic mode also gets the best from the steering. The weighting remains light, but assistance is reduced to the benefit of that all-important off-centre response and the Stelvio's nose responds keenly to inputs. It's an easy car to place into and through a given bend, and

'It has fleetness and a lack of inertia that some German rivals can't quite match'

with Q4 all-wheel drive and a locking rear diff, there's strong traction and minimal understeer on the exit, while the low weight and light steering give a feeling of fleetness and lack of inertia that some German rivals can't quite match. Unfortunately, winter tyres make it difficult to tell how much outright grip there is and harder to appreciate what feels like a well-balanced chassis.

Ultimately, the Stelvio isn't quite the equal of the Macan to drive, but arguably it doesn't need to be, with an entry point around £12,000 below the Porsche. It's an engaging drive and a welcome new face in the segment. It may even displace some of those Q5s, X3s and GLCs in Europe's top ski resorts. **X**

Antony Ingram (@evoAntony)

Specification

Engine	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight	Basic price
In-line 4-cyl, 1995cc, turbo	276bhp @ 5250rpm	295lb ft @ 1750rpm	5.7sec (claimed)	143mph (claimed)	1660kg (169bhp/ton)	c£35,000

+ Agile feel, quick steering, attractive cabin - Engines not truly inspiring; we'd rather see a new Alfa hot hatch

evo rating ★★★★★

A sleek, dark-colored McLaren 720S Super Series is shown from a front-three-quarter perspective, driving on a road at night. The car's headlights are on, and its aerodynamic design is highlighted by the ambient light. The background is a blurred cityscape with streaks of light from buildings and streetlights, creating a sense of high speed. The McLaren logo is visible in the top right corner.

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Official fuel consumption figures in UK mpg (l/100km) for the McLaren Super Series 4.0L (3,994cc) petrol, 7-speed Seamless Shift Dual Clutch Gearbox (SSG): urban 17.1 (16.5), extra urban 38.2 (7.4), combined 26.4 (10.7). Official combined CO2 emissions: 249g/km. The efficiency figures quoted are derived from official NEDC test results, are provided for comparability purposes only, and might not reflect actual driving experience.

Mercedes-Benz E400 4Matic Coupe

The new E-class Coupe is a class act, and the 328bhp 3-litre twin-turbo V6 is the best version – so far



LOOKS GOOD, DOESN'T IT? Mercedes went to great lengths trying to explain why its latest E-class is particularly easy on the eye (in brief: soft shoulder-lines, good proportions, a pillarless greenhouse) but, as with any art form, car design either works or it doesn't. The E-class Coupe just might have the most attractive combination of curves in the current Mercedes range, AMG GT included.

Those curves stretch 123mm longer and 74mm wider than they did on the old E-class Coupe, with 113mm of extra bodywork (and glass) between the axles. The track is wider, too (and wider than that of the saloon and estate), and yet, in basic diesel form, the Coupe hasn't gained a single kilo on its predecessor.

The cabin sees the greatest benefits from this expansion, though the excellent innards of the current-generation E-class mean it's already off to a better start than most. The E has one of the finer interiors of any modern vehicle, regardless of price, feeling beautifully crafted and thoughtfully designed throughout.

A pair of 12.3-inch high-resolution displays convey the car's vitals, while the driving position features more



adjustment than you'll ever need. All of this is enhanced by the Coupe's party piece, its pillarless side-glass, which not only looks fantastic in profile but affords the cabin the luxury of natural light and, if you drop the side windows, a taste of the convertible experience. One of those, incidentally, is on the way soon.

Mercedes expects the E220d Coupe to be the big seller, but you knew that already. What you need to know is that the four-cylinder E300 petrol that you might have considered as an entry-level alternative is a thoroughly unpleasant device. It's both noisier and less refined than the four-pot diesel and delivers nothing like the performance implied by its relatively healthy 6.4-second 0-62mph time. In short, it feels more like a diesel than the diesel does, but lacks the promise of 61.4mpg economy as compensation.

Much better suited to the E-class Coupe and a better taste of the inevitable AMG E43 (Mercedes won't yet commit to an E63 Coupe) is the E400, which uses a 3-litre twin-turbocharged V6 petrol engine and a 9G-Tronic nine-speed automatic transmission. The official figures are 328bhp, 354lb ft and 0-62mph in 5.3 seconds, but subjectively it's twice the engine of the E300's, from the smoothness with which it whirrs into life, to the strong, consistent urge and strident note it offers all the way through the rev range. It is, unsurprisingly, much like the popular '43' engine already used in the E-class saloon and estate, but with a touch less snarl and less of an inclination to butt into its governor at the top end of the rev-counter.

Air Body Control suspension with adaptive damping is standard on the E400 4Matic and it's an effective setup. The ride quality is pillowy on the motorway and falters only over sharper bumps, a trait common in air suspension systems. Flick the tiny knurled switch to Sport or Sport+ and the E400 feels instantly firmer, but still far from uncomfortable. While the steering firms up in Sport, the improved body control means

'The four-cylinder petrol version is a thoroughly unpleasant device'

smaller inputs are required to round any given corner.

What's lacking is any real interaction with the front wheels, and, at 1770kg and with a relatively long wheelbase, the E400 never feels truly agile. The 4Matic all-wheel drive gives it so much traction that on dry roads it's resolutely tied-down, with only progressive understeer when you eventually breach the tyres' abilities.

If you seek an E-class Coupe with the ability to entertain, better to wait for the E43. But so refined, so smooth and so unstressful is the E400 to drive, it should hit the spot if a stunning cabin, easy performance and classical good looks are all you require from a luxury coupe. **X**

Antony Ingram (@evoAntony)

Specification

Engine	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight	Basic price
V6, 2996cc, twin-turbo	328bhp @ 5200-6000rpm	354lb ft @ 1600-4000rpm	5.3sec (claimed)	155mph (limited)	1770kg (188bhp/ton)	£50,775

+ Good looks, classy cabin, relaxed performance **-** Not much here in the way of real thrills

evo rating ★★★★★



RICHARD MEADEN

Nürburgring lap records have become mighty but meaningless, says Meaden, who reckons there's a way to bring back the awe of the olden days

SEVENTEEN YEARS AGO THIS MAGAZINE dedicated its cover to a gathering of cars capable of lapping the Nürburgring Nordschleife in under eight minutes. Front and centre of the 'Ring Masters' cover (evo 021) was the then-brand-new Audi RS4 Avant – the most mainstream car to crack the magic eight-minute barrier. Arranged around it were the Caterham R500, Jaguar XJ220, Porsche 996 GT3 and Nissan R33 Skyline GT-R: four cars that had also built formidable reputations by circulating the world's toughest 13-odd-mile loop of tarmac in a high seven-minutes-and-something.

Fast-forward to 2017 and a Lamborghini Huracán has just lapped in a high six-minutes-and-something. That's an astonishing lap time. An achievement beyond anything you can glean from the soulless in-car footage. So why don't I care?

Too much of a good thing, I reckon. Where once these Ring records meant something, now I feel completely inured to their impact. With more and more cars claiming quicker and quicker times, the significance of the cars, the laps and even the North Loop itself seem to be eroding before my eyes.

Part of it is because the cars themselves have evolved at such a rate that the challenge has changed beyond recognition. Where it was once about getting the best from a fast road car that's in way over its head, it has now become a case of finding a driver willing and capable to summon enough commitment to find the car's limits.

It's often said the Nordschleife is like the ultimate B-road, and in many respects that's true. It certainly has more in common with a fantastic country road than a racetrack. That's what makes it unique, and why it has become a test and development mecca for all the major manufacturers. Thinking back to 2000, even the best fast road cars could be tied in knots, or at least a tangle or two, by our toughest road routes. Seventeen years later we're still using the same road routes, but the best high-performance cars are pretty much impervious to the challenges they present.

There was a time when I'd pick my moment and relish the prospect of driving test cars hard on these roads. The challenge was to be sensitive to their limitations and wary of their edgier traits. Self-control was a factor, but the limit was something you sought with care and paid respect to. These days a 991 GT3 RS,

Ferrari 488 or even a Golf R is capable of such blistering cross-country speed that you would rightly be relieved of your licence and liberty should you be reckless enough to uncork any of them. And you'd still be some way below the limit of their capabilities.

Watching the Huracán lap, or indeed the Porsche 918 Spyder lap it trumped, is a window on the zone where those limits now reside. Way up in the thin air, where only those charged with the job of wringing out a lap time are prepared or able to go. It's a bit like watching YouTube videos of those mad Russians who climb terrifyingly tall buildings, then dangle themselves off the ledge at the top. It makes for compelling but decidedly uncomfortable viewing. I certainly wouldn't want to try it.

If you love fast cars and what it takes to drive them to the limit of their capabilities, anything that happens between Hatzenbach and T13 should matter. Sadly, as these 'record' laps become more and more commonplace it seems the noble, gnarly old Nordschleife is being normalised: plundered for disposable marketing material that then sends vociferous internet 'experts' into a frenzy of conspiracy theories.

I'll always have tremendous respect for anyone prepared to put their balls on the block and go for a time, but I've reached a point where, apart from a bit of tea-break titillation, the laps don't mean anything. How

can they when they are timed on different days and the cars are prepared to a standard ungoverned by any kind of official body? If there's no consistency there's no context. That's why almost 35 years since it was set, there's only one Ring record worth getting excited about: Stefan Bellof's incendiary 6:11.13 at the wheel of a Porsche 956 in qualifying for the 1983 Nürburgring 1000km. On the same day, in the same type of car as his factory teammates, Bellof went five seconds faster than the next quickest man.

Inevitably there has long been talk of Bellof's record being ripe for breaking. Thus far talk has proven cheap. So here's an idea: if the manufacturers enjoy the marketing mileage from setting so-called Ring records, why don't they get together every year, allow an impartial scrutineer to check the validity of all the cars, strap in the maddest test drivers available, give them a slap and let them go at it in the ultimate Time Attack? From hot hatches to hypercars, the score would be settled. Now that would get my attention. ✕

'Almost 35 years since it was set, there's only one Ring record worth getting excited about'

"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...



RICHARD PORTER

Manufacturers used to exhibit extraordinary creativity in disguising their pre-production prototypes. Porter laments the loss of these pantomime cars

LAST WEEK I FELL DOWN ONE OF THOSE internet rabbit holes. You know the sort. One minute you're checking the weather, the next it's gone dark outside and you know 17 new things about turtles. Or, in my case, past midnight/staring at a picture of a Rover 800. But this wasn't a normal 800 because it looked more like an attempt to create a Delta S4 replica by starting with an Audi 100 Avant.

A bit more pinging around the dark and musty corners of the internet revealed it to be a prototype from back when the car wore the mysterious codename 'XX', and the boxy panelwork was a cunning ruse to disguise the lines of the secret car underneath. Rover was never accused of being thorough with aspects of the 800 like, say, door fits and electrical connectors, but it did a ruddy comprehensive job on the camouflage kit, adding a false bonnet, a misleading quad-lamp nose, a huge glassfibre rear hunch and fake door skins so that the speculative sketch artist at your favourite '80s car mag had nothing to work with.

It was an amazingly complete piece of concealment and seeing it made me strangely nostalgic, because this sort of thing doesn't happen any more. Look at spy shots today and, without fail, they'll depict some future model lazily swathed in nothing more than swirly techno-zebra body wrap. It's effective, I'm sure, but it's not intriguing or interesting. It certainly doesn't capture the imagination and cause you to scrutinise the pap shots, trying to distinguish real metal from glassfibre falsehood. Stare at a camo-wrapped prototype now and all you'll get is a splitting headache. The last secret car I can remember going beyond the usual rolls of madly patterned tape was the current Jaguar XJ, which could be spotted prowling the Midlands dressed up like a *Mad Max* battle-cruiser, all covered in screwed-on panels and insane roof fins. This car needed the extra camo, firstly because it was so radically different to its predecessor, and secondly because, as someone at Jag later admitted, they wanted to 'create some intrigue'. Which is exactly what happens when you go to town on the fake panels.

Unfortunately, for the people tasked with developing cars, these things are also a pain in the arse, adding weight, ruining

aerodynamics and blocking access to the real bits underneath while creating wind whistles, rattles and other false reads unhelpful to the process of getting things production-ready. Once the dazzle-ship wrap had been invented, it was pretty much the end of days for extravagant mouldings riveted to prototypes. And if you're a nerd who gets excited by the cloak-and-dagger nature of camouflaged test cars, that's a very sad thing.

But it's not all bad news for anyone disproportionately fascinated by car companies' future plans and their attempts to conceal them. Great swathes of physical testing have been replaced by computer modelling, which means production-spec prototypes happen later

in the process and don't need to be cloaked with such extravagant efforts when the reveal is so close. Yet despite this, there will always be components that need testing in the real world, and the common way to do this is under the cut 'n' shut shells of current models. They call them mules and, while these mash-ups usually give little outward clue to what's coming up, their swollen and mutated shells are as perversely fascinating as any prod-spec test car hidden under false panelwork.

The mule is a brilliant thing and one that led Porsche, for example, to complete initial 928 development under the hacked-up bodies of some Audi 100 Coupes and an old Opel Admiral. Likewise, McLaren completed an early shakedown of the F1 underneath a couple of Ultima kit cars before returning to an Ultima for work on the MP4-12C, while

adding a couple of discreetly modified Ferrari 360s into the mix. By the same token, a few years ago visitors to a well-known UK test venue never guessed that the noisy Lamborghini pounding the high-speed track was ironing out bugs in the transmission for the Veyron, just as few outsiders realised that the stretched 348 on gold wheels was an early test car for the Enzo or that the scruffy Metro van ragging past them on the A40 was an MGF underneath.

The glassfibre cladding has largely disappeared, but if you're of a nerdish bent then at least the test mule keeps the intrigue alive. And if you're really into the stuff I've just mentioned, you can find pictures of many of these mules online. Just watch out for the rabbit hole containing madly camouflaged Rover 800s. 📷

'The current Jaguar XJ could be spotted prowling the Midlands dressed up like a Mad Max battle-cruiser, covered in fins'

'WOW! WHAT A RIDE!'

HUNTER S. THOMPSON



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TED KRAVITZ

Don't be surprised if Ferrari protests the result of the Australian GP, says our F1 insider, as the argument over suspension rumbles on

IT'S SHADES OF GREY...' SAID CHRISTIAN Horner. The assembled journalists looked up, wondering if they'd just been given an insight to his and Geri's bedtime reading. Turned out the Red Bull Racing boss was referring to something dramatically less sexy: Formula 1's technical regulations governing suspension. These rules and what they really mean are currently the cause of much argument and could be the subject of a protest at the first Grand Prix of the season in Melbourne, if compromise cannot be reached.

For reasons nobody can quite remember and which seem increasingly illogical given its widespread use in road cars, active suspension is banned in F1. The regulations also ban moveable aerodynamic devices. So, in a two-fingered salute to both rules, designers have devised passive suspension that acts like active suspension and moves the car in a way that helps its aerodynamics.

The key is hydraulic heave dampers. Controlling the front ride height, they can be programmed (or set up through asymmetric valving) to lower the whole car quickly under braking and then through a corner, increasing aerodynamic grip, only to raise the ride height later but at a slower rate. The systems can also drop the rear of the car on the straight, which stalls the diffuser, dumps drag and gives a straight-line speed boost.

The debate surrounding their legality boils down to whether you believe suspension's purpose should be to suspend the car or to manipulate its ride height to optimise its aerodynamic performance. The teams say it is primarily doing the former while the latter, well, that's just happening by itself, simultaneously. What a coincidence! The FIA has reminded the teams that any side effects of suspension that benefit aerodynamics must be incidental to the main purpose of keeping the damn car off the ground (my interpretation).

So if the result of the Australian Grand Prix is protested (most likely by Ferrari, whose repeated requests for clarification over the winter suggest it is not finding the same gains in this area as its rivals), you'll know why.

There are likely to be shades of grey atop the podium again this year. Mercedes has been the class of winter testing's race simulations, even with its engines wound well down after bits

blew up on the factory dynos. Mercedes says it would rather have failures on the test bench than at the racetrack, allowing fixes to be put in place in time for the first event, but there might be a few tense moments in its garage if Red Bull or Ferrari bring something aerodynamically amazing to Oz.

This isn't impossible, but it is increasingly unlikely, as it's much harder to find half a second from pure aerodynamics than it is to find half a second from these hybrid engines. That's because the best power unit engineers are discovering gains every week – in combustion, electrical energy recovery and improving ways to deploy it around the lap.

Formula 1 Management's new MD (motorsports), Ross Brawn, is well aware that the power unit is dictating performance more than ever before (after all, he was the architect of Mercedes' current dominance), but has given a glimmer of hope that there might be change insofar as he'd support a return to louder, cheaper, perhaps larger-capacity, naturally aspirated racing engines – if the manufacturers can agree.

Car makers used to use Formula 1 as a giant research and development laboratory. The problem nowadays is that because their interests are increasingly headed towards autonomous, electric cars, the logical conclusion of their R&D would have the likes of Fernando Alonso, Lewis Hamilton and Max Verstappen replaced by robots.

Although given the state of his McLaren Honda, the possibility of being replaced by a non-sentient droid might appeal to Alonso.

McLaren isn't in as much trouble as it was in 2015, but it has gone backwards from last season. In redesigning the power unit, Honda made a mistake with the design of the oil tank, necessitating a hasty workaround. A different engine failed, prompting an apology to Alonso and Stoffel Vandoorne from Honda's Yusuke Hasegawa.

Such is Formula 1's '2 plus 2 equals 8' mentality that gossip is already circulating along the lines that McLaren is looking to part ways with Honda and beg Mercedes for the spare engine supply it's got going since Manor went bust. It seems almost unthinkable, but doubtless Honda would continue in F1 with Sauber, or Williams, or whoever, and life would go on. Controversial? Ruthless? Extreme? Of course. That's Formula 1. ❧

**'The possibility
of being
replaced by a
non-sentient
droid might
appeal to
Alonso'**



F1 1994-98 - Sport Exhaust (Stainless Steel OR Titanium)



SLR inc. 722 Variants 2003-09 - Sport Exhaust system



SLR Stirling Moss 2009-11 - Sport Exhaust system



MP4 12C 2012-14 - Ceramic Sport Exhaust / 'Cat' Replacement Pipes



650S 2014 on - Ceramic Sport Exhaust / 'Cat' Replacement Pipes



540C 2015 on - Ceramic Sport Exhaust / 'Cat' Replacement Pipes



570S 2015 on - Ceramic Sport Exhaust / 'Cat' Replacement Pipes



570GT 2016 on - Ceramic Sport Exhaust / 'Cat' Replacement Pipes



675LT 2016 on - 'Cat' Replacement Pipes



P1 2014-16 - 'Cat' Replacement Pipes

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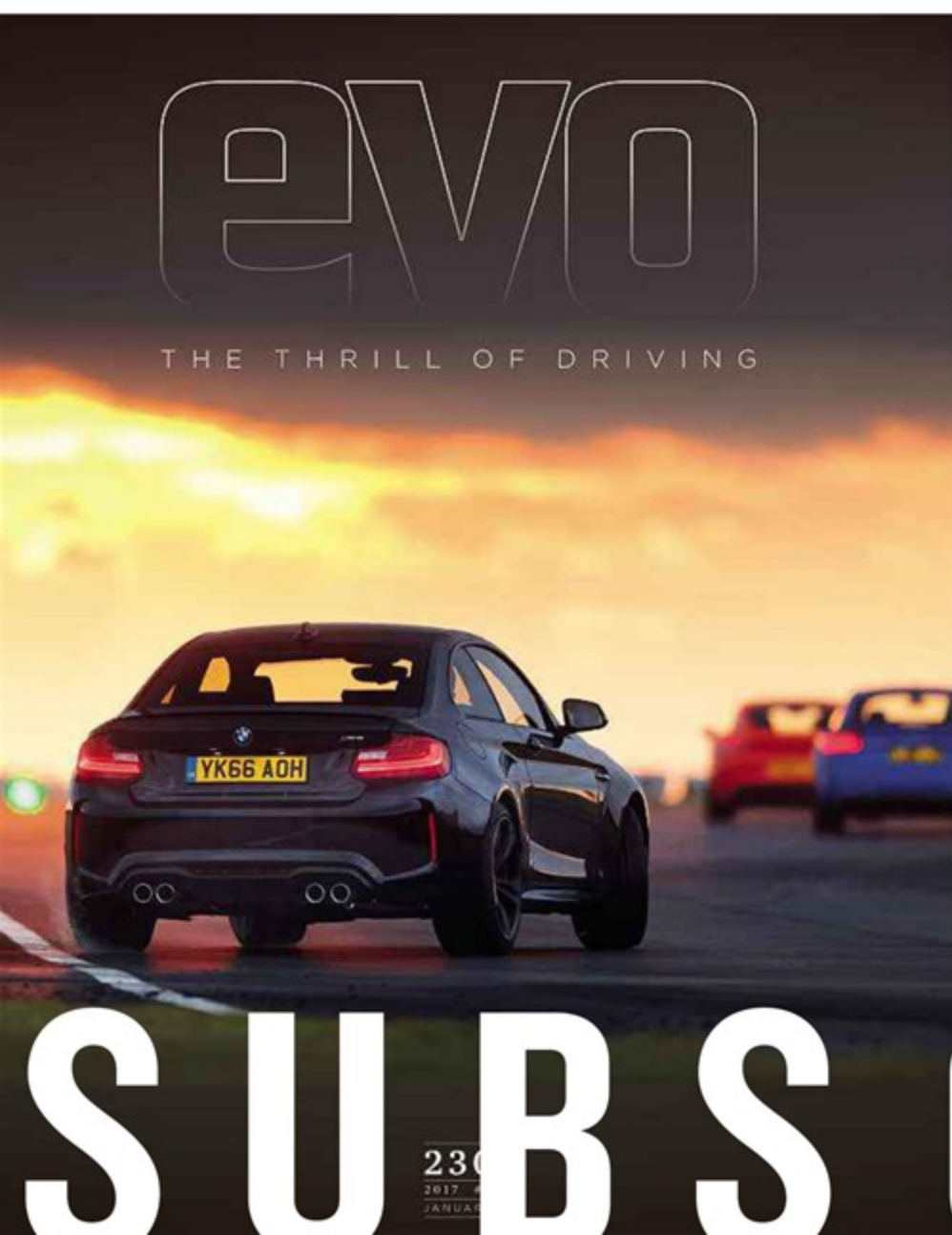
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McLAREN 720S



★ 2017's ★
MOST WANTED

McLAREN 720S



*McLaren Automotive is embarking
on its next chapter with a new
generation of Super Sports models,
starting with this: the 720S*

by STUART GALLAGHER

PHOTOGRAPHY *by* DEAN SMITH

'THE 720S MOVES McLAREN'S DESIGN LANGUAGE ON.
WHETHER IT'S GONE TOO FAR WILL BE DOWN
TO YOUR PERSONAL TASTE'





S E C O N D A L B U M syndrome. That's what McLaren wants to avoid with the 720S. Not only is this new 710bhp coupe the company's first 'second-generation' Super Series car and the replacement for the 650S, it is also the launch pad for 15 new McLaren models or derivatives that will be produced in Woking over the next five years. And no, there isn't an SUV in the plan.

Super Series is the core of McLaren's DNA. It's where the company started with the clumsily named MP4-12C and quickly learnt that building supercars isn't without its pitfalls – and that buyers in this sector, and the media, are a tough bunch to please. Claiming you've built a Ferrari rival is one thing. Proving you have is an altogether tougher task, and one McLaren experienced in public view.

It learnt, though. Updates came, tweaks were developed, the name was shortened and the 12C went on to blossom before eventually evolving into the 650S – a car that has, or rather had (the last example, a Spider, has been built, registered and added to McLaren's heritage fleet), the credentials to go nose-to-nose with Ferrari's rather brilliant 488 GTB.

This is pretty remarkable considering Ferrari will celebrate its 70th anniversary in 2017, modern McLaren Automotive only its seventh.

'The 720S would be replacing the core of our range,' says Mark Vinnels, executive director for programme development at McLaren. 'It would also be our first "second-generation" model; we knew we didn't want it to be just an evolutionary step.

'At the beginning we said [to the designers], show us sketches that aren't comfortable [for us]. We could see there were things that would need to be developed, but at that stage we didn't have the execution in our minds, such as the new carbonfibre structure.'

The 720S is built around an evolution of the MonoCell used in the first generation of Super Series models, while taking elements from the MonoCage of the Ultimate Series P1 hypercar. The fundamental change for the Super Series is that, where the MonoCell ended below the glasshouse, the carbon structure of the new MonoCage II has been designed to incorporate the roof and a pair of dihedral doors, just as the original MonoCage did on the P1.

'The MonoCage II took the lessons from P1, and we saw the upper carbon structure was feasible. The challenge was how to

Above: the 720S brings a fresh look to a McLaren, yet in profile it still clearly channels elements of the firm's most famous road car, the F1 of 1992

‘THE INSTRUMENT CLUSTER,
WHICH CAN FOLD DOWN TO A LOW-
DISTRACTION SLIM STRIP, IS
SIMPLY INSPIRED’





manufacture it in enough volume and at a sensible cost. What it brings in terms of visibility is unprecedented,' says Vinnels.

Incorporating the roof into the car's core structure has allowed chief designer Rob Melville to slim down the windscreen pillars and use glass for the C-pillars. In creating the 720S, Melville and his team have given us a car that is unmistakably McLaren but which also moves the company's design language on. Whether it's gone too far – or not far enough – will be down to your personal taste, but away from the bright lights of a motor show stand or photography studio, the 720S looks just right. It has elements of contention such as the headlights, which sit in what Melville describes as 'eye sockets'. These are divided into two portions by sequential indicators, with one portion directing air to the radiators behind the front wings and the other housing the LED headlights. For some it looks like an unfinished design element, for others it's an example of an original design solution answering an engineering dilemma.

It's a similar story in regard to feeding air to the new 4-litre twin-turbo V8. Previous McLarens had air intakes running along the doors, but the 720S has a sleeker, cleaner profile. Air for its engine runs through the bodywork and above the car's rear haunches, and cooling has increased by 15 per cent.

'Given we were going to increase the power, the last thing we wanted to do was increase weight,' says Vinnels. 'That's where the aero



Above right: rear wing also functions as an air brake.
Right: instrument panel can flip to show a 'Slim' mode for when the driver wants minimal distractions





INTERVIEW

CHRIS GOODWIN

Chief test driver, McLaren Automotive

by DAVID VIVIAN

'The new car benefits from all the development work we've done on 12C, P1, 675LT, 540 and 570. We've strengthened the team, refined the process and, as a result, we've been able to work to greater detail in any area of the car. We're such a young company and we've developed our capabilities so quickly. The measure of how far we've come in the six years we've been in business is the difference between the 12C and this car here.'

'You can start at the front of the 720S and work your way back and everything you touch is light years away from where we were with 12C. There are some obvious key items to look at that make it stand out as being different. Obviously the engine is one. But it's the way that 4-litre engine is tuned and calibrated. The driveability, the detail we've gone into in terms of the on-off throttle response, the torque delivery, the efficiency of the engine. Yes, we've changed the specific capacity but that's only the tip of the iceberg. Everything is extremely different and better, more developed than anything we've done before.'

'Throughout this project, we've kept an eye on 650S as one of our main reference points. We didn't know then what we know now about how to really hone and fine-tune the technologies that we use. A good example is the suspension system. It looks quite similar to the 650S's, but the front and rear geometry is different. High-speed stability is improved and we have very different – and much better –

steering feel and character, and the hardware inside the dampers has been refined. One of the big items is the way we control the suspension. We still have our hydraulic circuit linking to the adaptive-damping system, but the algorithm that controls that system is a massive, massive change.'

'We call it Proactive Chassis Control II and it's the way we control the dampers. Totally different software optimises the contact patch to a much higher level than we've seen before. It maintains an unbelievable degree of body control, even though we're accommodating all the bumps and dips in the road surface. It's kind of uncanny. The previous car was pretty good at creating great ride comfort in one mode, body control in another. But this has taken it a step further. The damping software can accurately maintain body control and handling balance together. The car feels sharp as a knife while dealing with the road surface at the same time. And you can feel the road surface. You feel connected.'

'The 720S grinds out an amazing amount of grip. It's just so fast through the corners. It's because the contact patch of the tyre is working so efficiently. We worked hand-in-hand with Pirelli because it's so demanding on the tyres. The balance can be comfortable and neutral or it can be as wild as a 675LT. We know we've got something that will appeal to everybody. It's a real breakthrough, another chapter.'

came from – how could we make the car more efficient, particularly around the cooling?’

Completing the car's design is a new integrated rear wing that's hydraulically operated. It also functions as an air brake and so has three main functions: downforce, DRS and high-speed braking.

However, it's what sits within the illuminated engine bay and the components that hang from the MonoCage that really increase the heart rate. This powerplant may feature eight cylinders in a V-formation and two turbos as per the 650S, but that's where the similarities end. Forty-one per cent of the parts are new for the M840T. There's a new cast-aluminium inlet plenum, lighter pistons, conrods and crankshaft. The twin-scroll turbochargers are new and faster-spooling

to further improve throttle response, and the 3994cc motor (up from 3799cc) spins to 8100rpm in the first two gears and 8200rpm in third and above. Peak power increases to 710bhp from 641bhp in the 650S and arrives at 7500rpm; torque grows to 568lb ft, up from 500. The seven-speed double-clutch gearbox has been modified to smooth out the shifts without compromising the crispness of each change. On top of this, upshifts are up to 45 per cent quicker than those in the 675LT (due to better ignition-cut software) and the speed of the downshifts is said to have improved as a result of the engine's lower inertia.

When the MonoCage, engine and aluminium body come together, the 720S weighs 9kg less than the 650S, tipping the scales at 1419kg with fluids. To achieve this,

the electrics are 3kg lighter than before, the standard-fit carbon-ceramic brakes are 2kg lighter and a 1.5kg saving has been found in the airboxes. The suspension weighs a hefty 16kg less than it does on the outgoing car, too. McLaren's diet and engine workout result in 508bhp per ton and a 2.9sec 0-62mph time, with 124mph coming up in 7.8sec. The car tops out at 212mph.

It's not only the performance, the further development of the car's dynamics, the weight saving and the clever exterior design that impress, though. Consider also that not a single experimental prototype was built for the development of the McLaren 720S.

'One push was to shorten the development time and make it more efficient,' says Haydn Baker, McLaren's vehicle line director for





‘MUCH OF WHAT McLAREN LEARNT WITH THE P1 AND 675LT HAS GONE INTO THE 720S’

Super Series. ‘So we decided to delete the experimental prototype phase, which was a huge challenge. All the proof of content was done on 650S mules, so one with the suspension on, one with the new engine, etcetera, but we didn’t build any cars until less than a year ago. All the work was done using CAE and CFD, and signed off virtually – years ago we would have done a lot more crashing into walls. Our first cars were built by April 2016: there were 20 of these validation cars, and that was the complete fleet for everything – sign-off, mileage, electronics, driveability – all built from production tooling.’

A great deal rests on the shoulders of the 720S. McLaren is forecasting production to rise from just over the 3000 units in 2016 to 4500 by the end of 2017. That will require Mike Flewitt, McLaren’s CEO, to continue to build the company’s market reach (you can

currently buy a McLaren in 30 markets) while his engineers busy themselves renewing and expanding the current product lineup. That will include a more powerful replacement for the P1 – codename ‘BP23’.

Among the 15 new models scheduled by 2022 will not only be Spider and GT versions of the 720S, but also a more extreme replacement for the 675LT, too. Then we’re into Spider variants of today’s 570 and 540 models, before these too are replaced with significantly updated models that will have been developed with technology introduced on the 720S. Perhaps the biggest challenge for Flewitt and his team is that half of all future McLarens will feature hybrid powertrains. For this, McLaren will not only need to develop the technology and seamlessly integrate it into its new range of cars, but it will also need its customers to

actually want it, too. Which isn’t always a given. Supercar owners want their toys to be noisy and thrilling and, in many cases, anti-social devices. Can hybrid technology deliver all those characteristics?

Right now, though, the focus is on the car you see here. And when you see it in its aluminium-and-carbonfibre glory, you’ll see a much more aggressive McLaren. Parked next to a 720S, a 650S looks devoid of any distinguishing features. Those new headlights may have caused much chatter, but when seen in situ they create a McLaren that makes you stop and take in the details, pick out the lines and the shrink-wrapped philosophy Melville and his team has focused on. Those sharp creases in the bonnet add an aggression that’s been lacking in the past. The rear, meanwhile, melds the P1 and 675LT’s violence with the sophistication of the 650S.



And the instrument cluster – which can fold down from a conventional full digital display to a low-distraction slim strip showing just gear, revs and speed – is simply inspired.

More power, more torque and a faster gearbox are the default upgrades for any new supercar. However, it's the work that has gone into the chassis that will demonstrate whether McLaren has remembered that while numbers are one thing, it's how they come together and allow the machine to interact with the driver that can mark a car out as being truly special and give it the potential to be a class winner and an object of true automotive desire.

McLaren knows this all too well after the less-than-glowing feedback that found its way to Woking in 2011 regarding the 12C. The steps it has taken to ensure every model since has answered those original criticisms

are proof that it's a manufacturer willing to listen, respond and deliver. Much of what McLaren has learnt with both the P1 and 675LT, undoubtedly two of the very best cars the company has produced in recent times and two of the very best performance cars of all time, has gone into the 720S.

Befitting any new supercar worth its place on Instagram, McLaren will build, and has already sold, 400 Launch Edition 720Ss. For the rest of 2017, it expects to sell a further 800 examples in standard, Luxury and Performance trims. Or, of course, you can order a bespoke MSO version finished to a specification of your choice. Beyond this, 1500 examples will leave the MTC every 12 months, costing at least £208,600 apiece. When we drive a 720S in a month or so, we'll tell you if you should be transferring your deposit to a Woking-based bank account. ☒

McLaren 720S

Engine V8, 3994cc, twin-turbo

Power 710bhp @ 7500rpm

Torque 568lb ft @ 5500rpm

Weight 1419kg

Power-to-weight 508bhp/ton

0-62mph 2.9sec (claimed)

Top speed 212mph (claimed)

Basic price £208,600

On sale May 2017

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HONDA CIVIC

Honda dragged its feet with the previous-generation Civic Type R. This time we're getting one almost from the get-go, but how much has changed?

by ADAM TOWLER

PHOTOGRAPHY by DEAN SMITH

WHITE PAINT, BLACK DETAILING, red logos and easily the wildest body addenda in the hot hatch market. No, you don't need me to tell you this is the all-new Honda Civic Type R.

And normally I'd leave it at that and let you make up your own mind on the looks. But not this time. The ungainly, slab-sided proportions and tacked-on aero of the old car made it highly divisive, and for many it was all a bit cringeworthy. Having had the benefit of walking around the new car, I believe that's no longer the case. Yes, it's still a riot of slashed lines, Manga-influenced forms and bonkers aero – Honda once again claims a class-leading balance between reducing lift and creating drag – and the deep chin, vortex generators on the trailing edge of the roof and the massive rear wing will still make a Golf R owner blush, but it's all so much lower, meaner and more cohesive.

It might have crossed your mind that the outgoing Civic Type R wasn't on sale for very long, and you'd be right. The go-ahead for that car didn't come until well into the production cycle for its generation of Civic, and the engineers on the project had to make the best of what they were given. This included an almost MPV-like form and a torsion-beam rear-suspension setup. As we've already explained (*evo* 230), the all-new Civic is a much lower, stiffer structure from which to work from, and the provision for a Type R model was not only in the plan from the start, but also influenced key decisions throughout the standard car's gestation.

The result is a base Civic that's 52 percent stiffer than before and 16kg lighter, with a centre of



HONDA CIVIC TYPE R

TYPE R



**'HONDA HAS
CLEARLY RESISTED
BEING DRAWN
INTO A POWER-LED
ARMS RACE WITH
ITS RIVALS'**

gravity 34mm lower and an H-point (the location of the driver's hip within the car) some 50mm lower. Those improvements have been carried across to the Type R variant, which has a structure 38 per cent stiffer than that of the old car. This new monocoque should provide the suspension with a much better platform to work from, which brings us neatly to the inclusion of a multi-link rear axle. Typically, this form of rear suspension provides the best control over the rear wheels while allowing the engineers to incorporate enough compliance for a more sophisticated ride. It's especially relevant to large hot hatches of the current high-power and high-weight variety. The Type R uses more rigid rear suspension arms than the standard car, and the front MacPherson struts have been tuned to suit. Once again, a helical-type limited-slip differential assists in putting more than 300bhp down cleanly.

And while Honda has moved to a 20-inch wheel diameter all-round (up from 19 inches), from talking with project engineer Hideki Kakinuma it's clear that the company has had more than one eye on everyday useability. That's not without good reason: unlike the outgoing Type R, which

has only been sold in Europe and Japan, the new car will be a global seller and will debut the Type R sub-brand in the USA. To this end, Honda has worked on the driving modes, responding to criticism that the old choice of normal and '+R' didn't cover enough bases. The core of the issue was that the +R setting for the variable damping was simply too firm, leaving the more energetic engine mapping in +R tantalisingly out of reach on a car with a surprising amount of turbo lag in the standard setting.

There are now three driving modes: Comfort, Sport and +R. Comfort is a more relaxed setting for the engine, steering and suspension than the old normal mode. Sport straddles the gap between that and +R, and Honda has taken the opportunity to make the new +R setting even more track-focused than before, feeling that even the old +R was still too much of a road-going compromise for modern, smooth racetracks. Kakinuma smiles wryly when he says that customer feedback told them many owners never used +R mode (we don't blame them) and that the button was therefore little more than a decoration in the car.

One thing the driver still can't do is mix and



Honda Civic Type R

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1996cc, turbo
Power 316bhp @ 6500rpm
Torque 295lb ft @ 2500-4500rpm
Weight c1378kg
Power-to-weight c233bhp/ton
0-62mph <5.7sec (claimed)
Top speed 167mph (estimated)
Basic price c£32,000
On sale Summer 2017



match the various settings in an 'Individual' mode, as can be done with the majority of the Type R's competitors. 'Honda believes in the typical performance of Type R,' says Kakinuma when challenged on this point. Which sounds to us like another way of saying: 'We know best.'

There is no option of a stickier tyre, either, just the standard Continental SportContact 6s, though Kakinuma says Honda will monitor the market and might offer something else. 'We wanted this car to appeal to a wide market; it was a challenge to see what we could do with one tyre,' he adds.

Intriguingly, a lighter, even more hardcore Type R is being considered, although there is no specific plan to build such a car just yet.

What hasn't changed? The engine (not very much, at least), the front brakes and the gearbox. The new car uses essentially the same 2-litre VTEC turbo engine as before, but with detail changes throughout and a revised ECU calibration. The official figures are 316bhp at 6500rpm and 295lb ft at 2500-4500rpm; in other words, an extra 10bhp and an identical torque output to the previous model. Honda has clearly resisted being drawn into a power-led arms race with its rivals,

and more power was well down the priority list with the old car in any case. Its front-wheel-drive configuration means it's considerably lighter than, say, a Focus RS, and therefore it doesn't need to match cars like the Ford on power, though a cynic might argue that there is a limit to what can be deployed through front wheels alone. Talking of weight, Honda won't provide an official figure yet, but Kakinuma confirms it's about the same as the outgoing car's 1378kg.

The Type R retains a six-speed manual gearbox because Kakinuma believes shifting gears with three pedals and a stick is an essential part of the hot hatch experience, and we wholeheartedly approve of that. There is a new rev-match feature, but don't worry, it can be switched off, and the shift quality of the 'box has supposedly improved.

Inside the Type R there's now a much more European feel. The supportive and gorgeous red buckets do indeed feel notably lower than before, and the small titanium gearknob is barely more than a hand-span away from the wheel.

The first new Type Rs should start arriving by the summer. By then we should already know if Honda's evolution of its hot hatch has paid off. ✕



Above: the old Type R's four exhaust tips have become three, moved to the middle of the rear valance (very 458...)



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PUREST
OF THEM
ALL ...



When it comes to pure drivers' cars, few names conjure more powerful sentiments than GT3 and A110. This year both are back – one following a rather longer absence than the other. So what exactly have Porsche and Alpine got in store for us?

by DAN PROSSER



ALPINE A110

EVER SINCE JEAN RÉDÉLÉ'S curious little sports car company was wound down more than 20 years ago – for good, as far as anybody could tell – the Alpine name has faded from consciousness like tail lights slipping into the mist. The last A610 rolled off the Dieppe production line in 1995, the company fatally short of the investment it needed to keep pace with ever more demanding crash and safety regulations.

In the two decades that have followed, the very concept of a French sports car has become every bit as obscure as the Alpine name itself. Today, French performance cars are based on very normal hatchbacks, and they're almost always front-wheel drive. Proper sports cars come from Germany, Britain or Italy, or perhaps from the other side of the globe, but not from France.

In some ways the Alpine brand never went away. A nutty core of enthusiasts has kept A610s, GTAs, A310s and earlier Berlinettes

running over the years, the pocket-sized A110 becoming a fixture on classic rallies across Europe. Most significantly, though, Alpine's factory at Dieppe has continued to develop and manufacture performance cars. And while those cars have all been badged 'Renault Sport' since 1995, the Alpine name has always been splashed across the walls of the factory and the clothing of the workforce, as though waiting until the time was right. Which is now.

Unveiled in road-going, production form to the press and public at the Geneva motor show, the new A110 is a mid-engined, rear-wheel-drive two-seater. With a bespoke aluminium body and extensive weight-saving measures it's very lightweight, while its 249bhp turbocharged four-cylinder engine should sling it along every bit as quickly as a driver-centric sports coupe needs to go.

Alpine (pronounced 'Al-peen') was bailed out by Renault in 1974 and the French giant still owns the marque to this day. It's



'Reviving the A110 name was a simple decision because the principles between the old and new versions are the same'

therefore with the backing of a multinational corporation – and its production expertise and economies of scale and unimaginable research and development resources – that Alpine makes its comeback today.

'There's a real pride both within the many employees of the Renault Group and in France and abroad for this brand,' says Alpine managing director Michael van der Sande. 'It instils passion. It's a huge responsibility [to bring the brand back] and we take it very seriously. We're trying to do justice to the original Alpines of the past with a lightweight sports car that's hopefully going to be as much fun to drive as the original A110 was.'

Reviving the A110 name was ultimately a simple decision, van der Sande explains, because the principles between the old and new versions are the same, despite being separated by half a century. 'A very lightweight sports car that punches above its weight in terms of performance is very relevant, not just

in the '60s and '70s, but also today,' he says.

The engineering team behind the A110 were fanatical about weight, which yielded a 1103kg total. The class-leading Porsche 718 Cayman, benchmarked by Alpine's engineers throughout the development process, is more than 230kg heavier. The A110's aluminium structure alone is reckoned to save 180kg compared to a steel one, while the very compact dimensions – the A110 is 20cm shorter than a Cayman – have also helped to keep weight down.

Chief engineer David Twohig admits he lost a night's sleep toying with the idea of fixing the passenger seat in position. Eventually, he decided the 500g saving wouldn't have been worth the inconvenience.

The engine is a 1.8-litre, single-turbo direct-injection unit. It will appear in forthcoming Renault models, so isn't unique to Alpine. Power is rated at 249bhp and torque at 236lb ft, which means the A110 has a Cayman-



'Alpine has used the underside of the car to generate downforce, almost eradicating lift at the rear'



Right: 'floating' panel between the occupants emphasises the A110's lightweight nature, and is made possible by the absence of a gearlever – the car is DCT only



rivalling power-to-weight ratio of 224bhp per ton (the Porsche has 225bhp per ton). Power is sent to the rear wheels via a seven-speed dual-clutch gearbox, with no option of a manual transmission. There's no limited-slip differential either, but the rear brakes are used to mimic the effect of one.

With double-wishbone suspension at all corners, the A110 has a more sophisticated chassis setup than the Cayman, which features MacPherson struts on both axles. The Alpine's steering, meanwhile, is electrically assisted, like the Porsche, but with the motor mounted on the column rather than the rack. On this occasion that's the less sophisticated method.

The very well executed styling of the car is clearly influenced by the shape of the original A110, including a tail that falls away from the rear screen. That profile is certain to generate aerodynamic lift at speed, but rather than solve the problem by attaching an ungainly wing or incorporating a complicated, expensive pop-up spoiler, Alpine has used the underside of the car to generate downforce, almost eradicating lift at the rear. The bottom of the car is completely flat with eight strakes to direct air through the rear diffuser.

Despite the car's modest dimensions, there's enough headroom for van der Sande to sit comfortably; at six-foot-seven he represents the 99.9th percentile for height. The lightweight Sabelt bucket seats can be adjusted up and down with the correct tools, dropping very close to the floor in their lowest setting to give a near-perfect seating position. The rear storage compartment is big enough to

swallow two helmets, while the shallow front boot can take a pair of airline cabin suitcases.

The Brembo brakes feature 320mm discs at the front, with four-piston calipers. Brembo has incorporated the parking brake into the rear calipers to save as much as 2.5kg, this being the first application of that technology.

Alpine quotes a 0-62mph time of 4.5sec with a top speed of 155mph, but the A110 isn't about raw performance. 'We're probably not going to be quickest on circuit,' says Twohig, 'but we have to be the most agile.' The tyre is a 17-inch Michelin Pilot Sport 4, rather than the grippier 4S, because Twohig wants the car to be playful at medium and low speeds: 'The car slides relatively easily. It isn't all about grip.' The A110 has various drive modes and an intermediate setting for the stability control, which can be switched off completely.

The car in these pictures is the launch-spec Première Edition, which gets 18-inch wheels and satnav as standard, although all 1955 examples have already sold out. The A110 is expected to cost less than £50,000 when it arrives in the UK early next year, where it will initially be sold through six or eight strategically located Renault dealerships.

Twenty-two years is an awfully long time for a sports car company to lie dormant, but Renault's timing could hardly be better. The wider performance car sector has become wrapped up in big power outputs and straight-line speed; a pretty little two-seater that prioritises fun over figures comes as welcome relief. If the A110 drives as good as it looks, Alpine's return will be a triumphant one.

Alpine A110

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1.8 litres, turbo
Power 249bhp @ 7200rpm
Torque 236lb ft @ n/a
Weight 1103kg
Power-to-weight 224bhp/ton
0-62mph 4.5sec (claimed)
Top speed 155mph (limited)
Price €58,500 (c£50,000)
On sale Early 2018

PORSCHE 911 GT3

'ONE LAST QUESTION,' I SAY TO ANDREAS Preuninger at the end of our interview. 'Is this the best 911 GT3 ever?'

We're standing in a chilly photographic studio on the outskirts of Stuttgart, just a few kilometres from Porsche's research and development centre at Weissach. The head of the company's GT-car division has spent the last 30 minutes or so talking me around the latest in a long and extraordinary line of stripped-down, pumped-up, track-ready 911s, pointing out every little refinement, every hard-won efficiency.

This new car is a development of the first-generation 991 GT3 rather than an all-new model, but every major component has been polished or honed to deliver more performance or less resistance. In among the tumbling list of minute tweaks and infinitesimal modifications are two standout headlines: the flat-six engine is now a 4-litre unit, superseding both the 3.8 in the previous GT3 and the 4.0 in the GT3 RS and 911 R, and buyers can now choose between a six-speed manual gearbox and a seven-speed PDK transmission.

'Our main focus was on engine development,' says Preuninger. 'Since we introduced the new engine platform in the previous GT3 we have used it in the GT3 RS and the R, and now in the [mid-engined] 911 RSR race car that came second at Daytona. As you would expect, we have been gaining confidence and experience with that platform and we are getting ideas to make it better – more powerful, more revvy, more longevity, everything. The engine we have now is a quantum leap from the 3.8 and a big step up even from the RS engine.'

The crankshaft is new and it now runs on bigger bearings. It's also cross-drilled with a central-fed oil system, so all the oil that lubricates the conrod bearings comes through the centre of the crank. That approach requires much less pressure for the oil to reach all the vital components, which means less internal resistance and, ultimately, more power at the wheels. 'That's what we were looking for,' says Preuninger. 'Get internal resistance down and be more efficient.'

The piston rings are lighter and thinner while the cylinder liners are coated in a very low-friction material, which further cuts resistance. The new oil pumps are more efficient, too. The air intake, meanwhile, features a twin-flap system. A similar setup was used on the 4-litre Mezger engine fitted to the 997 GT3 RS 4.0, but

'Buyers can now choose between a six-speed manual gearbox and a seven-speed PDK transmission'





previous versions of this engine used a single flap. 'This greatly influences torque low down,' says Preuninger. 'The only problem with having more parts is if something breaks it gets inhaled into the engine and, boom, it goes. We've found a way to make it completely bulletproof.'

'Everything is topped off by a completely new valvetrain. Whereas earlier incarnations of this engine used conventional hydraulic valve-lift adjusters, which require lots of oil pressure to operate, this version uses a completely rigid valvetrain, like in a race motorcycle. By deleting the hydraulic elements we can lower the forces in the valvetrain substantially – we're talking 30 per cent. We need less force to turn over the apparatus and less oil pressure. With that modification alone we gained about 10bhp.'

The results of all that development work are spectacular, on paper at least. Peak power is the same 493bhp as the outgoing 4-litre RS unit – 'that's 500 very conservative horsepower' – while torque is rated at 339lb ft, which is the same as the GT3 RS engine and an increase of 15lb ft on the previous GT3. 'The more interesting thing is when you look at the area beneath the torque curve,' says Preuninger. 'This is what gives this engine quite an edge over the 3.8.'

Impressively, despite the longer stroke needed to increase engine capacity over the 3.8, the new engine still revs to 9000rpm. The GT3 RS and R engines revved only to 8800 and 8500rpm respectively, which was the main reason the smaller engine was actually more exciting at the top end. Porsche has now combined the longer stroke and higher output with the head-spinning 9000rpm rev limit.

'The engine is like a firecracker exploding after 5000rpm,' says Preuninger. 'We understand this new platform now the way we understood the Mezger. It reacts completely differently to external inputs than the Mezger, so we had to rethink everything. You get new ideas from racing, from experience, and you have time to test. We are quite happy now that we know how to make this engine very powerful and efficient at the same time. The result is in this car.'

Porsche caused a first-world furore when it dropped manual transmissions from its GT cars in 2013, but following the success of the manual-only Cayman GT4 and 911 R it was somewhat inevitable that this latest GT3 would be available with a choice of transmissions. It's clearly the outcome Preuninger had hoped for – 'I'm freaking out!' he says about the return of the manual GT3 – and he goes on to explain the decision to go PDK-only on the previous GT3: 'On that car we had a completely new platform, so we couldn't concentrate on making both gearbox versions. We had to design for one. But after all this, who are we to say this is better or that is better? If you want to use the car on track, go for PDK, 100 per cent. If you occasionally go to the track and you're looking for involvement and a car that makes you smile all the time, go for the manual.'

Preuninger can only guess what the split between PDK and manual will be among customers, but he estimates 60:40 in favour of the two-pedal option. Certain markets, however, including the US, will favour the manual transmission. It's the same unit found in the 911 R, but it uses a dual-mass flywheel rather than a single-mass, which was an optional extra on the R. 'We should address this point right now,' he says, sternly. 'Don't take the single-mass flywheel from the R and try to be clever and put it on the new GT3. Why? You



'Despite the longer stroke needed to increase capacity over the 3.8, the new engine still revs to 9000rpm'



Left and above: new ram-air intakes feed the 4-litre flat-six, which is a revised version of that found in the recent 911 GT3 RS and 911 R; the turbocharged Carrera S beats it for torque (369lb ft plays 339lb ft), but few will sniff at the GT3's naturally aspirated 493bhp at 8250rpm





will ruin the engine. Believe me, we tried it. But even with a dual-mass flywheel the engine is so fiery.'

The manual gearbox has a switchable throttle blip and drives through a mechanical limited-slip diff. The PDK car, meanwhile, uses a faster-reacting electronically controlled LSD. The twin-clutch transmission is the same as in the GT3 RS, with the same gearing, but slightly improved shift times.

The chassis was perhaps the previous GT3's ace card, but Preuninger's team have still worked hard on the new car's dynamics. The damper tuning has been revised and there are helper springs on the rear axle now, like on the GT3 RS, which give a little more pliancy over bumps. In the UK the tyres will be Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2s, which have been further developed since being used on the previous GT3.

Cast-iron brake discs are standard fit and carbon-ceramics are available. The wheels, meanwhile, are the same design as before. 'We loved the gen-one wheel so much [we kept it], but in matt black. I normally don't like black wheels because you can't see the point where the wheel starts and the tyre ends, but with the [body-coloured] pinstripe you can.'

Preuninger says the car uses the latest version of Porsche's electric steering system, which has been improving steadily since first appearing on a Porsche Motorsport car on the previous GT3. 'We learned a lot on the 911 R,' he says, 'so the steering feel is quite a leap in comparison. This car also uses the smaller, 360mm steering wheel.' The rear-axle steering system has been carried over but with changes to the software that improve the car's low-speed agility.


The other major upgrade has been to the aerodynamics.

'The aerodynamic efficiency of the car is way better,' says Preuninger. 'We have the same coefficient of drag as the last one, but we've got 20 per cent more downforce. We learned on the 911 R that we could get better downforce by addressing the underbody.' New vanes and spoilers on the underbody accelerate the air underneath the car and shoot it directly to the new diffuser.

The rear spoiler also sits 20mm higher and 10mm further back, so it reaches into cleaner air. The maximum downforce figure is 155kg at top speed, matching the 997 GT3 RS.

With more power, torque, improved aerodynamics and tweaks to the chassis and tyres, the new GT3 will inevitably be faster than the old car, with Preuninger anticipating a Ring time of less than 7min 20sec. For reference, the twin-turbo 997 GT2 RS managed a time of 7min 18sec. Despite this new car being faster on circuit than the previous GT3, Preuninger also reckons it's more comfortable on the road. Weight is more or less unchanged, at 1413kg, although the manual 'box saves 17kg compared to PDK. Porsche quotes a 3.9sec 0-62mph time for the manual car and 3.4sec with PDK, with top speeds of 198mph and 197mph respectively.

The UK list price is £111,802, with the first cars set to arrive early in the summer. If you can find a dealer willing to sell you one, you'll once again have the choice between Comfort and Clubsport specifications.

In light of the countless improvements and refinements Porsche has made to this new 911 GT3, Preuninger's answer to my question is as emphatic as it is predictable. 'Absolutely,' he says. 'This is the best GT3 to date, no doubt about it.' 



Porsche 911 GT3

Engine Flat-six, 3996cc
Power 493bhp @ 8250rpm
Torque 339lb ft @ 6000rpm
Weight 1413kg
Power-to-weight 355bhp/ton
0-62mph 3.9sec (claimed)
Top speed 198mph (claimed)
Basic price £111,802
On sale Summer 2017

Right: interior does the 'stripped-back luxury' thing very well, and the GT3 now gets the smaller-diameter steering wheel from the GT3 RS. **Below:** those red rings aren't kerb protectors – they're to demarcate the tyre wall and the wheel itself (and are optional)







AN OPEN AND SHUT CASE?

REFRESHMENT COMES IN MANY forms. Last night's cold pint in the Y Pengwern guest house certainly met the criteria. The gale-force weather in north Wales this morning is refreshing, too, albeit less welcome as it tries to strip the hat from my head and turns *evo* photographer Aston Parrott's tripod into something from an HG Wells novel. Also being battered by the weather are two rear-wheel-drive, naturally aspirated sports cars with manual gearshifts and small footprints. Paddling alone in a sea of turbocharged hot hatchbacks, there's something very refreshing about both of them.

In the grey corner is Toyota's GT86, recently facelifted to mixed effect and still powered by a 1998cc boxer unit with a power figure just shy of 200 horses. Its crisp white opponent is the Mazda MX-5 RF – not, as the roofline suggests, a coupe, but a 'retractable fastback'. Think 991-generation 911 Targa in both concept and execution, or early-'90s Honda CR-X Del Sol if you're feeling cruel.

But I'm feeling kind. The RF looks great, just as chiselled and just as minimal of overhang as the roadster, but a little less toy-like. Mazda has discovered that MX-5 hard-top buyers leave the roof up more than their canvas-roof counterparts, so its designers put extra effort into the styling. They may be on to something, though I can't help feeling a proper fixed-roof coupe, with an F-type-style tailgate rather than XJS-style buttresses, would look even better.

The '86 isn't quite as slick. The proportions are great, better than the Mazda's, with a low bonnet and more rakish roofline, but the

*Two affordable,
rear-drive, naturally
aspirated sports cars,
but which one really
hits the spot: Toyota's
updated GT86 or
Mazda's new MX-5 RF?*

by ANTONY INGRAM

PHOTOGRAPHY by
ASTON PARROTT



details aren't so hot. The new front bumper gives the car a toothy underbite like Muttley's and while the rump is improved – gone are the glitzy 2001-era Lexus-style lights, and the absence of a spoiler on the base-spec car keeps things clean – the Toyota looks both underwheeled and over-sprung, like someone has forgotten to remove the shipping spacers.

Mazda's focus on style continues inside. The latest MX-5 has a minimalist cabin but not at the expense of useability, with a simple infotainment system and proper rotary dials for controlling ventilation. All the controls feel close and the dashboard and door-cards sweep around you like ribbons of silk. If you're tall, some aspects might start to grate: the seat is a little too high, the wheel only adjusts for rake and the buttresses make the cosy cabin a little claustrophobic, but the relationship between wheel and gearlever is as close as such things get and your feet tread pedals placed almost perfectly for heel-and-toe gearchanges.

If Mazda's engineers thought hard about control placement, then Toyota's have obsessed over it. Here you sit lower, peering over Toyota's own interpretation of a three-spoke steering

wheel, but there's more adjustment so you can put that wheel exactly where you need it. The seat feels more accommodating, too, the cabin more spacious, and the pedals somehow even better aligned than those of the Mazda. So what if there are a few nasty plastics about? This has always been the case with Japanese cars, and an Integra Type R or Nissan GT-R is no less of a drivers' car because of it.

I chose the '86 for the drive to Wales and became smitten with it all over again. Not at first though, thanks to Toyota's insistence on fitting low-grip Michelin Primacy tyres to its sports coupe. I'm all for cars that move about underneath you, but the GT86 can feel nervous in quicker corners even if you're not pushing particularly hard, as if the rear tyres are planning on breaking free, while in slower ones the front end can wash wide surprisingly early.

Not a great first impression, but stick with it and things improve. The GT86 does have grip, and it's when you start to lean on them that the tyres make a little more sense. The steering starts to feed back messages as soon as you start applying lock. It's no Elise-style chatterbox but there's enough information there to let

you know how much you can exploit the front end. Toyota hasn't clouded this feedback with weight either, so the '86 always feels light and nimble.

As you trust the front end, so you begin to bring the rear into play. The GT86 corners flat, far more so than the Mazda, so things begin to happen as soon as you've loaded up the chassis. And yes, sometimes there's a touch of understeer, but, once you've identified this through your fingertips, you need only relax your toes to balance the chassis. From that point, with the front and rear tyres sharing equal load, you can feed in more power and tighten your cornering line with the rear wheels. It'll do this around virtually any corner, and while that outright lack of grip means an average hot hatch would soon be several turns ahead, it's deeply satisfying to string together a sequence of bends, the Toyota seemingly on tip-toes, always a throttle movement away from a few more degrees of rotation.

The Mazda takes a different approach to cornering. It wears slimmer rubber – 205/45 R17s to the Toyota's 215/45 R17s – but its Bridgestone Potenza S001s generate



Above: Mazda's 'retractable fastback' gives you the option to go al fresco. **Left:** Toyota is the better-proportioned car, but it does look a bit under-wheeled



'The MX-5's 2-litre in-line four is more enthusiastic and punches through snappier gear ratios than the Toyota's boxer engine'

Mazda MX-5 RF

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc

Power 158bhp @ 6000rpm

Torque 147lb ft @ 4600rpm

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

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

Rear suspension Multi-link, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar

Brakes Ventilated discs front and rear

Wheels 17in front and rear

Tyres 205/45 R17 front and rear

Weight 1045kg

Power-to-weight 154bhp/ton

0-62mph 7.4sec (claimed)

Top speed 134mph (claimed)

Basic price £23,095

evo rating: ★★☆☆☆

Toyota GT86

Engine Flat-four, 1998cc

Power 197bhp @ 7000rpm

Torque 151lb ft @ 6400-6600rpm

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

Front suspension MacPherson struts, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar

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

Brakes Ventilated discs front and rear

Wheels 17in front and rear

Tyres 215/45 R17 front and rear

Weight 1240kg

Power-to-weight 161bhp/ton

0-62mph 7.6sec (claimed)

Top speed 140mph (claimed)

Basic price £26,410

evo rating: ★★★★★

significantly greater cornering forces than the Prius-spec Primacys. They seem to claw into the surface, letting you lean harder on the front end and allowing you to jump on the power sooner on the way out. Around any given corner it's quicker than the Toyota. And yet...

Joining straights in the RF always requires you to work through a degree of imprecision and softness. The steering rack itself is as direct as that of the Toyota, but its off-centre response isn't as keen, and until you've put an eighth of a turn into the wheel there's little indication as to what the front tyres might be doing. During this phase the body also begins to lean, forcing you to wait just a moment longer to discover how much you're testing the tyres. The chassis certainly meets Mazda's brief of making you feel like you're pushing the car hard, even when you're not, but when you're *actually* pushing the RF hard it never feels quite as composed, or as immediate, as the Toyota.

This softness also means that the Mazda struggles when you introduce undulations or sudden bumps into the cornering process. Where the Toyota absorbs a compression,

leading to one body movement and then regaining its composure, the Mazda tends to bounce and skip. Bumps also cause a shudder through the structure, even with the roof in place – something the stiffer Toyota shell handles with aplomb. With more grip, the Mazda isn't going to sling you into the undergrowth (though the significant weight transfer could cause clammy palms when the road is wet) but it all adds to the impression that the RF enjoys a slightly gentler pace of life. Which, given the Mazda's ability to walk away from the GT86 in a straight line (yes, really), seems like a missed opportunity.

The RF is 39bhp down on the GT86, at 158bhp plays 197, and it has slightly less torque too, producing 147lb ft to the Toyota's 151lb ft. But three things count in the Mazda's favour. Firstly, its peak outputs are developed lower down the rev-range than those of the Toyota – considerably so in the case of torque, with the GT86 starting to produce maximum twist just 600rpm shy of its power peak.

Secondly, Mazda's tireless efforts to cut weight allow the RF to undercut the '86 by

nearly 200kg, despite the extra hardware sitting on its rear deck. And finally, the MX-5's 2-litre in-line four is simply more enthusiastic and punches through snappier gear ratios than the GT86's Subaru-sourced boxer engine.

The Toyota's engine is responsive and fun to wring out, shedding its industrial low-revs chunter for an unusual flat-four note that has the tone and pitch of an old Impreza but played at 150 per cent speed. The gearbox is fantastic, too, snapping precisely through the gate with as little movement as the Mazda's famously crisp shift, despite a lever seemingly twice as long. But unless you use all the revs, all of the time – a frankly unrealistic scenario on public roads – the Mazda's meatier torque curve and stronger traction sees it pull whole car-lengths on the exit of every corner. The Toyota gains a little back on the way into corners – it has fantastic brake pedal feel and that confidence-inspiring turn-in feedback – but across the Welsh countryside the RF finds easy pace where the GT86 requires maximum driver commitment.

Unsurprisingly, it's the Toyota that delivers the biggest grins when you begin to play in the



‘The Toyota gains on the way into corners, but the RF finds easy pace where the GT86 requires maximum driver commitment’

corners, thanks largely to its Teflon tyres. The same body control that keeps it flat through bends and resists movement over craggy tarmac allows it to take an attitude sooner than the Mazda. Ensure you’re in a low gear, jump on the power early, and the rear tyres carve a smooth, progressive arc.

The quick, accurate steering makes it easy to catch, too, just as it does with the Mazda, though the car from Hiroshima always feels a little scrappier than its compatriot from Gunma. It takes a little more effort to loosen the RF’s rear axle, despite its broader powerband, and the body roll seems to add a little more momentum to every sideways movement, so you need to be quicker with the steering.

The Toyota GT86 is the better sports car. It struggles to match the MX-5 for pace but, equally, it isn’t a ‘slow’ car, and there’s great pleasure to be had engaging with the drivetrain. It also feels the better-made product, puts you in greater touch with the action and has

a greater depth of ability, from its feedback to its willingness to raise its game when you raise yours.

The Mazda is a grower. Stay within the limits of its chassis and it’s a whole lot of fun to drive, the exaggerated body movements giving it a playful feel and the extra grip giving it higher cross-country pace. It also looks great inside and out, costs less to buy, averaged a remarkable 40mpg over the course of our test (10mpg more than the Toyota) and, with its folding roof, will appeal to some buyers in a way the coupe-only GT86 cannot match.

Roof-down on a rare sunny day in north Wales, the Mazda is an invigorating car, with a punchier engine, rortier exhaust note and theatrical body movements, but I suspect many reading this will prefer the Toyota’s precision, composure and greater focus.

But if Mazda one day decides to make a tin-top MX-5 with a stiffer structure and a firmer chassis, that would be most refreshing of all. ❌



Left: cheap plastics, but GT86 cockpit gets all the important stuff right.
Above: both 2-litre fours, but Toyota’s Subaru-sourced ‘boxer’ (left) really needs to be revved; Mazda has punchier mid-range

GT-AR



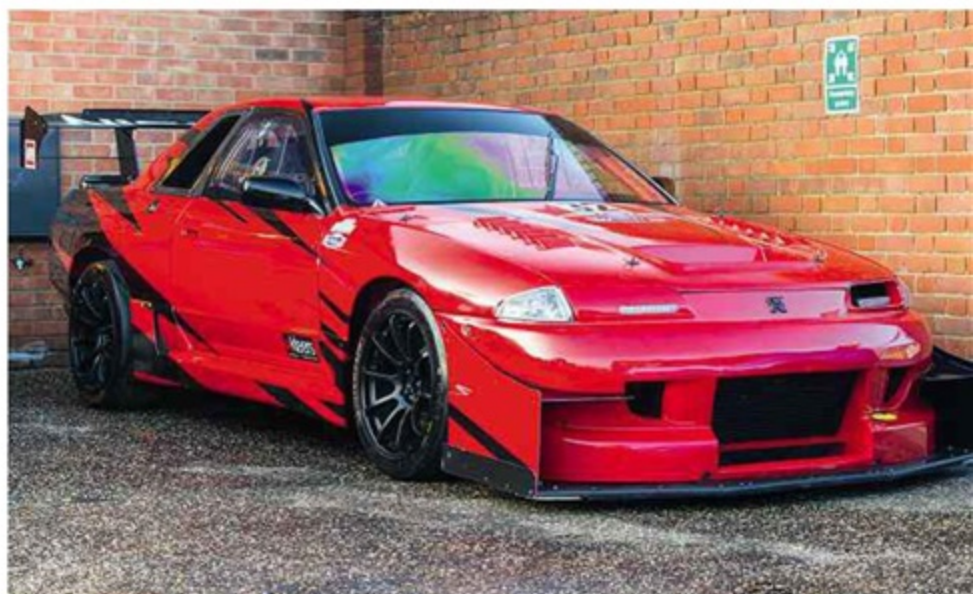
by ADAM TOWLER

PHOTOGRAPHY by ASTON PARROTT

SENAL

Most would be content with owning just one Skyline GT-R, but in three short years one man has built a breathtaking collection of tuned examples of Nissan's finest. He even sold his McLaren to fund the obsession...







'It's a relatively recent passion that has swept like wildfire through Richard's automotive life'

Top row: ATTKD-tuned R34 is Richard's most extreme road-going GT-R; 800bhp Bayside Blue R34 is the most powerful. **Second row:** R32 looks standard, but packs 680bhp; Richard will drive this rear-drive R32 in only his second year of racing. **Bottom row:** 650bhp Factory Hosaka GT-R is 'very useable'; 600bhp R32 too good to turn down

BEHIND THE SHUTTER door of a rather nondescript industrial unit, on just another industrial estate somewhere in England, is as fine an example of automotive obsession as you're likely to find anywhere. And it's brilliant.

Heated, and complete with a sofa, kettle, hi-fi system and 'facilities', this extraordinary man cave also features GT-Rs. Lots and lots of Nissan Skyline GT-Rs, squeezed into every last square millimetre of space – overflowing, in fact, into additional storage elsewhere.

Yes, Richard Wheeler really likes the original all-wheel-drive, turbocharged Godzillas. It's a relatively recent passion of his that has swept like wildfire through his automotive life, and today he's going to attempt to explain how this all happened. He'll do so in a calm, rational manner, albeit with a quiet, self-aware smile that says, 'Yes, I know this is probably a bit crazy...'

The beginnings of Richard's current GT-R armada seemed entirely innocent. 'I had a Skoda Fabia vRS, which I modified and then traded in for a Nissan R35 GT-R,' he says. 'I liked the R35, so I then had another one, wrapped in yellow, that I kept for much longer. I did some modifications to it and took it to trackdays. But I fancied something more old-school, with a manual gearbox, so I bought my first R32 GT-R – a completely standard car that I ran alongside a daily-driver Skoda Yeti. I upgraded the R35 to a new one, again, but found I didn't really need it – I had a sensible daily and a weekend fun car in the Yeti and the R32. After four months and 2000 miles, the R35 was sold. This was 2014. Ground zero.'

Nothing unusual so far, granted, but Richard was about to be bitten by a bug that has infected many a GT-R owner: tuning. In the space of a year, the innocent, metallic red R32 he had bought went from circa 320bhp to 600bhp (and subsequently 680), with braking, suspension and running-gear upgrades to match, all while looking completely standard from the outside. Having created such a monster, it dawned on Richard that the development process – although something he really enjoyed – may not be the most financially expedient way to go about having a biblically fast GT-R. As he says: 'I wanted an R34 as well, and realised it was better to look to Japan and to cars already modified. Given it's the old chicken-and-egg situation of either having the time to do the work yourself but not the money, or having the money and not the time, buying cars already "done" was much more realistic for me.'

So Richard bought a rare M-spec R34 GT-R in gold. Brilliant – except he felt it was too good to modify, so (by his own admission) foolishly he sold it on. With R34 values rocketing in the past year, it would be worth considerably more now.

The next arrival was a Bayside Blue R34 (which remains tucked-up in the garage during our visit). It's the only car in Richard's collection that retains its standard 2.6-litre displacement, all the others running 2.8-litre 'stroker' versions of the RB straight-six. This is Richard's Nismo car, all of its tuning parts having been sourced from Nissan's official motorsports arm. Some of them came with the car, some have been added by Richard. While an aggressive bonnet and front bumper suggest the same kind of brutal power output as Richard's other GT-Rs, this is merely a Stage 1 car, and hence has somewhere in the region of 400bhp.

'It's such a nice car to drive,' says Richard. 'As it's largely as Nissan intended, you can do anything with it, including putting the kids in the back or going to Tesco. You can drive it in all conditions; it's not too powerful. It's done more than 60,000 miles and isn't even a V-spec car, but it's one of the nicest GT-Rs I've ever driven.'

What happened next was driven by economics, and could therefore be labelled entirely sensible in terms of its logic. Realising it would be too expensive to modify the Bayside R34 to the kind of big power he'd got used to with the R32, Richard decided he needed another R34 to scratch that itch. 'And that's basically when it all got completely out of control,' he says with a wry grin.

The red R34 was the solution, and it's completely outrageous. Built by Japanese tuning firm Autech Tsukada (ATTKD), it vanquished the epic Mine's R34 to set the fastest time in the street-legal time-attack class at the Tsukuba Circuit. Granted, my only experience of the Mine's GT-R has been in pixelated form on *Gran Turismo 4*, but that's enough for me to know it's no slouch. The red car is a riot of carbonfibre – bonnet, roof and bootlid – with carbon canards jutting from the front bumper, enlarged front wings with venting on their rear faces, and a GT500 wing that is easily the largest aerodynamic device I've ever seen on a road car. The spec list rolls on and on, but it's a beautifully built thing – and it has around 650bhp.

'I'll take it out for half an hour, bring it back, try and calm down,' says Richard. 'In this weather it'd be backwards into someone's front garden. It's also too noisy for trackdays.'

At this point Richard's reasoning descended into numbers: if the Nismo was 50 per cent and the ATTKD 100, then he needed a GT-R running at 75 per cent or thereabouts. Enter the Tuning Factory Hosaka GT-R (the white R34): 'slightly less outrageous' than the red car, still with 650bhp and a roll-cage, but with rear seats. A car useable on the road, sort of. 'Rational thinking,' says Richard.

However, it's entirely possible that Richard's buying habits had been noted by his favoured importers, because soon after, on one expensive night on Facebook, he was offered not one but two more R34 GT-Rs. And he said 'yes'.



**‘In the past
the R32
racer has
generally
won or
caught fire.
On one
occasion it
did both in
the same
race’**

From top: a key for every (Skyline-shaped) occasion; RK Tuning-prepped R32 race engine produces nearly 700bhp; 800bhp R34 motor has just a single turbo; ATTKD R34 unit good for 650bhp

The first was a single-turbo, 800bhp car, again in Bayside Blue. It has a spec sheet of mind-boggling length and complexity. Purchased in the middle of 2016, it was effectively paid for by Richard selling the McLaren 650S Spider that he'd owned for a short period that year. 'I wasn't quite sure about it at first,' says Richard of the 800bhp Skyline, 'but when I drove it the car put such a big smile on my face. The turbo kicks in around 4500rpm, so you've then got 3000rpm of your hair being on fire.'

If the big-turbo blue car was the 110 per cent GT-R, then the purple car is a torpedo through this rather tenuous method of justification. It was bought mainly on account of its colour – the sought-after Midnight Purple. That it was a good car and had 550bhp were both bonuses.

Then came another R32 GT-R, with around 430bhp, but that's not here today – it's about to be sold. 'That was the only one I've bought with a view to selling on,' says Richard. 'It was a really clean car at a good price, and I was buying the other two, so...'

A similar logic applies to a black R32, which has around 600bhp and which was bought from a UK owner after a huge amount of money had been spent restoring and modifying it.

Finally, there's a race car – an R32-based machine built in the UK by RK Tuning. 'It came up for sale last year and I knew I couldn't miss the chance to buy it,' says Richard. 'But I also knew I wasn't up to racing it in my first season. So I've been racing a Ford Fiesta ST and a Lotus Elan, and will get out in the GT-R this year.'

The car is probably as far as you can go with a GT-R before it turns into a spaceframe silhouette racer: rear-wheel drive, 1080kg, nearly 700bhp, a driving position somewhere aft of the B-pillar. 'In the past it has generally won or caught fire,' says Richard. 'On one occasion it did both in the same race.' He's clearly in for an exciting season.

R34 prices in particular have risen sharply over the past year, fuelled in part by massive interest in the US ahead of the cars being eligible for use over there when they reach 25 years of age. For Richard, this is further justification for his addiction: 'Apart from the capital purchase, the cars don't really cost anything, as what little it takes to run them is more than offset by their appreciation in value.' When one of his cars put on £10,000 during its boat journey over from Japan alone, you can't really argue.

But surely there are now no more niches to be filled, no more fractional spaces to tick off in Richard's collection. 'Well, yes,' he says. 'But I did buy a Pearl White R34 V-spec II a couple of days ago, so there is that one... It is a really nice colour. And rare.'

Here we go again, then. ✕

Shortly after our visit, Richard bought a yellow R34 GT-R.



POWER CORRUPTS



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TESTING



TIMES



by DAN PROSSER,
DAVID VIVIAN
& JOHN BARKER

From the edge of the Arctic Circle to the scorched earth of Death Valley via Nardò and the Nürburgring, join us on a tour of the key locations where manufacturers put new cars through their paces

CAR TESTING LOCATIONS





MOBIS PROVING GROUND

Arjeplog, Sweden

DURING THE WINTER OF 1967, TWO Opel engineers drove north from Germany, not stopping until they'd covered almost the entire ice-ravaged length of Sweden. They stopped at a small town called Arvidsjaur, a few miles short of the Arctic circle, and found lodgings at the Laponia hotel.

They had travelled north in search of extreme winter conditions to test a new engine design, not thinking beyond the length of their to-do list. They could never have imagined that, every winter for the following 50 years and beyond, the world's car engineers would decamp to Arvidsjaur and nearby Arjeplog to test their own new technologies.

Today, with 20 or so separate test facilities and a complete infrastructure built up over five decades, the region is the epicentre of the car industry's winter testing activities. For ten weeks each season, the population of Arjeplog triples as 2000 engineers from 30 car manufacturers and as many suppliers descend on the town.

Hyundai and Kia come each year, using a facility that belongs to their major component supplier, Mobis. They come to develop ABS and ESC systems, using snow-covered tracks and circuits carved into frozen lakes. 'We have to cover these kinds of conditions,' says Hyundai-Kia engineering boss Albert Biermann. 'The range we have to master, the different levels of grip [...] that is not so easy for the chassis systems.'

Being posted to the north of Sweden each winter to drive prototypes on frozen lakes sounds like a plum assignment. The bitterly cold weather and the long nights (in January the sun sets just after lunch) plus the reality of being stuck in a small town away from friends and family, however, mean it's no holiday.

'I was first here in 1984 with the BMW 7-series. I had heard about a frozen lake and I wanted to drive on it,' recalls Biermann. 'I started slowly. Then after some time you try to be Walter Röhrl. Eventually I was too enthusiastic and I span the car 12 metres off the track and into the deep snow. It was an hour of shovelling...

'Some of our guys are out here for eight weeks or so. I think, after two weeks, being here can get boring.'

'You don't want to do more than a couple of weeks at a time,' confirms Jaguar Land Rover chassis engineer Mike Hart. 'I know one guy who did eight weeks straight. He was testing a car with three water-filled mannequins in it. He called them all Dave. He said he didn't realise he was losing his mind until he found himself in the children's playground in Arjeplog pushing them on the swings, laughing to himself.'

The Mobis facility was established in 2005. Its land circuits cover 3.3 hectares (one hectare being roughly the size of a football pitch), while the lake circuits are spread over 163 hectares. The Hyundai-Kia group had 120 engineers in

Above: just a few miles short of the Arctic circle, vast test facilities at Arjeplog attract thousands of engineers every year.

Above right: a rather different climate awaits visitors to the Nardò test centre in southern Italy



NARDÒ TECHNICAL CENTER

Nardò, Italy

the area this season, 20 of them working directly on the forthcoming Stinger GT performance car.

We've been following the Stinger GT since its unveiling late last year, and Kia invited *evo* to test the car on the lake, to explore its intriguing four-stage stability control system on a vast 250-metre-radius steering pad.

There's so little grip on a frozen lake that any car will slide around a little, even with the systems on, but by and large the electronics keep the Kia in good shape. In Sport mode it will slide around a little before the computers trigger the brakes and kill the throttle to bring it back under control, preventing it from spinning. Pressing the stability control button once removes one more layer of electronic assistance. The car will still use its brakes to try to keep itself in shape, but now it won't kill the throttle. It will spin in this mode, but you can also hold neat powerslides.

The final stage is to turn the systems off, which really means off. That turns the rear-wheel-drive Stinger GT into one of the most controllable and entertaining oversteer machines you can imagine – on this surface, at least.

There's every chance the crucial work that goes on in northern Sweden each winter has at one time or another saved your bacon. It just so happens that ice driving is also enormously good fun... as long as you don't hang around too long.

T

THE PISTA DI PROVA DI NARDÒ DELLA

Fiat opened for business on 1 July 1975 and quickly became a hot spot for serious vehicle testing in a part of Italy not noted for much apart from its largely unchanging sunny climate. Built by Fiat in the southern region of Apulia, and kissing the coast of the Ionian Sea, the spacious facility was eventually bought by Porsche Engineering in 2012 and renamed – rather less long-windedly – the Nardò Technical Center.

It now boasts 20 tracks to cater for just about every shakedown scenario imaginable, from extreme durability to noise, vibration and harshness (NVH) to low-friction ice simulations to near-death and actual death experiences for tyres and suspension. There are even facilities for measuring bodywork corrosion resistance.

Like the MIRA and Millbrook proving grounds in the UK, the NTC is open to all vehicle makers, as well as Porsche Engineering's many customers and, of course, the Porsche AG car division itself, though the corporate line is keen to emphasise that it affords itself no preferential treatment. For exclusive use, it has to book the time and stand in line. Nardò is, after all, an important revenue stream for Porsche.

You have to take to a helicopter to fully appreciate just how expansive Nardò's most famous circuit is. At 7.8 miles in circumference and 2.5 miles in diameter, the constant-radius



high-speed bowl looks much like you'd imagine the (admittedly much larger) Large Hadron Collider would were it exposed to the air, as it encircles not just most of the site's other facilities but also a large slice of the surrounding countryside. The banked track has four lanes, each with its own 'hands off' speed where, thanks to competing physical forces, the vehicle tracks true without any need for steering input from the driver. In lane four, the lane nearest the outer edge, this is a remarkable 149mph, which makes the 100mph 'hands off' speed on Millbrook's much smaller bowl seem, well, rather pathetic.

The Large Hadron Collider analogy isn't so fanciful, either. If it's all about speed, the NTC's circular track is one of the few places in Europe where 200mph-plus supercars can really be let off the leash to see what happens at V-max hour after hour. It's where the Volkswagen concept car, W12 Nardò, covered 4810 miles in 24 hours at an average speed of 200mph.

The 3.8-mile handling track, opened in 2006, is hardly less exciting or challenging. It comprises 16 bends (nine left-handers and seven rights), some modelled on the more celebrated of the Nordschleife's, and one in particular – the ever-tightening, downhill left-hander at the end of the main straight, entered more or less flat at around 180mph in a 918 Spyder – has to be among the greatest ever, making Laguna Seca's legendary Corkscrew seem a walk in the park by comparison. Porsche ambassador and superhand Walter Röhrl absolutely loves the track.

But even that isn't NTC's principal lure. As it always has been, it's the consistency of the sun and dry tarmac all year round, assets that don't only mean stable and efficient testing conditions on demand but also an ever-ready queue of Porsche personnel willing to tough it out for the greater good. And Nardò seldom disappoints. When it isn't possible to test at the Nürburgring, a more frequent occurrence than you might imagine, Nardò's accommodating climate provides the natural default location for Porsche's evaluation programmes. It's the same for Jaguar, Aston Martin, Audi and Lamborghini. In fact, nearly all of Europe's car makers have test facilities at the NTC.

And those facilities will expand in the coming years. The high-speed bowl is being completely resurfaced to eradicate the ostensibly minor lumps and bumps that are seriously amplified at 200mph or so. There will be new off-road tracks and dirt roads emulating the worst Africa has to offer, too.

Perhaps the enduring appeal of Nardò is best summed up by Bugatti's head of chassis development, Florian Umbach: 'I was very impressed when I drove for the first time with our Bugatti Veyron Super Sport over the big jump on the great handling track, just facing the blue sky and the amazing view of the sea.'

NÜRBURGRING

Germany

Production car lap record runs grab the headlines in the specialist press but they're a tiny percentage of the mileage that manufacturers rack up on exclusive 'Industry Pool' days at the Nürburgring Nordschleife. Why go there at all, you might ask, given that there are virtually no places in the world where you can drive flat out on an endless one-way road that twists like the Targa Florio?

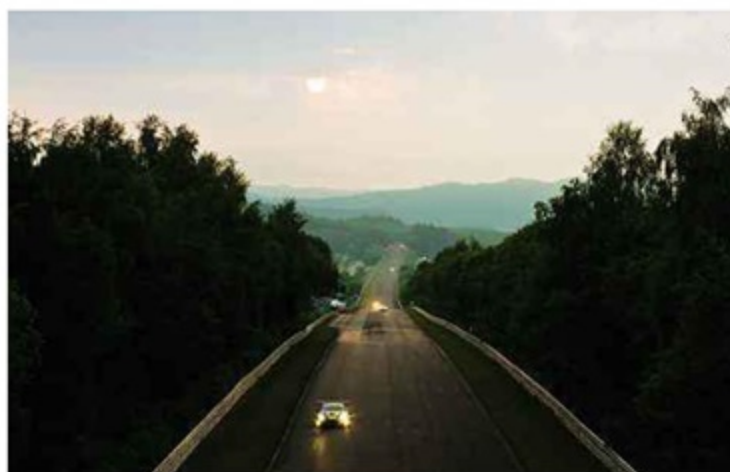
Well, car makers like to speed up development to find out if systems and components are robust, and the pace of the Nordschleife, combined with its bumps and elevation changes, is reckoned to make each 12.9-mile lap the equivalent of about 200 miles of normal road driving. If you've been there in your own car, you'll know that it is gently but insistently stressful, and that's why you'll see as many 'vanilla' cars there as you do high-performance models.

LADOUX

France

Among the many test tracks at Michelin's facility at Ladoux, just north of Clermont-Ferrand in central France, is one of the finest wet handling circuits we've tried and a simple yet remarkably revealing dry handling track. In combination, they make assessment of a car's base handling characteristics a 20-minute job and offer excellent opportunities for fine-tuning a car's traction and stability control systems.

Tucked away behind a scruffy industrial estate, the vast Michelin facility is by contrast as neat as a model railway, the approach to its main entrance via a bowstring bridge over a section of the looping high-speed track. The wet handling circuit is the big draw though, being wide, weir-fed – no need for wipers – and concocted of such curves and cambers that you find yourself grappling with lift-off oversteer without looking for it. It's where Richard Hammond 'learned' to drift in episode 13 of *The Grand Tour*.





- 1 Arjeplog
- 2 Nardò
- 3 Nürburgring
- 4 Ladoux
- 5 Ehra-Lessien
- 6 Death Valley

EHRA-LESSIEN

Germany

If you want to run a road car at very high speed – well over 200mph – your options are scant. The best place in the world is Ehra-Lessien in Germany with its 8.7km (5.4-mile) straights and long, banked links that permit a fast entry and exit. It sounds tailor-made for the current era of 250mph-plus road cars but is, in fact, a Cold War relic, built in what was a no-fly zone near the former East German border.

It's owned today by the Volkswagen Group – a fact that some reckon gives the group's Bugatti brand an advantage over every other car maker who fancies a pop at the title of World's Fastest Production Car. It's one of the few places where 250mph-plus can be achieved – Nardò's huge bowl comes with an unhelpful cornering load, while Papenburg in north Germany has straights of 'only' 4km (2.5 miles) – and it's rare for other car makers to be granted access.



DEATH VALLEY

United States

All car makers have access to test cells that can reproduce the harshest of environments, be they extreme heat, cold or humidity, but there's nothing so thorough as actually being there and driving the test car, which is why Death Valley National Park in California, USA, is still one of the must-visit new-car development destinations. Its searing heat tests everything on the car, from the obvious such as the engine cooling system and the capacity and functionality of the cabin air conditioning, to the unexpected such as the glue sticking the rear-view mirror to the windscreen. It's hot test in July and August, with average temperatures of 115–117deg F (46–47deg C), which makes it a test of the engineers as well as the cars, not to mention the photographers who camp out to 'scoop' the latest prototypes.





AUDI R8 V10 v McLAREN 540C v PORSCHE 911 TURBO



by DAN PROSSER

PHOTOGRAPHY by DEAN SMITH

BASIC INSTINCT

Three perfectly matched 'entry-level' supercars, but can any of them step out of the shadow of their more esteemed siblings – and which delivers the purest thrill?

THE McLAREN 540C, PORSCHE 911 Turbo and Audi R8 V10 all have well over 500bhp, sub-four-second 0-60mph times and show-offy six-figure price tags, and yet each seems destined to be perceived as the slower, cheaper and humbler version. The one you buy when business has been slow, or the divorce settlement particularly brutal.

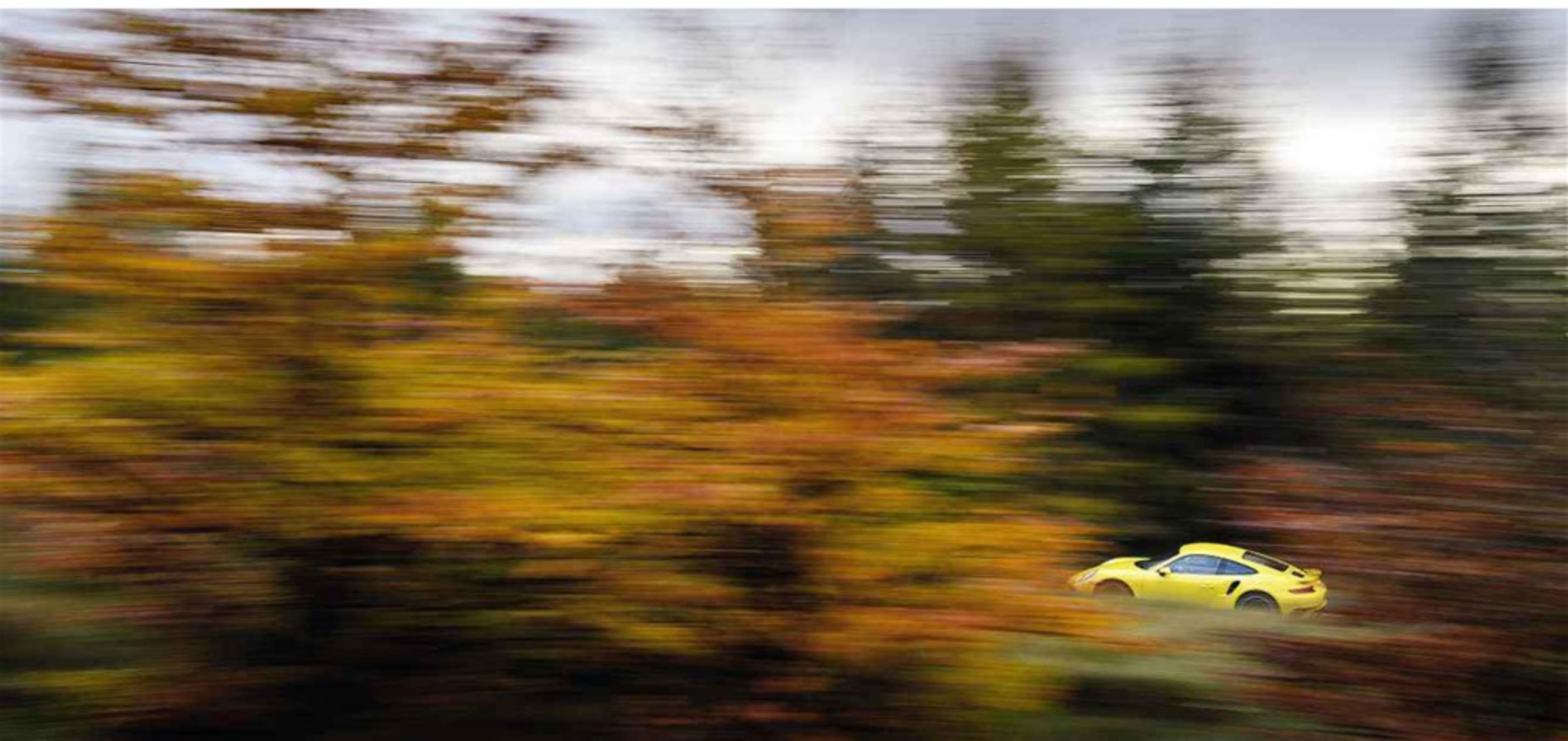
It's all nonsense, of course, but when you've got the 570S, 911 Turbo S and R8 V10 Plus strutting about in the sunnier corner of the showroom, each of these three cars will only ever be marked down as the slightly underachieving younger sibling. Imagine the deep-seated feelings of inadequacy if they had hearts rather than pistons, and brains instead of ECUs.

The thing about an inferiority complex, though, is that it can either make a person bitter and anti-social, or it can stir something primal deep within and drive them on to successes far beyond the reach of their seemingly more illustrious siblings. In the case of one of these second-tier supercars, that's exactly what has happened. But that won't decide the winner of this group test. The victor will be the car that delivers the purest, most concentrated driving thrill, because – as supercars – that's what they must do above all else.

For what might be the first time in an *evo* triple test, every one of these cars produces exactly the same power: 533bhp. And their top speeds are all within a whisker of each other. The McLaren tops out at 199mph, while the Audi and Porsche plod along at 198mph. All three cost in the order of £125,000.

McLaren Automotive might be the newcomer, but as a brand it already has more aspirational currency than either Audi or Porsche. Appropriately, it's the McLaren that feels the most exotic of the trio with its carbonfibre tub and hawkish styling. It helps, too, that the 540C sits at the bottom of a very prestigious model range and is

Right: 540C will have its work cut out to match the renowned everyday useability of the 911 Turbo. **Below:** few things cover the ground faster than a Turbo, either, except perhaps a Turbo S...





illuminated by the glow of the more expensive models as a result, whereas the R8 and 911 sit somewhere near the top of their manufacturers' ranges and are tasked with brightening the more mundane cars beneath them.

The 540C's engine is a 3.8-litre twin-turbo V8, which revs beyond 8000rpm despite its forced induction. These Sports Series McLarens are designed to be more useable every day than Woking's more focused efforts, lowered sills being one of several attempts to make the car less of a hassle in daily use. Compared with its rivals, though, the 540C is still quite tricky to get into and out of.

The sculptural cabin looks good and the seating position is absolutely superb – McLaren consistently does this better than anybody else – but the information and entertainment systems and minor controls just aren't as intuitive as the R8's or 911's. This might be the everyday McLaren, but the German cars ask their drivers to make far fewer allowances and concessions.

The least demanding car here in the day-to-day grind is the Porsche, and by some margin. Those little rear seats aren't much use for anyone over the age of seven, but

they can be used as valuable storage space, whereas the McLaren and Audi limit you to rather mean compartments between the front wheels. The 911 also has one of those, of course. But that's just a small part of what makes the Turbo so unfussy. It flops over speed bumps like a saloon car and visibility from inside the cabin is as good as a hatchback's. It's also quiet, you don't worry so much about where you leave it and it turns far fewer heads, or at least it would in anything other than look-at-me yellow.

The 911 Turbo outsells the competition by an order of magnitude precisely because it's so easy to use as an everyday car. Given that these slightly more affordable variants are much more likely to be an only car than the costlier models, themselves more often part of a fleet, that everyday-useability is perhaps as important a consideration as soundtrack or steering feel. The trade-off is that for sense of occasion it's a rubbery pork chop in a flat-roofed pub to the McLaren's filet mignon.

The 911 uses a 3.8-litre flat-six, also twin-turbocharged, but it doesn't rev anywhere near as high as the McLaren's V8. Instead, it's a torque monster, its 524lb ft from



'You can either wait a fraction before pinning the throttle, or open it up early and abruptly to overwhelm the rear tyres'

1950rpm somewhat showing up the 540C's 398lb ft from 3500rpm. The Turbo is four-wheel drive, of course, and as with the other two cars it has a twin-clutch gearbox.

The Audi R8 is one of the last remaining naturally aspirated supercars, which is reason enough to throw petals and blow kisses at it as though it's some returning space adventurer of the '60s. The 5.2-litre V10 is far and away the most exciting engine of this lineup and with the same peak torque output as the McLaren, albeit arriving 3000rpm higher up the rev-range, it doesn't give up a great deal in terms of straight-line shove.

The R8 feels very wide and visibility is good but not great, which means it doesn't slip through town as effortlessly as the Porsche. The two are distant cousins, both with the weight of the world's biggest car maker behind them, but inside the cabin it's the R8 that seems to have benefited more from that vast R&D capability. Its cockpit is brilliant and the systems all have the polish and slickness of an Apple product. In just about every way you interact with the R8, it feels so completely modern.

We were pushing our luck coming to north Wales in the

middle of winter but, a few spots of rain aside, the weather is holding up. I'd chosen the McLaren for the long drive from the office. I know very well that the other two would have made no fuss whatsoever of the four-hour trek, but while the long stint at its wheel has reminded me what a brilliant little supercar the 540C is, it hasn't convinced me that it's a consummate GT car. It's noisier than the others on the motorway and the steering wheel fidgets constantly in your hands. If you could somehow measure the aspects of a car's behaviour that most fatigue a driver, both of those things would be right at the top of the list. Far from finding the McLaren's chattery steering an annoyance, though, I actually think it's rather wonderful.

I love how tactile it is. I adore cruising along at half-pace down a gently winding road with an egg-shell fingertip touch on the perfectly sized steering wheel, feeling it patter and tug, sensing the shape of the road beneath and the cambers and the ruts as the rim twists lightly this way and that. There's some strange, indefinable joy in feeling connected to a machine, the interactions going back and forth. The important point, I think, is that you can enjoy that



Top right: 911 Turbo does have a playful side, though most drivers will only discover it on track.

Above right: R8's infotainment and minor controls feel modern and easy to use; the McLaren's kit is less intuitive

sense of connection even at low speeds. The 540C is not a car that needs to be slung from some great trebuchet before it comes to life.

The Audi and the Porsche both steer very differently to the McLaren (the Germans use electric power steering systems to the Brit's hydraulic setup). This relates back to the R8, and to a slightly lesser extent the 911, feeling oh-so modern. In either car you can turn into a long corner and not feel a single chirrup from the steering wheel. All white noise has been digitally erased. There's nothing, the steering wheel completely still. Refined, sophisticated, modern. In the analogue 540C that white noise is part of the track, a coarse texture. Sandpaper to silk.

There are certain cars whose steering absolutely should isolate you from the road surface the way the R8 and 911 do. But a supercar should dial you right in, steering wheel fidgeting away like a restless child. It's a perfect example of automotive technology moving both forwards and back. The McLaren communicates beautifully through its steering; the Audi and Porsche do not. And so, in an effort to feel connected, you start to drive faster.

The 911 Turbo is the most upright car of three, but when you start to hurry it along a winding road it responds with the immediacy and control of a more conventional low-slung supercar. There is a fraction of lightness to the front end, but it doesn't need to be managed in any way and the front axle finds just about as much turn-in bite as either of the mid-engined cars. The Turbo isn't a pure point-and-squirt machine because you can brake deep and late to play with its balance, using the great mass hung out behind the rear axle to get the car to swing into a corner, and all within the constraints of the stability control. And then, away from a corner, you can either wait a fraction before pinning the throttle so that the car squats and fires itself forward, or open it up early and abruptly to overwhelm the rear tyres and get the thing sliding ever so slightly.

The Porsche will respond if you give it the right commands, but it's a very narrow window. What's frustrating is that the 911 Turbo does have this broad, expansive window of adjustability and playfulness, this strata in which you can make it dance around like a rally car, but it's just a little beyond the reach of what's acceptable on the public road.



Strange as it may seem, the Turbo – the road-biased six-figure 911 – is actually a lot more fun on track.

A lot has been written about characterless modern turbocharged engines, not least in this magazine, but the 911 Turbo is excused from most of it. For one thing, the Turbo has always been turbocharged, so we aren't dealing with a forced induction engine that's replaced some wonderful naturally aspirated, high-revving motor (think new 911 Carrera). And, for another, Porsche's engineers have allowed the Turbo to actually feel turbocharged – huge boost, a real rush of energy all the way to the red line – rather than trying to give it the linearity of an atmospheric engine. It all means the 911's power unit is characterful and fun, as much a part of its overall make-up as the R8's screaming V10.

And my word does it thump the car down the road. For that shocking, dislocating sense of acceleration, nothing swings like a 911 Turbo at this money. Not even the Turbo S feels any more brutal in a straight line. The PDK gearbox is instantaneous and responsive, too, which means the delays as upshifts slot in can scarcely be measured.

The Porsche is spectacularly quick on the road and that

savage acceleration never grows old, but the truth is the Turbo isn't the most rewarding or engaging car to drive quickly. You find yourself chasing it ever harder just to try and wake it up. That touch of aloofness is the counterpoint to its peerless everyday useability.

There is more to enjoy about the R8 at medium speeds – that mighty engine for one thing – and, like the 911, it draws you into driving it faster and faster. But whereas the Porsche goads you on and delivers only a little in reply, the Audi really does come to life.

In this specification it's the only car here with fixed-rate dampers (adaptive dampers are an optional extra) and that does give it a slightly tauter ride than its rivals. This translates to excellent control and stability on a faster road, though, and with a little more wheel travel and slightly plusher tyre sidewalls on those 19-inch wheels, the car does squirm about a touch more than the V10 Plus model, which needs to be hustled before its chassis comes to life.

This test car has the much-maligned Dynamic Steering system, which does nothing to make the helm any more intuitive. The truth, though, is that the standard steering

Above: Audi's V10 is simply mighty, but we found ourselves hankering after the 602bhp Plus. **Above right:** 911 Turbo is the easiest to jump in and drive (very quickly) but, as with the Audi, its steering lacks feel



system isn't really any better: a vague and slightly woolly rack that still takes time to develop any confidence in.

At speed, the R8 feels as though it has wide tracks and a short wheelbase, so it gives the impression of being square. It snaps into corners immediately and with no inertia. You have to edge up to its limits, though, rather than sensing them instinctively, but that doesn't take long. It has balance, too, so you feel both axles working equally hard in corners. It's not the most communicative or readable car here, but in time you get close to drawing every ounce of pace from it, corner after corner.

The gearbox is more responsive even than the Porsche's and the V10 the most thrilling engine here, although without the optional sports exhaust the soundtrack is just a little flatter than it might be. And, wonderful as this engine is, it just isn't as intoxicating as the 602bhp version that powers the V10 Plus. The red line comes in a little earlier and with every upshift you wish ever harder that you had the really hot motor behind you. The R8 V10 will always play a supporting role to the R8 V10 Plus.

The 540C not only steers better than its rivals; in just about

every meaningful ride and handling discipline it leads the way. It's the most enjoyable at lower speeds but also the most engaging and exciting with more commitment. You point it inch-perfectly into a bend, sense the chassis sit down and bite into the corner and, for an instant, you feel beautifully suspended between the two axles.

The 911 and R8 have a traction advantage, but I think the 540C is ultimately faster down a dry road because you can exploit all of its cornering and braking ability more of the time. You're never left guessing or holding your breath and hoping. It backs up that predictability with massive grip and body control, and such fluid pliancy over bumps.

Switching the car into its Dynamic stability control setting soon becomes part of the start-up procedure. With the systems fully on, you can feel the car being restrained at every corner exit, as though being dragged backwards, but the Dynamic mode just releases it a little.

What lets the McLaren down most is its engine. This is the least convincing version of the 3.8-litre V8 so far. It needs 3000rpm before it starts to work and only above 5000rpm do you get the immediacy of response that you need to balance



the car on the throttle away from an apex. Out of very tight corners you find yourself with the throttle wide open, just waiting for something to happen, even down in second gear.

Crucially, that's not a frustration you often feel in the more responsive 570S. Rather like the R8, then, the cheaper, lower-powered version is shown up to be exactly that by its engine. And just as the R8 gazes up towards its more potent V10 Plus sibling, the 540C will always exist in the shadow of the 570S.

The 911 Turbo, then, is the only car here that makes its more expensive brother seem unnecessary. But, as we stated at the outset, that isn't going to be enough to earn it the group test victory. Instead, that honour goes to the car that excites more than its rivals both at low and medium speeds and also when you're hanging it over the edge. That honour goes to the only car here that truly makes you feel connected. It goes to the McLaren 540C. 🏆

Audi R8 V10

Engine V10, 5204cc
Power 533bhp @ 7800rpm
Torque 398lb ft @ 6500rpm
Transmission Seven-speed S-tronic dual-clutch, four-wheel drive, TV
Front suspension Double wishbones, coil springs, dampers
Rear suspension Double wishbones, coil springs, dampers
Brakes Ventilated 'wave' discs, 365mm front, 356mm rear
Wheels 8.5 x 19in front, 11 x 19in rear
Tyres 245/35 R19 front, 295/35 R19 rear
Weight 1595kg
Power-to-weight 340bhp/ton
0-62mph 3.5sec (claimed)
Top speed 198mph (claimed)
Basic price £122,450

evo rating ★★★★★

McLaren 540C

Engine V8, 3799cc, twin-turbo
Power 533bhp @ 7500rpm
Torque 398lb ft @ 3500-6500rpm
Transmission Seven-speed dual-clutch, rear-wheel drive, Brake Steer
Front suspension Double wishbones, coil springs, adaptive dampers
Rear suspension Double wishbones, coil springs, adaptive dampers
Brakes Ventilated discs, 394mm front, 380mm rear
Wheels 8 x 19in front, 10 x 20in rear
Tyres 225/35 R19 front, 285/35 R20 rear
Weight (dry) 1311kg
Power-to-weight (dry) 413bhp/ton
0-62mph 3.5sec (claimed)
Top speed 199mph (claimed)
Basic price £126,000

evo rating ★★★★★

Porsche 911 Turbo

Engine Flat-six, 3800cc, twin-turbo
Power 533bhp @ 6400rpm
Torque 524lb ft @ 1950-4000rpm
Transmission Seven-speed dual-clutch, four-wheel drive, PTV
Front suspension MacPherson struts, coil springs, adaptive dampers
Rear suspension Multi-link, coil springs, adaptive dampers
Brakes Ventilated discs, 380mm front and rear
Wheels 9 x 20in front, 11.5 x 20in rear
Tyres 245/35 R20 front, 305/30 R20 rear
Weight 1595kg
Power-to-weight 340bhp/ton
0-62mph 3.0sec (claimed)
Top speed 198mph (claimed)
Basic price £126,925

evo rating ★★★★★

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Market

ANALYSIS HOW TO BUY A LIGHTWEIGHT BRITISH SPORTS CAR

WANT IT. BUY IT. OWN IT. LOVE IT.

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Second to none for involvement and with fantastic residuals, these skin-and-bone Brit hits couldn't be more evo
by Adam Towler

MOST OF US HAVE FELT THE compulsion to buy a 'real' sports car at some time or other. Whether you're into hot hatches, rally specials or powerful GTs, the lure of something simple, low, rear-driven and fast remains strong. Moreover, the thought of a lightweight, hardcore sports car, typically of the low-volume British variety, takes that notion even further: it takes – and shows – commitment, and is a decision that puts driver appeal at the top of the priority list.

So, what are the options if you want to make that step into something more extreme? Let's begin with the ubiquitous Caterham Seven. You may choose to buy new or used, and if it's the latter there's a





bewildering array of models to choose from, built over successive decades. However, one obvious constant is that Sevens appear to be static in terms of price: regardless of age, there are few genuine Caterham Sevens to be seen under £12k, with most examples built in the last 20 years and to a decent specification commanding at least £15k.

Andy Noble of Sevens and Classics (sevensandclassics.com) says: 'The majority of Sevens we sell are between £18,000 and £26,000. If you were to keep the car three years, and not put too many miles on it, it'd probably be worth the same sort of money when you sold it. In terms of running costs they're perhaps the cheapest sports car you'll ever buy: a service should be £220 a year, and insurance probably only £250. They're so light on brakes, clutches and tyres. If you're going to use the car on track a lot then a limited-slip differential and a six-speed

gearbox are a good idea. If you're just pootling around country lanes then a car without an LSD and with a five-speed 'box is fine.'

Even something as exotic as the old Rover K-series-powered R500 is available for around £25,000, and while it has a reputation for being highly strung, as long as you keep oil and water in it you should get 25,000 miles between rebuilds.

There is, of course, a complete range of new Caterhams available, and here too there are plenty of options – see Expert View.

Strong residuals are also associated with the Ariel Atom, a car now firmly established as the great Seven alternative. With its largely open 'body', the Atom is even less practical in a real-world sense than the Seven, so really is just a weekend toy. That's just one factor that makes an Atom purchase a really personal thing. Another is the buyer's relationship with Ariel.

'You need to be comfortable tying up equity in something that you may not see or use very often'

The company sees a lot of its cars back for servicing, and sells many of them on in the used market. In most cases, a dialogue with the factory is part of the experience.

'We always say to come down and see us, take one out for a drive,' says Tom Siebert at Ariel. 'We also try to ascertain what the customer is looking for, and the spec will vary a lot between a Sunday-morning driver and a committed trackday-goer. I suppose 90 per cent will use their cars on the road, with up to ten trackdays

a year. So we'll try to tailor the car to them, and their budget – if they overspend they'll end up resenting that much money sat in the garage.'

That last point is applicable to all of these cars: you need to be comfortable tying up equity in something that you may not see or use very often, particularly through the winter months.

At the far end of the scale is something like the Radical SR3 (see Expert View). Although the company does make the incredibly fast RXC for the road, the little SR3 – a shrunken LMP car with a frenzied motorbike engine – is these days solely offered in track-only form. Radical has built more than 1100 SR3s since production began in 2002, and you only need to take one look at it to know this is a level of performance way beyond most road cars, even if the base model only has 1340cc. You may end up blitzing trackdays, then looking to racing. Given the SR3 starts

at £63,000, this is obviously a very different introduction to competition than something such as the Caterham Academy, but strong residuals underpin it all, with used SR3s still commanding £40,000-50,000.

One manufacturer that takes that modern racing vibe and puts it on the road is Lotus, with its Lotus 2-Eleven and 3-Eleven. The latter, with its £82k starting price new, is probably a bit too pricey for here, but its much more affordable predecessor also combines the extreme personality of a windscreenless track car with the security of the Lotus chassis tub and

polished dynamics that have a knack of making it feel more friendly than it has any right to be.

'These are a great buy,' says Jamie Matthews of Bell & Colvill. 'The Toyota engine is tried and tested, and it's a cheap car to keep going on the track. Don't be put off by loads of owners on the V5 as they're really a toy, but it's a shame when owners service the car themselves – a good history is still important.'

'You'll need £35,000-40,000 for one. They've been that way for a while now, and prices have started to creep up over the past year.'

SUMMARY

Whether you're after something to take for a quick blast on your favourite roads on a Sunday morning, or looking for the first rung on a racing career, there's still no real substitute for a lightweight British sports car. Apart from budget, the key thing is to define what you're going to use the car for. Try a few different options, buy the right car, and you can feel secure in the knowledge that depreciation isn't going to bite.



Clockwise from left: Radical SR3 gives a near race-car experience; 2-Eleven has lots of that Lotus magic; Caterham's Seven remains the benchmark lightweight; Ariel's Atom takes stripped-out to the extreme

EXPERT VIEW

JOSH DORAN

Radical Cars

'The SR3 is our most diverse car. You can use it just for trackdays or do a complete race series in it. We get lots of people buying one for trackdays, then after a couple of seasons they look further afield and get into racing with it. The cars can be driven by anyone who's competent, but there's loads of room for developing your skills.'

'At Radical we can do everything from simply supplying the car to arranging a customer's ARDS test, getting their kit and running the car for the year for them – it takes the hassle out of racing. The standard car uses a 1340cc

engine but most upgrade to the 1500cc car at £69,650, and that's the one used for racing. There are loads of options, but most we'd only advise you to go for if you're racing – data-logging, for example.'

'We have a parts store online and a spares truck at every race. Brake discs will do a full season and brake pads three or four races or trackdays. We also offer a warranty with our engine builds, which requires they're rebuilt every 40 hours or 12 months. That costs £3500-4500, but you can even send us the data after you run the car so we can check all is well.'

DAVE RIDLEY

CCO, Caterham Cars

'People come to our showrooms saying, "I have a 400bhp Impreza; I need a 250bhp Caterham." But our cars have performance through lightness, and not everybody needs that much power – an Academy car only has 125bhp but there are few things quicker on a trackday.'

'The spec of the car is all about how you intend to use it, which is why we now offer the S and R packs, for road and track use respectively. On the used market no two cars are the same. There is currently a nine- or ten-month lead-time on new orders, so a lot of people are buying a used

one on an agreed buy-back value while they wait for their new one.'

'It's the same with the Academy: 40 out of the 56 cars for the 2018 season are already sold, and some are buying older Academy cars to test this year ahead of getting their championship car for next season. All of that is due to the residual values of the cars.'

'If you want to build the car yourself, we'll talk you through that and advise what you'll need. You can even hire one from us for £175 to get an idea of whether it's right for you. If you do buy a car, we'll refund you that amount.'

FOUR TO BUY



2004 CATERHAM SEVEN SUPERSPORT 200

£21,995

This car has had a mechanical upgrade to full R400 spec, including the 200bhp VHPD Rover K-series engine with dry sump, a six-speed gearbox, limited-slip diff, adjustable suspension and bigger brakes. Finished in Porsche Viper Green, it's a really striking car.

SEVENSANDCLASSICS.COM



2009 ARIEL ATOM 3 310

£39,950

A supercharged Atom, originally to 300 spec but upgraded to a 310 in 2013. It has a Quaife LSD, adjustable suspension and Alcon brakes front and rear. Finished with a gunmetal frame, yellow panels and magnesium wheels, it's only done 6650 miles from new.

ARIELMOTOR.CO.UK/USED



2015 RADICAL SR3 RSX

£55,700

This SR3 has a 1500cc RPE-Suzuki engine fitted, along with a pneumatic paddle-operated gearshift, RSX bodywork with lights, 280mm floating brake discs, Intra dampers, air jacks and a race-logger dash. Just 17 hours usage from new.

UK.RADICALSPORTSCARS.COM/APPROVEDUSED



2010 LOTUS 2-ELEVEN

£44,995

Not registered until 2016, this is effectively a brand-new 2-Eleven with just 16 miles on the clock. Finished in white, with a GT4 roll-cage and forged wheels, it has the naturally aspirated Toyota engine and is road-legal.

HEXAGONCLASSICS.COM

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USED RIVALS £10K EVO CARS

by Adam Towler

A DIVERSE TRIO OF 'EVO' CHOICES around the £10,000 mark this month, with a hot hatch, a mid-engined sports car and a turbocharged coupe on offer.

The Renault Sport Mégane has been our hot hatch favourite for many a year, and while this sort of budget will probably mean the earlier '250' model, there is very little to choose between it and the slightly more powerful later versions.

Meanwhile, the original Porsche Boxster may well be a ubiquitous choice, but in S guise it is still

a fantastic sports car with all the performance anyone realistically needs on the road. These are surely about as cheap as they're ever going to get, with the majority of the poor examples now out of the market.

Finally we have the E92 BMW 335i: not quite a junior M3, but quick, understated and very useable. At this money it'll be a car with the earlier and sometimes troublesome 'N54' twin-turbo engine, as opposed to the later single-turbo 'N55', so homework is required.



RENAULT SPORT MÉGANE 250

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine	In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc, turbo
Power	247bhp @ 5500rpm
Torque	251lb ft @ 3000rpm
Weight	1387kg (181bhp/ton)
0-62mph	6.1sec (claimed)
Top speed	156mph (claimed)
On sale	2009-2012
evo rating	★★★★★

EXAMPLE

2010 £10,990



ashteadmotortrading.co.uk

A 53,000-mile car in striking Liquid Yellow and benefitting from the optional Cup chassis. Just had a new cambelt, water pump and brakes.

BUYING ADVICE

'Lower hub swivel joints start to creak and get play, so if the car tramlines a lot on a test drive it could well be this. Renault will only supply the complete hub, but we can repair them. The track rods can wear, causing wandering on the road, as do the anti-rotational links that join the hub to the wishbone – these will knock if worn. Make sure the clutch doesn't slip and that the synchro into third gear doesn't crunch. If the car pulls to one side under braking it may well be the pad stuck in the caliper. Also check the cambelt change history on the car, and be mindful that the scuttle can fill up with water if the drain holes are blocked. This then spills onto the ABS module and rots it.'

Dave Slater, Aarons Autos



PORSCHE BOXSTER S (986)

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine	Flat-six, 3179cc
Power	256bhp @ 6200rpm
Torque	229lb ft @ 4600rpm
Weight	1320kg (197bhp/ton)
0-62mph	5.7sec (claimed)
Top speed	164mph (claimed)
On sale	1999-2004
evo rating	★★★★★

EXAMPLE

2003 £8995



performancecarcompany.com

A late, facelifted 986 in Seal Grey with a black leather interior, including heated seats. Has a full service history documenting its 68,000 miles.

BUYING ADVICE

'The radiators in the front of the car rot, and we're now finding brake pipes and exhaust heat shields are corroding and need replacing – there are four exhaust heat shields, and you'll sometimes hear them rattle on start-up. The suspension and brakes are generally good, and the engines aren't anywhere near as bad as people will tell you: intermediate-shaft bearing issues are very rare. Apart from changing some water pumps and dual-mass flywheels the engines are generally good. The roof can sometimes break at the little plastic ball joints between the frame and the motor, but they're only £25 each and easy to fix – it's a failsafe on the mechanism.'

Mike Chare, Zuffenhaus



BMW 335i M SPORT (E92)

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine	In-line 6, 2979cc, twin-turbo
Power	302bhp @ 5800rpm
Torque	295lb ft @ 1300-5000rpm
Weight	1525kg (201bhp/ton)
0-62mph	5.6sec (claimed)
Top speed	155mph (limited)
On sale	2006-2012
evo rating	★★★★★

EXAMPLE

2007 £10,995



kiteley-motors.co.uk

An M Sport coupe with the auto gearbox and 69,000 miles on the clock. Lengthy spec includes metallic black paint, Dakota (red) leather and 19in wheels.

BUYING ADVICE

'Internally leaking fuel injectors are a common failure, and are expensive to replace. You can't replace just one, either. The electric water pump fails, leading to reduced power and coolant loss – the fan will stay on constantly if this has happened. The turbo wastegates can rattle, which most people just try to live with as replacing the turbos is very expensive. We see a lot of perished and worn vacuum hoses and leaky pressure converters, which affects performance, and there's also the high-pressure fuel pump issue: a tell-tale sign if it's worn is a longer cranking time on starting. Worn bushes are also common, and look for rear tyre wear on the inside edges. Go in with your eyes open.'

Steve Buck, A1BN

BUYING JOURNEY

evo reader James Kelly's stunning roster of cars

THE CARS

1988	Renault 5 TL (1985)
1990	Renault 5 Gordini Turbo (1983)
1994	Vauxhall Nova GTE (1988)
2001	Porsche Boxster S (986) (2001)
2003	Porsche Boxster S (986) (2003)
2004	Porsche Boxster S 550 Spyder (2004)
2005	Renault 5 Turbo 2 (Maxi replica) (1985)
2006	MG Metro 6R4 (1986)
2009	Porsche 911 Turbo (993) (1995)
2010	BMW M3 (E36) (1995)
2010	Renault Sport Clio 200 Cup (2010)
2012	Renault 5 Turbo 2 Tour de Corse (1985)
2015	Renault 5 Le Car 2 Turbo (1984)
2015	Nissan Skyline GT-R V-spec II (R32) (1994)
2016	Renault Sport Mégane R26.R (2009)
2016	BMW M2 (2016)

BMW M2

'I think the M2 represents what almost all of us want from a drivers' car in this age of automatic gearboxes and such. It's a totally modern car, but with a manual gearbox – at least in mine – pushing power to the back wheels and all wrapped up in a compact shape. It's no surprise to me that BMW was overwhelmed with orders.'



READER JAMES KELLY'S CAR HISTORY contains a fabulous breadth of models, and with Renault Sport and Porsche featuring heavily in the list, there's no shortage of **evo**centric drivers' cars in this back catalogue.

James's love for Renaults can be traced back to his first car, a 5 TL, owned when his friends drove rear-drive Ford Escorts. An incident with a squirrel during a high-speed drive down a Welsh forest track saw the end of that car, but the silver lining was surely its 5 Gordini Turbo replacement.

The Porsche contingent consists of a trio of first-generation Boxsters – including a rare 550 Spyder 50th Anniversary Edition – plus a much-loved (and missed) 993 Turbo.

A Metro 6R4 and an R32 Nissan Skyline GT-R also stand out, but it's the inclusion of two 5s (one front-engined, one mid), a Clio Cup and a very special Mégane on his present fleet that marks James out as a gold-star Renault addict. Rather unsurprisingly, he reflects that he has a 'good relationship' with Renault UK.



Porsche 911 Turbo (993)

'To me, Porsche is the best car manufacturer there is. I love everything about it, apart from its dealer network! The 993 was a special car. Mine was a low-mileage example that took two years to find; silver with a red interior and only 25,000 miles. Sadly, a business acquisition and a banking climate not willing to lend money forced its sale. I was gutted, even though it sold for £13k more than I paid for it.'



Renault 5 Turbo 2 Tour de Corse

'I'm a great fan of all things Group B, hence this is my second mid-engined R5 and why I've also owned a Metro 6R4. The R5 is a thoroughbred from a time when the driver was totally connected to the machine. This is by far the most expensive car I own, and because of that, it may have to go up for sale in a little while to help fund a house move. Obviously, I'm looking to find a way of not selling.'

WHAT NEXT?

'I had hoped to secure a Clio RS16 and was very disappointed when Renault announced this car wasn't going to make it to market. However, a couple of months ago I was loaned a Focus RS for the weekend by Ford. I massively enjoyed my time with the car and liked almost every aspect of it. It's now a car very much on my radar.'



evo
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- Checkpoint 2 - 25th May - 95 miles
Grasse to Monaco to watch the Formula 1 practice from a grandstand seat, after the racing is over we're heading back to our 4* hotel in Grasse for a Gala dinner and a relaxing evening with a few cocktails by the pool.
- Checkpoint 3 - 26th May - 545 miles
Grasse to Beaujolais to a stunning Chateaux with another Gala dinner with wine in the grounds of the medieval Relais du Silence Chateau, renowned for its fabulous cuisine.
- Checkpoint 4 - 27th May - 455 miles
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Buying guide

RENAULT SPORT TWINGO 133 (2008-2013)

It may have been the baby of the range, but the Twingo 133 is still very much a true Renault Sport car. And they now start at just £3000

by Peter Tomalin

THE ORIGINAL SMILEY-FACE Twingo wasn't junior hot hatch material. Twingo 2, however, turned out to be extremely receptive to the Renault Sport treatment. Launched in 2008, the Twingo 133 was aimed at a younger market than most RS offerings, which meant it had to be cheap to buy, run and – crucially – insure.

So, its naturally aspirated 1.6-litre four made a modest-sounding 131bhp at 6750rpm. However, with just 1050kg to pull, that was enough to propel the RS Twingo to 62mph in a decently brisk 8.7sec. It loved to rev, too, and had a properly sporty exhaust note. With sweet steering, good traction, and a playfully adjustable handling balance, the Twingo 133 really was made of the Right Stuff.





CHECKPOINTS

ENGINE

The engine is based on the 109bhp 1.6 from various Clio and Méganes but with more aggressive cams, a higher compression ratio, and a revised intake and exhaust. Mike Mardlin at specialist Rentech says it's proving generally very reliable, provided it's serviced to schedule, which is every year or 12,000 miles, whichever's sooner. The major service is at six years or 72,000 miles and includes the cambelt, water pump, filters, plugs, etc. It's a labour-intensive

job – Rentech charges around £750 – but the alternative is a potentially engine-wrecking failure.

Induction kits and sports exhausts make the engine sound rortier, but, being naturally aspirated, there's no shortcut to big power gains. RS specialist K-Tec developed a tuning package with a new exhaust system, including K-Tec's own tubular manifold, a Cat Cams camshaft, and a remap. K-Tec claims 163bhp at 7050rpm and 142lb ft at 4250rpm, gains of 32bhp and 24lb ft. It certainly feels a chunk quicker

than standard, if not quite *that* quick, but at £2600 it isn't cheap.

The engine should idle smoothly and pull cleanly, although, as Mike says, 'You really have to rev the nuts off it!' If it doesn't, it's probably an inexpensive coil pack that needs replacing.

TRANSMISSION

All Twingo RSs have an old-school five-speed manual gearbox. Some cars seem to suffer a slightly obstructive shift action from fourth to fifth, so that's worth checking; otherwise, no particular issues.

SUSPENSION, STEERING, BRAKES

Lower-arm ball joints are probably the Twingo RS's biggest weakness, says Mike, and you have to replace the whole front lower suspension arm. It's not hugely expensive – reckon on around £250 for the parts and labour – but it is a recurring issue, so do listen for any untoward knocks and clonks on the test drive and bargain accordingly.

If you're viewing a car with the Cup chassis, make sure you drive it on some typical back-roads. The

handling's great, but the bouncy ride isn't for everyone. 'For me, it has to be the Cup,' says Mike. 'The 133 is a bit underpowered, so it's the handling that makes it fun.' And drive it on a variety of road surfaces, too. 'The only reason I got rid of mine was the road noise,' says Mike. 'As I get older, I appreciate a bit more refinement!'

As wheels are easily swapped between Twingos, it's also worth ascertaining that you're looking at a genuine Cup chassis – one way is to check for a purple code patch on the rear dampers and springs.

BODY, INTERIOR, ELECTRICS

Check the boot-release works – they can fail, often because of water ingress, but are cheap to replace. Another common fault is water ingress under the scuttle panel, so check the front footwells for any sign of dampness.

'Check that all the electrics work,' adds Mike, and that includes the air con. The Twingo is good here compared with some Renaults, but does have the odd glitch. And check the LCD displays are fully functioning – some fade and a replacement costs hundreds.

On the outside were wheelarch and sill extensions to cover the 40mm-wider track; inside you got sports seats and neat details like a green change-up light on the rev-counter. At launch there were three variations. The regular 133 Sport had 16in alloys, tinted rear glass, split-folding rear seats and manual air con. You could have the same car with the Cup chassis option, featuring lower and stiffer suspension and 17in alloys, for £650 over the basic £11,550 list price. Or you could have the 133 Cup, which had the Cup chassis but went further by ditching some of the kit – most obviously the air con and the split-fold rear seats – to save weight.

We had mixed feelings about the Cup chassis. On smooth roads at the launch, the Cup felt unequivocally the one to have. Back home, whereas the standard setup seemed nicely judged for a junior hot hatch, the Cup gave an unsettlingly bouncy ride on the sort of back-roads the Twingo should

have been made for. Brilliant on trackdays, though, especially with the ESP disabled.

In 2012 the Twingo received a facelift to bring the looks into line with the rest of the RS range. It also gained a bigger rear spoiler, some interior tweaks and the addition of Liquid Yellow paint to the options list (at £1300!). Mechanically it was pretty much as before, and basic list was now £13,565.

Special editions include the Gordini – available pre and post facelift, with all the options plus leather and stripes – and the pre-facelift-only Silverstone, a run of just 50 cars with a silver/black colour scheme, Cup spec and a new stainless steel exhaust system.

The hot Twingo was never a big seller in the UK (2009 was its best year, with around 300 sold) but it's starting to gain a following. With the rear-engine, rear-drive Twingo 3 so far proving rather less fun than that recipe suggests, this is still the best way to enjoy some RS magic in a bite-size package.



WHAT TO PAY

Privately advertised early cars with higher mileages can be had for as little as £3000, with similar high-milers at traders from £3500, but in all cases you're looking for evidence of meticulous upkeep. Also be aware of the major service due at six years or 72,000 miles. If that's approaching, start haggling. Buying privately, £3500-4000 should get you a nice 2009-2011 example with average miles and a solid history. Post-facelift cars are £5000-plus.

The car pictured here is a 49,000-mile 133 Sport with the Cup chassis. It's currently for sale at the Value Car Centre in Norwich, priced at £4000. Call 01603 699999.

Left: naturally aspirated 1.6 is generally tough, but ensure it has been serviced regularly and that the cambelt change isn't due. **Above:** inside, check the air con and LCD displays

INFORMATION

SPECIFICATION

Engine	In-line 4-cyl, 1598cc
Max power	131bhp @ 6750rpm
Max torque	118lb ft @ 4400rpm
Transmission	Five-speed manual, front-wheel drive
Weight	1050kg
Power-to-weight	127bhp/ton
0-62mph	8.7sec (claimed)
Top speed	127mph (claimed)
Price new	£11,550

PARTS PRICES

Prices for Renault parts – cheaper alternatives are available through ren-tech.co.uk. Tyre price from blackcircles.com. All prices include VAT but exclude fitting charges.

Tyres (each)	£85.75 (205/140 R17 ContiSportContact 5)
Front pads (set)	£65.80
Front discs (pair)	£245.66
Damper (Cup)	£202.04 front, £496.54 rear
Clutch kit	£247.28
Catalyst	£926.00
Spark plugs (set)	£49.15

SERVICING

Prices from ren-tech.co.uk, including VAT. Servicing every 12 months or 12,000 miles, whichever arrives sooner.

Minor service	£175
Major service (6 years or 72,000 miles)	c£750

USEFUL CONTACTS

FORUMS, ADVICE, EVENTS

twingo133.net
renaultsport.co.uk
renaultsportclub.co.uk

SPECIALISTS

k-tecracing.com
ren-tech.co.uk
diamondmotors.co.uk

CARS FOR SALE

pistonheads.com
classicandperformancecar.com



'I BOUGHT ONE'

KEENAN NEGUS

'I'm 19, so insurance is an issue. I was already paying £1700 a year for my bog-standard Clio 1.2, and that was with a black box, but when I found out I could insure a Twingo 133 for just a hundred pounds more, that was it – I had to have one.'

'I saw this car advertised in Newcastle for £3000. I drove all the way up from Hertfordshire to see it, part-exchanged the Clio, then drove the 133 back home. That was just bags of fun. After the Clio, I couldn't believe how fast it was!'

'It's a 2009 car with the Cup chassis, which is what I really wanted. I know it's pretty uncomfortable on some roads, but I didn't buy it for comfort. I just love the way you can throw

it around. It feels so agile.

'It had 70,000 miles on the clock when I bought it five months ago, and I've already added 10,000 to that. I drive it a lot! I drive into London every day for my job as a carpenter, and I also go and visit my family down in Cornwall, so I really rack up the miles.

'I've had four of us in it, which was just about OK. And one day the van at work had broken down, so I loaded up the Twingo instead – timber, tools, great big bundles of nails. It was probably slightly overloaded, to be honest, but it was fine.

'What's gone wrong? Not much really. I broke a wishbone and that cost about £180 just for the part – luckily my stepdad

is a mechanic so I could get it fitted for free. I had to replace a wheel bearing, too. And the exhaust had a leak, but I've managed to patch that.

'I've had the wheels powder-coated black to make it a bit more stealthy. I'm now planning some modifications, starting with a set of coilovers. I'm also looking at getting a turbo. The insurance? I'll worry about that when it happens!'



IN THE CLASSIFIEDS



**2009 (59)
TWINGO 133**
£4990

44,000 miles, Mirage Grey, two owners, service history, 16in alloys
bransonscars.com



**2010 (60)
TWINGO GORDINI 133**
£5295

46,100 miles, Extreme Blue, leather trim, climate control, 17in alloys
hawkins.co.uk



**2011 (61)
TWINGO 133**
£9999

3000 miles, one owner, full service history, panoramic sunroof, immaculate
renaultretail.co.uk

WHAT WE SAID



FIRST DRIVE, SEPTEMBER 2008

'Push hard and you will find understeer, but the way the Twingo changes direction with so little fuss means you don't often breach the slip barrier. The ESP stability program is well judged, too. I don't find myself searching for the off switch for ages...

'Get the orange button glowing, pin the throttle and the Twingo is with you every step of the way. There's a hunger for corners that's invigorating – even if the steady trickle of information is fed back to you through the chassis rather than the steering. Electric steering is to blame, robbing the Twingo of true clarity. At least the helm is accurately and consistently weighted with a pleasingly quick rack – half a turn of lock deals with most corners.

'The brakes are meaty underfoot – developed for the Mégane, they're reassuringly positive – and when the rev needle homes in on 7000rpm (and the tuneful 1.6 begins to sound just a touch ragged) the change-up light glows green. That's green for go, grab another gear, give it some. It's a small thing, but it matters somehow.' – **evo** 123

RIVALS

SUZUKI SWIFT SPORT (Mk1)

Slightly less hardcore than the Twingo, particularly when the Renault is in Cup form, the 134bhp Swift is still a great drive in its own right. £3000-4500 gives a wide choice.

MINI COOPER

There are plenty of Coopers, both first and second generation, for £3000-4000. They're not quite as feisty as the Twingo, but they are still fun. Ubiquity puts some people off, though.

RENAULT SPORT CLIO

If you want a bigger hit from a Renault Sport hatch, then £3000-4000 also buys you the exuberant Clio 182 Cup ('04-'06) or the slightly more grown-up 197 Cup ('07-'09).

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EXPERT VIEW

ROLY BALDWIN

Eporsch

'The market is buoyant at the moment. These cars are relatively affordable and there is plenty of demand, even if the market for 987 Boxsters is slightly larger.'

'Spec is important to customers, and while some feel they must have the S model, a lot don't feel they need the extra performance on the road. I'm not that concerned about the engines on the early cars. The 3.4-litre cars do occasionally suffer from scored bores, but not like gen-1 997s.'

'Overall, if we're buying a car we simply check the usual things – condition, service history and signs of expenditure. I like to see more than just stamps in the service book. But it's not a car that tends to have lots of problems.'

'Prices are fairly static at the moment and you may even suffer a little bit more depreciation, but they're on that flat-ish part of the curve that Porsches seem to get into, and I expect in the years to come they'll start going up again. At the moment a budget of £15,000-16,000 buys a very nice first-gen car, or spend a bit more for a low-mileage one.'

MIKE CURTLER

Ashgood Classic & Sportscars

'The 987.2 Caymans offer all the fun of a 997.2 911 but for 60 per cent of the price. With their mid-engined layout, super handling and small size, they're fun and practical all at the same time.'

'We sell Caymans to men and women, young and old; cars for weekend use, cars for every day, cars to be used on the track, cars to pop to the supermarket in, cars to drive to the south of France.'

'As if to illustrate that, we sold a lovely Cayman 2.9 PDK to a 22-year-old last month, and also bought a Cayman from a 92-year-old.'

'If asked what the pick of the bunch is, I'd find that really difficult to answer. It's hard to beat a nicely specified Cayman R with the factory sports exhaust, but then again, the little 2.9-litre engine is such a gem. To be really honest, I don't think there is a bad 987.2 Cayman. They'll do nearly 40mpg on a long run, and you have that lovely naturally aspirated flat-six engine.'

'The looks have aged well too, in my opinion. I used to think that they could look awkward, but now they just seem right. To look the best they really need 19-inch alloys, but they do ride better on the smaller wheels.'

MODEL FOCUS PORSCHE CAYMAN (987)

With prices as low as £12,000, Porsche's mid-engined coupe is a tempting used option. Here's what you need to know

by Adam Towler

THE CAYMAN HAS ESSENTIALLY been produced in three separate iterations. It is the first – the 987 model – that we're interested in here, not the subsequent 981 (sold from 2013 to 2016) or the latest 718 Cayman.

The 987 first appeared in 2005 with a larger version of the M96 3.2-litre flat-six from the Boxster S. Known as M97, it displaced 3.4 litres and produced 291bhp, and the car it was in was marketed as a Cayman S (the Boxster S gained this larger engine in 2007). A 242bhp non-S Cayman, with a 2.7-litre version of the newer M97 flat-six, joined the range in 2006.

These earliest Caymans are essentially baby brothers to the 997.1 911s, and share plenty of components with them, not least smaller versions of their engines. Therefore, albeit to a lesser extent, the same noted potential frailty with these

engines applies, although it is rare and can often be prevented with the correct maintenance.

A second generation of 987 Caymans launched in 2009. Instantly recognisable by their facelift, they also adopted an all-new engine family (A91), introduced in the 997.2 911 in 2008. The 3.4-litre Cayman S now featured direct injection and made 316bhp without the associated reliability concerns of the older engines. The non-DFI engine in the entry-level Cayman was also part of that new family, but Porsche postponed the inclusion of DFI to keep the two models far enough apart. Nevertheless, the displacement grew to 2.9 litres, giving 261bhp and useful extra torque, making this relatively rare model really appealing.

Today, the Cayman market begins around £12k, with plenty of tidy 987s from £15k, rising to low-mileage Cayman Rs (3.4 litres, 325bhp) at £45k.





Lamborghini Murcielago LP670-4 SV
Ceramic brakes, High level rear wing small decal option, 600 miles, 2009, **£499,990**



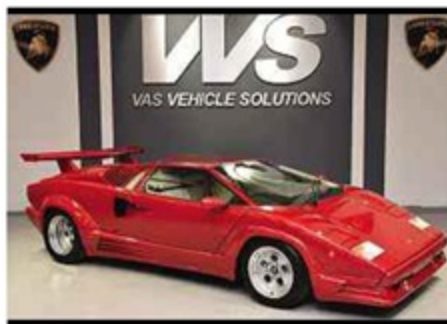
Lamborghini Murcielago LP670-4 SV
Ceramic Brakes High Level Rear Wing Small Decal option 4,000 miles 2009, **£399,990**



Lamborghini Murcielago LP670-4 SV
Ceramic brakes, high level rear wing, large decal option, 8,000 miles, **£379,990**



Lamborghini Countach 5000 s QV
Sportivo interior, Manual transmission, High level rear wing, 21,000 miles, 1988, **£349,990**



Lamborghini Countach 25TH Anniversary
Sportivo interior, Manual transmission, High level rear wing, 20,000 miles, 1990, **£299,990**



Lamborghini Murcielago LP 650-4 Roadster. 1 of 50 Worldwide, Alcantara Sports Seats, 3,000 miles, 2009, **£279,990**



Lamborghini Aventador LP700-4 Roadster
Dione Forged Alloy wheels, Transparent engine cover, Branding PK, Reverse camera, 4,000 miles, 2014, **£274,990**



Lamborghini Diablo 6.0 VT Final Edition
Carbon Fibre Driving Zone, Carbon Fibre Inserts, Carbon Fibre Engine Bay, 20,000 miles, 2000, **£249,990**



Lamborghini Huracan LP 610-4 Spyder
Bi colour Sportivo Interior, sports exhaust and branding PK, 1000 miles, 2016 **£217,990**



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



Lamborghini Huracan LP 610-4 High Spec
20" Mimas alloy wheels, Carbon fibre engine bay, Transparent engine cover, Reverse camera, 9,000 miles, 2015, **£169,990**



Lamborghini Huracan LP 610-4 Coupe
20" Giano alloy wheels, ceramic brakes, branding PK, orange callipers, 2,000 miles 2014 **£169,990**



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



Lamborghini Murcielago LP640 Coupe
Factory carbon sports seats, ceramic brakes, and Larini exhaust, 12,000 miles, 2008, **£164,990**



Lamborghini Murcielago LP640 Coupe
Titanium Hercules alloys, Parking Camera, 10,000 miles, 2008, **£164,990**

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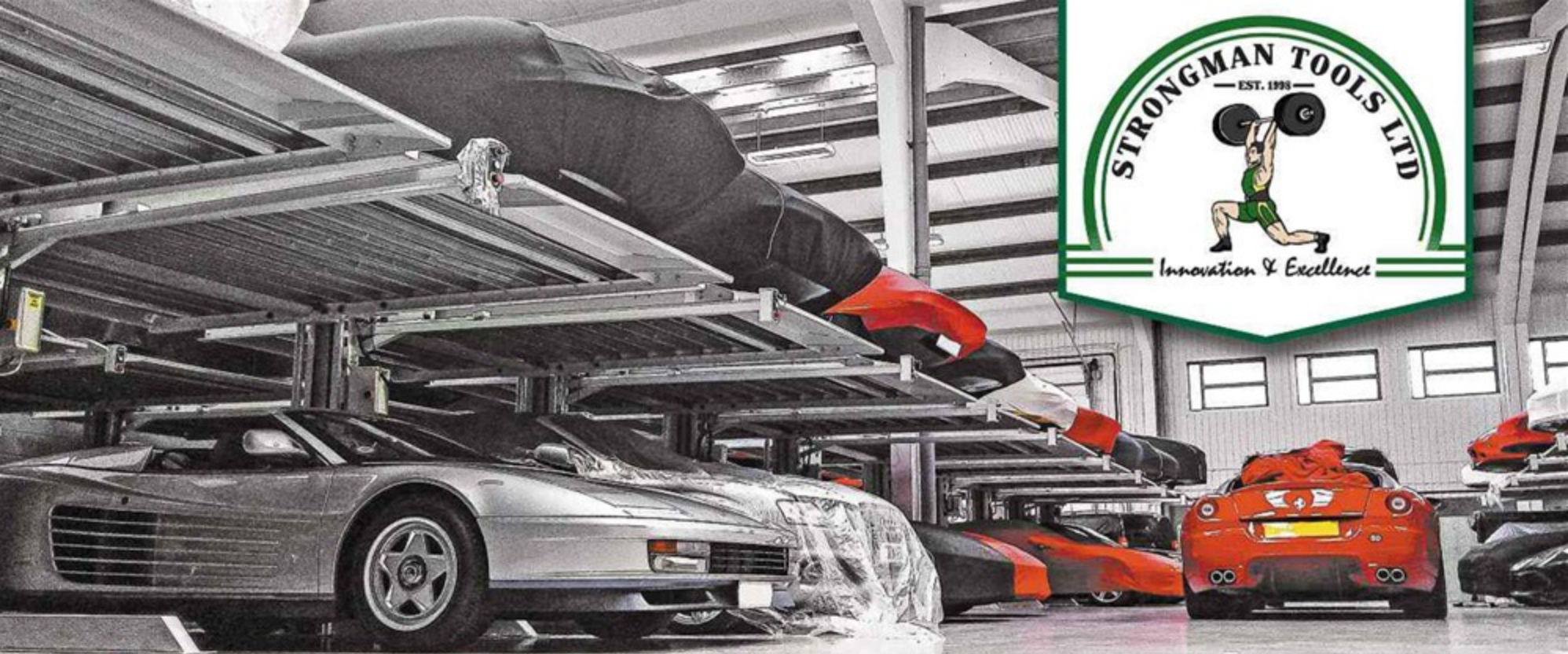
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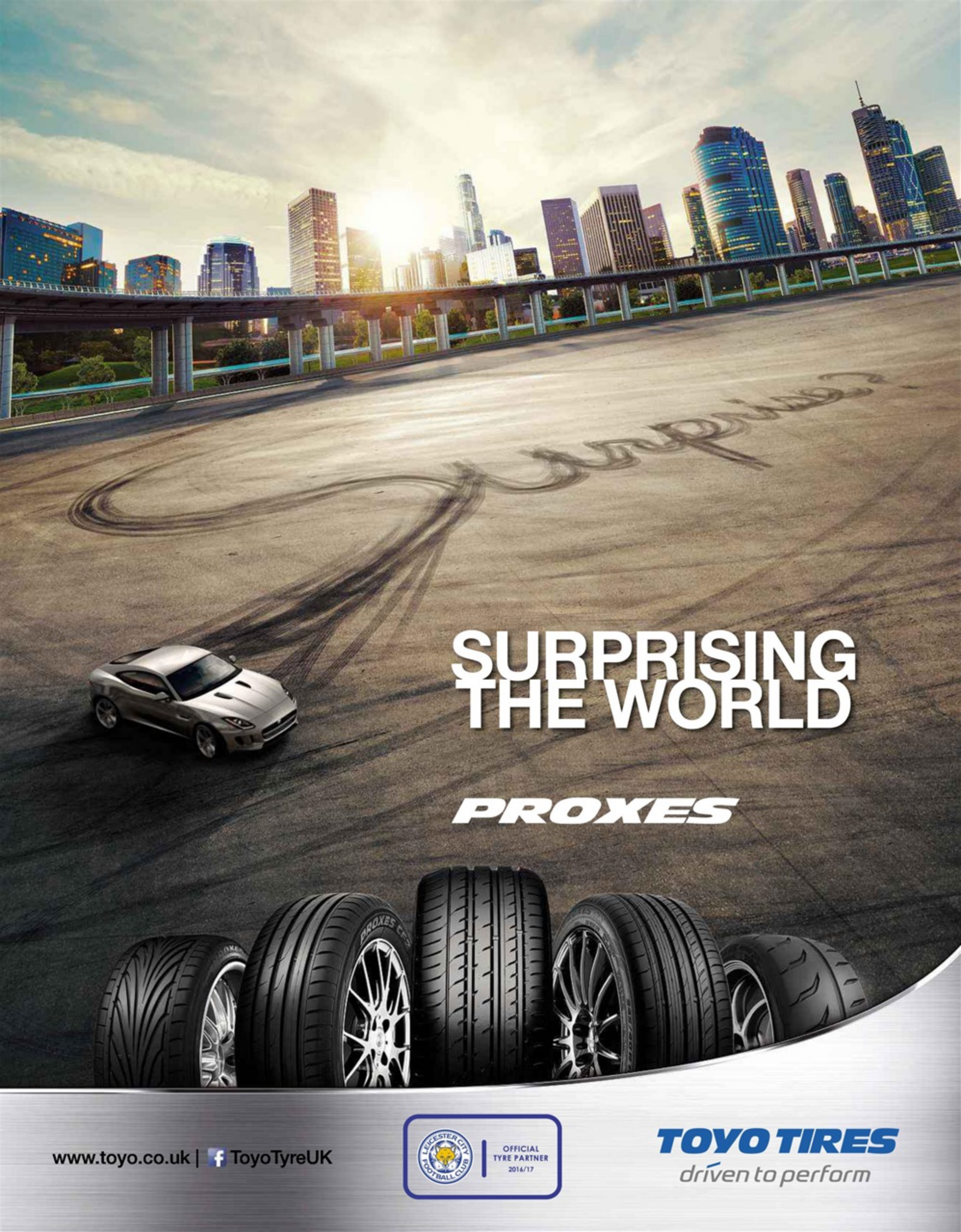
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Porsche Cayman GT4

Part exchange valuation	£85,000
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return of
£19,995

Ferrari 599 GTB

Part exchange valuation	£100,000
SOLD FOR	£119,995
Returned customer (less fee)	£118,495



Increased
return of
£12,995

Porsche GT3

Part exchange valuation	£67,000
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ESSENTIALS

THE ROUND-UP

New motoring products that have caught our eye this month



T-SHIRT

DB5
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sentiersupplyco.com

This T's name – DB5 – is a bit of a giveaway, but the keen of eye may already have identified the car by its wire wheel alone. Part of Sentier's 'Classics' range (which also includes Mini Moke and 911 tees), it's available in either black or grey and in sizes from small to extra large.



SLOT CAR

Renault 5 Alpine Gp2
€89

gts-series.com

Your eyes aren't deceiving you – this really is a slot car, despite the incredible level of detail. A replica of Jean Ragnotti's second-place 1978 Monte Carlo Rally car, it almost looks too intricate to use, with spotlights, wipers and faithfully narrow tyres on real aluminium wheels.



GAMING

Nintendo Switch
£279.99

store.nintendo.co.uk

Nintendo's hardware has been hit-and-miss of late, but its latest console, the Switch, looks promising. It heralds another Mario Kart title for a start (*Mario Kart 8 Deluxe*), and while it's not as powerful as a PS4 or Xbox One, Nintendo usually nails the fun (and family-friendly) factor.



CAMERA

Kodak Pixpro SP360 4K
£199.99

amazon.co.uk

GoPros have been the darling of action-sports types (and indeed *evo's* film-makers) for years, but 'VR' cams can provide an even more immersive experience. Watch a recording from a pair of these Kodaks on a virtual reality headset and you get a full 360 degrees of 4K footage.



SUNGLASSES

Sunwise Parade White
£64.99

shop.sunwise.co.uk

The latest addition to Sunwise's 'Driving' range, these sunglasses feature category 3 protection for strong sunlight, plus anti-glare polarised lenses. Sunwise says the flat arms also make them suitable for wearing under a helmet, should you need some shades for the track.



MEN'S GROOMING

JP Torsion Razor
£987.14

jprazors.com

The price of this razor is probably an indication of why more grooming products aren't made from components from old F1 cars, but people have paid far more for much less useful things. It's constructed from part of a titanium Red Bull Racing torsion bar, and just 36 will be made.

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**THIS
MONTH**

PORSCHE 911 CARRERA // BMW i8 // PEUGEOT 308 GTI 270 // AUDI R8 SPYDER //
LANCIA DELTA INTEGRALE // VOLKSWAGEN GOLF GTI CLUBSPORT EDITION 40 //
FERRARI F40 // SKODA OCTAVIA ESTATE vRS 230 // FORD FOCUS ST ESTATE



Mercedes-AMG C63 S Coupe

Smoke 'em if you got 'em... Take one supercoupe, one empty runway and one Richard Meaden, and the results are inevitable – purely in the name of road testing, of course

L LONG-TERMERS LIVE double lives. One day they're doing a run-of-the-mill commute, the next they're blasting along the best driving roads we can find in the wake of a supercar. All of which describes our C63 S Coupe's day-to-day existence.

If you recall last month's NSX test you'll know we took Honda's sensational hybrid supercar to Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground for a few flat-out sprints down the runway, as well as to North Yorkshire for a blast across the moors. What you won't know is that the C63 was pressed into service as support vehicle for this test.

With an empty runway and a few minutes to spare, it would have been remiss of us not to attach the VBOX to the AMG. The 63 easily thumped to 60mph in 4.3sec and 100mph in 9.0sec. Those figures are a few tenths off AMG's claims, but not bad considering the bootful of kit, cold

conditions and Brunters' less than ideal concrete surface.

We could only use the second half of the runway, but the Merc still reached just shy of 150mph. Slowing 1725kg from those speeds is quite a task, but the big (optional) ceramic brakes barely worked up a sweat. I can also confirm the C63 S will hit 60mph in 7.2sec while doing an almighty rolling burnout. Never let it be said **evo's** testing is anything less than thorough...

I was in the NSX for most of the trip to, around and back from the North York Moors, but this gave me a chance to sit back and admire the muscled Merc on the road, as others do. I can confirm it looks – and sounds – pleasingly thuggish. All the better when caked in a thick crust of accumulated road grime.

You might expect a 500bhp, rear-drive car running summer rubber to be something of a liability on wet and potentially icy moorland roads, but

'It's just so easy to live with, yet so special. And so darned exciting when you want it to be'

Louis Shaw (**evo's** resident bundle of youthful energy) never once emerged ashen-faced: testament to his commendable self-control and the AMG's well-sorted stability control system, which lets you extract more than enough performance without constantly intervening. This car is a beast, but a tame and placid one unless you poke it with a stick.

I was smitten by the NSX, but it was great to get back into the C63. It's just so easy to live with, yet so special. And so darned exciting when you want it to be. But then, as I'm coming to learn, that's the magic of AMG, and what will make this long-term a very tough act to follow. **✕**

Richard Meaden
(@DickieMeaden)

Date acquired	October 2016
Total mileage	4618
Mileage this month	1251
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	22.4



Porsche 911 Carrera

Now more than 20 years old, our 993 gets a suspension overhaul



Above: old and new spring and damper units side by side. **Below:** new adjustable top mounts. **Bottom:** getting the geometry just-so



LAST MONTH I REVEALED my ambition to learn how to drive an old-school 911 properly. To help me out with this plan, I've bitten the bullet and refreshed and upgraded my car's tired 23-year-old suspension. This has involved some major new parts and some much smaller ones too, plus one very large bill. Hopefully it'll all be worth it.

I started with new suspension bushes. Often overlooked when it comes to upgrades, bushes are crucial for keeping the suspension quiet, controlled and operating smoothly. The Powerflex pieces I went for are made of polyurethane rather than rubber, so should outlast almost anything else on the car.

Reducing body roll was also on my hit list – this is a '90s car, after all – and this is where a pair of H&R anti-roll bars came in. They feature multiple end links for extra adjustability and are 6mm thicker at the front and 7mm thicker at the rear than the standard bars. In fact, they are 3mm thicker at the front and 4mm thicker at the rear than the bars of the Carrera RS, so the increased lateral stiffness should be immediately evident.

I've also invested in an Öhlins Road & Track adjustable suspension kit. This uses the firm's dual-flow valve technology, which promises rebound performance that is equal to compression performance. The result? No compromise between comfort and agility, at least on paper. Designed with lightness in mind, most of the kit's parts are manufactured from aluminium, including the camber-adjustable top mounts.

Obviously, all of this needed to be installed and set up correctly, so I booked the 993 in with Design911 in Essex. They've been a Porsche

specialist for over 20 years and reassured me they could deliver the setup I was after.

The first job was to replace the old rubber suspension bushings – not the easiest task as it involves removing the rear suspension arms and the driveshafts too. Next the new anti-roll bars went on, as did the new springs and dampers. With so many new parts being fitted, I was advised to replace the worn-out drop links and track-rod arms at the same time. This wasn't completely straightforward, however, because there was a clearance issue. An earlier upgrade to 993 Turbo brakes



Date acquired	April 2016
Total mileage	78,599
Mileage this month	36
Costs this month	Öhlins kit £3390 anti-roll bars £344 bushes £230 drop links £350 track-rod arms £140 fitting/setup £1776
mpg this month	32.7

meant it was necessary to find a set of drop links that would fit around the bigger brakes and work with the new suspension kit. In the end some Turbo-spec Tarett drop links and a bit of handiwork on the brake-line location did the job.

With all the new hardware in place, it was finally time to calibrate the suspension geometry. The result is a ride height a full 40mm lower than standard and some more aggressive negative camber, both at the front and the rear. The Öhlins dampers were also set to the factory suggestion of seven clicks, which yields an 'intermediate' stiffness, but I'll have a proper play with them to find an ideal road setting. I'll report back on how all these changes feel on the road next time. ☒

Aston Parrott
(@AstonParrott)



BMW i8

It's meant to be the frugal sports car, but just how far can you push the i8's fuel-sipping abilities?

I IT WASN'T A PLANNED experiment and in hindsight it wasn't a very clever one either. My excuse is that I always want to know just how far you can push a car's fuel range before the engine splutters and leaves you stranded at the side of the road. Call it curiosity, but I need to run out of fuel just once. It's why I know an RS6 can roll on for another 27 miles after the range reads zero before its V8 coughs, and a 2-litre VW Group turbodiesel can stretch an extra 61 miles beyond zero when installed in a 2010 Audi A4.

The i8 is a little trickier to judge. Fill its 42-litre fuel tank (evo's car has the optional larger tank; the standard one is 30 litres) when the batteries are depleted and, depending on how you drive, the range will be between 280 and 320 miles. Charge the batteries and a further 16 to 20 miles will be added to that, depending on whether you

pre-heat the cabin or not.

Draining the fuel tank doesn't take long on the right road. The i8 is still proving to be more of a sports car than I had initially given it credit for; the way the front axle's electric motor quells understeer and pulls the nose through the apex gives it a balanced stance through every kind of turn. In Sport mode the 129bhp electric motor works overtime to supplement the three-cylinder engine's performance and the electric range can be quickly halved and soon wiped out. However, in Sport mode the ECU also activates maximum energy recuperation when lifting off and during braking, which allows the electric motor to support the engine as much as possible. It doesn't give you an instant 20 miles of additional electric range, but an extra mile here and there is a welcome bonus.

It's not quite free energy because you are still burning through the superunleaded with a degree of

recklessness after all, but it does introduce a whole new element to playing fuel-light roulette on a late run home to avoid a 24-hour fuel station's night-pay window.

To play this game I needed to know exactly how long I could ignore the i8's zero-range warning for. The answer is a mere 12 miles, mainly because the fuel lines are so short due to the engine and fuel tank being in close proximity to each other. And how many miles can you go on a battery that says it's empty? Precisely zero. Funny that. Additional lessons learnt from this experiment? Don't expect a seven-year-old to push an i8 for half a mile. ☒

Stuart Gallagher
(@stuartg917)

Date acquired	November 2016
Total mileage	9124
Mileage this month	1681
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	38.4

'Draining the fuel tank doesn't take long on the right road – the i8 is still proving to be more of a sports car than I had initially given it credit for'

Peugeot 308 GTi 270 by Peugeot Sport

Familiarity pays dividends with the 308, as a new line of communication is uncovered

I INITIAL IMPRESSIONS OF the Peugeot 308 GTi are good – it's a fast, lively and exciting hot hatch. However, there isn't an abundance of feel or a strong sense of connection with the road, especially through the steering.

This isn't a deal-breaker because the 308 responds loyally to your inputs and reacts just as you'd expect of a front-wheel-drive hot hatch, so you can easily drive around the steering's silence. However, I've also found that with time and practice you can begin to establish a connection with the front tyres, albeit through the suspension rather than the steering. And so, after many miles behind the 308's small steering wheel, I've adapted my behaviour to suit and it's made the Pug even more enjoyable.

I'd been getting it wrong in the past because of that tiny wheel; combined with a relatively quick steering ratio, it makes it very easy to apply just a little too much lock

when entering a corner. The 308 almost always reacts without any issues, even with an extra degree of steering angle, so it's not essential to change your style, but if you do reduce your inputs it unveils a suppleness to the front suspension that isn't noticeable when you're too sharp or quick with the steering.

Far from making the 308 feel flabby or unresponsive, this new-found roll from the front end means you can work the front axle even harder. Slowly loading up the outside front wheel by using the brakes and steering reveals even more grip. And as you increase the pressure on the tyre, each extra degree of roll the suspension allows acts as a gauge as to just how much grip there is. When the roll begins to tail off you know you're getting to the tyre's limit and you can back off before there's a dramatic loss of grip.

This greater understanding of the 308's front grip has multiplied my confidence in the car's abilities,

'After many miles behind the 308's small steering wheel, I've adapted my behaviour to suit and it's made the Pug even more enjoyable'

Date acquired	July 2016
Total mileage	14,720
Mileage this month	504
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	32.8

which has been invaluable in the recent late-winter conditions. This bond with the front tyres isn't just accessible when there's lots of grip, it's there all of the time, as long as you keep the steering inputs small and measured.

The rear axle doesn't behave in the same way. It remains proportionally stiffer than the front and doesn't have the ability to communicate how much grip the tyres have in such detail. But as they don't need to deal with steering or power, it's less important to have such an intimate connection with them. This stiffness does have its advantages, too, as it allows the rear to be easily manipulated. Indeed, with fantastic control and understanding of the front tyres, you're able to exploit the slight skittishness of the rear axle, making it deeply enjoyable to coerce the 308 GTi down a twisty road. ☒

Will Beaumont
(@WillBeaumont)



Audi R8 Spyder V10

Audi: thoughtful, precisely engineered. Still couldn't cure the supercar bugbear of crap seats, though

OUR R8 SPYDER HAS THE optional Recaro bucket seats, which is both a good thing and a very bad thing. At £3000 they're not exactly cheap, but it's the lack of adjustment rather than the cost that I find frustrating.

You can raise and lower the seats – inevitably they're permanently in their lowest position – but there's no adjustment for angle or lumbar support. The backs are very upright and the squabs are very flat to the floor, which means you sit with your back as straight as it would be when sitting on a church pew. It's not a natural supercar seating position by any means.

If they could be reclined by a few degrees I think they would be much

more comfortable to sit in. In fact, if I owned this car myself and I had paid for the Recaros, I would have to see about getting some backstreet workshop to fabricate a couple of new brackets to tilt the seats backwards a touch. I wonder what that'd do for the warranty...

As it is, I find myself slouching in the seat after a while to try and achieve a more natural seating angle, bum scooted along the base. On longer journeys my right hamstring can go numb, too.

However, being just about 6ft tall, I actually think they're slightly better than the standard seats. It's all to do with the soft-top roof. The pop-up rollover bars, which nestle between the engine bay and the cabin, have impinged on the passenger compartment by a few inches. As a result the standard seats don't push back far enough away from the steering wheel and the pedals for anybody above average height to get comfortable, which means you drive with your legs folded up like a yogi's. I know of one very tall journalist who had to abandon an R8 Spyder at the side of the road after just a few miles for this very reason.

The Recaros, though, have a much slimmer back, which means that



'One very tall journalist had to abandon a Spyder at the side of the road after a few miles'

Date acquired	November 2016
Total mileage	6550
Mileage this month	2530
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	22.6

when they are pushed back against the firewall I can only just reach the pedals with my legs outstretched. The point is, taller drivers might well find the fixed-back seats are the only option, no matter how unnaturally upright they may be.

After a few thousand miles I'm not as irritated by the seats as I once was, except on much longer journeys. When I recently lent the car to production editor Ian Eveleigh, though, his very forthright email brought it all flooding back. 'The seats in your R8 are bloody awful,' it went. 'No support at the bottom of your spine and far too upright. Good job the rest of the car is so damn good.' ✕

Dan Prosser (@TheDanProsser)



Lancia Integrale

What goes up must come down, and what goes fast must eventually stop. But it's nice to be able to choose when that happens

I KNEW THINGS WERE bad when even Dad said something needed to be done. Lane Senior, renowned sceptic of any Lancia-related expenditure not necessary in the very strictest sense, was referring to the brakes. And as a man who opened his **evo** account back in the '70s with an MG Midget, he really would know.



Of course, drive anything built before 1990 and the one thing the original brakes are sure to quell is any hope you had of making that apex. The 'Gale is no different in this respect. Decent back in the day, its single-piston calipers and ventilated discs on the front axle were even shared with the Ferrari-engined Lancia Thema 8.32. Sounds impressive – it was impressive – but the game has moved on and today those brakes are quite an unnerving proposition. Too much haste round a blind bend and you could still be waiting for them to bite as the car puts an oblong hole through the blameless unfortunate in front.

The real danger is that this is a car that does 'too much haste' way too easily. Full-time AWD and pliable suspension not only mean the tyres cling to the road like a limpet but

'Drive anything built before 1990 and the one thing the brakes are sure to quell is any hope you had of making that apex'

also that, assuming your understeer is not terminal, feeding more power to the Torsen rear differential will tighten the line and should see you through. It gives the car an effortless but deceptively fast flow, and I've covered big distances without using the middle pedal at all.

You're asking to get caught out, though, aren't you? Tractor, livestock – whatever it might be – so a brake upgrade is now in the offing. Popular options among Integrale owners are the hardware from either the Clio 182 or a 986 Boxster. Both fit nicely and, in the case of the Porsche kit, offer awesome stopping power. In fact, my only reservation is how enthusiastically they might rearrange the car's peripatetic interior trim (a pothole once fired the radio faceplate straight into my face – no kidding).

This expensive upgrade will need to be planned carefully, so as a stopgap I've fitted a set of Goodridge braided brakes lines. For £66 they lessen the dead spot at the top of the pedal's travel. Not only does this feel quite nice but it probably equates to the difference in reaction time between someone who is sober and someone with two pints of Tennent's Super down the hatch. Alas, after that, retardation is as feeble as ever, so it would be wonderful to at some point get the car stopping as well as it goes. ✕

Richard Lane (@_rlane)

Date acquired	August 2013
Total mileage	89,772
Mileage this month	193
Costs this month	£66.62
	braided brake lines
mpg this month	25.2

Volkswagen Golf GTI Clubsport Edition 40

When is 261bhp not 261bhp? When it's on the Edition 40's Performance Monitor readout

OVERBOOST. IT'S THE bane of a car magazine that takes pride in getting its facts and figures correct. Any car equipped with this increasingly common feature suddenly has two maximum power and torque figures to keep track of, along with some accompanying conditions regarding when and for how long the larger pair of peaks might be achieved.

That is assuming the car's maker shares full details of the overboost in the first place. Take the 179bhp Fiesta ST, for example. It can actually produce 197bhp on overboost, but you won't find any mention of this at ford.co.uk or in the car's brochure. However, check out the tech spec for 2016's ST200 limited edition and you'll see Ford finally let slip details of the boggo ST's extra power. And suddenly it's clear why that car feels considerably more sprightly than its official numbers might suggest.

So what's the overboost deal with the Edition 40? By default its EA888



'Realistically there's no time when the overboost isn't available to you in third gear or above'

engine produces 261bhp between 5350 and 6600rpm, with 258lb ft of torque between 1700 and 5300rpm. But if you put your foot to the floor in third gear or above, overboost is engaged for up to ten seconds and those peaks increase to 286bhp and 280lb ft. As opportunities to keep the accelerator pinned in third or above for this amount of time are pretty rare, this realistically means there's no time when the extra boost isn't available to you in these gears.

I thought that the Performance Monitor display that's tucked away in the infotainment system of some recent Golfs might be able to confirm the differing power peaks as you progress through the gears. Press the Car button, then choose Selection, then Sport, and three handy gauges appear, showing boost pressure, power and G-forces. (You can also swap any of these for oil temperature or coolant temperature, or switch the whole display to a lap timer.)

So, after some experimental acceleration runs, what did I discover? Well, firstly that no matter how I tackled it, I could never achieve more than 236bhp in first gear. Hitting the non-overboost peak of 261bhp in second was not a problem,

though. And in third? Erm, well, it looked like 261bhp again (or 195kW to be precise, as the display uses the SI unit of power). But I don't think VW is lying about the overboost; it's just that the needle on the gauge hits its digitally rendered end-stop at 261bhp and progresses no further.

The official line from VW is that the factory 'set up the Performance Monitor system to show the "always available" power peak, rather than the temporary boost peak,' which does rather spoil the fun of this display for Edition 40 drivers, but at least you can see an increase on the boost gauge, from a peak of around 1.8bar in second gear to as much as 2.1bar with overboost.

Perhaps the important thing is that the car definitely feels good for its quoted 286bhp in third gear and above. In fact, you can't really tell that it delivers less in second or even first. Which possibly suggests that we shouldn't get too hung up on the numbers, after all. **X**

Ian Eveleigh



Date acquired	October 2016
Total mileage	6889
Mileage this month	1134
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	31.0

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Ferrari F40

The Secret Supercar Owner enjoys a brief reunion with an old friend

I IT WAS ALMOST TWO years to the day from when I had last seen the F40, but a business trip to the UK with a bit of free time upon arrival gave me an ideal window to take the car out for a reunion drive. A few past attempts at such had been short-circuited by the wrong kind of weather, but on this particular Monday it was a near-perfect day.

My flight landed on time and a good friend picked me up at Heathrow in his mint Ferrari 512TR. After a short drive up into the Buckinghamshire countryside, we were at the gates of the storage unit. The current custodians of the F40 had it out waiting, sitting alluringly in the sunshine and ready to go. A quick visual check indicated that everything was in order, so down I dropped into the recently reupholstered racing bucket. It was a wonderful feeling being back behind the wheel of the last car the great Enzo Ferrari signed off. Key in the ignition, a push of the starter button and the twin-turbo V8 fired up immediately. After giving it a good ten minutes to warm up, we headed out.

The F40 is not an easy car to drive, so I was surprised at how comfortable I felt behind the wheel after all that time. The steering weight is perfect, the brakes adequate and that 471bhp engine absolutely feral. The next couple of hours were spent enjoying a number of A- and B-roads that we used to drive on Sunday mornings when I lived nearby. The F40 was every bit as involving and thrilling as I remember it being. Cars do not come any more **evo** than this.

It's now back in storage, where it will sit for six months before it finally comes over to the US. That short drive may well have been this F40's last outing on UK tarmac. **X**

Secret Supercar Owner
(@supercarowner)



'The steering weight is perfect, the brakes adequate, and that engine absolutely feral'

Above: the F40 awaits its owner's arrival outside the storage unit it is temporarily calling home.
Right: using twin turbos, Ferrari coaxed 471bhp from just 2.9 litres back in 1987 – and this in a car weighing just 1100kg



Date acquired	November 2006
Total mileage	29,329
Mileage this month	82
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	It's an F40...



Skoda Octavia Estate vRS 230

The devil is in the detail, and there's a fiery corner of hell reserved for some of the Skoda's software

THE OCTAVIA HAS RAPIDLY passed the 10,000-mile mark and certain things about it are starting to become a little, well, irritating. I must stress that on the whole this car is still a pleasure to run, but niggles mean it's far from perfect.

Let's start with the parking sensors, which seem to operate only in maximum-panic mode, erupting into long beeps when the nearest solid object is still a good metre away. The beeping also silences Radio 1, which in my book is simply unforgivable, although some older members of the **evo** team claim not to be able to tell the difference.

The next issue concerns the tyre pressure warning system. A puncture alert is not what you want to see when you're on the M6 after a long day shooting and are still two hours from home, but recently I have had to pull over in just such circumstances on two separate occasions, each time for a different

wheel. The pressures appear fine when checked, so I'm not sure what's causing the false alarms. I've now reset the monitoring system, so let's hope that cures it.

My final qualm concerns the infotainment unit, which has been driving me crazy throughout my time in the Octavia. Yes, it has the excellent Apple CarPlay. And yes, it has great Bluetooth/hands-free. The reversing camera also works brilliantly, but why are modern built-in satnavs worse than a smartphone running Google Maps?

The Skoda's journey-time predictions seem to be around 30 minutes out on every long trip I make, while its software is not aware of many new roads. The display also runs with a slight delay, meaning you can quite easily miss your turning. But backtrack and take the turn you missed and the satnav decides to redirect you on a new route, even though you're back on the original one. It's driving me insane!

'All my photographic equipment was strapped safely down so I could really have some fun'

Date acquired	November 2016
Total mileage	10,955
Mileage this month	1422
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	31.1

Anyway, rant over. Now let me talk about how much fun I had driving in Snowdonia whilst shooting the GT86/MX-5 RF feature for this month's issue.

Getting off the motorway meant Eco mode got swapped for vRS mode, as long stretches of winding roads and great weather were in the offing. All photographic equipment was also strapped safely down so I could really have some fun.

I really do enjoy the way this car performs: 227bhp is ample and there's just enough grip from the Pirelli P Zeros. The brakes are also pretty fantastic. There's personality, too: at one point the car went light over a crest when the engine was on the verge of kissing the rev limiter and it made the exhaust pop like a rally car's. Perhaps it was just a malfunction of the 'fake' engine noise pumped through the cabin speakers, but god it sounded great. Unlike those parking sensors. ☒

Aston Parrott (@AstonParrott)

Ford Focus ST Estate

ST estates have proved a hit with numerous **evo** staff members, but one of us is struggling to see the appeal

A MONTH INTO FOCUS ST 'ownership' and I finally opened the boot. Thankfully, the Ark of the Covenant-style whirlwind of ghouls I was expecting never materialised, and unlike Indiana Jones's foe, my face remains unmelted. The luggage area is a bit manky, but that's to be expected given the car's previous use as a video-wagon. It's nothing a good vacuum won't sort.

Installing my carry-on case for a flight is hardly the most taxing use of the tradesman's entrance, but I've got to justify it being there somehow. The ST is having to work a lot harder to justify itself to me, however. Where my old Kia Proceed GT long-term was the equivalent of a kid who arrives at class early, completes all his homework but rarely pipes up in class discussions, the Focus is proving to be something of a class clown, twanging his ruler off the edge of a desk and refusing to tuck in his shirt.

I'm not sure what I was expecting from a car that struggles to put its power down in the dry, but on greasy winter roads rarely a moment goes by where the Ford's front wheels are rotating at the same speed as their counterparts astern. I like to think I'm not a total yob and I do have some degree of control over my right foot, but very little throttle

'Calling it tramlining would do a grave disservice to urban railed transport'

at all is needed to send the front axle into a tizz. The torque-steer is mighty, too, and when the car's not dragging me across the road under power, it's doing it at a cruise, since every crease, white line and ripple pulls the steering this way and that. Calling it 'tramlining' would do a grave disservice to urban railed transport; trams at least travel in a straight line.

The ST deigns to irritate me in other ways, too. First, there's the heated windscreen. It's among the world's greatest inventions on a frosty morning, but is a gnawing irritation whenever it's dark, which happens far more often. The tiny wires that supply the heat diffract the headlights of oncoming vehicles,



Date acquired	November 2016
Total mileage	11,990
Mileage this month	1368
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	31.4

making other traffic a mass of indistinct, distracting light.

Another 'convenience' feature, Ford's Easy Fuel system (designed to prevent the wrong type of fuel nozzle being inserted, or the syphoning hose of a petrol thief), has made filling up anything but easy. I've not yet discovered the atomically precise position the nozzle needs to adopt to not click off every three seconds, but when I do I'll spend significantly less of my life lingering at petrol stations with my fellow

fillers glaring at me as I curse the Ford's very existence.

I'm not too keen on the notchy, obstructive gearshift, either, which unlike the shift on our old Fiesta ST long-term has not improved significantly with age. The turning circle is also hopeless (what use is a quick steering ratio if the wheels don't turn very far?) and on cold mornings turning the steering wheel causes its trim to creak.

If the Focus ST was merely unruly, the inconvenience would be occasional, and in fairness to Ford's 247bhp, front-wheel-drive estate, I expect its behaviour, and at least some of its issues, will improve when the weather does. **x**

Antony Ingram (@evoAntony)

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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 - Pricy, 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... er, 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	+ Very fast, very effective, very... er, quality, with added five-pot character - A little too clinical	★★★★☆
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	-	+ A faster, feistier DS3 - 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	£18,344	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	295/2750	1362kg	202	5.7	-	154+	169	-	+ Great value upgrade - Steering still not as fearsome 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 - Pricy	★★★★☆
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, duff 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 Integrale	194 R	'88-'93	4/1995	207/5750	220/3500	1300kg	162	5.7	-	137	-	23.9	+ One of the finest cars ever built - Demands love, LHD only	★★★★☆
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 evol - 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 S alternative	★★★★☆
Mini John Cooper Works (R56)	184 R	'08-'14	4/1598	208/6000	206/2000	1160kg	182	7.2	16.7	148	165	39.8	+ A seriously rapid Mini - Occasionally just a little unruly	★★★★☆
Mini John Cooper Works GP (R56)	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 canvas to extract full potential	★★★★☆
Peugeot 208 GTI	184 R	£18,895	4/1598	197/5800	203/1700	1160kg	173	6.8	17.9	143	125	47.9	+ Agile chassis works well on tough roads - Could be more involving	★★★★☆
Peugeot 208 GTI by Peugeot Sport	225 R	£21,995	4/1598	205/5800	221/1750	1185kg	176	6.5	-	143	125	47.9	+ The most focused small hatch on sale - Nearly £4k more than a Fiesta ST Mountune	★★★★☆
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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SUPERMINIS & HOT HATCHES



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 hatches, 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 cash - Limited choice of colours
Renault Twingo GT	231 D	£13,755	3/898	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	233 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 F1 Team R26	195 R	'07-'09	4/1998	227/5500	229/3000	1345kg	171	6.2	16.0	147	-	-	★ The car the R26.R is based on - F1 Team stickers in dubious taste
Renaultsport Mégane R26.R	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	★ Serious pace and agility for Golf GTI money, now with an extra 10bhp - The Mk7 Golf R
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 could be a family car
Skoda Octavia vRS 230 (Mk3)	215 D	£26,350	4/1984	227/4700	258/1500	1345kg	171	6.7	-	155	142	45.6	★ Limited-slip diff makes for a sharper steer - It could handle more than the extra 10bhp
Skoda Octavia vRS TDI 4x4 (Mk3)	223 D	£27,590	4/1968	181/3500	206/1750	1475kg	125	7.6	-	142	129	57.7	★ Four-wheel drive tightens the vRS chassis - Diesel and DSG only
Skoda Octavia vRS (Mk2)	163 R	'05-'13	4/1998	197/5100	206/1700	1395kg	143	7.3	-	149	175	37.7	★ Drives like a GTI but costs much less - Green brake calipers?
Subaru Impreza STI 330S	124 R	'08-'10	4/2457	325/5400	347/3400	1505kg	219	4.4	-	155	-	-	★ A bit quicker than the 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 Nring/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 GTI (Mk7.5)	233 D	£27,865	4/1984	227/4700	258/1500	1289kg	179	6.4	-	155	145	44.8	★ Still the most capable all-round hot hatch - Should be more thrilling
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 soundtrack - 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
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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Unwrapped

New Porsche 911 GT3 RS



Unwrapped

Alpine A110



Head-to-head

Mégane Trophy v Golf R



Leaderboard

McLaren 570S

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Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio. At last, an Alfa Romeo we can love not just for its badge, for the noise it makes and for being Italian, but because it's a great car. In fact, the Giulia Quadrifoglio is a saloon car that feels like a sports car – and thankfully that sports car isn't a 4C.



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	229R	£59,000	6/2991	503/6500	443/2500	1524kg	335	3.9	-	191	198	40.3	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Alpina D3 Biturbo (F30)	192D	£47,950	6/2993	345/4000	516/1500	1585kg	221	4.6	-	173	139	53.3	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Alpina B3 Biturbo (F30)	188D	£57,450	6/2979	404/5500	442/3000	1630kg	252	4.3	-	190	177	37.2	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Aston Martin Rapide S	201D	£147,950	12/5935	552/6650	465/5500	1990kg	282	4.2	-	203	300	21.9	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Aston Martin Rapide	141R	'10-'13	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1990kg	240	5.2	-	188	355	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Audi S3 Saloon	192D	£32,330	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1430kg	210	5.3	-	155	162	26.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Audi S4 (B9)	225D	£44,000	6/2995	349/5400	369/1370	1630kg	218	4.7	-	155	166	38.7	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Audi S4 (B8)	166D	'08-'16	6/2995	328/5500	324/2900	1705kg	195	4.9	-	155	190	34.9	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Audi RS4 Avant (B8)	216R	'12-'15	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1795kg	251	4.5	10.5	174	249	26.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Audi RS4 (B7)	231R	'05-'08	8/4163	414/7800	317/5500	1650kg	255	4.5	10.9	155	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Audi RS4 (B5)	192R	'00-'02	6/2671	375/6100	325/2500	1620kg	236	4.8	12.1	170	-	17.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Audi RS2	214R	'94-'95	5/2226	315/6500	302/3000	1595kg	201	4.8	13.1	162	-	18.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
★ Audi S5 Sportback	233D	£47,000	6/2995	349/5400	369/1370	1660kg	214	4.7	-	155	166	38.7	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Audi S6	091D	'06-'11	10/5204	429/6800	398/3000	1910kg	228	5.2	-	155	299	22.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Audi RS6 Avant (C7)	203R	£79,505	8/3993	552/5700	516/1750	1935kg	290	3.6	8.2	155	223	29.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Audi RS6 Avant Performance (C7)	224D	£86,420	8/3993	597/6100	553/2500	1950kg	311	3.7	-	155	223	29.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Audi RS6 Avant (C6)	116R	'08-'10	10/4991	572/6250	479/1500	2025kg	287	4.3	9.7	155	333	20.2	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Audi RS6 Avant (C5)	052R	'02-'04	8/4172	444/5700	413/1950	1865kg	242	4.8	11.6	155	-	19.3	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Audi RS7 Sportback	208R	£84,485	8/3993	552/5700	516/1750	1920kg	292	3.9	-	155	229	28.8	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Audi S7 Sportback	171D	£64,380	8/3993	414/5000	406/1400	1945kg	216	4.6	-	155	225	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Audi S8 Plus	217D	£98,395	8/3993	597/6100	553/2500	1990kg	305	3.8	-	155	229	28.2	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Audi RS Q3	206D	£46,120	5/2480	315/5300	332/1600	1655kg	206	4.8	-	155	203	32.1	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Bentley Flying Spur V8	200D	£132,800	8/3993	500/6000	487/1700	2342kg	217	4.9	-	183	254	25.9	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Bentley Flying Spur V8 S	230D	£142,800	8/3993	521/6000	502/1700	2342kg	226	4.6	-	190	254	25.9	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Bentley Flying Spur	185D	£154,900	12/5998	616/6000	590/1600	2400kg	261	4.3	-	200	343	19.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Bentley Bentayga	217D	£162,700	12/5950	600/5000	664/1350	2365kg	258	4.0	-	187	296	21.6	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Bentley Mulsanne	178F	£229,360	8/6752	505/4200	752/1750	2610kg	197	5.1	-	184	342	19.3	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Bentley Mulsanne Speed	223F	£252,000	8/6752	530/4200	811/1750	2610kg	206	4.8	-	190	342	19.3	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BMW 330d M Sport (F30)	180D	£37,800	6/2993	254/4000	413/2000	1540kg	168	5.6	-	155	129	57.6	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BMW 340i M Sport Touring (F31)	228D	£41,635	6/2998	321/5500	332/1380	1615kg	202	5.1	-	155	158	41.5	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BMW 435i Gran Coupe	203D	£41,865	6/2979	302/5800	295/1200	1585kg	194	5.5	-	155	174	34.9	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BMW M3 (F80)	211R	£56,605	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1520kg	284	4.1	8.6	155	204	32.1	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BMW M3 (E90)	123R	'08-'11	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1605kg	262	4.9	10.7	165	290	22.8	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BMW M3 CRT (E90)	179R	'11-'12	8/4361	444/8300	324/3750	1580kg	285	4.4	-	180	295	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BMW M5 (F10M)	208R	'11-'16	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1870kg	300	4.3	-	155	232	28.5	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BMW M5 (E60)	129R	'04-'10	10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1755kg	289	4.7	10.4	155	-	19.6	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BMW M5 (E39)	110R	'99-'03	8/4941	394/6600	369/3800	1795kg	223	4.9	11.5	155	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BMW M5 (E34)	110R	'92-'96	6/3795	340/6900	295/4750	1653kg	209	5.9	13.6	155	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BMW M6 Gran Coupe	190D	£95,665	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1875kg	299	4.2	-	155	232	28.5	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
★ BMW M760Li xDrive	233D	£132,310	12/6592	602/5500	590/1550	2180kg	281	3.7	-	155	294	22.1	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BMW X5 M50d	191D	£65,240	6/2993	376/4000	546/2000	2190kg	155	5.3	-	155	173	42.8	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BMW X6 M	212D	£93,100	8/4395	567/6000	553/2200	2265kg	245	4.2	-	155	258	25.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BMW X6 M	134D	'09-'15	8/4395	547/6000	502/1500	2305kg	241	4.7	-	171	325	20.3	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Brabus Bullit	119R	£330,000	12/6233	720/5100	811/2100	1850kg	395	3.8	-	217	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Cadillac CTS-V	148R	£67,030	8/6162	556/6100	551/3800	1928kg	293	3.9	-	191	365	18.1	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Cadillac CT6	226D	£69,990	6/2997	411/5700	409/2500	1950kg	214	5.7	-	149	223	28.2	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Honda Accord Type R	012R	'98-'03	4/2157	209/7200	158/8700	1306kg	163	6.1	17.4	142	-	29.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Infiniti Q50S Hybrid	195D	£39,995	6/3498	359/6800	402/5000	1750kg	208	5.1	-	155	144	45.6	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Jaguar XE 2.0d AWD	227D	£33,825	4/1999	178/4000	317/1750	1615kg	112	7.5	-	140	123	60.6	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Jaguar XE S	213D	£44,865	6/2995	335/6500	332/4500	1635kg	208	4.9	-	155	194	34.9	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Jaguar XF S	214D	£49,945	6/2995	375/6500	332/4500	1710kg	223	5.0	-	155	198	34.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Jaguar XF S Diesel	219D	£49,945	6/2993	296/4000	516/2000	1750kg	172	5.8	-	155	144	51.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Jaguar XFR	181D	'09-'15	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1800kg	284	4.8	10.2	155	270	24.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Jaguar XFR-S	208R	'13-'15	8/5000	542/6500	501/2500	1800kg	306	4.4	-	186	270	24.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Jaguar XJ3.0 V6 Diesel	148D	£58,690	6/2993	271/4000	442/2000	1835kg	150	6.0	-	155	167	46.3	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Jaguar XJ	191D	£91,755	8/5000	542/6500	502/2500	1875kg	294	4.4	-	174	270	24.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Jaguar F-Pace 3.0 V6 Supercharged	222D	£65,275	6/2995	375/6500	332/4500	1884kg	202	5.1	-	155	209	57.7	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Land Rover Discovery Sport	205D	£32,395	4/2179	187/3500	101/1750	1863kg	100	9.8	-	117	159	46.3	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lexus GS F	221D	£69,995	8/4969	470/7100	391/4800	1790kg	267	4.6	-	168	260	25.2	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lexus IS F	151R	'07-'12	8/4969	417/6600	372/5200	1714kg	247	4.7	10.9	173	270	24.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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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 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	£52,615	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	£63,760	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	£80,115	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	£110,405	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	£54,335	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	£42,270	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	£44,595	4/1991	355/6000	332/2250	1510kg	239	4.8	-	155	175	37.7	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + An aggressive and focused sports crossover - Low on driver interaction
Mercedes-AMG C43 4Matic Estate	228 D	£45,250	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	£59,800	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	£61,260	8/3982	469/5500	479/1750	1710kg	279	4.2	-	155	196	33.6	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Much more fun than it looks - Gearbox dim-witted at low speeds
Mercedes-AMG C63 S	211 R	£66,545	8/3982	503/5500	516/1750	1655kg	309	4.0	-	155	192	34.5	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Tremendous twin-turbo V8 power - Not quite as focused as an M division car
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG	151 R	'07-'14	8/6208	451/6800	442/5000	1655kg	277	4.4	9.7	160	280	23.5	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Monstrous pace and extremely engaging - Same-era M3 is just a little better...
Mercedes-Benz C55 AMG	088 R	'04-'08	8/5439	367/5250	376/4000	1635kg	228	5.2	-	155	-	23.7	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Furiously fast, commendably discreet - Overshadowed by M3 and RS4
Mercedes-AMG E63 S 4Matic+ (W213)	231 R	£85,000	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	465/5200	1765kg	298	4.5	-	155	295	22.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Indulgent chassis, brilliant engine, now with an extra 11bhp - Steering still vague
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W211)	096 D	'06-'09	8/6208	507/6800	465/5200	1765kg	292	4.5	-	155	-	19.8	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Brilliant engine, indulgent chassis - Vague steering, speed limits
Mercedes-Benz E55 AMG	052 R	'03-'06	8/5439	476/6100	516/2650	1760kg	271	4.8	10.2	155	-	21.9	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + M5-humbling grunt, cossetting ride - Speed limits
Mercedes-Benz S63 AMG L	191 D	£119,835	8/5461	577/5500	664/2250	1995kg	294	4.4	-	155	237	27.9	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Monster pace - Average steering feel
Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG S	199 D	£86,500	8/5461	577/5500	590/1750	1795kg	327	4.1	-	155	231	28.5	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Remains quick and characterful - Dated gearbox, no four-wheel drive option in the UK
Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG	178 R	'11-'14	8/5461	518/5250	516/1700	1795kg	293	4.2	-	155	231	28.5	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Monster performance, 549bhp an option - Not as desirable as a Bentley or Aston
Mercedes-Benz SLS63 AMG	099 R	'06-'11	8/6208	507/6100	464/2650	1905kg	270	4.5	-	155	345	19.5	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Beauty, comfort, awesome performance - M5 has the edge on B-roads
Mercedes-Benz GLE63 AMG S	218 D	£94,405	8/5461	577/5500	560/1750	2270kg	258	4.2	-	155	276	23.9	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Stonking pace, extreme refinement - Feels remote
Mercedes-Benz GLE63 AMG S Coupe	213 D	£96,555	8/5461	577/5500	560/1750	2275kg	258	4.2	-	155	278	23.7	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Subtler than an X6 M - More force than finesse
Mercedes-Benz G63 AMG	176 R	£87,005	8/5461	518/5250	516/1750	2270kg	232	4.7	-	155	276	23.9	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Great engine, surprisingly good dynamics - £85K buys a Boxster and an ML350...
Mercedes-Benz G63 AMG	172 D	£124,000	8/5461	537/5500	560/2000	2475kg	220	5.4	-	130	322	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + It exists; epic soundtrack - Ancient chassis, silly price
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-300 SST	118 R	'08-'13	4/1998	290/6500	300/3500	1590kg	185	5.2	13.9	155	256	26.2	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Evo gets twin-clutch transmission - Not as exciting as it used to be
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-360	122 D	'08-'13	4/1998	354/6500	363/3500	1560kg	231	4.1	-	155	328	19.9	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Ridiculously rapid new Evo - A five-speed gearbox?!
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-330 SST	134 R	'08-'12	4/1998	324/6500	322/3500	1590kg	207	4.4	-	155	256	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Great engine and gearbox combo - It still lives in the shadow of the Evo IX
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-400	181 R	'09-'10	4/1998	403/6500	387/3500	1560kg	262	3.8	-	155	328	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Most powerful factory Evo 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	275/2750	1365kg	205	4.6	-	150	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Our favourite Evo - Subtle it is not
Porsche Panamera	227 D	£113,975	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 Turbo	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 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	£43,648	6/2997	335/5500	339/1450	1865kg	183	5.4	-	157	204	31.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + No less compelling than the Turbo - Although lacks its ultimate speed and agility
Porsche Macan GTS	217 D	£55,188	6/2997	355/6000	369/1650	1895kg	190	5.2	-	159	212	30.7	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Handles like an SUV shouldn't - Still looks like an SUV
Porsche Macan Turbo	207 D	£59,648	6/3604	394/6000	406/1350	1925kg	208	4.5	11.1	165	208	30.7	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Doesn't feel like an SUV - Not a match for a proper sports saloon
Porsche Cayenne GTS (Mk2, V6)	211 D	£72,523	6/3604	434/6000	442/1600	2110kg	209	5.2	-	163	228	28.3	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + The driver's Cayenne... - ...but why would a driver want an SUV?
Porsche Cayenne GTS (Mk2, V8)	173 D	'12-'15	8/4806	414/6500	380/3500	2085kg	202	5.6	-	162	251	26.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Dynamically the best SUV of its era - At two tons, it's still no sports car
Porsche Cayenne Turbo (Mk2)	212 D	£93,574	8/4806	513/6000	533/2250	2185kg	239	4.5	-	173	261	25.2	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Remarkable performance, handling, completeness - Vague steering, dated engine
Porsche Cayenne Turbo S (Mk2)	184 D	£118,455	8/4806	562/6000	590/2500	2235kg	255	4.1	-	176	267	24.6	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + More power and torque than a Zonda S7.3 - In an SUV
Range Rover Evoque Coupe Si4	160 D	£46,660	4/1999	237/6000	251/1900	1670kg	144	7.0	-	135	199	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Striking looks, sporting dynamics - Hefty price, and petrol version is auto-only
Range Rover Sport SDV8	222 FF	£84,350	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	£84,350	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	£95,150	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	£80,850	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	£216,864	12/6592	563/5250	575/1500	2360kg	242	4.7	-	155	317	20.8	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + It's quicker than you think - It's more enjoyable driven slowly
Rolls-Royce Phantom	054 R	£310,200	12/6749	453/5350	531/3500	2560kg	180	5.7	-	149	377	18.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Rolls reinvented for the 21st Century - The roads are barely big enough
Subaru WRX STI	201 R	£28,995	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	148	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + A Subaru with real edge - Bit too edgy in the wet
Subaru Impreza Turbo	011 R	'98-'00	4/1994	215/5600	214/4000	1235kg	177	5.4	14.6	144	-	27.2	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Destined for classic status - Thirsty
Subaru Impreza P1	200 R	'00-'01	4/1994	276/6500	260/4000	1283kg	219	4.9	13.3	150	-	25.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + One of our favourite Imprezas - Doesn't come cheap
Subaru Impreza RB5 (PPP)	187 R	'99	4/1994	237/6000	258/3500	1235kg	195	5.0	14.1	143	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Perfect blend of poise and power - Limited numbers
Subaru Impreza 22B	188 R	'98-'99	4/2212	276/6000	265/3200	1270kg	220	5.0	13.1	150	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + The ultimate Impreza - Prices reflect this
Tesla Model S P85D	208 D	£79,080	515kW	691	687	2239kg	314	3.2	-	155	0	n/a	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Dual motors and 4WD equals extraordinary acceleration - Lack of charging points
Tesla Model S Performance	196 R	'14	310kW	416	442	2100kg	201	4.2	-	130	0	n/a	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Intoxicating performance, soothing refinement - Generic styling, charging limitations
Vauxhall Insignia VXR SuperSport	189 D	£29,824	6/2792	321/5250	321/5250	1825kg	179	5.6	-	170	249	26.6	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + A 170mph Vauxhall - Should be a more engaging steer
Vauxhall Vectra VXR	102 D	'06-'09	6/2792	276/5500	262/1800	1580kg	177	6.1	-	161	-	27.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Great engine, effortless pace, good value - Numb steering, lumpy ride
Vauxhall VXR8 GTS	215 D	£54,499	8/6162	576/6150	545/3850	1834kg	319	4.2	-	155	363	18.5	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ + Monster engine; engaging driving experience - Woeful interior
Volvo V60 Polestar	222 D	£49,665	4/1969	362/6000	347/3								

W6 AAR	£595	K800 AUD	£595	R24 CAB	£595
E9 ABA	£495	9716 AW	£2400	P29 CAB	£595
R26 ABB	£495	J7 AWA	£695	R121 CAB	£495
V2 ABB	£895	Y9 AWM	£495	FII CAD	£595
W70 ABC	£495	I56 AXA	£895	J32 CAD	£595
T4 ABD	£495	S86 AYD	£995	C555 CAD	£495
ABE 2S	£1300	800 BA	£3200	DII CAF	£695
P28 ABS	£895	R29 BAD	£595	P24 CAH	£495
R29 ABY	£595	R121 BAD	£495	CAM I2A	£2300
P28 ACH	£495	W9 BAG	£495	PI23 CAM	£795
ACH I54	£1900	Y9 BAH	£595	X14 CAN	£495
R25 ACK	£495	R23 BAK	£495	S19 CAN	£595
PI21 ACK	£595	R23 BAL	£495	G97 CAR	£495
A12 ACR	£595	BAL 55E	£1200	CAR I2IS	£795
P31 ACS	£495	R21 BAM	£595	P29 CAS	£895
P10 ACT	£595	P28 BAM	£495	P26 CAT	£595
R44 ACT	£495	R555 BAM	£495	D9 CAV	£595
6501 AD	£2200	P23 BAR	£495	N900 CAV	£495
K6 ADA	£695	R25 BAR	£595	M16 CAW	£595
R27 ADD	£495	R21 BAS	£495	T900 CAW	£495
P21 ADE	£795	C20 BAT	£695	G4Z 890I	£595
R25 ADE	£695	R21 BAX	£595	G7 CDB	£595
B7 ADF	£595	G15 BAY	£595	CDJ 757	£1200
P24 ADM	£595	P26 BAY	£495	J8 CDM	£795
O055 ADM	£495	BAZ 494	£895	TI CDP	£595
R23 ADS	£495	BAZ 356I	£595	G4 CDW	£695
R25 ADY	£595	A5 BBA	£1300	P27 CEC	£495
P31 ADY	£495	I95 BBP	£795	AC52 CES	£495
400 AE	£3900	J12 BBY	£695	N333 CFC	£595
W3 AER	£595	P29 BBY	£495	Y400 CFC	£495
T65 AFG	£595	K6 BCR	£495	S24 CFJ	£795
R29 AGE	£495	B0C 29	£795	Y9 CGB	£495
R9 AGM	£595	BEA 2L	£2100	L8 CGB	£695
E7 AGP	£495	S87 BEA	£895	R91 CHD	£795
J9 AGR	£695	R24 BED	£595	CHE 8M	£595
L1 AHN	£695	P28 BED	£495	W10 CHR	£595
X121 AJB	£695	P23 BEE	£495	P23 CHR	£495
P321 AJB	£595	M4 BEK	£1400	P5 CHS	£795
W24 AJF	£495	R25 BEK	£495	C10 383	£695
P26 AJG	£495	P28 BEK	£595	P400 CJB	£595
R29 AJH	£595	BEK 5K	£1400	R121 CJH	£495
P29 AJJ	£595	P19 BEL	£695	PI23 CJS	£695
H111 AJH	£1600	R26 BEL	£495	P26 CJW	£495
R121 AJH	£495	P27 BEN	£1300	P45 CKE	£595
R31 AJL	£495	R29 BER	£495	P24 CLB	£695
P321 AJM	£595	R2 BEB	£795	M33 CLK	£495
PI23 AJM	£695	R31 BES	£495	683 CLN	£1200
R600 AJP	£595	BES 615	£595	N5 CLS	£895
Y6 AJR	£595	CHI BET	£595	1995 CM	£2500
S400 AJS	£695	R26 BET	£495	P27 CMB	£495
T004 AJW	£495	P3 BEV	£1700	L1 CMC	£595
P21 AKE	£495	D13 BEV	£1200	L3 CMR	£695
G9 AKH	£595	R27 BEV	£595	293 CNK	£495
J44 AKY	£1900	T11 BEV	£595	P23 COB	£595
P21 ALB	£595	B878 BEV	£595	R27 COB	£595
V9 ALD	£695	P23 BEZ	£795	K70 COB	£695
P25 ALE	£495	BEZ 38	£695	R23 DJH	£695
V29 ALF	£695	BEZ 838	£495	B2 DJJ	£595
R27 ALL	£495	BF 5870	£995	S44 DJM	£595
R29 ALP	£495	943 BGT	£495	P700 DJM	£595
P26 ALS	£595	BH2 24	£795	R29 DJP	£695
ALW I11Y	£1100	BIL 6908	£695	W111 DJP	£595
P23 ALX	£595	F4 BJB	£595	R321 DJP	£495
L500 ALX	£595	P23 BJS	£495	R26 DJR	£595
P24 ALY	£595	333 BJS	£495	P321 DJR	£495
N25 AMB	£795	B1J 27	£895	P24 DJS	£595
J333 AMB	£695	67 BL	£4400	PI21 DJS	£495
P24 AMC	£695	442 BLG	£595	AC05 COX	£495
W5 AMF	£595	R77 BME	£995	CJ53 COX	£495
DI AMI	£2100	66 BMH	£495	C15 CPS	£495
W31 AMM	£495	P19 BMW	£895	213 CPW	£1400
R23 AMP	£495	B26 BMW	£795	R27 CRA	£495
P25 AMP	£595	BMW 695V	£595	W9 CRH	£595
P28 AMP	£495	P24 BOB	£1300	T9 CRJ	£695
P21 AMS	£695	K100 BOB	£1100	R25 CRS	£695
P21 ANA	£595	R24 BOB	£495	G9 DMJ	£595
R23 AND	£495	612 BON	£1300	140 DMR	£495
P31 AND	£595	P23 BOO	£595	P4 DOB	£595
AF06 ANG	£495	PI21 BOO	£495	C18 DOB	£495
P24 ANG	£595	T88 BOT	£595	403 CRV	£595
W6 ANH	£695	H3 BOW	£695	G5 CRW	£595
AJ09 ANN	£595	R31 BOW	£495	M2 CRY	£495
R26 ANN	£595	W18 BOB	£595	I54 CS	£4300
M29 ANO	£495	P23 BOX	£895	BI CSD	£695
P29 ANS	£495	M66 BOX	£795	V9 CSD	£495
W9 APL	£595	R26 BOY	£495	CSU 618	£595
TP AS	£1100	S3 BRH	£495	N3 CTB	£595
ES APW	£595	P21 BRO	£595	S40 CUT	£495
E13 ARB	£695	S555 BRO	£495	L9 CWS	£595
P28 ARB	£595	R25 BRY	£595	994 DOT	£1400
R29 ARB	£495	V88 BRY	£895	299 DA	£3300
B14 ARC	£595	R123 BRY	£795	9718 DA	£1500
R121 ARC	£495	673 BRY	£1900	R25 DAB	£495
R25 ARD	£495	BR2 840	£495	R24 DAD	£495
R23 ARK	£495	BS 8072	£1600	K7 DAF	£695
P28 ARL	£495	Y9 BSC	£495	J88 DAH	£495
P29 ARM	£495	Y7 BSH	£495	G9 DRJ	£495
R29 ARM	£495	BSK I53	£895	T20 DAL	£495
D6 ART	£1200	A3 BSM	£495	R26 DAL	£495
P21 ART	£695	573 BSM	£1600	M70 DAL	£4100
W28 ART	£495	H9 BSR	£495	P002 DAN	£1300
A55 ART	£795	I7 BU	£4900	P321 DAN	£895
E14 ARY	£1500	M44 BUD	£595	E328 DAN	£595
R24 ASA	£495	E90 BUD	£495	K11 DAR	£595
S31 ASA	£595	C8 BUG	£595	P25 DAR	£695
MU11 ASH	£495	C20 BUG	£695	P321 DAR	£595
P31 ASH	£1300	K800 BUG	£495	R23 DAS	£495
J505 ASH	£795	I27 BUL	£1200	B888 DAS	£595
B600 ASH	£895	R23 BUN	£495	B35 DAV	£795
A7 ASK	£695	P24 BUR	£495	D89 DAV	£595
D18 ASP	£495	853 BUR	£1300	A18 DAY	£1300
K5 ATB	£595	R23 BUT	£495	DAY 76N	£1400
C20 ATM	£495	A4 BUX	£895	F2 DBM	£695
A19 ATP	£495	BXG 862	£695	W9 DCG	£495
R28 ATT	£495	2192 BY	£1400	W9 DCL	£595
X13 AUD	£695	I984 C	£3900	W9 DCP	£495
F14 AUD	£895	I985 CA	£2900	W6 DCR	£595

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P26 DEB	£1400	V28 EDD	£595	594 FOH	£595	80 HJX	£895	R27 JOS	£595	LW 110	£695	E12 MJF	£595
P23 DEE	£595	V333 EDD	£495	R25 FOS	£495	37 HN	£3600	G18 JOY	£895	4491 LJ	£795	PI21 MJH	£595
P4 DEK	£695	Y9 EDG	£495	G25 FOX	£1200	23 HO	£4900	E3 JPD	£695	P21 LJS	£595	R27 MJM	£695
P26 DEL	£595	T51 EDG	£695	R29 FRA	£495	R27 HOG	£695	M8 JPG	£695	83 LK	£4900	MUM 300X	£595
J6 EDP	£1600	J6 EDP	£495	J40 FRA	£595	K4 HOP	£795	E8 JRC	£795	J1 LMB	£895	R24 MJP	£595
G321 DEL	£495	W9 EDW	£495	FRE 545	£895	R27 HOP	£595	Y900 JRS	£595	54 LN	£4900	R69 MJW	£695
R24 DEM	£595	Y111 EDY	£495	FRY 70Y	£695	F6 HGT	£795	C3 JSC	£695	Y6 LOC	£595	S333 MJW	£595
P24 DEN	£1300	Y6 EEE	£495	L99 FRY	£595	R23 HOW	£595	N3 JSF	£595	V28 LOL	£595	P21 MMC	£695
S222 DEN	£695	U6 EFC	£495	2378 FS	£1800	HS 1836	£2200	JSJ 6W	£595	470 LLO	£595	R31 MMC	£595
P900 DEN	£595	A99 EFC	£595	T70 FUN	£595	151 HTA	£1300	W9 JSN	£595	R21 LOR	£795	L8 MMS	£2100
R28 DER	£495	87 EG	£4500	FW 804I	£1600	I6 HUG	£4900	J3 JTH	£695	R10 LOT	£595	G30 MOF	£695
Y31 DER	£595	R31 EGG	£495	44 FXJ	£695	W4 HUG	£595	G7 JTW	£695	G11 LOT	£695	R23 MOG	£695
S48 DER	£1300	200 EJ	£3900	55 FY	£2900	I21 HW	£3300	364 JXV	£495	R31 LOU	£1200	X200 MOG	£595
D006 DES	£495	EJB 8V	£695	384 FYC	£895	444 HXY	£595	E6 JWB	£695	880 LPJ	£695	R24 MOL	£695
K9 DES	£995	286 EJV	£595	R28 GAL	£595	IDZ 85	£595	S55 JXY	£695	LPS 8	£2800	F27 MOL	£595
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S16 DES	£1400	T8 EKS	£695	A14 GAM	£595	IXI 224	£495	E9 KAB	£595	831 LS	£3800	P27 MOR	£595
P23 DEV	£595	6977 EL	£995	GAS 319	£1800	T27 JAB	£595	T6 KAD	£595	S1 LTR	£595	R23 MOS	£595
J400 DEV	£495	P31 ELE	£495	W31 GAV	£795	T30 JAC	£1400	H2 KAP	£695	LTR IF	£595	W5 MPG	£595
DEW I2F	£895	ELE 81D	£595	T555 GAV	£595	E999 JAC	£1200	W10 KAR	£695	R24 LUC	£595	N4 MPR	£695
R27 DEX	£495	R17 ELL	£495	Y9 GBR	£595	T10 JAD	£595	K444 KAR	£595	P55 LUC	£695	MR 6646	£2500
DEZ 250	£695	P25 ELL	£595	X1 GCG	£795	K8 JAF	£695	R26 KAS	£595	N5 LUK	£695	V123 MRK	£695
DEZ 818I	£495	R21 ELS	£595	333 CGC	£1200	T55 JAG	£1100	P25 KAT	£695	P29 LUK	£595	N8 MSA	£595
3468 DG	£1300	PI21 ELS	£495	901 GCR	£795	JAH I2D	£895	U4 KAY	£595	555 LXE	£595	Y1 MSR	£995
N6 DGB	£695	G333 ELS	£695	GCW 2W	£595	O057 JAK	£595	P23 KAY	£895	411 LY	£6500	N6 MST	£595
V4 DGW	£695	R24 ELY	£695	1964 GD	£2900	S222 JAK	£895	KAC 848	£895	S55 LYF	£595	T7 MTC	£695
V53 DJB	£795	P28 ELJ	£495	GDN 490	£895	P26 JAM	£695	KAC 6694	£595	LYN 21M	£2500	MTR 33D	£795
L700 DJB	£695	EL2 2595	£495	R321 GEE	£595	E72 JAN	£1300	KZ 6804	£2900	P29 LYN	£1200	36 MU	£4900
T90 DJC	£695	P25 EMA	£895	M2 GEF	£1600	78 JAN	£4900	I03 KDT	£1200	31 LYN	£4900	7426 MU	£1200
P321 DJC	£595	P25 EMM	£595	P27 GEM	£895	E549 JAN	£695	S9 KE	£3600	PI23 LYN	£595	P21 MUL	£795
R21 DJG	£595	G100 J1Y	£595	GEM 311Y	£595	M700 JAN	£1100	P21 KEL	£895	I972 M	£4900	G400 MUM	£695
PI23 DJG	£495	B5 GEN	£895	B5 GEN	£895	G9 JAP	£795	X10 KEN	£1600	P26 MAC	£1200	X40 MUM	£795
R23 DJH	£695	S999 GEN	£595	S999 GEN	£595	D9 JAR	£1100	K22 22P	£1600	P23 MAD	£795	S99 MUM	£595
B2 DJJ	£595	GEO IR	£2500	GEO IR	£2500	M70 JAR	£595	X40 KEN	£595	P24 MAD	£895	R7 MUR	£895
S44 DJM	£595	E0 8769	£895	P23 GEO	£595	P24 JAS	£595	86 KEN	£3300	W27 MAD	£695	B13 MUR	£695
P700 DJM	£595	222 EOD	£895	R28 GEO	£695	R121 JAS	£895	N222 KEN	£795	R700 MAD	£595	W29 MUR	£595
R29 DJP	£695	86 EP	£4100	P25 GER	£595	W9 JAW	£595	R23 KER	£695	R6 MAF	£695	8539 MX	£795
W111 DJP	£595	479 EPB	£695	GER 148	£1700	D11 JAW	£695	R21 KES	£795	K3 MAG	£1400	7002 MY	£1100
R321 DJP	£495	92 ER	£4800	C8 GES	£695	V11 JAX	£695	S19 KEV	£1200	W77 MAG	£595	222 MYX	£695
R26 DJR	£595	Y9 ERC	£595	GF 146	£3500	P321 JAX	£595	KEV 82N	£2400	T666 MAG	£595	1851 MZ	£595
P321 DJR	£495	C1 ERH	£695	T1 GPH	£595	P25 JAY	£595	VIII KEV	£995	R26 MAK	£695	W2 NAH	£695
D21 DJS	£595	N4 ERL	£495	M8 GGS	£5500	H8 JBS	£695	KEZ 7363	£495	P26 MAK	£595	C15 NAR	£595
PI21 DJS	£495	N4 ERN	£795	G18 5847	£695	P24 JCB	£595	4692 KF	£1100	P31 MAK	£595	G7 NAR	£595
728 DKG	£895	T21 ERN	£495	G11 8659	£695	V2 JCD	£795	K18 7428	£495	M40 MAL	£1300	NAR 594	£995
I92 DKH	£495	P26 ERN	£495	400 GJ	£3900	D4 JCL	£695	S9 KN	£4900	I03 MAL	£2300	W25 NAT	£895
N4 DLC	£595	R5 ESP	£695	A9 GJP	£695	F6 JCM	£895	K1 KOS	£795	C777 MAL	£895	W444 NAT	£795
531 DLT	£895	ESS 8Y	£995	333 GK	£3500	K20 JCS	£695	KP 8655	£1400	P23 MAP	£595	89 ND	£4900
XI DMA	£1100	I7 ESS	£2400	424 GLY	£795	J2 JDK	£695	3898 KR	£1500	R151 MAR	£595	G10 NDY	£795
P29 DMC	£595	P28 ESS	£495	1990 GM	£2600	P24 JDM	£595	KRM 893	£1300	P23 MAS	£595	T70 NDY	£695
G9 DMJ	£595	N99 ESS	£795	N6 GMB	£695	P21 JED	£595	S48 RTW	£695	P28 MAT	£1200	53 NE	£3100
I40 DMR	£1400	R23 EST	£595	GN 4861	£1600	Y5 JEF	£1500	KUI 110	£495	PI21 MAT	£895	S71 NES	£795
P4 DOB	£595	J900 EST	£495	GNH 904	£695	Y7 JEF	£1200	694 KWL	£895	O139 MAT	£695	P9 NET	£1200
C18 DOB	£495	6036 ET	£1200	I79 GNM	£695	JEF 348N	£695	P23 KYM	£695	S14 MAW	£695	R33 NET	£795
D0C 83K	£895	P24 ETE	£695	K5 GOS	£595	R900 JEF	£595	R123 KYM	£595	R23 MAW	£595	74 NET	£4400
V321 DOK	£495	861 ETJ	£695	G11 GOW	£695	R7 JEL	£695	R26 LAB	£595	R26 MAX	£1300	R21 NEV	£595
351 DOL	£2200	9156 EV	£795	A7 GPH	£695	JEL 867	£1100	S10 LAC	£595	S29 MAX	£1500	P31 NEY	£895
N99 DOL	£495	P2 EVE	£1500	A6 GWP	£695	P24 JEM	£695	A20 LAD	£895	P31 MAX	£1400	NEZ 90	£895
N9 DON	£1700	R28 EVE	£895	1966 GR	£2500	R23 JEN	£1500	J97 LAD	£595	MAZ 646	£995	NJ 5555	£2700
W81 DON	£795	W70 EVE	£795	T33 GRA	£595	S200 JEN	£1300	W7 LAG	£595	MAC 3728	£495	P21 NKS	£595
X321 DON	£695	P333 EVE	£695	D3 GRW	£695	LI0 JER	£695	J9 LAP	£695	Y7 MBH	£695	49 NMT	£495
472 DON	£2900	R29 EVO	£795	GRZ 191	£495	R29 JER	£595	V50 LAU	£595	R24 MCC	£595	49 NN	£3900
M2 DOT	£595	T8 EVS	£895	GSY 294	£1300	P24 JES	£1100	B5 LAW	£1400	R23 MCC	£595	44 NNS	£2100
W50 DOT	£595	R23 EVS	£495	GTF 559	£995	BI66 JES	£695	G62 LAW	£695	P24 MCK	£595	P321 NNY	£595
994 DOT	£1400	R28 EVS	£695	788 GTV	£795	JES 735X	£695	V66 LAW	£795	R26 MCK	£595	A71 NOS	£595
Y1 DOW	£895	555 EYJ	£595	G37 GUY	£795	H4 JFC	£595	S80 LAW	£895	P23 MCL	£595	NOS 111A	£795
R24 DOW	£495	P24 FAB	£495	200 GXJ	£595	P2 JGB	£595	W9 LCM	£595	R21 MCM	£695	920 NPA	£695
A3 DPJ	£495	R23 FAT	£595	26 GY	£4900	W9 JGP	£595	849 LDE	£595	P23 MCM	£595	212 NPK	£695
A7 DPT	£495	X300 FAY	£495	GZ 7348	£695	D7 JGR	£595	P25 LEA	£695	MCR IR	£1700	222 NR	£3900
N14 DRB	£495	RI FCB	£495	8179 HA	£1200	776 JGW	£795	R3 LED	£595	R6 MDB	£795	V5 NBS	£695
J3 DRC	£695	95 FD	£3500	R25 HAS	£595	JH 5	£52000	R24 LEE	£1500	4010 ME	£1400	L7 NSH	£595



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 dufer in Lotus's Elise and Exige Roadster ranges, and the same goes for Caterham's evergreen Seven.

	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 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	£9-71	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	£8-72	4/1998	245/8200	155/5200	500kg	498	3.2	-	150	-	33.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ariel Atom 3 Supercharged	138 R	£9-72	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	457/5750	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	£5-15	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1815kg	263	4.6	-	190	368	18.2	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Aston Martin DBS Volante	133 D	£9-12	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	£8-14	4/1984	268/6000	258/2500	1455kg	187	5.6	-	155	189	34.9	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Audi TT RS Roadster	133 D	£9-14	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	481/7700	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	605/1700	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	204	5.2	-	155	219	30.1	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BMW Z4 3.0si (Mk1)	094 D	£6-09	6/2996	265/6600	232/2750	1310kg	205	5.7	-	155	-	32.9	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BMW Z4 M Roadster	091 R	£6-09	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1410kg	244	4.8	-	155	-	23.3	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BMW M Roadster	002 R	£8-02	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	£10-03	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	560kg	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	£7-14	4/1596	125/6100	120/5350	539kg	235	5.9	-	112	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Caterham Seven Supersport	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	£9-12	4/1999	175/7000	139/6000	515kg	345	4.5	-	140	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Caterham Seven Superlight R500	123 R	£8-14	4/1999	263/8500	177/7200	506kg	528	2.9	-	150	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Caterham Levante	131 R	£9-10	8/2398	550/10000	300/8500	520kg	1074	4.8	8.2	150	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Caterham Seven R300	068 R	£10-06	4/1796	160/7000	130/5000	500kg	325	4.7	-	130	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Caterham Seven R500	200 R	£9-06	4/1796	230/8600	155/7200	460kg	510	3.6	8.8	146	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ferrari California T	229 D	£155,254	8/3855	553/7500	557/4750	1729kg	324	3.6	-	196	250	26.9	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ferrari California	171 D	£8-14	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	£9-09	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	£75	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	£9-14	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	£8-12	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	★ ★ ★ ★ ★



VOLKSWAGEN GOLF R32

The Mk4 R32, with its 237bhp 3.2-litre V6 and four-wheel drive, marked a long-overdue return to form for fast Golfs. John Simister tried it

'Has any compact hatchback ever been more powerful? I can't think of one, nor any more sonorous. Those two stainless tailpipes emit a crisp-edged, open-mouthed, creamed-together blare as the power flows, a fluff 'n' crackle as the throttle feathers. The engine revs with an insistent shove well

into the high six-thousands, yet it pulls with conviction and not a hint of a stumble right from its 600rpm idle. It shrugs off the Golf's mass like a hand brushing away a fly.

'A Golf hasn't cornered as keenly as this one for years. A Mk3 was flaccid, a Mk4 is usually

rubbery and approximate, but this R32 steers with direct, mechanical precision through its speeded-up rack. It's also very throttle-tunable in its trajectory, tucking in if you lift off, untucking with power back on.

'At last, a modern Golf with evoness. Why did it take so long?'

ISSUE 048, OCTOBER 2002

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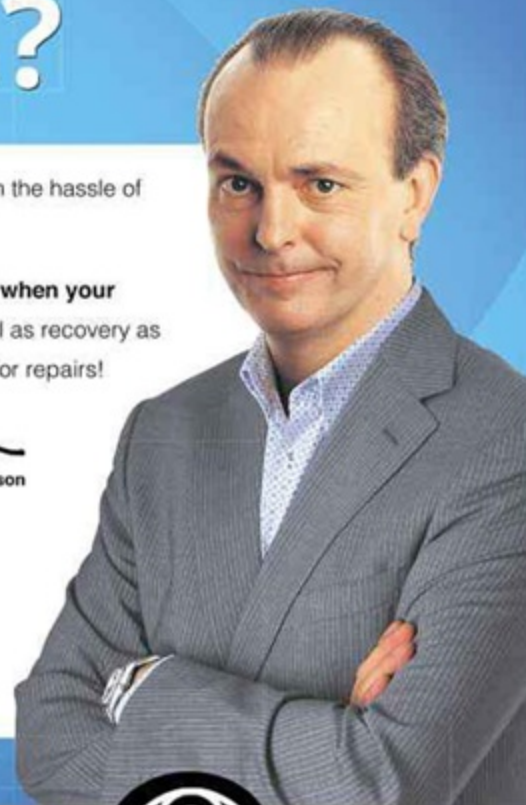


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	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	CO2 G/KM	EC MPG	EVO RATING
Lotus Elise 1.6 Club Racer	183 R	71-75	4/1598	134/6800	118/4400	852kg	160	6.0	-	127	149	45.0	★★★★★
Lotus Elise S Club Racer	189 D	73-75	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	905kg	244	4.2	-	145	175	37.5	★★★★★
Lotus Elise R	068 R	70-71	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	860kg	223	5.6	13.9	150	196	34.4	★★★★★
Lotus Elise SC	131 R	70-71	4/1794	218/8000	156/5000	870kg	254	4.5	11.4	148	199	33.2	★★★★★
Lotus Elise S1.8	104 R	70-71	4/1794	134/6200	127/4200	860kg	158	6.3	18.7	127	-	37.2	★★★★★
Lotus Elise 111S	049 R	70-71	4/1796	156/7000	129/4650	860kg	197	5.1	-	131	-	40.9	★★★★★
Lotus Elise Sport 135	040 D	70	4/1796	135/6200	129/4850	726kg	189	5.4	-	129	-	-	★★★★★
Lotus Elise Sport 190	044 R	70	4/1796	190/7800	128/5000	710kg	272	4.7	12.1	135	-	-	★★★★★
Lotus Elise (S1)	126 R	76-77	4/1796	118/5500	122/3000	731kg	164	6.1	18.5	126	-	39.4	★★★★★
Lotus Exige Sport 350 Roadster	221 R	£55,900	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1125kg	312	3.7	-	145	235	28.0	★★★★★
Lotus Exige Sport 380 Roadster	231 R	£67,900	6/3456	375/6700	302/5000	1110kg	343	3.5	-	178	242	27.2	★★★★★
Lotus Exige S Roadster	186 R	73-75	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1166kg	301	3.8	-	145	235	28.0	★★★★★
Lotus 3-Eleven	220 R	£82,500	6/3456	410/7000	302/3000	925kg	450	3.3	-	174	-	-	★★★★★
Lotus 2-Eleven	126 R	70-71	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	720kg	267	4.3	-	140	-	-	★★★★★
Lotus 2-Eleven Supercharged	123 R	70-71	4/1796	252/8000	179/7000	670kg	382	3.8	-	150	-	-	★★★★★
Lotus GT4	138 R	70-71	4/1796	266/8200	179/7200	670kg	403	3.7	-	155	-	-	★★★★★
Lotus 340R	126 R	70	4/1796	190/7800	146/5000	658kg	293	4.5	12.5	126	-	-	★★★★★
Lotus Elan SE	095 R	79-95	4/1588	165/6600	148/4200	1022kg	164	6.7	-	137	-	21.0	★★★★★
Maserati GranCabrio	142 D	£98,940	8/4691	434/7000	332/4750	1980kg	223	5.2	-	177	337	19.5	★★★★★
Maserati GranCabrio Sport	161 D	£104,535	8/4691	444/7000	376/4750	1980kg	228	5.0	-	177	377	19.5	★★★★★
Maserati GranCabrio MC	185 D	£112,370	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1973kg	234	4.9	-	179	337	19.5	★★★★★
Mazda MX-5 1.5 (Mk4)	230 F	£18,495	4/1496	129/7000	111/4800	975kg	134	8.3	-	127	139	47.1	★★★★★
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	★★★★★
Mazda MX-5 RF (Mk4)	233 D	£23,095	4/1998	158/6000	147/4600	1045kg	154	7.4	-	134	161	40.9	★★★★★
Mazda MX-5 2.0i Sport Tech (Mk3.5)	212 R	70-75	4/1999	158/7000	139/5000	1098kg	146	7.6	-	138	181	36.2	★★★★★
Mazda MX-5 1.8i (Mk3)	091 R	70-79	4/1798	124/6500	108/4500	1080kg	108	9.3	-	122	-	-	★★★★★
Mazda MX-5 1.8i (Mk2)	017 R	78-79	4/1839	146/7000	124/5000	1065kg	140	8.6	-	123	-	32.5	★★★★★
Mazda MX-5 1.6 (Mk1)	131 R	79-97	4/1597	115/6500	100/5500	971kg	120	9.0	-	114	-	-	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG SL C43	222 D	£45,950	6/2996	362/5500	383/2000	1520kg	242	4.7	-	155	178	26.2	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLK 55 AMG	186 R	72-75	8/5461	416/6800	398/4500	1615kg	262	4.6	-	155	195	33.6	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLK 55 AMG	087 R	70-71	8/5439	355/5750	376/4000	1575kg	229	4.9	-	155	-	23.5	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLK 55 AMG Black Series	110 R	70-78	8/5439	394/5750	383/3750	1495kg	268	4.9	11.2	174	-	-	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG C63 S Cabriolet	226 D	£68,115	8/3982	503/5500	516/1750	1850kg	276	4.1	-	155	208	31.7	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG SL 63	228 D	£114,115	8/5461	577/5500	664/2250	1770kg	331	4.1	-	155	234	28.0	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SL 500	169 D	72-76	8/4663	429/5250	516/1800	1710kg	255	4.6	-	155	212	31.0	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SL 63 AMG	171 D	72-76	8/5461	530/5500	590/2000	1770kg	304	4.3	-	155	231	-	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SL 65 AMG	183 D	73-76	12/5980	621/4800	737/2300	1875kg	336	4.0	-	155	270	24.4	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SL 63 AMG	117 D	70-73	8/6208	518/6800	464/5200	1970kg	278	4.6	-	155	328	20.0	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SL 65 AMG	071 D	70-73	12/5980	604/4800	737/2000	2035kg	302	4.1	-	155	-	-	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SL 55 AMG Roadster	167 R	72-74	8/6208	563/6800	479/750	1660kg	345	3.7	-	197	308	21.4	★★★★★
Morgan 3 Wheeler	198 R	£31,140	2/1976	82/5250	103/3250	525kg	159	6.0	-	115	215	30.3	★★★★★
Morgan Plus 8 Speedster	202 R	£71,140	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1000kg	368	4.2	-	148	282	23.3	★★★★★
Morgan Plus 8	171 R	£86,345	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1100kg	334	4.4	-	155	256	25.7	★★★★★
Morgan Aero SuperSports	145 R	£128,045	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1180kg	312	4.2	-	170	-	-	★★★★★
Morgan Aero 8	105 R	70-78	8/4799	362/6300	361/3400	1100kg	334	4.5	-	170	-	25.2	★★★★★
Nissan 370Z Roadster	143 R	70-74	6/3696	326/7000	269/5200	1554kg	213	5.5	-	155	262	25.2	★★★★★
Porsche 718 Boxster	224 D	£41,739	4/1988	296/6500	280/1950	1335kg	225	5.1	-	170	168	38.2	★★★★★
Porsche 718 Boxster S	222 R	£50,695	4/2497	345/6500	310/1900	1355kg	259	4.4	9.8	177	184	34.9	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster (981)	172 R	72-76	6/2706	261/6700	206/4500	1310kg	202	5.4	-	164	192	34.5	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster S (981)	186 R	72-76	6/3436	311/6700	265/4500	1320kg	239	5.1	-	173	206	32.1	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster GTS (981)	203 D	74-76	6/3436	325/6700	273/4500	1345kg	246	5.0	-	174	211	31.4	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster Spyder (981)	2123 R	75-76	6/3800	370/6700	310/4750	1315kg	286	4.5	-	180	230	28.5	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster S (987)	161 R	70-72	6/3436	306/6400	265/5500	1355kg	229	5.3	-	170	223	29.7	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster Spyder (987)	188 R	70-72	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1275kg	252	5.0	-	166	221	29.1	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster S (986)	070 R	79-74	6/3179	256/6200	229/4600	1320kg	200	5.7	-	164	-	26.9	★★★★★
Radical SR3 SL	174 R	£69,840	4/2000	300/6000	265/4000	775kg	393	3.4	-	161	-	-	★★★★★
Renault Sport Spider	231 R	76-79	4/1998	148/6000	136/4500	930kg	157	6.5	-	131	-	-	★★★★★
Rolls-Royce Dawn	222 D	£250,000	12/6592	563/5250	575/1500	2560kg	223	4.9	-	155	330	20.0	★★★★★
Toyota MR2	187 R	70-76	4/1794	138/6400	125/4400	975kg	141	7.2	21.2	130	-	38.2	★★★★★
TVR Tamora	070 R	70-77	6/3605	350/7200	290/5500	1050kg	338	4.5	-	160	-	-	★★★★★
TVR Tuscan Convertible	091 R	70-77	6/3996	365/6800	315/6000	1100kg	337	3.8	-	195+	-	-	★★★★★
TVR Chimaera 5.0	007 R	73-75	8/4988	320/5500	320/3750	1060kg	307	4.6	-	167	-	26.4	★★★★★
TVR Griffith 4.3	068 R	72-73	8/4280	280/5500	305/4000	1060kg	268	4.8	11.2	148	-	-	★★★★★
TVR Griffith 500	009 R	73-75	8/4988	320/5500	320/3750	1060kg	307	4.8	11.2	167	-	22.1	★★★★★
Vauxhall VX220	023 R	70-74	4/2198	145/5800	150/4000	875kg	168	5.6	-	136	-	34.4	★★★★★
Vauxhall VX220 Turbo	066 R	73-75	4/1998	197/5500	184/1950	930kg	215	4.7	-	151	-	-	★★★★★
Vuhti 05	220 R	£59,995	4/2000	285/5600	310/3000	725kg	405	3.7	-	152	-	-	★★★★★

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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 Evige and Evora continue to offer sublime handling in all guises.

	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 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	£7-09	8/4691	450/7000	354/4750	1585kg	288	4.1	-	181	-	-	+ Looks, exclusivity, noise, balance - They're all sold	★★★★★
Alpina D4 Biturbo	206 R	£50,950	6/2993	345/4000	516/1500	1585kg	221	4.6	-	173	139	53.3	+ Fifth-gear oversteer - Sounds like a diesel, fuel economy not as good as you might hope	★★★★★
Alpina B4 Biturbo	206 R	£58,950	6/2979	404/5500	442/3000	1615kg	254	4.2	-	188	177	37.2	+ 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	£9-13	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	£4-76	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	£7-12	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	£9-14	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	£2-74	5/2480	355/5500	343/1650	1450kg	249	4.3	-	174	209	31.4	+ Stonkingly fast cross-country - Shockingly expensive for a TT	★★★★★
Audi S5	233 R	£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	£7-15	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 - W12 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	620/2000	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	£1-12	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	£4-76	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 GTS	232 R	£6	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	£7-13	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 GTS (E92)	232 R	£7-11	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	£0-07	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	£0-07	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	£0-04	6/3246	335/7900	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	£6-98	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	£6-90	4/2302	312/6750	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	£6-09	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	£5-10	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	£6-00	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	£7-05	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	£2-03	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 boisterous	★★★★★
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	£9-14	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	£1-74	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	★★★★★



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whichever comes first. Swivel-hub ball-joints are a costly weakness – around £500 per side to sort – so listen for knocks and clonks from the front of higher-mileage cars. Front discs are around £300 a pair to replace, including labour, so factor this in if they're past their best. (Full guide, evo 228.)

SPECIFICATION (250 CUP)

Years 2009-2016
Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc, turbo
Power 247bhp @ 5500rpm
Torque 251lb ft @ 3000rpm
0-60mph 6.1sec (tested)
Top speed 155mph (claimed)
Rating ★★★★★

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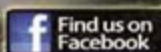


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OUR CHOICE

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 PI.



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 Supervoce 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	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	CO2 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	+ Much better than the DBS it succeeds, especially in 2015MY form - It's no Ferrari F12	★★★★★
Aston Martin Vanquish S (Mk2)	231 D	£199,950	12/5935	595/7000	465/5500	1739kg	348	3.5	-	201	302	21.6	+ Noise, poise, drama and charm - Not as rounded as the DB11	★★★★★
Aston Martin Vanquish S (Mk1)	110 R	£105,000	12/5935	520/7000	425/5800	1875kg	282	4.9	10.1	200	-	-	+ Vanquish joins supercar greats - A tad intimidating at the limit	★★★★★
Aston Martin One-77	179 R	£10,712	12/7312	750/6000	553/7600	1740kg	438	3.7	-	220+	-	-	+ The engine, the looks, the drama - Gearbox hates manoeuvring; only 77 were made	★★★★★
Audi R8 V10	228 D	£119,520	10/5204	533/7800	398/6500	1595kg	340	3.5	-	198	272	24.8	+ All the R8 you really need - Some may hanker after a manual gearbox	★★★★★
Audi R8 V10 Plus	229 R	£134,520	10/5204	602/8250	413/6500	1555kg	393	3.2	-	205	287	23.0	+ Timeless drivetrain, huge performance - Needs to be driven hard to really engage	★★★★★
Audi R8 V10	181 D	£10,715	10/5204	518/8000	391/6500	1620kg	325	3.9	8.4	194	346	19.0	+ Real supercar feel - The V8 is cheaper, and still superb	★★★★★
Audi R8 V10 Plus	190 R	£13,715	10/5204	542/8000	398/6500	1570kg	351	3.8	-	198	346	19.0	+ An R8 fit to take on the 458 and 12C - Firm ride may be too much for some	★★★★★
Audi R8 GT	169 F	£10,712	10/5204	552/8000	398/6500	1520kg	369	3.6	-	199	-	-	+ Everything we love about the R8 - Not as hardcore as we wanted	★★★★★
Audi R8 LMX	208 R	£15,715	10/5204	562/8000	398/6500	1595kg	358	3.4	-	198	299	21.9	+ More of everything that makes the R8 great - S-tronic transmission not perfect	★★★★★
Bugatti Veyron 16.4	134 R	£105,711	16/7993	1000/6000	922/2200	1950kg	521	2.8	5.8	253	596	11.4	+ Superbly engineered 4WD quad-turbo rocket - Er, lacks luggage space?	★★★★★
Bugatti Veyron Super Sport	151 R	£10,714	16/7993	1183/6400	1006/3000	1838kg	654	2.5	-	268	539	12.2	+ The world's fastest supercar - Limited to 258mph for us mere mortals	★★★★★
Bugatti EB110	078 R	£12,350	12/3500	552/8000	451/3750	1566kg	358	3.4	-	212	-	-	+ Superbly engineered 4WD quad-turbo rocket - It just fizzled out	★★★★★
Chevrolet Corvette ZR1	133 R	£10,713	8/6162	638/6500	603/3800	1528kg	424	3.8	7.6	205	355	18.8	+ Huge pace and character - Take plenty of brave pills if there's rain	★★★★★
Ferrari 488 GTB	228 R	£183,964	8/3902	661/6500	561/3000	1475kg	455	3.0	-	205+	260	24.8	+ Staggeringly capable - Lacks a little of the 458's heart and excitement	★★★★★
Ferrari 488 Spider	216 D	£204,400	8/3902	661/6500	561/3000	1525kg	440	3.0	-	203+	260	24.8	+ All the usual 488 thrills, but with the wind in your hair - See left	★★★★★
Ferrari 458 Italia	221 R	£10,715	8/4497	562/9000	398/6000	1485kg	384	3.2	6.8	202	307	20.6	+ An astounding achievement - Paddleshift only	★★★★★
Ferrari 458 Speciale	203 R	£14,497	597/9000	398/6000	1395kg	435	3.0	-	202+	275	23.9	-	+ evo Car of the Year 2014 - If you don't own a regular 458, nothing	★★★★★
Ferrari F430	163 R	£10,710	8/4308	483/8500	343/5250	1449kg	339	4.0	-	196	-	18.6	+ Just brilliant - Didn't you read the plus point?	★★★★★
Ferrari 430 Scuderia	121 R	£10,710	8/4308	503/8500	347/5250	1350kg	378	3.5	7.7	198	-	15.7	+ Successful F1 technology transplant - Likes to shout about it	★★★★★
Ferrari 360 Modena	163 R	£10,710	8/3586	394/8500	275/4750	1390kg	288	4.5	9.0	183	-	17.0	+ Worthy successor to 355 - Not quite as involving as it should be	★★★★★
Ferrari 360 Challenge Stradale	068 R	£10,710	8/3586	420/8500	275/4750	1280kg	333	4.1	-	186	-	-	+ Totally exhilarating road-racer. It's loud - It's very, very loud	★★★★★
Ferrari F12 Berlinetta	190 R	£241,053	12/6262	730/8250	509/6000	1630kg	455	3.1	-	211	350	18.8	+ 730bhp isn't too much power for the road - Super-quick steering is an acquired taste	★★★★★
Ferrari F12tdf	230 R	£339,000	12/6262	769/8500	520/6250	1520kg	514	2.9	-	211	360	18.3	+ Alarmingly fast - Doesn't flow like a 458 Speciale	★★★★★
Ferrari 599 GTB Fiorano	101 R	£106,712	12/5999	611/7600	448/5600	1688kg	368	3.5	7.4	205	415	15.8	+ evo Car of the Year 2006 - Banks are getting harder to rob	★★★★★
Ferrari 599 GTO	161 R	£11,712	12/5999	661/8250	457/6500	1605kg	418	3.4	-	208	-	-	+ One of the truly great Ferraris - Erm, the air con isn't very good	★★★★★
Ferrari 575M Fiorano Handling Pack	200 R	£102,006	12/5748	508/7250	434/5250	1730kg	298	4.2	9.6	202	-	12.3	+ Fiorano pack makes 575 truly great - It should have been standard	★★★★★
Ferrari 550 Maranello	169 R	£107,002	12/5474	485/7000	415/5000	1716kg	287	4.3	10.0	199	-	12.3	+ Everything - Nothing	★★★★★
Ferrari GTC4 Lusso	225 D	£230,430	12/6262	680/8000	514/5750	1920kg	360	3.4	-	208	350	18.8	+ Rear-wheel steering increases agility - Not as engaging as other Ferraris	★★★★★
Ferrari FF	194 R	£11,715	12/6262	651/8000	504/6000	1880kg	347	3.7	-	208	360	15.4	+ Four seats and 4WD, but a proper Ferrari - Looks divide opinion	★★★★★
Ferrari LaFerrari	203 R	£13,715	12/6262	950/9000	664/6750	1255kg	769	3.0	-	217+	330	-	+ Perhaps the greatest Ferrari ever - Brakes lack a touch of precision on track	★★★★★
Ferrari Enzo	203 R	£102,004	12/5999	651/7800	485/5500	1365kg	485	3.5	6.7	217+	545	-	+ Intoxicating, exploitable - Cabin detailing falls short of a Zonda or F1's	★★★★★
Ferrari F50	186 R	£106,997	12/4699	513/8500	347/6500	1230kg	424	3.9	-	202	-	-	+ A better drivers' Ferrari than the 288, F40 or Enzo - Not better looking, though	★★★★★
Ferrari F40	222 R	£107,922	8/2936	471/7000	426/4000	1100kg	437	4.1	-	201	-	-	+ Brutally fast - It's in the dictionary under 'turbo lag'	★★★★★
Ford GT	200 R	£104,006	8/5409	550/6500	500/3750	1583kg	353	3.7	-	205	-	-	+ Our 2005 Car of the Year - Don't scalp yourself getting in	★★★★★
Hennessey Venom GT	180 R	£1,900,000	8/7000	1244/6500	1155/4000	1244kg	1016	2.5	-	270	-	-	+ 0-200mph in 14.5sec, and it handles too - Looks like an Exige	★★★★★
Honda NSX	233 R	£143,950	6/3493	573	476/2000	1776kg	328	3.0	6.8	191	228	28.2	+ Blisteringly quick and brilliantly engineered - Limited range on a full tank	★★★★★
Jaguar XJ220	157 R	£102,994	6/3498	542/7200	475/4500	1470kg	375	3.7	-	213	-	-	+ Britain's greatest supercar... - ...until McLaren built the F1	★★★★★
Koenigsegg Agera R	180 R	£110,9m	8/5032	1124/7100	885/2700	1435kg	796	2.8	-	273	-	-	+ As fast and exciting as your body can handle - It's Veyron money	★★★★★
Koenigsegg One:1	202 R	£102,00m	8/5065	1341/7500	1011/6000	1360kg	1002	2.9	-	273	-	-	+ The most powerful car we've ever tested - It's sold out; we couldn't afford one anyway...	★★★★★
Lamborghini Huracán RWD	229 R	£155,400	10/5204	572/8000	397/6500	1389kg	418	3.4	-	199	278	23.7	+ More seductive than the 4WD Huracán - Feels like there's more to come	★★★★★
Lamborghini Huracán	209 D	£186,760	10/5204	602/8250	413/6500	1532kg	399	3.2	-	202+	290	22.6	+ Defies the numbers; incredible point-to-point pace - Takes work to find its sweet-spot	★★★★★
Lamborghini Gallardo LP560-4	180 D	£108,713	10/5204	552/8000	398/6500	1410kg	398	3.7	-	202	325	16.0	+ Still a missile from A to B - Starting to show its age	★★★★★
Lamborghini Gallardo	094 R	£106,708	10/4961	513/8000	376/4250	1520kg	343	4.3	9.4	196	-	-	+ On a full-bore start it spins all four wheels. Cool - Slightly clunky e-gear	★★★★★
Lamborghini Aventador	194 R	£260,040	12/6498	690/8250	509/5500	1575kg	445	2.9	-	217	370	17.7	+ Most important new Lambo since the Countach - Can feel a little clumsy	★★★★★
Lamborghini Aventador S	233 R	£271,146	12/6498	730/8400	509/5500	1575kg	471	2.9	-	217	394	16.7	+ A more agile, more connected Aventador - Erm... expensive?	★★★★★
Lamborghini Aventador SV	216 R	£321,723	12/6498	740/8400	509/5500	1525kg	493	2.8	-	217+	370	17.7	+ More exciting than the standard Aventador - ISR gearbox inconsistent	★★★★★
Lamborghini Murciélago LP640	093 R	£106,711	12/6496	631/8000	487/6000	1665kg	385	3.8	-	211	-	21.3	+ Compelling old-school supercar - You'd better be on your toes	★★★★★
Lamborghini Murciélago LP670-4 SV	200 R	£109,711	12/6496	661/8000	487/6500	1565kg	429	3.2	7.3	212	-	-	+ A supercar in its truest, wildest sense - Be prepared for stares	★★★★★
Lamborghini Murciélago	089 D	£101,006	12/6192	570/7500	479/5400	1650kg	351	4.0	-	205	-	-	+ Gorgeous, capable and incredibly friendly - V12 feels stressed	★★★★★
Lexus LFA/LFA Nürburgring	200 R	£104,805	10/4805	552/8700	354/6800	1480kg	379	3.7	-	202	-	-	+ Absurd and compelling supercar - Badge and price don't quite match	★★★★★
Maserati MC12	079 R	£104,005	12/5998	621/7500	481/5500	1445kg	437	3.8	-	205	-	-	+ Rarer than an Enzo - The Ferrari's better	★★★★★
McLaren 540C	228 R	£126,000	8/3799	533/7500	398/3500	1311kg	413	3.5	-	199	258	25.5	+ A very good junior supercar - The 570S is still better to drive	★★★★★
McLaren 570S	229 R	£143,250	8/3799	562/7500	443/5000	1440kg	397	3.1	-	204	249	26.6	+ A truly fun and engaging sports car - McLaren doesn't call it a supercar(!)	★★★★★
McLaren 570GT	228 R	£154,000	8/3799	562/7500	443/5000	1495kg	382	3.4	-	204	249	26.6	+ Blurs the line between grand tourer and supercar brilliantly - 570S is more involving	★★★★★
McLaren 650S	196 R	£195,250	8/3799	641/7250	500/6000	1428kg	456	3.0	-	207	275	24.2	+ Better brakes, balance and looks than 12C; more power too - Costs an extra £19k	★★★★★
McLaren 675LT	228 R	£259,500	8/3799	666/7100	516/5500	1328kg	510	2.9	-	205	275	24.2	+ Runner-up at eCoty 2015; asks questions of the P1 - Aventador price tag	★★★★★

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 Evija S (V6)	1:19.1	209	-
SEAT Leon Cupra 280 Sub8 (fastest hot hatch)	1:19.1	212	Yes
BMW M4	1:19.2	199	Yes
BMW i8	1:19.4	210	-
Honda Civic Type R (FK2)	1:19.5	212	-
Renaultsport Mégane Trophy 275	1:19.6	212	-
BMW M5 Competition Pack (F10M) (fastest saloon)	1:19.7	-	Yes
Audi TTS (Mk3)	1:19.9	209	-
Audi R8 V8 (Mk1)	1:20.1	201	-
BMW M135i	1:20.4	212	-
Nissan 370Z Nismo	1:20.5	209	-
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
Renaultsport Mégane 275 Trophy-R	1:23.6	215	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	-
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 Evija 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
Vuuh O5	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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