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Ed speak

WHAT DO YOU PRIORITISE IN A PERFORMANCE CAR?

I ask simply because this month the industry seems to be back to chasing horsepower (and with the onslaught of turbocharging, obscene torque, too), with a hot hatch from Audi now generating as much shove as a 5-litre V8-engined E39 M5 and a hypercar that produces near-enough 1500bhp without an electric motor in sight.

Power is a corruptive force. Addictive, dangerous, adrenalin-fuelling and at times scary. We can't get enough of it. Whether we're behind the wheel of something genuinely powerful – McLaren's 570S Track Pack (driven on page 32) springs to mind – or standing behind the catch-fencing watching a 7-litre Cobra being muscled, drifted and encouraged through Goodwood's Madgwick corner, inside wheel hanging in the air, driver wrestling with give-or-take 450bhp, it's hypnotic.

Then again, so is driving a car that relies on more than the brute force of an overpowered engine to deliver its thrills. The S1 Lotus Elise, as featured on page 98, is perhaps the perfect case in point. Sub-800kg, less than 120bhp and a driving experience like few others. Twenty years on it's still as thrilling and engaging to drive as it was when it was new, which explains why Lotus has returned to this formula with a new Elise Sprint (see page 19).

As 2017 progresses we're going to be driving more new performance cars that focus on power gains over their predecessors rather than weight loss. Or rather, any weight chased out of a car (as is the goal of many a manufacturer) will be put back on when the more powerful engine and the auxiliary components required to feed it and cool it are squeezed into place. And yes, this approach will deliver more thrilling cars and drives for the memoirs, but in an efficiency-obsessed world I do wonder when a manufacturer is going to stop to ask if all this power has gone to its head. ✕

Stuart Gallagher, Editor ————— @stuartg917

'Power is corruptive. It's addictive and adrenalin-fuelling, and at times scary'

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ICON: SI ELISE

Almost twenty-one years after it was launched, John Barker returns to the very first Lotus Elise to discover whether its unique brand of flyweight magic remains as charmingly addictive as it was back in the day. Is it perfect? No. But is he courting disappointment? Not a chance

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Each has close to 600bhp and wings on its nose, but is the turbo'd DB11 or the old-school Vanquish S worth your money?

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***evo** gets up close and personal with Ford's RS200 Group B rally weapon, and tells how the series was born but then quickly died*

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Feel the Ford

FOCUS RS



Go Further



Official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for Ford Focus RS: urban 28.3 (10.0), extra urban 44.8 (6.3), combined 36.7 (7.7). Official CO₂ emission 175g/km. The mpg figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results (EU Directive and Regulation 692/2008), are provided for comparability purposes and may not reflect your actual driving experience.

ford.co.uk/FocusRS



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

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briefing

THE STATE OF THE BRITISH MOTORING NATION

Great Britain's automotive manufacturers are numerous, varied and fascinating, but which are fighting fit and which are gasping for air?

by BRETT FRASER

DESPITE THE COUNTLESS TRIALS and tribulations of its indigenous car makers over the past few decades, Britain remains an attractive location in which to design, engineer and manufacture the sort of sports and premium cars that fill the pages of *evo*. In fact, whatever ugly truths lie behind the neglect and even collapse of many famous British marques, their inherent 'Britishness', or at least the perception of its best parts, has encouraged substantial foreign investment in their salvation. And as important to those investors as the nameplates themselves is the need to continue producing those cars on British soil.



So we're taking a quick look at the current fortunes of British-based car makers; those that crop up on *evo's* radar, at any rate. They range from giants such as **Jaguar Land Rover**, which in 2016 shifted 544,000 units (making it Britain's biggest car producer for the second consecutive year), to tiddlers such as **Arash** – a single car sold in 2016 and the prospect of that total dropping to zero for 2017, admits company founder Arash Farboud with refreshing and slightly amusing honesty.

And that's the other thing about making cars in Britain: it's fertile, welcoming ground for the passionate,

the dreamers and the plucky. Ultra-low-volume makers – **BAC**, for instance, and **Noble** and **Elemental** – can call upon decades' worth of sports-car-building talent, and mix it in with all the high-tech thinking that has sprung from Britain's dominance of top-tier motorsport. Not that it always works out – in January 2017 Zenos, whose senior management had backgrounds at the likes of **Lotus** and **Caterham**, went into administration. Yet in the great spirit of British resilience, a consortium that includes investors in **AC Cars** has pulled Zenos back from the edge of the abyss, confident that the product

is right, even if the cashflow wasn't.

A more highly anticipated comeback is that of **TVR**. According to Les Edgar, the new company's chairman, 'TVR is fully immersed in the development and delivery of its new car. We are now very close to being able to reveal the finished product and will do so later in 2017. Production will begin in 2018.'

Arash is also looking towards next year, rather than this one, to make a splash. '2018 is the year of our AF10 replacement and promises to be something truly exciting,' enthuses Farboud. **Noble**, too, is using 2017 to consolidate while '2018 will be a year

of substantial but controlled growth for Noble Automotive,' says MD Peter Boutwood. 'Watch this space.'

Others comparative minnows *do* have plans for this year. **Ginetta**, for example, is expecting to launch an LMP1 racer, ready to compete in the 2018 FIA World Endurance Championship, while **David Brown** will reveal its 'Project 2' – an upmarket original Mini – and is soon to move into new headquarters at Silverstone. **Caterham** will announce another 60th-anniversary special edition of the Seven, **Radical** has new-generation versions of the SR1 and SR8 with improved aero,

544,000

Total Jaguar Land Rover production in 2016 – the most of any UK car maker



Clockwise from bottom: just one Arash AF10 sold in 2016; 25 Aston DB4s are on the way; BAC Mono sales modest but growing; Caterham's 60th-anniversary Seven; Jag's electric I-Pace; Ginetta logo soon to be seen on an LMP1 car; Mini range set to grow



25

Number of DB4 continuation models Aston Martin will build



LMP1

The top category of endurance racing – where Ginetta is heading



1200

McLaren expects to sell quite a few examples of the new 720S this year



Clockwise from top right: David Brown is re-imagining another classic (the Mini); in 2018 TVR's Sagaris will finally be superseded; McLaren's 720S; Radical is set to introduce two new models; Noble intends to keep things small-scale; as does Ariel; new Phantom is coming



and **Elemental** is introducing a windscreen variant of its Rp1.

There's activity amidst the bigger players, too. **Bentley** has launched the Continental Supersports, and will reveal an all-new Conti GT at the end of 2017. **McLaren** continues its avalanche of new models with the 720S, plus a Spider derivative for its Sports Series range. **Aston Martin** has its DB4 GT continuation series, limited to 25 cars, which will start arriving with customers in the summer, and later this year we'll see the all-new V8 Vantage and further testing of the Valkyrie, all ahead of the DB11 Volante and the DBX SUV. **Lotus** CEO Jean-Marc Gales reveals that the all-new Elise won't be with us until 2020, but for 2017 there will be a freshened up version of the existing Elise, including a Sprint variant (see page 19), 'and we are gearing up to launch the Evora Sport 410 in the

USA and the Evora 400 in China. We do have new high-performance derivatives planned throughout the rest of the year, with each faster and lighter than those that went before.'

Down in Chichester, **Rolls-Royce** is readying itself for the announcement of the eighth-generation Phantom, and up in the Midlands **Jaguar Land Rover** is preparing for the introduction of the Range Rover Velar, with Jaguar busy developing its electric I-Pace SUV. As for **Mini**, its 2017 activities revolve around the Countryman range, including a John Cooper Works variant and a plug-in hybrid.

What's interesting to see amongst some of the smaller companies is innovative diversification. **Morgan** is merging the nostalgic looks of its iconic three-wheeler with an electric drivetrain to develop the EV3, while **Westfield** has branched out into

“
TVR is fully immersed in the development and delivery of its new car
”

autonomous travel pods, of which it expects to build 20 during 2017.

Perhaps less of a headline but still quite a progressive step is Rolls-Royce's move to aluminium core structures, as will debut in the new Phantom late in the year. According to the company's CEO, Torsten Müller-Ötvös, the car 'will be underpinned by the Architecture of Luxury. This new, proprietary all-aluminium architecture will underpin every new Rolls-Royce launched from today.'

While the likes of Jaguar Land Rover, Mini, Bentley and, to a degree, Rolls-Royce will chase greater volumes during 2017, some of the more specialist contingent are content to stay small. Noble's Peter Boutwood says: 'We believe it would be foolish and arrogant for a company the size of Noble to take on the established marques. They do what they do brilliantly. We offer an



Above: Morgan starting to merge classic design cues with electric powertrains.

Right: Westfield now building autonomous travel pods. **Below:** Elemental's Rpi set to get a windscreen option

30%

The proportion of revenue that McLaren re-invests in R&D



alternative ethos for the supercar buyer – it's remarkable, and possibly unique, that after some five years of production, none of our buyers has sold or offered to sell their M600.'

At **Ariel**, the directors have taken the decision to remain a small, low-volume, high-quality producer manufacturing cars 'that are affordable, accessible and that the big boys can't, won't or daren't make.' Arash Farboud has a similar outlook: 'We look at each car as a masterpiece in construction and design, and with that numbers are exclusively low.'

But is anyone making any money? Take a look at the table below and you'll see that while several companies are reluctant to reveal their financial situation – or have awkward accounting periods (hence 'TBC') – others are doing just fine, thanks very much, and are expecting to expand globally during the next few years. Lotus is amongst those not revealing actual figures, but CEO Gales says that the company's turnaround is nearing completion and a solid foundation is now in place. And there's plenty

of talk of inward investment in the industry. McLaren CEO Mike Flewitt states, 'We're committed to investing between 25-30 per cent of revenue in research and development.'

At Jaguar Land Rover, MD Jeremy Hicks claims, 'The business is investing over-proportionally in technology, infrastructure and talent.' Bentley CEO Wolfgang Dürheimer says, 'Looking ahead, our focus is to invest in new, sector-defining luxury cars and innovative technologies.'

Intriguingly, not one company mentions the possible impact of Brexit, even though our questionnaire asked for a five-year forecast. We can only assume that, as yet, it's an imponderable. And, frustratingly, a handful of British car makers are unable to respond to our request for information. Bristol, Lister and Keating Supercars have remained silent. At least Ultima had the gumption to say that it wished to remain 'mysterious', had been in profit for the past 15 years, had zero debt and substantial cash reserves...

Manufacturer	Cars built (2016)	Sales target (2017)	Turnover (2016)	Profit (2016)	Employees
ARASH	1	0	£280,000	-£15,000	Around 20
ARIEL	96	100	Not disclosed	Not disclosed	26
ASTON MARTIN	3700	Not disclosed	£593m	£101m	2000+
BAC	24 (July '15 to July '16)	36 (July '16 to July '17)	£2.1m (July '15 to July '16)	Not disclosed	25
BENTLEY	11,023 (deliveries)	Not disclosed	€2.03bn	€112m	4000
CATERHAM	Just over 500	550	£19.7m	£542,000	115
DAVID BROWN	6	Not disclosed	Not disclosed	Not disclosed	Around 20
ELEMENTAL	3	12	Not disclosed	Not disclosed	8
GINETTA	70	100	Not disclosed	Not disclosed	80
JAGUAR LAND ROVER	544,000	Not disclosed	£22.2bn	£1.56bn	40,000 (globally)
LOTUS	Not disclosed	Not disclosed	TBC	TBC	850
MCLAREN	3286	'Another record year'	TBC	TBC	1750
MINI	360,233	Not disclosed	€94.16bn (BMW Group)	€9.67bn (BMW Group)	1700 (BMW/Mini UK)
MORGAN	796	800-1000	£30m	TBC	More than 200
NOBLE	Not disclosed	10-12	Not disclosed	'Not yet profitable'	14
RADICAL	145	170	£18m	Not disclosed	130
ROLLS-ROYCE	4011	Not disclosed	Not disclosed	Not disclosed	1700
WESTFIELD	162	200	£2.63m	£595,817	28



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New arrivals

An even lighter Elise and the fastest ever Golf R are amongst this month's newcomers



REMOVING WEIGHT FROM SOMETHING as ethereal as the Elise can't be an easy task, but the engineers at Potash Lane have managed it with the new **Lotus Elise Sprint (1)**, trimming an already insubstantial car down to a 798kg dry weight.

It's the first time the Elise has dipped into the 'sevens' since the flyweight first-generation model, (which still mocks the Sprint's middle-aged spread with a 731kg with-fluids figure) and is the result of the use of carbonfibre for the seats and engine cover, a lithium-ion battery and other improvements borrowed from models such as the Exige. It gets that car's intricate exposed gearlever assembly, too. Heavier is the price: £37,300 for the 134bhp 1.6-litre car – that's five grand more than a standard Elise.

When is an Elise not an Elise? When it's a **Detroit Electric SP:01 (2)**. As part of a business plan that probably reads 'do what Tesla did', the Detroit-based, British-engineered firm has announced a joint venture with China's Far East Smarter Energy Group to secure \$1.8billion in investment. Production of the Elise-chassis'd electric sports car is scheduled to begin later in 2017.

VW and Porsche have each announced upgrades to popular models this month. **VW's** offering is a Performance Pack for the Golf R **(3)**, with drilled front brake discs, upgraded pads, a small lip on the rear spoiler and the removal of the 155mph limiter, lifting top speed to 165mph. An Akrapovic exhaust is also available, saving 7kg and adding volume. The pack hasn't yet been confirmed for the UK, however.

That's also the case for the 30bhp Power Kit for the **Porsche 911 Carrera S (2)**. It takes power to a GTS-matching 444bhp, with upgraded turbochargers, the Sport Chrono package and a central exhaust exit. Pricing is in the region of 10,000 euros.

The **Abarth 595 Trofeo (4)** is definitely available in the UK, priced from £17,290. Based on the upgraded Abarth 595 launched last year, it gets the same 158bhp and six-speed manual gearbox. Five paint schemes are offered, with contrasting exterior trim, while performance software in the infotainment system allows you to upload track data to the car for real-time telemetry.

Finally this month, news still trickles in from **Toyota** on its future sports cars. At the Geneva motor show, *evo* learned that Toyota engineer and

“Toyota's Gazoo Racing chief is keen to bring back an MR2-sized sports car, with a mid-mounted engine still an option”

Gazoo Racing chief Tetsuya Tada is keen to bring back an MR2-sized sports car to the lineup. While this may take the form of a front-engined, rear-drive model like that previewed by 2015's S-FR concept **(5)**, Tada also hints that a mid-mounted engine is still an option – not least as it makes space for battery installation, should a hybrid model be on the cards. Meanwhile, the Japanese firm has also applied for a patent for an electric compressor, which could see use in the next-generation Supra.

INDUSTRY

Aston's awfully big adventure

As Aston Martin prepares to battle Porsche and Bentley for SUV supremacy, its CEO explains his decision to build a second home for the company
by David Vivian



TOWARDS THE END OF 2016, ASTON

Martin bought 90 acres of the Vale of Glamorgan in south Wales following a deal struck between Aston CEO Andy Palmer and Welsh first minister Carwyn Jones. The land, just to the west of Cardiff Airport at a place called St Athan, came with buildings that had been occupied by the Ministry of Defence, including three enormous aircraft 'super-hangers'. Beginning with reception areas, offices and a staff restaurant, these are now being 're-purposed' as Aston's St Athan production facility, where its first SUV, based on the DBX concept, will be built as part of a £200million investment programme. We asked Palmer, why here, why now?

'Why Wales? We actually went to 20 different

level it, you have to put the services in and then you have to construct the basic framework of the building. That takes about a year. If I'd gone that route, I wouldn't be able to launch a car in 2019.

'The innovative nature of the SUV is that it uses the same chassis-construction methodology as our sports cars: bonded aluminium. The facility at St Athan is, I think it's fair to say, unique insofar as it's also unique in sports cars – bonding, and not welding, aluminium. That's our knowhow and our technique and we're replicating that in an SUV, which, I think, is an industry first.

'Apart from the SUV, the plan is to produce all of the large-car platforms, whatever they might be in the future, at St Athan. Well, probably. And that probably means Lagonda. But before that, by the end of 2018, we should be producing

“We actually went to 20 different sites around the world – a number of them in the US, some in the Middle East”

sites around the world – a number of them in the United States, some in the Middle East and a few in eastern Europe. So think about the type of car we're going to make here. It's an SUV. And think about the primary destinations: the USA and China. Also about the technologies we need to deploy. So, yes, 20 different sites. We evaluated them principally on quality, cost and delivery.

'St Athan didn't win on the grounds of cost. I could easily have got more grants, aids and incentives from overseas governments. But for quality/cost/delivery – the ability to use our existing supply base, our ability to recruit talent, the receptiveness of the Welsh government – they were all solid reasons. And why did we choose to go into the existing facility? There would have been certain benefits if we'd gone for a greenfield site, but first of all you have to

test vehicles. I hesitate to call them prototypes because they're off production tooling.

'When it's up and running, the factory will be capable of producing about 7000 units per year. Essentially it's a repetition of what we have at Gaydon – except we'll be taking up a little bit more space because the SUVs are a little bit longer and, therefore, the track between the stations is a little bit longer, too. In total, the factory area is something like a million square feet. We haven't gone public on cost because it's a rather involved and complex deal with the Welsh authorities. But, needless to say, it's an affordable entry ticket. St Athan works, not because we're getting lots of grant aid but because of a number of things, including the connection to the major motorways. The first car will come off the production line at the end of 2019.'

City Concours tickets on sale

Inaugural car show in the heart of London promises some rare sightings



LONDON IS THIS SUMMER to play host to an all-new event showcasing 'some of the world's most incredible cars'. Held on 8-9 June, the City Concours will see the immaculate five-acre lawn of the Honourable Artillery Company (a short walk from Liverpool Street station) flooded with glamorous road and racing machinery from bygone eras to the present day, and there will also be a selection of sports cars for sale from specialist dealers.

The show, organised by the same team behind the annual Concours of Elegance (this year at Hampton Court Palace), is presented in association with *evo's* sister-magazine *Octane*. Assuming the fickle British weather holds, guests can expect to get up close to F1 cars from the 1970s, '80s and '90s as well as the beautiful but viciously challenging machines from the world of historic sportscar racing. Among them will be 'RSF 303' – an unrestored Ecurie Ecosse Jaguar D-type that finished runner-up

at the 1957 Le Mans 24 Hours (pictured, above). That an Henri Toivonen Group B Lancia 037 also features heavily on the City Concours website bodes well for rally fans, though we can't promise anything for now.

Indeed, the full cast of cars is still to be confirmed, but a diverse range of categories includes The Swinging Sixties, Legends of Le Mans, Speed, F1 Hall of Fame, Evolution of the Supercar, American Muscle, Alternative Power and Modern Bespoke. The event will also feature luxury watch and art pavilions and a supercar paddock sure to attract the latest carbonfibre-festooned creations from McLaren and the like. One of only seven Touring Superleggera Disco Volante Spyders – the sensationally rebodied Alfa 8C Spider that's the result of a 10,000-man-hour conversion – is also set to put in an appearance.

Tickets start at £42 (admission only – breakfast and lunch packages are also available) and are already on sale at cityconcours.co.uk.



“An unrestored Jaguar D-type that finished runner-up at Le Mans will be among the cars



Above: Touring Superleggera Disco Volante Spyder will grace the lawn of the Honourable Artillery Company in June

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DMS 135i (BMW CAR MAY '09) "THE STANDARD CAR IS GREAT BUT DMS HAVE SOMEHOW MANAGED TO TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL"

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2017 car tax rates explained



Buying new? Then choose your car wisely, because the latest VED rates can bite

ALL NEW CARS SOLD IN THE UK ARE now subject to revised Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) rules. In short, while owners will still pay their first year of VED based on a car's CO2 rating, the rate for subsequent years is now fixed at £140. The exceptions are cars using an alternative fuel source (e.g. hybrids), which get a £10 discount, zero-emissions cars, which attract a £0 rate, and cars with a list price of over £40,000, which incur an additional £310 charge in years two to six. It's worth noting that the £310

surcharge applies to zero-emissions cars, too. Bad luck, Tesla owners.

So if your purchase is middling in terms of its price and CO2 rating, you'll not be too badly affected by the changes. For example, a 139g/km VW Golf GTI would previously have cost £130 per year to tax. Since 1 April 2017, its first-year VED rate is £200, but drops to £140 per year thereafter, so after five years of ownership the GTI will have set you back £760 in VED, compared with £650 before the changes.

The difference is more sizeable on a car such as the 168g/km Porsche 718 Cayman. Previously you'd have paid £1140 for five years of VED (£300 for the first year, £210 for the next four), but thanks to its £42,897 list price, it will now cost £2300 in tax over the same period (£500 for the first year, plus four years at £450).

And frugality is no guarantee you'll be in the clear. The fuel-sipping 115g/km Renault Twingo GT would previously have cost just £120 during its first five years; now it's £720. Caveat emptor.

WATCHES: DEBUTING BRANDS



Leyden Velox

Price: €300 (c£255)
From: leydenwatches.com

Leyden Watches was recently founded by a young watch enthusiast from the Dutch city of Leiden. The firm's first model is this classic-style chronograph with a 42mm case and a hybrid quartz/mechanical movement. Three colour schemes are available: 'Panda' (white dial with black subdials), 'Classic' (all-black dial) and 'Dark' (black dial, black case). If you're quick you may still be able to reserve a Velox for the special pre-order price of €235 (c£200).



Nezumi Voiture

Price: €395 (c£335)
From: nezumistudios.com

Swedish brand Nezumi's first watch is unashamedly inspired by '60s and '70s racing chronographs, right down to its size – a modest-by-modern-standards 40mm in diameter. Three suitably retro colour schemes are offered, yet the watch is powered by a thoroughly modern hybrid movement. Nezumi president David Campo is a true petrolhead too: he also founded Roughneck Brigade, a club for owners of hot-rod air-cooled 911s.



Zahnd & Kormann ZK No. 1

Price: from CHF 899 (c£720)
From: timeisyours.ch

Crowdfunded watch startups are usually targeted at the more affordable end of the market, but entrepreneurs Roger Zahnd and Florian Kormann have applied the same approach to a pukka Swiss-made watch. Their ZK No. 1 is powered by an ETA self-winding movement and features chronograph, day, date, month and moon-phase functions. It has a 41mm case and is available in four different colour schemes, each limited to 2016 examples.

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

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Clipsal 500

THE CLIPSAL 500 IS THE FIRST STOP FOR THE AUSTRALIAN V8 Supercars series. This year the event, held in Adelaide in March, returned to its traditional format of a brace of 250km races run over two days, following three years with the 500km total split over three races.

Reigning champion Shane Van Gisbergen won the first race in his Holden Commodore with relative ease and set a new race lap record of 1:20.9 – no other driver managed to dip below 1:21.0. Despite his best efforts, Van Gisbergen's teammate Jamie Whincup – pictured here working a kerb in true touring-car style – finished back in sixth place.

The Red Bull drivers completed race two in exactly the same positions – first and sixth – although things didn't go quite so smoothly for Van Gisbergen this time: after a bad start he lost the lead to the two Team Penske Ford Falcons, only making his way to the front when, with just three laps to go, Ford driver Scott McLaughlin locked a wheel going into a corner.



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720S yay!

McLaren's 720S (*evo* 234) seems to have been the star of the 2017 Geneva motor show. The first images leaked online made the car look odd, but having now seen it in proper photos and videos, I think it looks stunning.

McLaren has gone all out: the car looks so futuristic and really exotic. I was dubious about the zombie-eye-socket headlights at first, but they definitely grow on you. Parked next to a 488 or Huracán, I think the 720S would look more purposeful and modern with its curves, flashy doors and active aero.

The switchable dash seems a bit of a gimmick, especially as the display is digital: why not just show less information on it in track mode? It would save grams on the mechanism. But it's great to see a young British car company really taking the fight to the big boys.

I never thought I would pick a Macca over a Fezza or Lambo as my lottery dream car, but with the 720S it has finally happened!

KLi



720S nay

So, after huge anticipation and much McLaren-generated 'teaser shot' hype, the 720S has finally been revealed. I've probably been looking forward to this supercar more than any other in recent years.

First impressions? OMG! McLaren has created a pig! What were they thinking with that bug-eyed face? The side profile is simply hideous too, and what is going on with that instrument binnacle that looks like it belongs in a bus?

I've no doubt whatsoever that this car will 'do the numbers', but oh how I wanted it to both trounce the Ferrari 488 and look beautiful at the same time. Sadly, it looks like it'll only hit half of that brief. Maybe it'll look better in the flesh, but for now, I'm truly disappointed.

Rob Price, Surrey

The Eagle has landed

That McLaren 720S... Am I the only one reminded of the Eagle from Gerry Anderson's *Space 1999*?

John Koenig



Lacking Focus

Now, I've owned too many good cars to be a fanboy of any particular make or model, but I feel I must rally to the defence of your much-maligned Focus ST Estate (Fast Fleet, *evo* 234). Yes, I do own a facelift ST hatch, but my observations are objective – it is a daily driver, not my pride and joy.

Whilst a couple of Antony Ingram's criticisms may be vaguely justified (poor turning circle, notchy gearchange when cold), most are nonsense. The fuel cut-off? Never happens to me. The windscreen elements compromising visibility? Try looking *through* the screen.

Most significant of Mr Ingram's misguided grievances concerns tramlining and an inability to put power down even in the dry. This is nonsense. My car puts its power down extremely well up to at least eight-tenths, despite the lack of a mechanical limited-slip diff, and it never tramlines at all. It could be that Mr I suffers from a chronic case



LETTER OF THE MONTH

A wing too far

IN MY USUAL CUSTOM, I FLICKED THROUGH THE PICTURES first in the latest issue of *evo* (234), so I could return to read the features by preference. While doing so, I could not help being struck by the abundance of new road-going metal with outrageous wings attached.

We are all generally used to Porsche's GT models having substantial rear wings, so the pictures of the latest 911 GT3 were not really a surprise. The new Honda Civic Type R is designed for a particular taste, so again, no shocks there. But the Bentley Continental Supersports? Surely that is a wing too far.

It would be very interesting to see just how some of these cars, especially the Bentley, would behave with their wings removed. If the 500bhp Mercedes-AMG C63 S Coupe that featured in Fast Fleet in the same issue can survive intact without its looks being ruined by one, just how necessary are they?

Rob Lintott

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



of CTA (clumsy throttle application), but I have another theory: a man so uninterested in his assigned vehicle that he fails even to open the tailgate for weeks is unlikely to have bothered to visit a tyre centre for a camber and toe adjustment. I would suggest the car desperately needs one if it is as bad as he says.

I understand **evo's** logic in giving the ST to someone who would not normally choose it, but it would seem to me that Mr Ingram is so apathetic to the job at hand that he, the car and the readership would be better served if it were sent elsewhere.

Niall McMahon

You will be pleased to learn, Niall, that the ST will have a new keeper from next month. You can read Antony's final thoughts on the car in this issue's Fast Fleet. Some of them are even complimentary... - Ed

Heat seeking missile

Always enjoy your general Fast Fleet updates and the classic cars in particular. Good to read your Secret Supercar Owner recently exhumed his Ferrari F40 for a run in the sun (**evo** 234). About time!

But I noticed he writes: 'After giving it a good ten minutes to warm up, we headed out.' Starting a car and leaving it to 'warm up' in situ is ill advised, for classic supercars in particular.

Best to check the car's fluids and tyre pressures before hopping in. Then depress the clutch and pump the brake pedal a few times to check operation. If there's an auxiliary cooling fan, flick the switch to ensure it is working.

Start the engine with the minimum amount of throttle. With the F40 there's no choke, but if you do have

one, cut it off as quickly as you can. Never rev the engine above the bare minimum to keep it running cleanly. (I once got into a 250LM Ferrari with an insensitive owner who started it from cold, revved the engine right up and blew the oil filter clean off!)

Start driving the car extremely gently within a minute or two. If you leave the old thing sitting there some elements will warm up but most will remain ice cold.

No doubt your SSO understands the water temperature gauge is the last thing you use to determine the car's overall temperature - water heats up the quickest. An oil temp gauge is the best indicator of engine warmth.

An older car requires sensitivity and feeling from the driver. From the off it will feel stiff and tight. Give it at least ten miles and then the tyres will warm, the wheel bearings will loosen, the suspension bushes will relax, the gearbox will become co-operative and the engine will start to sing. Then, and only then, can you drive the nuts off it with unashamedly analogue brio.

Best to frighten yourself (you'll also be hot by now) with a well-warmed classic supercar.

Robert Coucher, International Editor, Octane magazine

E-fail

I read with interest Stuart Gallagher's **Ed Speak** in **evo** 233 ('Are electric cars on a charge?') and felt compelled to share with you my own personal perspective on electric cars.

Late last year I skipped work and instead went to a trackday at the Sonoma Raceway in California. During the morning's events, two cars stood out from the rest of the pack: a spanking new Mustang GT350 and a Tesla P-something-S.



While the Tesla's acceleration and cornering (due to all those batteries in the floor) was epic, the near-silent 'whoosh' of its progress around the course was about as exciting as one of those old battery-powered milk floats that used to deliver our daily 'pintas' back in the day. Assailed by the shouty roar of the GT350 there was no apparent contest in the thrills and entertainment departments.

But what really sealed it for me was the sight of the Tesla disappearing just before lunch, its driver in search of a Supercharger station to replenish the batteries after the morning's exertions, and then it skulking back late for the afternoon's fun. It's not just the range anxiety to be concerned about with fully electric cars, it's also the charging-point locations and the top-up times.

I'm happy to report that my 911 Carrera GTS and the GT350 were both too loud to pass the circuit's noise test, so we had to short-shift and lift off as we passed the monitoring station. One disadvantage of 'powered by dinosaurs' technology, I guess, but I'll still keep my batteries confined to my laptop and phone for the foreseeable future!

Larry Cable, California

Not getting the Bug

The first reviews of the Bugatti Chiron are out and pages are being devoted to recording its numbers and describing its design. But what does this car do or represent that is new or interesting?

Of course it's hugely fast – the Veyron was and this car is newer. Of course it's refined – it is built with VW money and wears a price tag that's in a different league to that even of other supercars. It may even be more

interesting to drive than the Veyron because of the advances in electronics to synthesise agility and feel. But so what? What is there to make **evo's** readers want to drive or own one?

The Chiron appears to be totally uninspiring and seems sure to be a mere footnote in the history of fast cars. I can only hope **evo's** testers find something of interest, beyond the numbers.

Tim Pickworth

You can find out if that is the case starting on page 88. – Ed

More cheap thrills

Sorry guys, but I think you've lost the plot. I've been a subscriber from the beginning, but **evo** 234 was just too much.

Aston Parrott spends £6230 on suspension bits for his second-hand Porsche, while in the 540C (£126,000) v 911 Turbo (£126,925) v R8 (£122,450) group test Dan Prosser refers to those cars being 'perceived as the slower, cheaper and humbler versions'.

And to cap it all, in the Market Analysis article Adam Towler tells us 'How to buy a lightweight British sports car', including 'Four to buy' at £21,995, £39,950, £44,995 and £55,700 respectively.

Get real, guys. While we may dream about such levels of expenditure, your average **evo** reader just might want a more grounded approach occasionally. I bought my Westfield for much less than Aston Parrott's suspension upgrade and enjoyed several years of **evo** motoring, including three camping trips to Le Mans. Without the hood, of course.

It provided me with a great driving experience and utter reliability, all at a price much more in line with the man-in-the-street's reach. Cheap and cheerful, but still the thrill of driving.

Frank Havard



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McLaren 570S Track Pack

We'd love to see a Longtail version of the 570, but in the meantime this trackday-focused package of enhancements will do very nicely



SOON ENOUGH, McLAREN will realise that the model we're all waiting for is a Longtail based on an entry-level Sports Series car. Like the 675LT, it'll get more power, more aggressive aero, super-sticky tyres and a more focused chassis. It could well be the best car McLaren has ever made.

Until they see sense down in Woking, though, we'll have to make do with this: the 570S Track Pack. Despite the very promising naming strategy, the Track Pack is not a fully re-engineered version of the 570S in the way a GT3 RS is a comprehensive re-imagining of the Porsche 911. Instead, it's a box on the options list, one that adds lightweight seats, lighter wheels, Alcantara trim in the cabin and a couple of other bits and pieces. The Track Pack may be a long way from being a full-spec Longtail, then, but it might well be the Sports Series at its very best nonetheless.

The kit costs £16,500 on top of the £143,250 list price. The 570S

is already the lightest car in its sector by a fair margin thanks to its carbon tub and standard-fit carbon-ceramic brakes, but the Track Pack trims away a further 25kg. The bulk of that saving can be attributed to the carbonfibre, fixed-back bucket seats and the lightweight wheels, as well as the Alcantara in place of the heavier leather trim.

The rear wing now sits 12mm higher, although it's still integral to the bodywork. That more pronounced spoiler, incidentally, will not be available on any other Sports Series model. It adds 29kg of downforce, says McLaren, although you'll need to be clipping along at 150mph before it applies that much pressure over the rear axle.

Finally, the Track Pack adds the telemetry system that featured on the 675LT and P1. It allows drivers to time themselves on circuit, analyse laps at the end of a session and compare times with other drivers.



The drivetrain is unchanged compared with the 570S, which means the 3.8-litre twin-turbo V8 still produces 562bhp at 7500rpm and 443lb ft from 5000 to 6500rpm. The gearbox is a seven-speed twin-clutch item. McLaren quotes a 0-62mph time of 3.2 seconds and 204mph flat out. The slim weight saving apparently reduces the 0-124mph time by a tenth of a second, down to 9.4sec.

The bucket seats swallow you whole rather than merely support you. They're also comfortable enough for longer journeys, although they do make getting into the cabin a little more awkward and anybody with the thighs of a track cyclist might find them too tight. But the seating position itself is brilliant, just

as it is in every modern McLaren. You sit low and reclined, with your feet way out in front of you. With McLaren's trademark low scuttle you feel as though you'd see your toes if you were to lift your feet up and peer along the bonnet.

Dynamically, the Track Pack feels just the same as the 570S, of course, but given that the car is as agile and rewarding as it is, having supportive bucket seats and that more tactile Alcantara-trimmed steering wheel really does make a lot of sense. The 570S is pitched as a sports car, rather than a grand tourer or a day-to-day machine, and those Track Pack elements just make the most of its sports car qualities. In short, this is the best Sports Series yet.

It may be way down on power

compared to the new 720S, but the unrelenting way the Track Pack pulls through third and fourth gears suggests it isn't giving away a single pony to its more expensive brother. It actually feels so frantically fast on the road that you have to build up to full throttle, and even then you daren't keep it pinned for more than a few seconds at a time.

There's no doubting the car's performance, but throttle response is a weakness. You need the engine spinning beyond 5000rpm before it becomes responsive enough that you can trim the car's line using the throttle, and even then it isn't as good as the best modern turbo engines. The gearbox, too, is a little off the pace of the quickest twin-clutch units out there, but in

'The Track Pack badging promises proper circuit ability; the car delivers in spades'

isolation it's very difficult to criticise.

It isn't straight-line performance that earns the Track Pack a five-star rating, though. It's the perfectly judged ride and handling balance, the detailed and feelsome steering and the sheer man-and-machine engagement that it delivers out on the road. It's huge fun to drive, both at low speeds and at full tilt.

On circuit, the Pirelli P Zero Corsa tyres are grippy and consistent, while the ceramic brakes bite hard and resist fade really well. What makes the Track Pack, and any 570S for that matter, so much fun on circuit is that chassis balance. On the way into a corner it wants to oversteer like a 205 GTI – that's intended as a compliment – which means you can really fling the thing around without having to manage understeer. The Track Pack badging promises proper circuit ability; the car delivers in spades.

McLaren might never build a Longtail Sports Series car. That would be a pity, but the 570S Track Pack is so capable and entertaining that it gets very close to owning that same position right at the top of the model range. It actually feels like a 675LT that's been dialled down by a couple of notches. Those cars are changing hands for more than £300,000 right now; at £159,750, the 570S Track Pack certainly doesn't feel like half the car. ❌

Dan Prosser (@TheDanProsser)

Specification

Engine	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight	Basic price
V8, 3799cc, twin-turbo	562bhp @ 7500rpm	443lb ft @ 5000-6500rpm	3.2sec (claimed)	204mph (claimed)	1415kg (404bhp/ton)	£159,750

➕ Road and track ability, huge performance, seating position ➖ Engine lacks response compared with the best

evo rating ★★★★★



McLaren 570S Track Pack



Bottom middle:

Alcantara trim sits well with the new model's track credentials.

Bottom right: lighter alloy wheels are standard, along with carbon-ceramic brakes

Mercedes-AMG GT C Roadster

AMG's new GT C has much of the hardware of the R, but with a more rounded character. Available first in Roadster form, it could be the best AMG GT yet

THE GT BADGING IS misleading. It suggests a floaty ride and a long-legged gait, the sort of lolling stride that you get in a Bentley or a big Aston Martin. It certainly doesn't hint at rock-solid body control and darting, snappy agility. But the Mercedes-AMG GT has always felt more like an apex-to-apex sports car than a refined grand tourer, that distinctly athletic character best summed up by the car's very responsive steering.

Truth to be told, when the AMG GT first appeared, its steering was so responsive that it felt hyperactive. It was light, unnaturally quick and very difficult to read. With that endless bonnet, the GT's front wheels already felt about half the length of a football pitch away from where you sat, but that flighty steering made the car so difficult to tune into that they might as well have been the whole 100 yards away.

The past tense is important here because the latest AMG GTs steer so much better. They have revised racks with less aggressive ratios, which means their helms are actually intuitive and easy to read, allowing

you to place the car exactly where you want it, with good feel.

The AMG GT C is the fourth variant in the range, slotting in above the second-tier S and just below the hardcore, range-topping R. The coupe version will follow in due course, but Mercedes has chosen to launch the GT C as a Roadster first. Its twin-turbo 4-litre V8 develops 549bhp – neatly splitting the 503bhp S and 577bhp R – with 502lb ft of torque from 1900 to 5750rpm.

The GT C is much more than just a bridge between those two models, though. In fact, given that it borrows hardware from the R but not its singularity of purpose, the C could just be the pick of the entire range. The borrowed bits are mostly found at the back end. The rear arches are 57mm wider than a lesser GT's, which adds visual muscle and accommodates a rear track 44mm wider, while the rear tyres are 10mm wider and wrapped around 20in wheels rather than 19s.

There's also an electronically controlled limited-slip differential, rather than the purely mechanical item found in lower-spec GTs that's slower to react and less precise in the way it distributes torque.







But the big news is rear-wheel steering. First introduced on the R, in simplified terms the rear wheels turn in the opposite direction to the front wheels when cornering below 62mph, effectively shortening the car's wheelbase and making it more agile, while above 62mph they turn in the same direction as the fronts, making the car more stable.

Even though it has a fairly complicated roof mechanism and additional body strengthening, the Roadster's weight penalty over the Coupe is around 60kg (the total here is 1678kg). The three-layer fabric roof stows or closes in 11 seconds at road speeds of up to 30mph.

Despite the GT C's standard-fit AMG Ride Control adaptive dampers, the low-speed ride is tense, although

'Dropping the hood invites the deep, rumbling exhaust note into the cabin'

it does improve with speed. Once again, the AMG GT reminds you it's a sports car, not a GT. With the hood in place, there's little to tell you it retracts at all and the structure still feels very stiff. The cabin is a real highlight, meanwhile, with a good seating position and a very high standard of fit and finish.

The steering is a night-and-day improvement over that of early AMG GTs. This clearly isn't entirely down to the rear-wheel steering, however, because an entry-level GT we drove during this launch, which wasn't so equipped, also steered rather brilliantly. Instead, rear-wheel steering helps to make the car feel shorter as you flick it between tight second- and third-gear corners, effectively bringing the front axle

closer to where you sit.

With its transaxle layout, which places the twin-clutch gearbox between the rear wheels, the GT C has massive traction, aided by that electronically controlled LSD. Despite the firm ride there's also good pliancy over bumps, so the body is rarely unsettled.

The wider rear track makes the car feel more stable and better supported across the rear end than ever, too, which means you can lean on it even harder. When the back end does break away under power, it does so predictably. With a low centre of gravity and the bulk of the mass within the two axles, the GT C is lithe and agile, slicing through corners like a much lighter car.

The engine is monstrously powerful and very responsive, while the gearbox is quick and smooth. Dropping the hood invites the deep, rumbling exhaust note into the cabin, treating you to one of the most stirring soundtracks of any turbocharged car on sale today.

On the downside, the GT C Roadster can begin to get a little wearing on longer journeys with its excessive road noise and unyielding seats. Apart from that, though, it is arguably the best AMG GT yet.

Now bring on the lighter, stiffer AMG GT C Coupe!

Dan Prosser (@TheDanProsser)



Top: bodywork is mostly aluminium, with magnesium used for the bonnet and – exclusive to the Roadster – a weight-saving composite for the bootlid. **Above:** carbon-ceramics are a £5995 option

Specification

Engine	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight	Basic price
V8, 3982cc, twin-turbo	549bhp @ 5750-6750rpm	502lb ft @ 1900-5750rpm	3.7sec (claimed)	196mph (claimed)	1678kg (332bhp/ton)	£139,445

+ Improved steering; performance; sports car dynamics - Tense low-speed ride; long-distance refinement slightly lacking

evo rating ★★★★★



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Volkswagen Golf R

Photography by Aston Parrott

The mildest of makeovers make the revised Golf R more than ever the performance car that does it all



TEN BRAKE HORSEPOWER. Ten. Doesn't sound a lot, does it? And, truth be told, I'm not sure I can tell the difference on the road – not without driving old and new Golf Rs back-to-back. But that 306bhp headline power figure subtly but assuredly elevates the latest R above the recently revised SEAT competition. It's also now a hot hatch with a power output that begins with a 'three' – even in old money – which is very much *à la mode*.

There are no changes to the chassis setup with this 'Mk7.5' Golf R, but there is an all-new twin-clutch DSG gearbox, now featuring seven (not six) gears. Other than that, it's a case of the usual slight evolution of the styling front and rear, a new

design of optional 19in wheel, and all the other modifications that have been implemented across the Mk7.5 models as a whole: a suite of driver assistance systems, a glossy new optional touchscreen infotainment system and a 'virtual dial' pack (VW's answer to Audi's Virtual Cockpit).

The Golf R is a fascinating car for two main reasons. One, because it so comprehensively nails its target audience. It's a classy yet classless hot hatch, one that mixes outrageous yet accessible performance with a smart – almost reserved – character. It's the mega-hatch that's socially acceptable, much as the Mk2 Golf GTI 16v was in the 1980s, and it's frankly no surprise that the things are now so ubiquitous, although favourable

'Certainly it's fast – really, really shockingly rapid for so little effort'

lease deals have helped, too. And secondly, because it takes a while to be completely won over by its charms. So undemanding is the R, particularly when fitted with a twin-clutcher, that it's easy to see it as highly capable, but not really special.

Certainly it's fast – really, really shockingly rapid for so little effort. One of the appealing facets of the old R was the way in which the 2-litre lump combined boosty torque from very low revs with a genuinely keen top end, and this revised engine is naturally the same. It has found a great partner in the new DSG 'box, whose shifts are virtually instantaneous and pleasingly smooth. If you're just taking it easy, with the multitude of settings accessed via the driving modes set to normal, then it'll already be in sixth gear by the time 30mph is showing on the speedo.

A manual 'box is still available, but, if the clutch pedal delay has been carried over, then the DSG option looks very appealing, and it certainly suits the engine's delivery.

Yet there's so much more to the Golf R. It's like peeling back the skin of an orange to reveal the fruit beneath: the more you drive it, the more you realise its hidden depths; the harder you drive it, the more it seems to enjoy it. It's not really fazed by any road, and I'd be tempted to add 'or by any surface' were it not for the particular spec of our test car....

The pairing of the larger, 19in rims with the omission of variable dampers (DCC) just takes the edge off both the car's ultimate ability and everyday civility. Urban roads that look smooth to the eye are fed back into the cabin with annoying pedantry, and the chassis can get slightly out of phase over sudden bumps taken at speed, as if the big wheels and meagre tyre sidewalls are a little too much for the standard dampers to contend with. Save the £810 on the bling 19s and spend it on DCC instead. Traction is absolute, and the car surprisingly neutral post-apex when accelerating hard.

All in, the Golf R remains – almost annoyingly – the answer to just about every automotive question. **✖**

Adam Towler (@AdamTowler)



Specification

Engine	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight	Basic price
In-line 4-cyl, 1984cc, turbo	306bhp @ 5500-6500rpm	280lb ft @ 2000-5400rpm	4.6sec (claimed)	155mph (limited)	1408kg (221bhp/ton)	£32,310

+ Classy and classless; outrageous yet accessible performance **-** 19-inch alloys don't do the ride any favours

evo rating ★★★★★

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TechArt GTStreet R

Porsche's 911 Turbo S a little underpowered for you? We try TechArt's 710bhp variant



TO WRITE OFF TECHART'S GTStreet R as just a conspicuous, almost grotesque tool with which to attract attention would be a mistake. Its carbonfibre bodywork, massive double-decked rear wing, GT3 RS-style front wheelarch vents, wider arches and the new intake scoop atop the engine cover may all look exuberant, but this car has substance to back up its wild appearance.

It's based on the Porsche 911 Turbo S, and keeps that model's 3.8-litre flat-six, seven-speed dual-clutch transmission and four-wheel drive. However, a remap, new turbos and a new exhaust liberate an extra 138bhp and 125lb ft of torque, pushing the totals to 710bhp and 678lb ft. The result is a claimed 0-62mph time of 2.7sec – 0.2sec quicker than Porsche's figure for the Turbo S – and a top speed of 211mph (up 6mph).

Complementing the extra performance are wider, larger-diameter wheels shod with Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres (265/30 x 21 front, 325/30 x 21 rear), firmer, lower springs and retuned geometry. Inside, lime-coloured leather panels on the doors are matched by green stitching on the part-Alcantara steering wheel,



'It soon becomes clear that the GT3-style sensations are more than just superficial'

dash and fixed-back carbonfibre front seats, while the rear seats have been replaced with a helmet holder and a bright green roll-cage. Thankfully, other colour schemes are available, as you would hope for a conversion that costs 76,109 euros plus tax (c£78,400) with 631bhp, or 108,109 euros plus tax (c£111,000) with

710bhp. And don't forget the £147,540 for the Turbo S donor car.

As soon as you turn the key you're introduced to that new exhaust. It's louder than a standard Turbo S item, but rather than being unpleasant it joins with the Alcantara, the new seats and the roll-cage to infuse the GTStreet R with the same hardcore vibe Porsche's GT models exude.

During normal driving the TechArt's performance doesn't feel remarkably different from that of a standard Turbo S. It's incredibly fast, but also useable and friendly much of the time. Stretch the engine beyond 6000rpm, though, and the extra grunt makes itself known with a huge jolt forwards that the tyres struggle to contain. In a straight line it's fun and addictive, and you tend to stay in the lower gears just to experience this energetic top end.

Turn into a corner with any verve and it soon becomes clear that the GT3-style sensations are more than just superficial. The front axle reacts immediately to steering inputs, and a lack of roll means there's no slack even in quick direction changes. The steering is a lot more communicative than a regular 911 Turbo's too, and there's so much front-end bite that

it's rare to get close to the tyres' limits through cornering forces alone.

But that brutal thrust isn't so helpful when you're trying to exit a turn in a controlled fashion. Stray into the top quarter of the rev range and the explosion of acceleration immediately makes the car want to swap ends. It's so startling that you instantly lift off the throttle, but now the front axle can't interject with a wave of torque and pull you cleanly away from the corner, as it would in a Turbo S. But trust that reliable front end, stand on the throttle just a little bit later, and the acceleration, combined with a degree of corrective lock, work to straighten the car and then teleport you to the next bend.

The extra power alone could have turned the GTStreet R into an untameable beast, but TechArt's chassis work gives you a fighting chance of managing the performance. It can feel ragged and borderline scary some of the time, but mastering the aggressive surge of thrust is incredibly satisfying. If you find a Turbo S or even a GT3 RS too tame, this could be the 911 you're looking for – albeit an eye-wateringly expensive one. ❌

Will Beaumont
(@WillBeaumont)

Specification

Engine	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight	Price
Flat-six, 3800cc, twin-turbo	710bhp @ n/a rpm	678lb ft @ n/a rpm	2.7sec (claimed)	211mph (claimed)	c1600kg (451bhp/ton)	See text

➕ Immense and exciting performance ➖ Not exactly subtle, or cheap

evo rating ★★★★★

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Bentley Mulsanne Speed

Photography by Aston Parrott

Can anything weighing 2610kg ever be sporting? Well, 811lb ft of torque gives the Speed a fighting chance



IT ALWAYS FEELS WRONG to hustle a Bentley, even when it's fitted with the most potent version of the company's legendary six-and-three-quarter-litre twin-turbocharged V8. There's something not quite right about asking 2610kg of aluminium, timber, bovine skin, shag-pile carpet and a champagne fridge neatly installed between its two rear seats to adopt the attitude of a McLaren. It's just not the done thing.

Clearly Bentley feels differently or it wouldn't go to the trouble of spending 400 hours building each Mulsanne Speed. That includes 5800 individual welds and 37 hours spent stitching the interior trim together. Oh, and the ten-and-a-half hours set aside to bolt together its fabulously fearsome engine.

The bald stats are 530bhp and – rather more tellingly – 811lb ft, delivered via an eight-speed ZF auto gearbox that's been recalibrated from the standard Mulsanne's settings to better optimise the engine's output. There's even an 'S' mode for the shift speeds. With almost three tons to propel, every little helps.

Further enhancements include new active engine mounts and uprated suspension bushes to accompany Bentley's Drive Dynamics Control and Continuous Damping



Control systems. The former manages throttle, suspension and steering maps; the latter controls the car's air suspension to allow it to switch from chauffeur levels of comfort to a lower, more aerodynamically efficient setting at higher speeds.

A Mulsanne Speed is not for those wishing to keep a low profile. It's vast. There are flats on London's rental market with a smaller square footage (and this is the short-wheelbase model; the Extended Wheelbase adds a further 250mm of real estate).

Since last year's revamp, everything is bigger on the new Mulsanne: the grille is wider by 80mm, the front bumper by 53mm, the rear by 26mm. But the ride height here is lower. With the Speed's darkened chrome 21-inch wheels, it's a bit of beast – a monster truck, to recall Ettore Bugatti's suggestion that WO Bentley's finest

were the fastest trucks in the world.

Inside, there's a new touchscreen infotainment system to bring the big Bentley gracefully into the 21st century on the tech front. For £15,000, Crewe will even provide a couple of iPads in the rear picnic tables, a Naim stereo, TVs for the rear passengers and a Wi-Fi hotspot. Fifteen grand, though, will also buy you an S1 Elise with enough change to repair a head gasket failure.

Use the Mulsanne Speed like a regular car (say, sub-two-tons and around £200k cheaper) and you might be left wondering: 'What am I paying for?' It's very quiet; the refinement levels are off the scale and the effort required to do anything barely registers. Drive with anyone in the rear seats and you can't help but think they are having the greater Bentley experience. Then you

'Overcome your self-reserve, twist the knurled DCC control to Sport and hold on'

overcome your British self-reserve, twist the knurled DCC control to Sport and hold on.

At 1750rpm the 6.75-litre has already reached peak torque and maintains it to around 3000rpm, then there's a bit of a drop off before full power arrives at 4000rpm. At no time do you feel the need for more thrust. And where the steering was a bit rudderless in comfort or 'Bentley' mode, it loses wooliness and gains some precision; enough, in fact, to allow you to exploit that monstrous V8. The ride quality even remains intact when you select the firmer damper setting to control the beautifully crafted body.

The Bentley Mulsanne Speed, then: great to be driven in and better to drive when you ask it to swap its Loakes for a pair of Onitsuka Tigers. **Stuart Gallagher** (@stuartg917)

Specification

Engine	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight	Basic price
V8, 6752cc, twin-turbo	530bhp @ 4000rpm	811lb ft @ 1750rpm	4.9sec (claimed)	190mph (claimed)	2610kg (206bhp/ton)	£252,000

+ Extravagant, effortless performance **-** Passengers have more fun than you do

evo rating ★★★★★



RICHARD MEADEN

Not only is the way in which hypercars are built rapidly changing, but so is their raison d'être. Meaden reckons he's identified a perturbing new trend

JUST A FEW YEARS AGO, WE, LIKE EVERY OTHER motoring media title on the planet, were obsessed with the Porsche 918 Spyder, McLaren P1 and LaFerrari. And rightly so, for the so-called Holy Trinity of hypercars were something new, thanks to next-level performance delivered via clever and highly complex hybrid powertrains.

We didn't appreciate it at the time but those cars were like the cork firing out of the champagne bottle, for they have been followed by a torrent of increasingly extraordinary hypercars.

Funnily enough, I don't include the Bugatti Chiron in that wave. Not because it's somehow not worthy, but because it sticks to conventional methods – namely eight litres, sixteen cylinders, four turbochargers and an awful lot of petrol – to deliver its insane performance. Like the Veyron, it separates itself from its rivals.

Elsewhere, the pace of change has been breathtaking. Aerodynamics have leapt to LMP1 levels and hybrid has transcended its tree-hugging roots to become an essential performance booster. Both Aston Martin's Valkyrie and Mercedes-AMG's Project One employ hybrid tech – the Aston in conjunction with a bespoke, high-revving naturally aspirated V12, the AMG with a version of its 1.6-litre F1 V6 turbo.

Yes, I know they're ridiculous machines, but I'd be lying if I said I wasn't hugely excited about them. As much to see if they really can deliver a worthwhile driving experience on the road (as their creators insist they will) as I am about attempting to access their full-blown capabilities on track. However, such is the madness of our times, it would seem things have moved on before either of these two fantastical beasts has turned a wheel.

I suppose the advent of the all-electric hypercar was inevitable, but the speed with which they are appearing and the capabilities they claim to possess is succeeding in turning me off. Partly it's because they're all unfamiliar names – Vanda Dendrobium, for example – but deep down I think the noble supercar/hypercar has somehow been hijacked in the name of 'technology showcases'.

Supercars have always served that purpose to a degree. They're halo cars. But at least we know what we're getting excited about with Ferrari, McLaren or Porsche. Getting in a lather about these unknown electric hypercars makes me feel like I'm falling for a sucker-punch, my natural inclination to be drawn to fast, exciting

cars betrayed by something that's not real. Or perhaps a dazzling Trojan Horse filled with far less-interesting white-goods EVs.

Of all the emerging players, Croatia-based Rimac Automobili is by far the most interesting, the most authentic and, to my mind, the most **evo**. A leader in battery and electric-motor technology, its Concept One hypercar impressively showcases the fruits of its labours, with a huge amount of the car done in-house. It has also built cars for 'Monster' Tajima's assaults on Pikes Peak and has recently been named as technology partner for the Aston Valkyrie. If Rimac's own Concept One becomes a production reality it could well be a game-changer – the Tesla of the hypercar world.

However, I'm not so sure about the projects from Singapore-based Vanda Electrics or China-based NextEV. Firstly because both rely heavily on outsourced engineering expertise – the former with Williams Advanced Engineering, the latter with RML – but mainly because the Dendrobium and Nio EP9 have little or nothing to do with what each company actually wants to sell us. It all feels a bit like chequebook brand-building: take a load of money to an established engineering consultancy, commission a hypercar that you have no real intention of building in any meaningful numbers, but stick your name on it in the hope it generates plenty of media exposure for your upcoming range of far more mainstream electric vehicles.

That's not to denigrate the ambition, effort or expertise that's being ploughed into each of these machines. The Dendrobium looks a long way from being ready, but the Nio EP9 is well advanced, with a raft of super-quick lap times serving as proof of its capabilities. Thus far it has come within a handful of seconds of the Porsche 918 Spyder's Nordschleife lap record and, perhaps more impressively, lapped the Circuit of The Americas both with and without a driver. I'm not sure autonomous technology and hypercars make great bedfellows – what dream are they trying to sell us? – but, if nothing, it's a great way to grab headlines. Or develop self-driving tech for bread-and-butter EVs...

Only time will tell whether these battery-powered hypercars are hollow, fatuous publicity stunts or genuine attempts at being the final nails in the traditional petrol-powered supercars and hypercars we've come to worship. In a rather unsettling way I hope it's the latter. Otherwise what's the point? ❌

'The speed at which electric hypercars are appearing is turning me off'



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RICHARD PORTER

The choice of paint colours car makers currently offer is unspeakably dull. Porter reckons he knows why

LOOKING DOWN MY STREET IS A STRANGELY monochrome experience. There's a grey car, a black car, a white car, a grey car, another grey car, another white car and on it goes until you get to our house with my wife's car outside, which is white. But don't worry, next week she's getting her new car. Which is grey. I was going to say that, as a nation, we're not very imaginative when it comes to choosing car colours. Not like we were in the 1970s, when every British car showroom exploded with a range of eye-strangling greens, browns and yellows, as if car makers drew their colour palettes from what comes out of the various holes in a baby.

But have people really lost their bravery and imagination? Or is it that we're being denied the choice as car companies steer us towards a dreary palette of off-greys? The new Merc E63, for example, is available in two standard colours – black or white – and six optional metallics, two of which are silver. If you want something truly vibrant you'll have to spend 900 quid to enter the up-spec 'Designo' range, which contains just three colours, one of which is bright red. The other two are white and grey.

I'm not singling out Mercedes for being dreary, firstly because they do that uncommonly zingy and delightful blue you see around on C-classes, including Richard Meaden's C63 Fast Fleet car, and secondly because this is the case with all car makers. Of the 11 colours available on a mid-range Jaguar XE, for example, seven are black, white, silver or grey. If you want normal metallic paint on your Audi R8, you have just four choices: silver, grey, black or a very dark green. Or, for no extra cost, you can have a pearl-effect finish. In grey. Then there's BMW. Alongside a whole platter of the usual non-colours, they'll do you an M4 in run-off-area blue, fake-blood red or chest-infection yellow, but if you're ordering a 330i, the most exciting colour you're allowed is an unremarkable red.

To get truly interesting paint choices you have to look to the pricey end of things. If you're specing an Aston Martin DB11, for example, you're plunged into a technicolour world so vast Timothy Leary would get a headache. You want your V12 GT sprayed the

colour of 1950s toothpaste? Always dreamt of marshalling 600 horsepower inside the skin tone of a Wilmslow gym instructor? Wish to develop a sudden craving for a can of Fanta every time you whip off the car cover? Not a problem, sir. It's the same at McLaren where, thanks to the excellent time-vacuum of their new configurator, I discover the 720S can be built in a heady range of paints spanning everything from 'The dog's not well' to 'Uncle Peter's fourth heart attack'.

This is more like it, I found myself thinking as I worked on my seventh new spec for the mythical McLaren I will not order. And then, in a standard online game I play over and over again, I shifted from simply trying to push the boundaries of taste and expense and started designing the spec I'd actually want to drive. Now, the 720S is a supercar. It's never going to move discreetly and silently down the high street. People look at supercars. You may as well give them good reason to stare by ordering one the colour of a trippy Tellytubby. And yet... every time I do the online design for the car I'd actually order, I find myself erring towards those subtle silvers and tasteful greys.

Maybe it's a sign of the times. In all likelihood, we'll look back on the 2010s as the era of grey. Everyone's painting their living rooms muted, flat Farrow & Ball colours like Mouse's Despair and Badger's Ballbag, and the same is true of cars. I'd love to say that my new Aston DB11 is turning up next week and it's the colour of a particularly terrible sneeze, but that probably wouldn't be true, even if I had 155 grand to spare. Nor is my imaginary McLaren 720S about to enliven the neighbourhood with its sports exhaust and panels the colour of a baboon's bum. I'd love to, but I have to wonder if I could summon up the guts.

Maybe that's why the average car is silver, white or grey. Car companies are giving us what we actually want, rather than what we wish we were brave enough to order. Which is a shame because I really, really lust after a DB11. I'd love to buy a 720S too. And, in the unlikely event this ever happens, perhaps I need to be bold on the spec. If nothing else, I think I owe it to my street. ☒

'People look at supercars, so you may as well give them good reason to stare by ordering one the colour of a trippy Tellytubby'



Stainless Sport System



Stainless Sport System



Stainless Sport System



Stainless Sport System



Stainless Sport System



Sport System inc. Carbon Tips



Sport System inc. Carbon Tips



Sport System inc. Carbon Tips



Sport System inc. Carbon Tips



Evoque SD4 Diesel 2011 on



Evoque Si4 petrol 2011 on



Range Rover 3.0 V6 SuperCharged 2014 on



Range Rover 5.0 V8 inc. SuperCharged 2013 on



Range Rover 5.0 V8 inc. SuperCharged 2009-13



Range Rover Sport 3.0 V6 SuperCharged 2014 on



Range Rover Sport 5.0 V8 SuperCharged 2014 on



Range Rover Sport SVR 2015 on



Range Rover Sport 5.0 V8 Supercharged 2009-13

SUPERIOR EXHAUST SYSTEMS FOR THE WORLD'S FINEST CARS





TED KRAVITZ

*A Ferrari win in Melbourne was cause for celebration.
Now just imagine if the drivers could actually race*

MOTOR RACING. THE CLUE IS IN THE NAME. But, as F1 is learning, when complex aerodynamics preclude racing, the sporting element withers away. You don't even need loads of overtaking – the formula just needs to provide the technical possibility for a driver to get close enough to another driver to allow them to race. Attack and defend. Sure, a crisp overtake is satisfying and rewarding, but some of the most memorable Grands Prix have been decided by an unsuccessful overtake. Monaco 1992, for example, when Ayrton Senna held off Nigel Mansell for lap after nail-biting lap. Mansell couldn't pass, but he and Senna could race.

The 2017 regulations have led to an aero-mechanical package that provides prodigious grip, all of which is lost as soon as one car gets in the turbulent air of another. If you find that frustrating, you're not alone. Lewis Hamilton has been unusually vocal in his criticism, arguing that if the new rules make following and racing harder than before, whoever came up with them should be held accountable and never be let within sniffing distance of a rulebook again.

Hamilton's concerns are shared by F1's new management. Despite the fact that billions have been spent on implementing these new aero regs, they could all be binned just as soon as they arrived. Ross Brawn, a man charged with the difficult balancing act of keeping teams and race fans happy, has left the door open to changing the rules again after only one year, stating that if Formula 1 Management (i.e. him) think there's a problem with the racing, they will 'fight their corner' to make it better.

But in the meantime we're stuck with what we've got – the silver lining being that it's bloody close. The difference between success and failure, at least in Melbourne, was less than one second. That was the margin by which Sebastian Vettel beat Lewis Hamilton out of the pits – and, since you can't race, went on to beat him, via a bigger margin, to the chequered flag. At least it secured the 'anyone but Mercedes' victory the sport so desperately needed.

Ferrari's return to form is undoubtedly good for F1, and its first win for over a year a relief for team principal Maurizio Arrivabene. That magnificent name (affectionately anglicised to 'Maurice Comeswell') has been synonymous with tension over the last year,

as a winless season, such as Ferrari suffered in 2016, is usually followed by an agonising few weeks waiting for the principal to be sacked. But Arrivabene has hung on in there, his face only slightly more grizzled than before, his hair, slicked back with a liberal amount of gentleman's pomade, only slightly more grey.

Maurizio might give the impression of being a menacing ex-scrap metal dealer (copyright Richard Porter), but he's actually a gentle softie (or so I've heard), doing his best to protect his team from the impatient demands of Fiat boss Sergio Marchionne and the expectation of Ferrari fans worldwide, all of whom yearn for a world championship to break the ten-year drought. Arrivabene came to the most pressurised job in F1 from Ferrari's main sponsor Philip Morris, parent company of the Marlboro cigarette brand.

Back in the day, 'Mauri' was a keen consumer of his company's products (red label, no messing), but has since given up, probably for the best given his stressful line of work.

If Arrivabene and Vettel can convert one win into two, or more, then a genuine two-team rivalry for the championship could make up for the loss of regular wheel-to-wheel racing. We will live in anticipation of the day when conditions allow Vettel and Hamilton to race, like Schumacher and Häkkinen before them, with defeat or victory hanging in the balance of a single second.

Absent from that fight and the real mystery of the season so far is Red Bull. In a rule-

change year we expected Adrian Newey to show everyone the way, yet only Max Verstappen finished in Melbourne – some 30 seconds behind Ferrari, the team Red Bull trounced in 2016. It seems Red Bull has gone backwards. One explanation is the late change to the suspension rules. Christian Horner was careful with his choice of words when suggesting the ban had not been the primary reason for his team's poor pace, but the rapid reversion to old suspension has left the car's setup on a knife-edge. Red Bull is angry at how Ferrari's requests for clarification changed the FIA's mind, despite the UK-based team having paperwork from F1 race director Charlie Whiting saying he thought their suspension was OK.

Red Bull didn't make a fuss in Australia so as not to disrupt Liberty Media's first race. But its resentment hasn't gone away and, in the meantime, Ferrari is on top. All's well that Comeswell. ✕

**'A genuine
two-team
rivalry could
make up for the
loss of regular
wheel-to-wheel
racing'**



Ceramic Coated Sport Exhaust System



911 Turbo and Turbo S (991) 2011-15



Stainless Sport Exhaust System



911 GT3 (991) 2014 on



Stainless Sport Secondary Silencer Delete Pipes



911 (991) 3.4, 3.8 2012-15



Titanium Sport Exhaust System



997 Turbo & GT2 2008-11



Stainless Sport System Cat Back



911 (997) GT3 2007 on



Stainless Sport System



Panamera S 4S GTS V8 2008-14



Stainless Sport Rear Sections



911 Carrera (997) 2005-11



Stainless Sport System inc. Race-Cats



911 Turbo & GT2 (996) 2001-06



Stainless Sport Rear Sections



911 Carrera (996) 1997-05



Stainless Active Sport Systems



Boxster and Cayman S 3.4 (987 Gen2) 2009-12

SUPERIOR EXHAUST SYSTEMS FOR THE WORLD'S FINEST CARS



REDEMPTION?

by DAN PROSSER

With nearly 400bhp, this is the most powerful RS3 to date, and it's now available as a saloon as well as a hatch. But has Audi also managed to give its halo A3 a chassis to match its prodigious go?







S

SOMEWHERE between the trickle of card-carrying petrolheads who reel off acceleration times and waste entire lunch hours poring over classifieds, and the white-water torrent of reluctant motorists who drive only because they must and care less for their cars than for their lawns, there exists a third group. They are the inbetweeners. They are not enthusiasts, but neither are they so indifferent that driving is a chore, or that cars are mere appliances that cost too much. They care about what they drive; beyond that it's all meaningless, uninteresting guff.

For years the Audi RS3 has been the darling of these inbetweeners. They've enjoyed the prestige of that four-ringed badge on the nose and the distinction of the 'R' and the 'S' on the rear. They've liked the looks and the cabin quality, and when they've 'opened her up' on the dual carriageway, as the inbetweeners are inclined to do, they've had a great deal of fun thundering past slower, less expensive traffic.

The Audi RS3, the inbetweeners will tell you, is a great car. In fact, it isn't. The RS3 has never been without its strengths – burly five-cylinder motor, handsome and purposeful styling – but it has always been let down by inexcusable dynamic shortcomings, be it an unnecessarily hard-edged ride or vague, stodgy steering. Or understeer. Acres of understeer. Vast plains of front-axle push that made them frustrating to drive at any sort of speed and far less entertaining than rivals from Volkswagen, Mercedes, Ford and the others.

But now there is a new Audi RS3, or rather a heavily revised version. It still looks good in that subtly menacing way, it still has a smart, high-quality interior, and the engine is still a burly five-cylinder. It still ticks the status boxes the inbetweeners hold dear, then, but is there anything at all about this latest RS3 that could elevate it to a place where those of us who really care about the finer points of driving should pay it any credence?

Ever since Mercedes-AMG released the 376bhp A45 last year, we've been awaiting the

400bhp hot hatch. Well, here it is. (Actually, it's a 394bhp hot hatch once you convert from metric PS to traditional bhp, but we're not about to quibble over a handful of nags.) This new RS3 is the most powerful hot hatch ever, but for reasons I will come to later, it's not the five-door Sportback model I'm interested in. Instead, it's the four-door Saloon that's got my attention.

The 2.5-litre turbo engine has been reworked for this revised RS3. Power is up by 32bhp, while torque rises slightly to 354lb ft across a wide torque band – 1700-5850rpm. Audi has made a few modifications to the internals, including plasma-coated cylinder bores to reduce friction and a crankshaft that's now hollow, saving 1kg. In fact, weight saving is the real headline news where the engine is concerned. Some 26kg has been whittled away from the big five-pot, mostly through the use of an aluminium crankcase. That not only reduces the weight of the car as a whole, but also improves weight distribution. Audi Sport chief engineer Stephan Reil reckons it shifts the balance rearwards by a full percentage point, which comes as very



encouraging news for a car that has always been resolutely nose-heavy.

The only gearbox option is a seven-speed twin-clutch unit and the RS3 is still, of course, four-wheel drive. It's the latest hardware from Haldex and, like the system in the outgoing RS3, it can act proactively rather than having to wait for a difference in wheel speed between the axles before it transfers torque rearwards. However, unlike the old version, which could only send 80 per cent of the available torque to the rear, this one can send every last drop. It's actually the same all-wheel-drive setup that makes the latest TT RS far and away the most engaging quick TT so far.

Audi quotes a launch-control-assisted 0-62mph time of 4.1sec for both hatch and saloon, with a top speed of 155mph, but if you're really in a hurry you can pay to have that lifted to 174mph. The car comes fitted with passive dampers as standard, but you can specify Magnetic Ride adaptive dampers.

Inevitably the RS3 has various drive modes and an intermediate setting for the stability-control system. In Dynamic mode, with the ESC set to Sport or off altogether, the RS3 is at its most agile and playful, the all-wheel drive most inclined to send torque rearwards to push the car away from a corner rather than pull it out. Whether that's enough to make this the RS3 we've been waiting for we'll soon find out.

The standard brake setup uses 370mm cast-iron discs on the front axle with eight-piston calipers, although carbon-ceramic rotors can be specified. A sports exhaust also features on the options list, as does Audi's Virtual Cockpit,

which replaces the traditional dials with a 12-inch TFT screen. The RS3 is still no lightweight – at just over 1500kg in both forms, it's slightly heavier than Mercedes-AMG's A45, though it is a few kilos lighter than BMW's M2 (when fitted with the equivalent DCT 'box, at least).

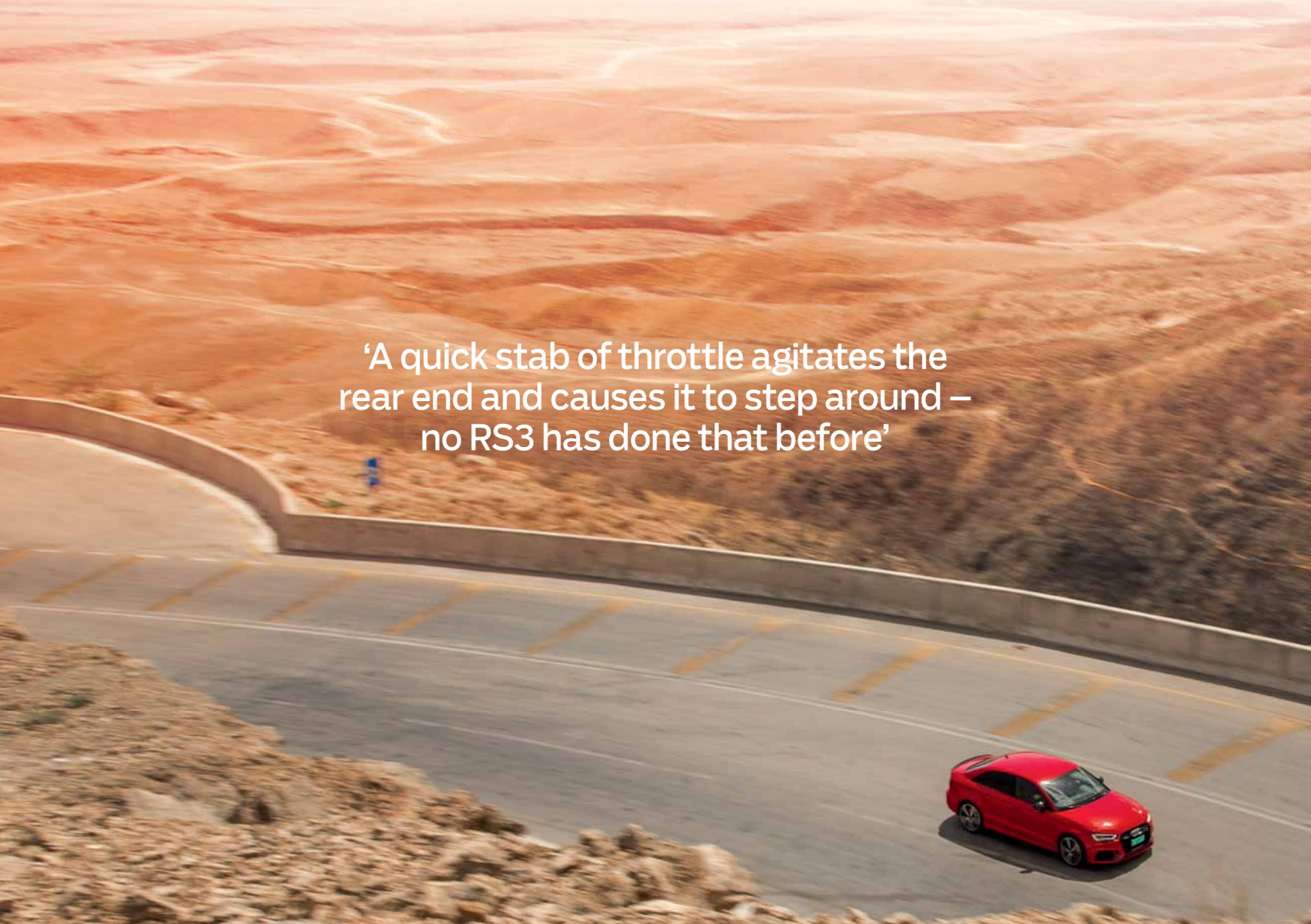
For all their diligence and earnestness and grey-suited corporate solemnity, the world's premium car makers can be spectacularly schoolboy-ish at times, not least in their steadfast refusal to base an international media launch at a hotel that a rival has already used. This explains why I find myself sitting in a very lovely holiday resort close to Salalah, Oman, on the very edge of the Arabian Peninsula, basking in 30-degree heat in the middle of March. Everyone is comfortable and relaxed. Reil has just had lunch and puffed his way through a Marlboro. He flops down into the seat opposite me and reclines as though he's settling down to watch a film. He is unguarded, open and forthcoming.

The adaptive dampers, he says, are only for improving ride comfort. If spirited driving is your bag, stick with the purer, less interfering passive setup. And while the official Audi line declares the Sportback and Saloon behave just the same as one another out on a twisting road, Reil lets slip that the four-door model does have certain characteristics relating to its shape – centre of gravity, weight distribution and so on – that will confer a handling advantage. So it's the Saloon that I make a beeline for. Plus it looks better, like a mini RS4. Although I reckon it still needs a bit more arch.

After a short drive through the completely



'Unlike the old RS3, which could only send 80 per cent of the available torque to the rear, this one can send every last drop'

A high-angle, wide shot of a red Audi RS3 driving on a two-lane asphalt road that curves through a vast, arid, orange-brown desert landscape. The car is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the frame, moving away from the viewer. The road has yellow dashed lines and a concrete guardrail on the outer edge. The background shows rolling hills and a clear sky.

‘A quick stab of throttle agitates the rear end and causes it to step around – no RS3 has done that before’

unremarkable city of Salalah, probably twinned with Kidderminster, the route steers us away from the coast and towards the mountains. Suddenly we arrive at a long, sweeping 180-degree bend, and then another, then another, each one lifting us closer to the top of the mountain range. The RS3 immediately feels poised and balanced with a grippy, tenacious front axle. It gets into a corner keenly and feels neutral at the apex, then drives positively through to the exit.

What hasn't changed is the massive straight-line punch from the engine. It starts pulling really hard at 2500rpm and doesn't let up until it butts into the rev-limiter at 7000rpm. Throttle response is good, if not razor-sharp, and the soundtrack, with the engine exhaling through the optional sports exhaust, is guttural and throaty, with none of those engineered-in pops and crackles that can seem so contrived.

The gearbox is so refined in auto mode that you're not really aware of there being one at all, while in manual it's quick and responsive. I do find myself having to call for a downshift more than once on occasion, though. I also wish the

driver's seat would drop an inch or two lower and I'd like more support from these upgraded sports seats, but at least the steering wheel reaches right out to my chest.

The test route cuts along a plateau atop the mountain range for mile after mile, fast sweepers bleeding into one another past caravans of huge, dim-witted camels, while sand and pale rocks reach out as far as the eye can see in all directions. The road surface is mostly very smooth, but the few scars and blemishes I do rattle over suggest there's an edge to the RS3's ride quality that might make it a touch unyielding on the roughest roads. It's not unbearably stiff, though.

We won't have a chance to test a Magnetic Ride car on this occasion, but for these roads the passive chassis gives decent pliancy over bumps and good body control, without taking so much movement out of the car in cornering that it feels completely inert. The steering, meanwhile, is as good as Audi's electronically assisted setups have ever been: sharp and direct, and without the gloopy and imprecise feel of earlier iterations.

Eventually the road begins to bunch up and flick this way and that, then it reaches a sequence of ten or so hairpin bends that drop it back down onto the plain that separates the mountain range from the ocean. Our test car is fitted with the optional wider front tyres – up from a rear-matching 235mm to 255 – which give a little more turn-in grip and help to give a more neutral balance. I'm grateful for it because these hairpins are so glassy smooth it's almost as though they're soaking wet and streaked with oil. But they offer a good demonstration of the RS3's newfound balance. Trail-brake into a corner and the front end bites. The car quickly spreads its weight across both axles, feeling neutral towards the apex, perhaps slipping into a sniff of lift-off oversteer. Previous RS3s would push into understeer here. A quick stab of throttle agitates the rear end and causes it to step around – no RS3 has done that before – at which point you simply catch the slide, stand on the throttle and let the car gently drift out towards the exit in a neat powerslide.

These hairpins may flatter the new RS3, but there's no doubt its chassis balance has



been improved. Previous versions would have bluntly nosed their way down the hill like runaway bobsleds. The important point is that the new model feels poised and agile in faster, grippier corners, too, both on the way in with a closed throttle and on the way out with the throttle wide open. For the first time, the RS3 is engaging, rewarding and fun to drive.

There's been a change at Audi's fast-car division recently, not least in its rebranding from quattro GmbH to Audi Sport. Its latest products are entertaining and adjustable where for so long they were mostly remote and prescriptive. The TT RS, S4 and S5 and now the RS3 are much more fun to hustle than ever before. They feel more fleet of foot and less like they're wearing lead boots.

For too long the RS3 has been a fast car rather than a true performance car. This latest version will undoubtedly continue to be the darling of the inbetweeners because it still combines performance with a certain aspirational desirability, but for the first time, the RS3's appeal reaches beyond the half-interested onlookers. It's now a car for enthusiasts, too. ✕

Above: five-cylinder engine's output nips at the heels of that of the latest 911 Carrera S. **Above right:** twin-clutch gearbox is silky smooth. **Below:** optional front tyres are wider than those at the rear



Audi RS3 Saloon

Engine In-line 5-cyl, 2480cc, turbo

Power 394bhp @ 5850-7000rpm

Torque 354lb ft @ 1700-5850rpm

Transmission Seven-speed dual-clutch, four-wheel drive

Front suspension MacPherson struts, coil springs, dampers

Rear suspension Four-link, coil springs, dampers

Brakes Ventilated discs, 370mm front, 310mm rear

Wheels 19in front and rear

Tyres 255/30 R19 front (optional), 235/35 R19 rear

Weight 1515kg

Power-to-weight 264bhp/ton

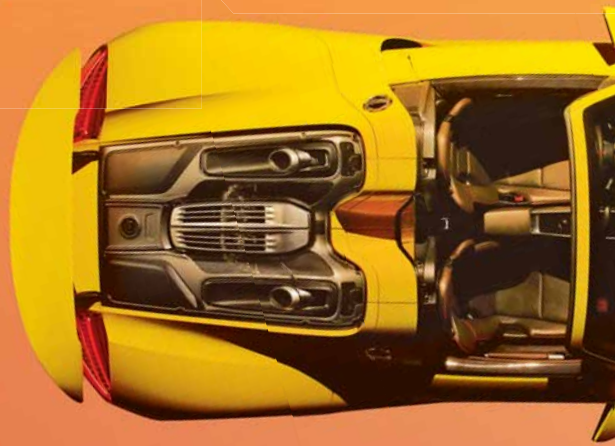
0-62mph 4.1sec (claimed)

Top speed 155mph (limited, raised 174mph limit optional)

Basic price c£46,000

On sale Summer 2017

evo rating: ★★★★★



A
BRIEF
HISTORY
OF

POWER

Will these power wars ever end? If the past four decades are anything to go by, probably not. But how exactly did we get to this age of 350bhp-plus hot hatches and 1500bhp hypercars?

by ANTONY INGRAM



Walk into a BMW dealership asking for a 200-horsepower car in 2017 and the salesperson will probably hand you the key to a 320d. If you did the same back in 1979 they'd have put you behind the wheel of an E12-generation M535i, packing six cylinders and 3.5 litres, and sitting below only the M1 in BMW's hierarchy.

When it arrives later this year, the M535i's descendant – the G30-generation M5 – will make something north of 600bhp, enabling it to compete in a segment where such figures are becoming the norm, having long ago climbed above 300, 400 and even 500bhp.

It's the same story in virtually every other sector in the performance-car market: cars now make three times (or more) the power that their contemporaries did just four decades ago, but do so with greater reliability and astounding ease of use. In the last decade in particular, technological advancements have resulted in some astonishing numbers, aided by sophisticated electronic-control systems, tyre advancements and, in some cases, electric motors – to assist or even power the car outright.

Hot hatchbacks have brought some of these developments within reach of the greatest number of people. Time was when you could dethrone traditional sports cars with a small three- or five-door model by simply dropping in a larger engine – preferably with fuel-injection, though forced induction briefly found favour in the 1980s, with blue-collar heroes such as the Escort RS Turbo and MG Maestro Turbo outpunching their naturally aspirated counterparts. Sixteen-valve heads soon put a stop to that, and variable valve timing (and lift, as in Honda's VTEC engines) took things further still – in 1999, 170bhp seemed

an astonishing amount in a car as small as a Renault Clio. The first Focus RS set the template for the modern era, though, making over 210bhp from its turbocharged four-cylinder: today's equivalents now send another 50 per cent to the front wheels alone.

A history of sports saloons is ostensibly a history of BMW's M5, with both cylinder count and capacity increases ensuring outputs have climbed steadily since the mid-1970s. Forced induction features in this category too. Both the Lotus Carlton and the supercharged Jaguar XJR knocked BMW off its perch in power terms, but the E60 M5's staggering 5-litre naturally aspirated V10 lifted the class straight into supercar territory in 2004. Since then, turbocharging has been the go-to when reaching for the 600bhp mark, but cars such as the 671bhp Porsche Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid and 595bhp Tesla Model S P100D have shown the potential of electric power – and not just to reduce emissions.

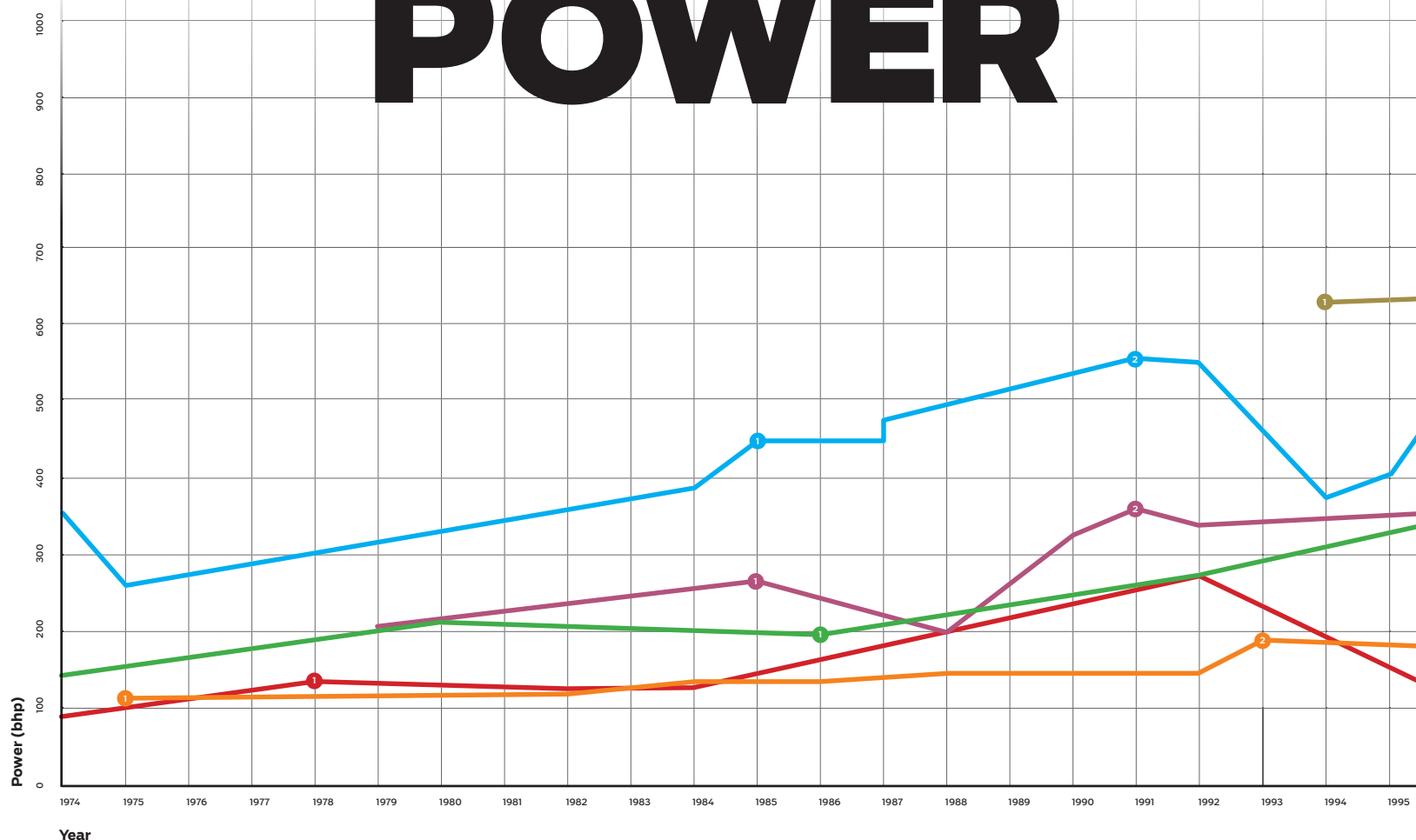
Electric power has also come to define the supercar class. It didn't start that way – back in the 1970s, Lamborghini needed nothing more than a 3.9-litre V12 to make its cars among the fastest on the planet. Ferrari countered with the turbocharged 288 GTO, but it was 1987's F40 that moved the game on: 2.9 litres, eight cylinders and a pair of turbochargers made for a mighty (and conservatively quoted) 471bhp. Bugatti took things further with the quad-turbocharged EB110, but neither could compare with what upstart McLaren had in store. Its BMW-supplied, naturally aspirated V12 produced 627bhp, helping to make the F1 it resided in arguably the first example of what we now call a hypercar. Just over a decade later Bugatti's Veyron breached the 1000 PS (986bhp) mark with its 8-litre, quad-turbo W16. Since then, the race towards 1500bhp has been rapid, with either electric power or turbocharging – normally both – taking hypercars to new heights.

By contrast, sports cars have moved at a slower pace. Porsche's Boxster provides a good indication of two-seaters in recent times, starting with 201bhp in 1996 and rising to a turbocharged 345bhp in the new 718 Boxster S, but weight, as well as power, has influenced performance in this category. The 82bhp Morgan 3 Wheeler is less potent than a 1974 MGB but a great deal faster, while Alfa's 4C Spider makes less power than a TVR Griffith from 1992, but still gets to 60mph a few tenths quicker.

And what about performance coupes? These could also be traced through a Porsche lineage in the form of the 911, but with the likes of Nissan's GT-R, Audi's R8 V8 and, of course, BMW's M3, it certainly hasn't completely dominated this class – on paper, at least.

Turn the page to see in more detail how outputs have progressed over the last 40 years as we chart the power figures of 100 key **evo** models. Then maybe take a moment to ponder where those lines are heading...

THE PROGRESS OF POWER



HOT HATCHES (FRONT-DRIVE)

1975	Volkswagen Golf GTI Mk1 (1.6)	108bhp
1982	Volkswagen Golf GTI Mk1 (1.8)	110bhp
1984	Ford Escort RS Turbo	132bhp
1986	Peugeot 205 GTI 1.9	127bhp
1988	Vauxhall Astra GTE	154bhp
1992	Honda Civic 1.6 VTi	158bhp
1993	Rover 220 GTi Turbo	197bhp
1999	Renault Sport Clio 172	170bhp
2001	Honda Civic Type R (EP3)	197bhp
2001	Alfa Romeo 147 GTA	247bhp
2002	Ford Focus RS (Mk1)	212bhp
2005	Vauxhall Astra VXR	237bhp
2009	Ford Focus RS (Mk2)	300bhp
2010	Ford Focus RS500	345bhp
2011	Ford Focus ST	247bhp
2014	Renault Sport Mégane 275 Trophy-R	271bhp
2015	Honda Civic Type R (FK2)	306bhp
2016	Volkswagen Golf GTI Clubsport S	306bhp

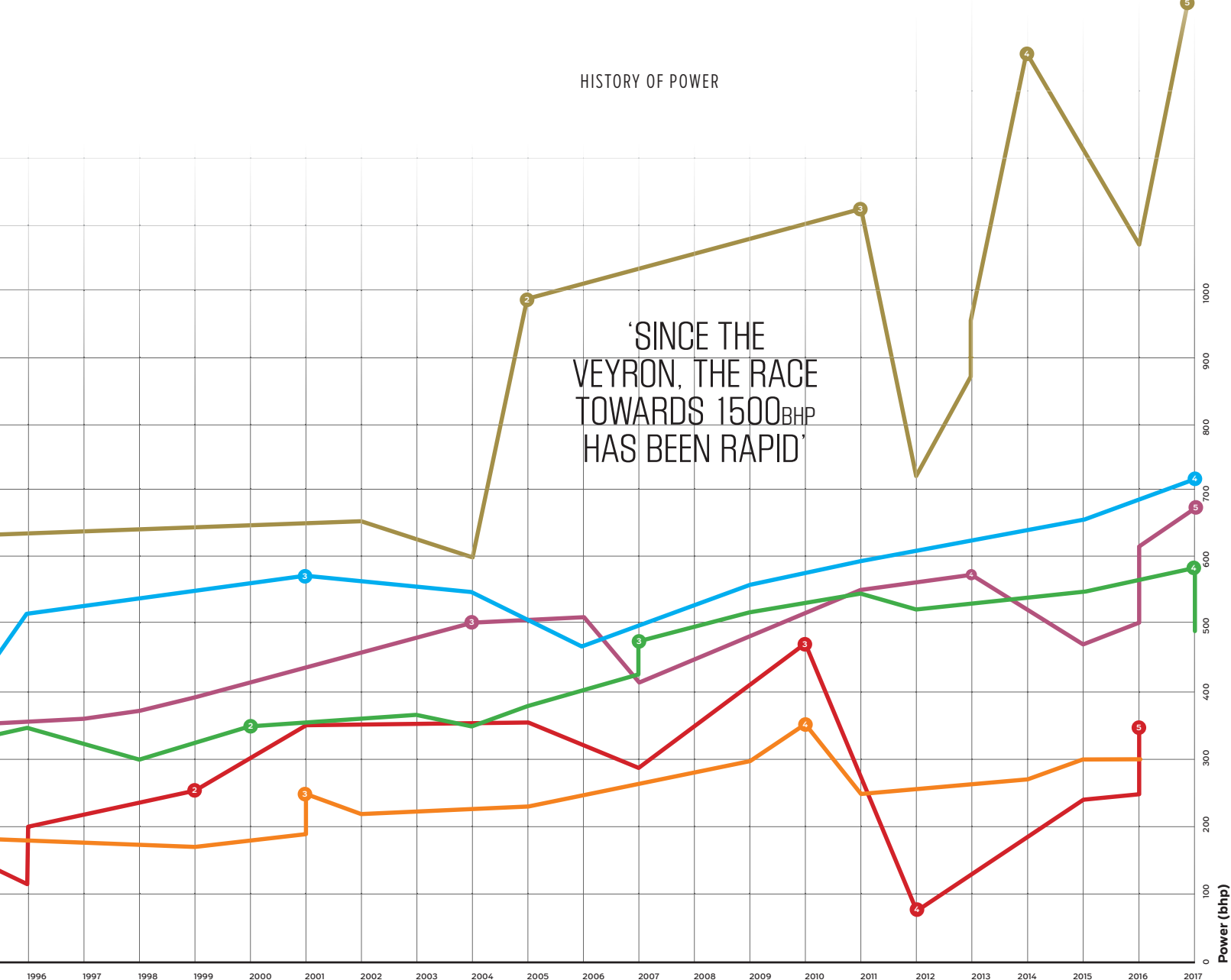
SPORTS CARS

1974	MG MGB	97bhp
1978	TVR 3000M	138bhp
1982	Caterham Super 7	120bhp
1984	Toyota MR2 (Mk1)	122bhp
1992	TVR Griffith 4.3	280bhp
1996	Lotus Elise (S1)	118bhp
1996	Porsche Boxster (986)	201bhp
1999	Porsche Boxster S (986)	256bhp
2001	TVR Tamora	345bhp
2005	TVR Tuscan Convertible	365bhp
2007	Porsche Boxster S (987)	291bhp
2010	Ariel Atom V8 500	475bhp
2012	Morgan 3 Wheeler	82bhp
2015	Alfa Romeo 4C Spider	237bhp
2016	Lotus Elise Cup 250	243bhp
2016	Porsche 718 Boxster S	345bhp

SPORTS SALOONS

1979	BMW M535i (E12)	215bhp
1985	BMW M5 (E28)	278bhp
1988	Mercedes-Benz 190E 2.5-16	201bhp
1990	Mercedes-Benz 500E	322bhp
1991	Lotus Carlton	377bhp
1992	BMW M5 (E34)	340bhp
1998	Jaguar XJR (X308)	370bhp
1999	BMW M5 (E39)	394bhp
2004	BMW M5 (E60)	500bhp
2006	Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W211)	507bhp
2007	Lexus IS F	417bhp
2011	BMW M5 (F10)	552bhp
2013	Mercedes-AMG E63 S (W212)	577bhp
2015	Lexus GS F	470bhp
2016	Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio	503bhp
2016	Tesla Model S P100D	603bhp
2016	Mercedes-AMG E63 S 4Matic (W213)	603bhp
2017	Porsche Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid	671bhp

HISTORY OF POWER



COUPES

1974	Porsche 911	148bhp
1980	Lotus Esprit Turbo	210bhp
1 1986	BMW M3 (E30)	197bhp
1992	BMW M3 (E36)	282bhp
1996	TVR Cerbera	350bhp
1998	Porsche 911 Carrera (996)	296bhp
2 2000	BMW M3 CSL (E46)	355bhp
2003	Porsche 911 GT3 (996.2)	375bhp
2004	Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.1)	350bhp
2005	Aston Martin V8 Vantage	380bhp
2007	Audi R8 V8	424bhp
3 2007	Nissan GT-R (R35)	473bhp
2009	Aston Martin V12 Vantage	510bhp
2011	Jaguar XKR-S	542bhp
2012	Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Black Series	510bhp
2015	Nissan GT-R Track Edition	542bhp
4 2017	Mercedes-AMG GT R	577bhp
2017	Porsche 911 GT3 (991.2)	493bhp

SUPERCARS

1974	Lamborghini Countach LP400	370bhp
1975	Porsche 930 Turbo	260bhp
1984	Ferrari 288 GTO	395bhp
1 1985	Lamborghini Countach LP5000S QV	449bhp
1987	Porsche 959	444bhp
1987	Ferrari F40	471bhp
2 1991	Bugatti EB110	552bhp
1992	Jaguar XJ220	542bhp
1994	Ferrari F355	375bhp
1995	Porsche 911 Turbo (993)	402bhp
1996	Ferrari F50	513bhp
3 2001	Lamborghini Murciélago	570bhp
2004	Ford GT	550bhp
2006	Porsche 911 Turbo (997.1)	472bhp
2009	Ferrari 488 Italia	562bhp
2011	McLaren MP4-12C	592bhp
2015	Ferrari 488 GTB	661bhp
4 2017	McLaren 720S	710bhp

HYPERCARS

1 1994	McLaren F1	627bhp
2002	Ferrari Enzo	651bhp
2004	Porsche Carrera GT	604bhp
2 2005	Bugatti Veyron 16.4	987bhp
3 2011	Koenigsegg Agera R	1124bhp
2012	Pagani Huayra	720bhp
2013	Porsche 918 Spyder	875bhp
2013	McLaren P1	903bhp
2013	Ferrari LaFerrari	950bhp
4 2014	Koenigsegg One:1	1341bhp
2016	Rimac Automobili Concept One	1073bhp
5 2017	Bugatti Chiron	1479bhp

ASTON MARTIN VANQUISH S v DB11





The Vanquish S and DB11 are both V12-engined, near-600bhp super-GTs, but one is naturally aspirated and the other is the first turbocharged Aston. And that's not all that sets them apart

by DAVID VIVIAN

PHOTOGRAPHY by MALCOLM GRIFFITHS

TWO OF A KIND?



AS COGNITIVE SCIENTISTS ARE FOND of reminding us, memories are unreliable. They're also a measure of experience: the stronger the experience, the more vivid the memory. So, to begin, I'll share these stripped-back recollections with you. Over the thousand or so miles between Florence airport in Italy and my house in Kent, the DB11 that I drove last summer left me in no doubt that GT perfection had been recast in the image of Aston's sharp new platform, powertrain and design language. But a few months later, on the challenging Clun section of *Motor* magazine's old group test route in Shropshire (a place of putative terror in my youth that I hadn't visited in decades), Aston's latest self-styled 'super-GT', the Vanquish S, gave me goosebumps; an old-school adrenalin shot and then some. And if we left it at that – a division of responsibilities and effects comfortably complicit with Aston's own script on the matter – it wouldn't be a crime. There's the DB11 customer and there's the Vanquish S customer, and they're presumed to be not the same person.

But they might just be after the same thing. There's significant overlap here that can't be made to disappear with the wave of a marketing wand. Headline hardware and stats for a start. In the starkest terms, Aston has two 600bhp, V12-engined coupes on its books. Both are capable of around 200mph and accelerating to 100mph in under 10 seconds. From memory I could have a stab at telling

you which was the superior, more satisfying steer. Actually, I will. The Vanquish S. But maybe it's because it's slightly fresher in my mind and stirred up long-forgotten feelings on that Clun road.

So, to settle this once and for all, our day begins on a narrow, normally unexplored road that spears off at a right angle from the first leg of the **evo** Triangle in Denbighshire, Wales. It leads to a pretty reservoir, replete with roaring aqueduct and, when we eventually roll to a halt, a DB11 and Vanquish S vying for aesthetic prominence in the viewfinder of photographer Malcolm Griffiths' Canon. Both are evidence of Aston's knack for producing jaw-dropping shapes, but, after a period of chin-in-hand reflection from several angles, Antony Ingram, Nick Stafford and I agree with Malcolm that it's first blood to the remastered old-timer.

In a bold colour – the Madagascar Orange of the car I drove back from Florence, for example – the DB11 is drama on wheels, as you might hope given the design and aero cues from One-77 and Vulcan. In this car's My Little Pony pearlescent hue (or Mako Blue as Aston would have it), not so much. The Vanquish S looks almost alarmingly sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll by comparison, an impression massaged by its blisteringly blue metallic paintjob. Maybe the front spoiler is a little too jutting for perfect front-to-back harmony but, technically, it achieves just that. Aero plays a vital part in raising the new 'old' model's game, the object being to increase grip at

Above: stats show DB11 and Vanquish are perfectly matched – at least on paper. **Right:** visually, Vanquish S just shades the DB11 for aggression and presence; inside, too, it's the more overtly sporting of the pair





the front while maintaining stability at the rear, which the splitter does by reducing front lift from 66kg to 18kg at 150mph. Yet, stand back, and the overall impression is of a final, exquisite resolution of everything that's come before, right back to DB7.

The Vanquish S is shot through with this meticulous attention to detail, a reframing of artisanal 'Aston-ness' for a new audience. A cold wind is whipping across the reservoir, so I duck inside while Malcolm rattles off the last few details on the DB11. Apart from the curiously angled corners of the steering wheel (why?), it's a great cabin. The low-slung seats and high waist engender feelings of snugness and security and there's a dense, hewn-from-solid quality to the leather-clad forms and trimmings that makes the leaner, cleaner architecture of the DB11's more spacious and airier interior seem a little insubstantial. Then again, the Vanquish S costs £45,050 more than the DB11 so you'd expect it to be materially the more luxurious item. Maybe you can lay it on a little too thickly, though. I search in vain for a label that says 'white stitching by Spirograph', but I have my suspicions.

We'd wanted to take these cars to Scotland but the weather forecast was dire. Defaulting to a cloudy and windy but thankfully dry Snowdonia, at least the roads are familiar and don't need learning. Having driven here at a feebly sub-optimum, traffic-clogged pace

in the Vanquish S, I decide first to reacquaint myself with the DB11 and an Aston that, at last, has most of the competition on the back foot. Billed as the company's all-purpose GT for the unfolding Andy Palmer-led era, it's necessarily a broad-bandwidth proposition: a bolide with the 'ballistic' subtly concealed until required. It's the car that replaces the DB9, the DB10's short life having been lived only in James Bond fantasy land. Body and front and rear tracks are significantly wider than the DB9's and, by making the wheelbase 65mm longer, it's been possible to mount the all-alloy 5.2-litre twin-turbo V12 further back in the chassis. With outputs of 600bhp and 516lb ft, it's the most powerful motor ever to go into a series-production Aston – also the most sophisticated, with 'intelligent' cylinder bank deactivation, (it depends on load but you can't tell) and the more usual stop-start function.

The DB11 can do smooth and suave in its sleep. The micro-managed shifts of its eight-speed ZF auto are all but imperceptible. Its cabin is airy, easy to see out of and double-glazed. And the very-nearly-circular steering wheel places engine map options and adaptive damper settings at my thumb-tips. All great company between Florence and Whitstable for sure, but I can't wait to find out what this 5.2-litre, twin turbo V12 feels and sounds like here on the Triangle: live, loud and, with Sport+ engaged, unplugged.

To be honest, it's not that loud but, oh, the singing voice. Despite what you'd expect to be the muffling influence of the twin turbos, a complex, multi-layered V12 bellow is delivered with unfettered resolution that sends all the right messages to the small hairs on the back of my neck but, unlike the too-damn-loud Vantage GT8 on last year's eCoty, stays just the right side of anti-social. The Vanquish S may have more sonic swagger – actually the rather arbitrary rev-determined opening of the exhaust valves on the drive up proved wearing after a while – but the DB11's soundtrack is no less soul-stirring for its comparative couth and lack of raw decibels. No matter, it's pretty sensational to feel the torque-dense delivery of the engine firing on all 12 and the added layers of urgency and gearshift speed unleashed by the most extreme powertrain setting. If the throttle doesn't quite have the razor-edged responses of the larger-capacity, naturally aspirated V12 in the Vanquish S, neither would I guess the engine was turbocharged. And it feels punishingly rapid through the mid-range, its thumping reserves of torque making laughably light work of overtaking even the more determined Triangle travellers.

Although entirely electric, the steering is good and direct with well-judged about-centre weighting and enough feel and transparency to lean on the front end with confidence, the merest roll of the wrists accurately guiding the

big car through fast sweepers with minimal wasted effort. Directional agility meets terrific natural stability and it's a great feeling. For a car that Aston claims to be its softly calibrated GT in the great scheme of things, the DB11 sure has some sharp moves. Yet it does the other thing with equal facility, too. Returned to the relative decorum of the 'touring' mode, the upper-register sonority of its exhaust note on a light throttle is actually quite soothing and, on the most pliant of the three selectable damper settings, the ride's pretty comfy as well. Enough for now. A harder nut awaits.

With 595bhp at 7000rpm and 465lb ft at 5500rpm, the older, naturally aspirated V12 powering the Vanquish S doesn't have quite the firepower of the smaller, turbocharged mill. But, at 1739kg, the S is 31kg lighter than the DB11, so the power-to-weight ratios are almost identical: 344bhp per ton for the DB11 plays 349. With launch control, wider rear rims and stickier rubber, the S has the fiercer initial acceleration, hitting 60mph in 3.85sec (versus 3.96sec) according to our VBOX, but beyond 100mph the DB11 gradually pulls away.

Subjectively, too, the Vanquish S doesn't feel quite as quick when rolling on, lacking the DB11's pulverising mid-range punch. But it

'The DB11 is punishingly rapid through the mid-range, with thumping reserves of torque'

Left: DB11's double-glazed cabin is a perfect place to sit when grand touring. **Bottom right:** smaller capacity of the DB11's V12 is more than compensated for by the addition of twin turbos

does feel more exciting, dramatic and intense, the engine's aerobic violence building and soaring to an absolute peak before its eight-speed auto – every bit as smooth and swift as the DB11's – reloads for another manic lunge for the horizon. It's dangerously addictive.

The Vanquish S is narrower than the DB11 and feels it. Dynamically it's a different proposition, too. It asks a little more of the driver and requires more concentration to place accurately. It has simply masses of grip at both ends. Ultimately its limits are higher than the DB11's but dissolve towards a satisfyingly mobile and playful edge, especially with its Sport settings locked in. The DB11 is more prescriptive. It feels tidy and planted at speed over uneven surfaces but asks you to place more trust in its torque-vectoring than your own reactions. You think you're travelling faster in the DB11. You probably are. In the Vanquish S it seems less of an issue; you tend to revel in the process.

The basic deal has its foundations in that huge available grip but teamed with lickety-split responses and remarkable helm acuity for a GT, even a super one. The steering is weightier than the DB11's but even more precise, while body control has a tauter,





ACCELERATION (from standstill, in seconds)

Aston Martin DB11															Speed (mph)			
30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	110	120	130	140	150	160	170	180			
1.9	2.6	3.2	4.0	4.8	5.9	6.9	8.1	9.7	11.3	13.4	15.7	18.3	21.5	25.9	30.9			

Aston Martin Vanquish S															Speed (mph)			
30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	110	120	130	140	150	160	170	180			
1.9	2.5	3.1	3.9	4.8	5.8	7.0	8.3	9.8	11.5	13.8	16.3	19.2	23.6	29.1	35.7			

QUARTER MILE

Aston Martin DB11													Seconds	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
12.01sec (123.93mph)														

Aston Martin Vanquish S													Seconds	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
12.04sec (122.36mph)														

BRAKING DISTANCE (100mph to standstill)

Aston Martin DB11							Distance (metres)				
80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	100	
93.56m (4.44sec)											

Aston Martin Vanquish S							Distance (metres)				
80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	100	
90.33m (4.11sec)											

more knuckley, feel to it. It means I can sense the suspension, damping and tyres working a little harder but within more tightly defined limits. The chassis tracks the road's undulations more closely, removing the jolts and stings with expertly judged damping. The figures say the Vanquish's carbon-ceramic brakes are superior, but both cars' are capable of soaking up serious punishment without fading.

The Vanquish S would also be a great car in which to attack a big distance: acceptably comfortable, easy on the nerves and constantly engaging. Indeed, I'm beginning to suspect that my initial (unreliably remembered) hunch is correct. Of the two circa-600bhp Aston Martin GTs, the naturally aspirated V12 Vanquish S is the more super. I reckon I need a final fling in the turbocharged DB11 to confirm it.

Life on roads like these shouldn't be easy for the DB11. On paper it's too wide and a mite too heavy. A brisk lick, leaning on those bounteous torque reserves, seems to be more its tempo. But, once again, switching in Sport+ has an amazingly transformative effect on the car. In a blink, it summons greater precision and resolve. That feeling of rock-solid stability yet swift, incisive turn-in urges greater commitment and permits later braking and a slicing cut towards the apex almost on a par with the Vanquish's best game.

True, magnificent as the fully lit, Sport+ mapped V12 is on the straights, it doesn't pay to hang on to the final few hundred revs. That's peak thrill in the Vanquish S but, in the DB11, it's better to nail a full-throttle rhythm that punches successive gears back into the heart of the torque. Then the DB11 feels epic.

What's so special about the DB11, what it does better arguably than any other GT currently on sale, is cover so many bases with so much style and charisma. It's strong across the board; there are no visible chinks in its armour. It can be as relaxing or involving as you want it to be. A car it's a pleasure to spend time in at a loping cruise, but one with a powertrain that can switch from serene to savage in a heartbeat. Its repertoire has real, multi-faceted depth served up with a kind of super-heroic confidence. It's one of the great 'I've got this' cars, ready to rumble on demand beneath the surface civility.

The Vanquish S is a less convincing chameleon, never fully able to mask its desire to bite chunks out of the horizon. It sacrifices breadth for focus, but is none the worse for that. Perhaps it's the zero-sum game Aston intended all along. What's undeniable is the DB11's greater spread of assets. The Vanquish S, on the other hand, has the deeper appreciation of the art of driving. The thrill, too. ☒

Aston Martin Vanquish S

Engine V12, 5935cc
Power 595bhp @ 7000rpm
Torque 465lb ft @ 5500rpm
Weight 1739kg
Power-to-weight 348bhp/ton
0-62mph 3.5sec (claimed)
Top speed 201mph (claimed)
Basic price £199,950

evo rating ★★★★★

Aston Martin DB11

Engine V12, 5204cc, twin-turbocharged
Power 600bhp @ 6500rpm
Torque 516lb ft @ 1500-5000rpm
Weight 1770kg
Power-to-weight 344bhp/ton
0-62mph 3.9sec (claimed)
Top speed 200mph (claimed)
Basic price £154,900

evo rating ★★★★★

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PROFESSOR OF ENGINES. NOW THAT'S A JOB

title. Since 2015, Jamie Turner has been professor of engines and energy systems at Bath University. I've known Turner for years and first met him when he was at Lotus (he had two stints at the Norfolk company), where he worked on the Corvette ZR1 engine, Lotus's own V8 and numerous skunkworks projects, including a test engine nicknamed Omnivore for its ability to run on virtually any fuel, and an optical engine that allowed the combustion process to be observed through a transparent cylinder. Turner worked for Cosworth F1 too, and prior to the Bath appointment led spark-ignition engine development at JLR.

Professor Turner also has a very cool office, most likely the coolest on campus. It is a shrine to the internal combustion engine and, to a lesser extent, Lotus. On a filing cabinet is a vast cylinder that's one of the 18 that make a Bristol Centaurus radial aircraft engine. On a windowsill is a rotor and crankshaft from a rotary engine and also a sectioned Roots supercharger.

Yet while the man who helped develop Norton's rotary engines (Turner adores bikes) loves a traditional motor, he's not at all stuck in the past. Quite the opposite. 'I drove a Tesla recently and really liked it,' he admits, adding: 'I felt a bit dirty.'

Fortunately, Turner predicts a long future for the internal combustion engine. 'The reduction of carbon dioxide has been an absolute godsend to engineers,' he explains. 'The

pursuit has made engineering incredibly important and has laid down fantastic challenges for us.'

In fact, while chatting with Turner about supercharging and amazing stuff such as the Napier Nomad flat-12 two-stroke diesel compound aero engine (his favourite engine) is cool, the really fascinating area is his views on the future of the internal combustion engine and how we're going to get more power from it.

'One thing I think we'll see fairly soon is the introduction of higher-octane fuels,' he says. 'Compared to what the car industry has achieved – about 30 per cent reduction in CO2 since 2000 – the oil industry hasn't really played its part yet in reducing emissions. But it will do. They accept that higher-octane fuels will allow us to use higher compression ratios to improve combustion efficiency. From our side, I think the number-one move to allow higher compression ratios will be the development of water injection to reduce combustion temperatures – it's all about controlling knock or pre-ignition. BMW has used water injection in the M4 GTS but that was a bit simple compared to the really optimised systems they have recently published on introducing the water with the fuel in direct injection.'

Professor

Few people understand internal combustion engines like Professor Jamie Turner, so we ask him how manufacturers will get more power from them in the future, before looking at the tricks engine tuners use for those who simply can't wait

by COLIN GOODWIN

PHOTOGRAPHY by ANDY MORGAN

'Number two on my list of technologies that we'll soon see more of is variable compression ratios. Nissan has produced a variable-compression-ratio engine but it's not really a new idea at all. Neither is water injection, for that matter. There aren't that many totally new ideas.'

So water injection and variable compression ratios are the two most important technologies in Turner's view, but they're top of a list that includes higher fuel pressures (350bar or more) and electric super- or turbocharging. 'We'll see more cars adopting 48-volt electrical systems to power these devices,' says Turner, 'and we'll also see stop-on-the-move coasting, in which the engine will stop and the clutch disengage to reduce fuel consumption.'

A current Goodwin hobby horse is that modern engines are becoming soulless. The table-top torque spread and even the lack of turbo-lag have reduced much of the excitement that you get from revving an engine and feeling the power increase dramatically. Only the most exotic engines, such as Porsche's naturally aspirated 4-litre

Right: Professor Jamie Turner with an engine test rig at the University of Bath

Power

A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a patterned shirt and dark trousers, stands with his arms crossed next to a large, complex industrial engine system. The engine is mounted on a metal frame and is surrounded by numerous blue and black hoses, wires, and various mechanical components. A large, grey, rectangular component is visible in the foreground. The background shows a workshop or laboratory setting with various equipment and a red fire extinguisher. The word "Power" is overlaid in large white letters across the center of the image.



flat-six, Ferrari's 6.3-litre V12 and also the Lamborghini Aventador's V12 have old-school drama. So is the soulful engine dead?

'That flat torque curve is there for emissions reasons, because it suits the drive-cycle used in testing,' says Turner. 'Also, it encourages drivers to change up a gear early and enables an automatic gearbox to do the same, both of which reduce emissions and fuel consumption.'

Professor Turner is in no doubt that as far as proper powertrains are concerned, plug-in hybrids will be a major trend. Which brings us neatly on to the more sexy matter of gas turbines as power generators. Jaguar fitted them to the C-X75 supercar concept of 2010, but the subject has since gone quiet.

'For sure, they have a future,' says Turner. 'They're efficient enough when running at a constant speed, but the important things are that they don't need a cooling system and they're light. Those are huge advantages for [electricity-generating] range-extendors because currently an internal combustion engine is used. For that you need separate cooling systems for the engine and the electrical system as they require cooling water at different

'Gas turbines have a future: they don't need a cooling system and they're light'

temperatures, and you carry the engine at all times, even though you don't really ever want to use it.'

Because Turner is on the side of academia, there is no corporate or company line to toe, meaning all subjects are open to discussion. Try talking about the possible rebirth of the two-stroke engine with an engineer from a car company and it'd be a short-run thing. The professor of engines doesn't think the two-stroke is about to return, but he likes talking about it. And he's still researching it now. 'Thermodynamically they are just better. And thermodynamics is what it's all about. You could say it's a shame that we've spent 120 years building engines operating on the wrong cycle...' ❌

Tuning: the new-school



Iain Litchfield has been extracting comedy amounts of horsepower from engines for 20 years – most famously those of Nissan GT-Rs.

'It's about airflow,' he says. 'With turbocharged cars, it's quite simple in theory: you fit a bigger turbocharger that will flow more air. Unfortunately, it's not quite as simple as that, particularly if you're after big increases in horsepower. The bigger the turbo the more lag you're going to get, not just because of the mass of the turbine and compressor but because of aerodynamic drag on

the bigger blades. To help solve the problem you can go up in engine displacement, which is what we do on the really powerful GT-Rs. It's why McLaren has made the 720S's engine larger.

'Eventually you need larger injectors that can flow more fuel, bigger fuel lines and higher-capacity fuel pumps. Then there are intercoolers that have to be made larger to cool the extra air. Manufacturers are turning to chargecoolers because they remove heat so quickly. The snag is that that heat goes into the

cooling system, which on a circuit with hard use is a problem.'

Tuning modern, naturally aspirated engines presents other problems. Mainly because they're just so good out of the factory.

'The power gains tend to be very small,' says Litchfield. 'We can fit a new exhaust system to a Nissan 370Z and remap the ignition, fuelling and even valve timing, but still only get a gain of 15bhp. The next step is to fit new intake systems and camshafts and up the compression, but even then the gains aren't huge.'

Tuning: the old-school



Ken Brittain, who together with Dave Brodie set up Brodie Brittain Racing, has spent a lifetime coaxing power out of engines. His career started at Willment, the tuning company and race team that ran Cobras and GT40s during the 1960s.

'You aimed to increase the volumetric efficiency of the engine,' explains Brittain, 'by increasing the revs by allowing the engine to breathe.' This involved hours of painstaking work on the bench, balancing combustion chambers and intake ports, gas-flowing the ports and developing a new camshaft to extend the valve-opening times.

'Depending on the fuel available or allowed, you'd also raise the compression ratio. Lastly, you'd spend ages on the dynamometer, constantly making changes, using different camshafts and exhaust manifolds. It was time-consuming and often boring – particularly blueprinting an engine, which was a good way of extracting more money from a customer.'

'The quality of the components you were working with was varied and often really poor. When you worked on the Ford Essex V6's cylinder heads you'd often break into the water passages. We had tons of them that were only good for scrap. I went to Ford's foundry to find out what was going wrong. Ford weren't removing the flashing on the casting so the heads didn't sit correctly in the jigs when they were being machined.'

'The quality of modern engines is unbelievable, with accuracy beyond F1 engine standards of only decades ago. The first time I opened up a Suzuki Hayabusa engine I was astonished. The cylinder head looked like a full race head from Cosworth. All I had to do was give the chambers and ports a quick polish.'



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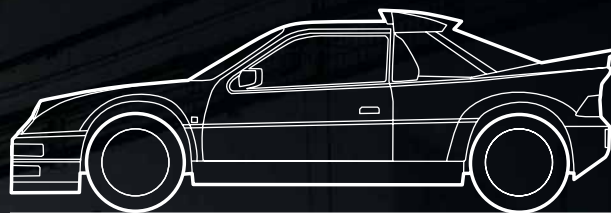


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THE ANATOMY OF A



GROUP B CAR

by ADAM TOWLER

PHOTOGRAPHY by ANDY MORGAN

UNPRECEDENTED LEVELS of power, excitement – and controversy. Group B rallying had it all. Even 30 years after it was banned, the legend surrounding the category remains as powerful as ever. We take a look under the skin of Ford's RS200 – Group B's only fully bespoke car – to discover what went into building a motor sport monster.

**'IN MOST CASES
MANUFACTURERS
VIEWED THE 200
ROAD CARS AS A
NECESSARY EVIL'**



Right: manufacturers had to build 200 homologation cars before they could go rallying under the Group B regulations. So not only did it spawn the most visceral rally cars, but some pretty astonishing road cars, too



THE BIRTH OF GROUP B

The early '80s saw major change sweep through international motorsport, with new Group N, A, B and C rules replacing the Group 1-6 regulations that had held sway for decades. Suddenly teams and manufacturers faced new challenges – and new opportunities. Group N and A cars had to be built in 5000 units or more, with the former in particular allowing very little scope for performance modification and the cars having to adhere to certain interior measurements and have at least four seats.

Group B was very different. It was intended as a replacement for both Group 4 in rallying and the Group 5 silhouette formula used in circuit racing, the latter having spawned such cars as the brutal, 911-based Porsche 935. The plan was that 200 examples had to be built over a 12-month period, and this time just two seats were required. Teams could apply Group A-style modifications to the cars to bring them up to competition specification, the idea being to allow and encourage more exotic, low-volume machinery. This way it would be easier for everyone to 'build a Lancia Stratos'.

Not only was this half the number of units that had been required for Group 4 homologation, but an 'evolution' clause sought to eliminate the 'optional parts' rule that manufacturers had used to get trick bits onto their rally cars, passing them off as spurious dealer-fit options. These extra 20 evolution cars, while retaining the passenger compartment and basic layout, allowed for areas such as engine displacement, aerodynamics and the structures front and rear to be modified. A manufacturer could introduce a new evolution model every 12 months, but if it wanted to change anything fundamental a further 200 cars would have to be built as an entirely new homologation model. Triggering a run of evolution cars meant production of the cars used for the 200 original homologation models had to be stopped.

John Davenport was director of motorsport for British Leyland, latterly Austin Rover Group, and remembers the negotiations well. 'There were two powerful lobbies when the manufacturers were discussing the new rules with FISA during 1979 and 1980,' he recalls. 'Those that wanted a very small production run to qualify, like us, Opel, Lancia and the Japanese manufacturers, and those that wanted a run of thousands, such as BMW and Ford. They already made sporting cars that would have just then needed the right regs to tune up. What we ended up with was the 200-car rule, which was neither one thing or the other.'

Over at Ford Motorsport, chief rally engineer John Wheeler also remembers the pain of producing homologation cars. 'Building 400 cars for Group 4 was a massive task for a manufacturer,' he says. 'The cost of design and development was huge – mega millions for the entire project. It's only when you get down to 20-or-so cars that you can look to build them in racing workshops.'

As it was, in most cases the manufacturers viewed the 200 road cars as a necessary evil and never actually went rallying with them, competing with the evolution models that were more like pure prototypes. 'It took us 18 months to put the road cars into production,' adds Wheeler. 'We were scheduled

to make our competition debut in October 1985, but the stress of setting up a factory from scratch delayed things.' Ironically, given events to come, FISA promised rule stability until the end of 1987, with a two-year notice period of any major changes.

What a manufacturer could build was unfathomably relaxed by the standards of modern motorsport regulations, with their endless pages of prescriptive rules, air restrictors and common-to-all parts. Essentially, there was a matrix of displacement, weight and wheel width, into which every car could fit. The regs ran from 1 litre up to 5 litres-plus, but the key categories for rallying fitted between 2 and 4 litres. Cars with engines up to 2-litre displacement had a minimum weight limit of 820kg (Renault's 5 Turbo was in this category), rising to 4-litre machines that could weigh no less than 1100kg. An equivalency factor of 1.4 was applied to engines with forced induction, so, for example, the up-to-2.5-litre class meant a turbocharged engine of no more than 1785cc and a weight of 890kg. The Peugeot 205 T16 and Lancia Delta S4 fell into that particular category, while the turbocharged 2121cc Audi Quattro and naturally aspirated 3-litre Metro 6R4 both fell into the 3-litre class. The 4-litre class included the Porsche 959 and Ferrari 288 GTO, the Ferrari in particular intended for Group B circuit racing – a form of racing that never materialised.

So far, all so innocent: in 1982 there was nothing alarming about a Group B car at all, it was just another means for creating a rally car championship. Consider Lancia's first attempt at a Group B car, the delicate 037, which arrived for the start of the new regulations. A light, two-seat sports car with a small, supercharged engine powering the rear wheels only, it was just the sort of car FISA had intended in so many ways. Its great rival, the Audi Quattro, was actually a carry-over from the Group 4 days, but in its genes laid the root of everything that was to follow, for good and for worse.

DRIVETRAIN & CHASSIS

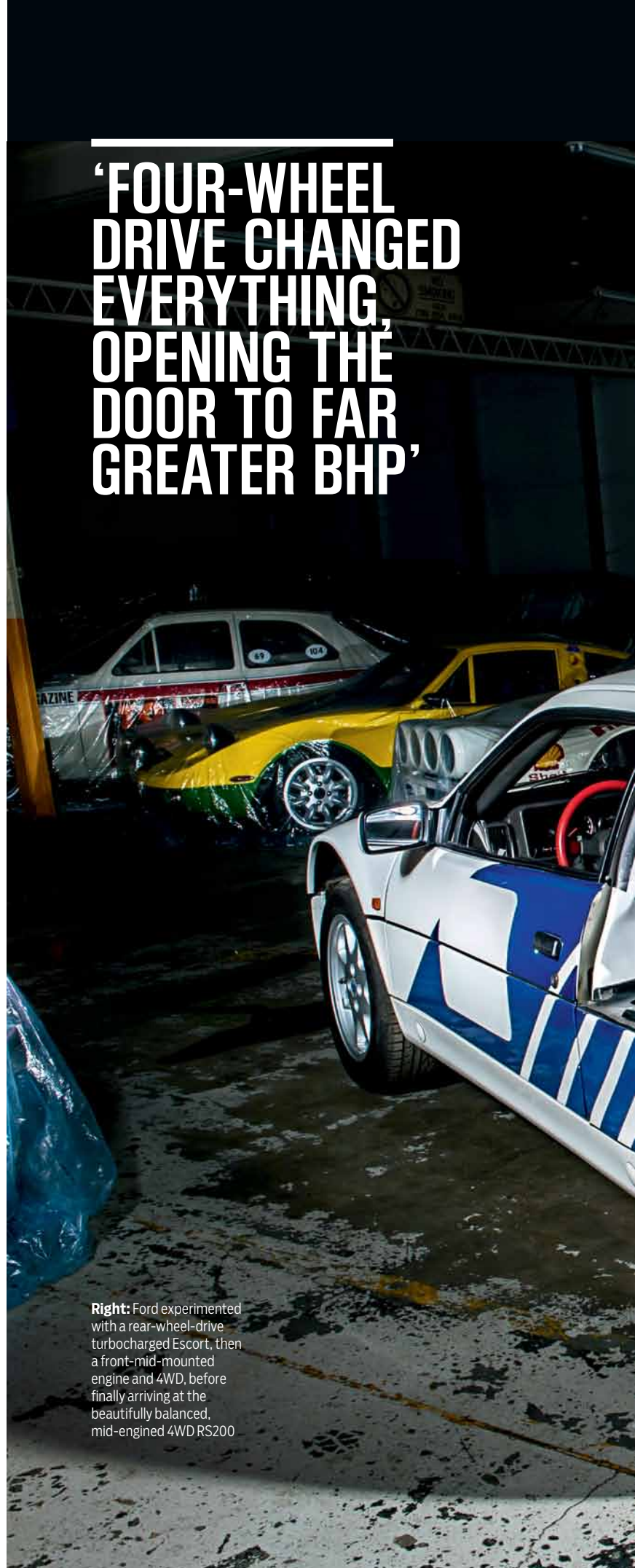
'No one had been thinking four-wheel drive when Audi came along with the Quattro,' says Austin Rover man Davenport. 'Up to that point, four-wheel-drive cars were perceived as useless.'

Lancia had its 037, and Ford was working on a new rear-drive Escort that did at least use turbocharging – the ill-fated RS1700T – yet history now shows us it was wasting its time. Four-wheel drive changed everything, slashed seconds and even minutes off stage times, and opened the door to far greater useable horsepower. After all, there was only so much power that could be deployed through the rear wheels on a loose-surface stage, even if you could generate it in the first place.

Nevertheless, it was also obvious to the engineers of rival teams that Audi's approach was fundamentally flawed. Sticking to its production-car roots, the Quattro slung its inline 'five' way out beyond the front axle with fairly disastrous implications for the handling balance. Moreover, Audi even retained a locked centre differential for years.

What was required was a much more favourable weight distribution. Both Ford and Austin Rover experimented with front-mid-engine layouts but found packaging an engine and four-wheel-drive running gear impossible. Both then put the engine in the middle, the Ford RS200 featuring the gearbox up front for arguably the most benign balance in a Group B car.

**'FOUR-WHEEL
DRIVE CHANGED
EVERYTHING,
OPENING THE
DOOR TO FAR
GREATER BHP'**



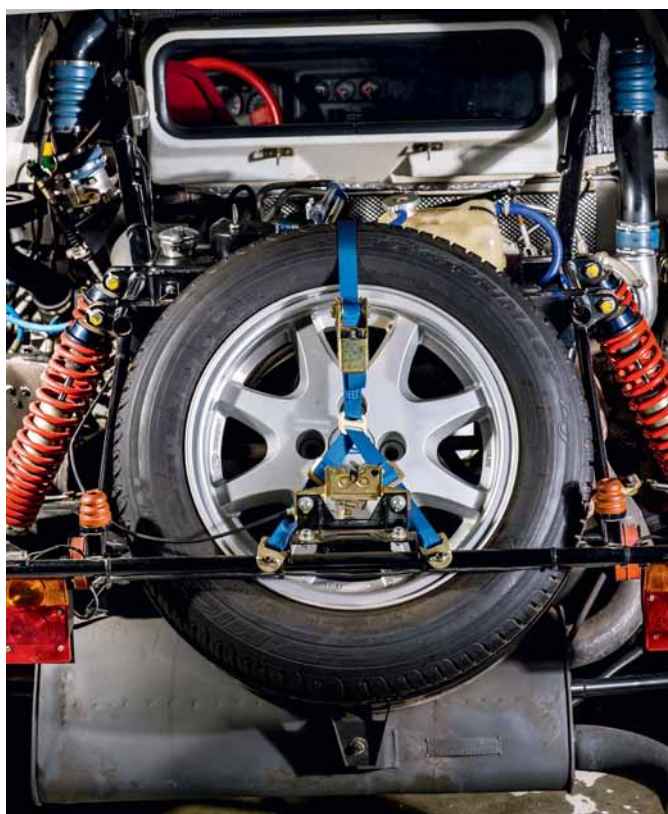
Right: Ford experimented with a rear-wheel-drive turbocharged Escort, then a front-mid-mounted engine and 4WD, before finally arriving at the beautifully balanced, mid-engined 4WD RS200





Above and below:

Group B gave engineers unprecedented freedom. RS200 was one of the most sophisticated cars, though even its twin-rear-damper suspension seems crude by today's WRC standards



However, the car that first showed what could really be possible was the Peugeot 205 T16, which made its competition debut on the Tour de Corse in 1984. Compact, mid-transverse-engined and with four-wheel drive, it was a rallying supercar, even in original 340bhp form, and took both the drivers' and manufacturers' titles in '85 and '86.

That said, what dates a Group B car – other than the sheer, hypnotic potential for utter danger – is its suspension and four-wheel-drive system. The art of four-wheel drive was just being understood, and even to drive something like the road RS200 in these images is to experience a drivetrain of astonishing crudity. The Ford had perhaps the most advanced suspension of its day with its twin-rear-damper setup, but, compared with the astonishing capabilities of a 2017 WRC car and its magic carpet ride, it is from the Iron Age. No wonder Group B stage times have long since been surpassed in the latter years of the WRC.

ENGINE & GEARBOX

Looking back, it's easy to feel sorry for embattled Austin Rover. Having decided to go with a V6 engine for its Metro 6R4 because there was nothing else suitable in its inventory, it was committed to a non-turbo configuration based around the displacement and weight rules. 'FISA were supposed to be controlling the fuels,' recalls Davenport drily, 'and there was no reason a 3-litre naturally aspirated engine of 400bhp shouldn't be competitive with a turbocharged 1.7-litre engine. But the teams were using high levels of toluene – it was just ridiculous.'

Ah yes, C6H5-CH3, or toluene to you and me: the colourless but evil-smelling octane-boosting aromatic hydrocarbon that contributed so much to the turbocharged madness of the 1980s, whether in F1 or in the WRC. Used by the Luftwaffe in World War II, its octane-boosting qualities combined perfectly with the relatively new art of turbocharging and, crucially, the emergent electronic control of fuel injection. 'The gains in electronics were very rapid,' recalls Ford man Wheeler. 'We started at Boreham in 1983 with the Escort RS1700T and Bosch, and you wouldn't believe the size of the testing equipment they'd cram into the passenger seat. But it was incredible what they were up to – Dr Udo Zucker was a complete genius.'

More than anything else, it's raw power that defines the Group B era. By 1986 there was a 500 club: the E2 S1 Quattro with at least 550bhp, maybe more; the turbocharged and supercharged Delta S4 with incredible response as well as immense power; and the Evo 2 T16, at least when fitted with an F1-spec turbocharger, as the team tried.

And just imagine what might have come later. For 1987 Ford planned to introduce the first evolution of the RS200, having bucked the trend by rallying the original '200-build' car in its first year. The 'evo' put right one of the original car's main weaknesses: 444bhp in 1986 just simply wasn't enough. The larger 2.1-litre BDT engine moved the car to the optimum point in its displacement/weight class, and would have given the RS200 a reliable 650bhp from the start of the season.

In 1985 there had also been the first major step forward in gearbox tech, with Audi introducing the twin-clutch PDK transmission on the Quattro. It was heavy but increasingly effective and, given what we know now of transmission technology, it would surely only have been a matter of time before semi-automatic 'boxes became the class norm.

BODY & AERODYNAMICS

The Group B cars were a riot of carbonfibre, Kevlar and plastic panels, the like of which hasn't been seen in rallying before or since. With virtually no restriction on what could and couldn't be used, only budgetary concerns provided any limitation – and this was an era when motorsport attracted an almost-limitless resource from the major manufacturers.

Unlike modern motorsport, where higher minimum weight limits mean cars are often ballasted to reach the target figure, it was genuinely hard for manufacturers to get their cars light enough, despite using advanced materials only seen otherwise in F1. Audi struggled and, as Davenport confirms, a 6R4 only hit the 960kg minimum in sprint spec, struggling to fall below the ton for longer events where more strength was required.

For Audi, aerodynamics offered a way of clawing back some of the handling deficit, and the wild E2 S1, with its snowplough front end and roof-high rear wing, was a spectacular example. Peugeot Sport introduced a massive rear wing for the Evo 2 version of the T16, in part through necessity to maintain its trajectory over high-speed jumps. And Austin Rover incorporated real aero from the start: 'The cars were pretty basic to drive, not easy at all,' remembers Davenport, 'but the aero improved that. We couldn't believe the difference. It turned the 6R4 from a ratty thing to predictable, at least in the hands of the talented drivers we had.'

THE END OF GROUP B

On 2 May 1986, Lancia's superstar driver, Henri Toivonen, and his regular navigator, Sergio Cresto, were leading the Tour de Corse rally with ease. Toivonen was the golden boy of Group B: young, charismatic, fast and fearless. He was the only one of Lancia's crack driving squad to truly tame the ferocious yet ungainly Delta S4, a car that in many ways summed up everything that was good and bad about Group B rallying.

Exactly why Toivonen and Cresto left the road on a seemingly innocuous corner has never been established, but the Lancia appeared neither to brake nor turn before it tumbled down the hillside, bursting into a fireball almost on impact with the trees. The S4 had much in common with a sports prototype racing car from the 1960s, with a simple tubular spaceframe chassis and the crew actually sat on fuel tanks with minimal protection; the pairing didn't stand a chance. Group B was immediately banned from the end of the year, and its – safer – intended Group S replacement along with it.

Even today, it's a deeply emotive topic. Another senior engineer from the period, who wished to remain anonymous, had this to say: 'The root of all evil was the weight classes – they were ridiculous. They bore no relation to building a safe car. You just can't get a car down to 960kg with turbochargers and all that tech and have safe cars. If it had been, say, 1180kg, and with certain rules on safety cells, it would have all been fine.'

Toxic, extremely flammable fuel; rules that allowed freedom but stipulated little on safety; spectators who stood where they liked in their thousands; rallies many times longer than those of today... Many things contributed to the demise of Group B. One thing is certain: we'll not see its like again. ❧



by DAN PROSSER

PHOTOGRAPHY by ASTON PARROTT

Let's settle this...

Electric power versus internal combustion. It's been played out countless times on YouTube, and the electric car usually wins, but is it that clear-cut? And which power source provides the greatest thrill?



IF THE INTERNET ONE DAY BECOMES FULL

and there's no space left for anything new, all we have to do is delete every video of an electric car outrunning a petrol-engined car on a drag strip. More often than not, the electric car in question is a Tesla, most likely the twin-motor Model S P100D. If you looked no further than these videos, you'd have to conclude that the P100D is the quickest motor vehicle ever to be sold to the public.

But let's look a little further. Are electric cars really as fast as the clips suggest? What's more, in a contest like this, can an EV ever be as thrilling and dramatic as a conventional performance car?

Tesla claims the £129,400 P100D is the fastest-accelerating production car currently on sale, quoting 0-60mph in 2.4sec. Its twin motors develop 595bhp and 713lb ft of torque. It weighs a rather corpulent 2108kg, but, with a motor working on each axle, it does have all-wheel-drive traction.

Representing the 'conventional' performance car today is Audi's £132,020 R8 Spyder. Its 5.2-litre V10

makes 533bhp and 398lb ft, but at 1720kg the R8 is significantly lighter than the Tesla. The Audi also has four-wheel drive, but its naturally aspirated engine sits at the opposite end of the spectrum to an all-electric drivetrain, so in terms of the way these two cars produce their power and deploy it away from the line, they could hardly be more different.

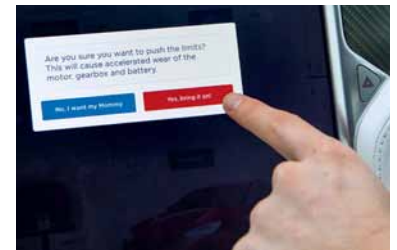
This isn't a full-bore performance test, with a day set aside to optimise launches, warm tyres and trim tenths of seconds from each run. It's just two cars, a start line and our GPS-based VBox timing gear.

The Tesla has what must be the most drawn-out launch-control procedure of any car you care to mention. You first engage the sportiest drive mode—appropriately branded Ludicrous—then hold down the same button on the huge central display for a few seconds. Eventually the entire screen explodes into a warp-speed animation, after which you'll be shown a warning. 'Are you sure you want to push the limits?' it asks. 'This will cause accelerated wear of the motor, gearbox and battery.' Your two options



Left: activating R8's launch control is the work of a moment; Tesla takes rather longer, but the warp-speed sensations (and graphics) make it worth it. **Below:** Tesla, predictably, pulls out initial lead

'You simply go from stationary to great speed in an instant, swept away by a silent force, like a tidal wave'





are 'Yes, bring it on!' or, amusingly, 'No, I want my Mommy.' Clearly, you're going to hit yes.

Then you sit and wait. To engage Ludicrous+ mode, the car has to warm up its battery, which can take up to 30 minutes. It's a good job the clock isn't running yet... Once it's warmed through, you engage launch control by holding down the brake pedal with your left foot, flooring the accelerator with your right, then stepping off the brake.

With not a chirrup of wheelspin and scarcely more than a sci-fi whirr from the motors, the P100D takes off. The launch is so sudden there doesn't seem to be a period of acceleration at all. You simply go from stationary to great speed in an instant. It's like being picked up and swept away by a silent force, a tidal wave perhaps, and you feel your eyeballs squeeze against their sockets and your brain press against the back of your skull. The sensation is so uncomfortable that it almost registers as pain.

After three or four seconds that astonishing rate of acceleration starts to fade. The numbers still flash by on the speedo, but the P100D feels merely fast now rather than intergalactically quick. After that first hit, you want it to build and build, but instead it just sort of fades away. It's almost disappointing.

Still, the numbers are fairly outrageous, 60mph flashing by in 2.9sec. That's half a second short of Tesla's claim but still absurdly fast by any measure. The P100D hits 100mph in 7.7sec.

The R8's launch control is much simpler, and whereas the Tesla is eerily quiet as it sits on the line, the Audi's V10 *wap-waps* at a steady 4500rpm, sounding as though it's about to explode. When you release the brake pedal you feel the transmission engage violently, like two trucks colliding head on. There's the faintest hint of wheelspin and the engine strains at 5000rpm for a split second as it tries to overcome the car's inertia, and you're off. You flick the upshift paddle yourself – it's faster that way – and feel the car pull with a force that seems to be sustained all the way to triple figures. The noise, the fury, the mechanical cruelty of it all. The R8 doesn't match the Model S for G-forces, but the whole process is so much more dramatic.

The numbers tell an interesting story. The Tesla is quicker to 60mph by three-tenths of a second, but the Audi is ahead by 100mph, stopping the clock half a second sooner at 7.2sec. The 60-100mph times are revealing, too, the Audi taking just 4.0sec to the Tesla's 4.8sec.

Away from the line, then, the P100D is faster than the R8, but everywhere else the petrol-engined car has the advantage. So is one type of acceleration better or more enjoyable than the other? Not really. That would be like declaring one genre of music to be better than another. If I never feel the silent, gravitational force of an electric car at full acceleration again, that will be cause for regret, but I'll be just as gutted if I never again experience a raw, naturally aspirated engine digging deep and howling loud as it hauls a car from standstill to 100mph in a matter of seconds. ✕

ACCELERATION (from standstill, in seconds)

Audi R8 Spyder V10										Speed (mph)
10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	
0.5	0.9	1.4	1.9	2.5	3.2	4.0	4.9	6.0	7.2	

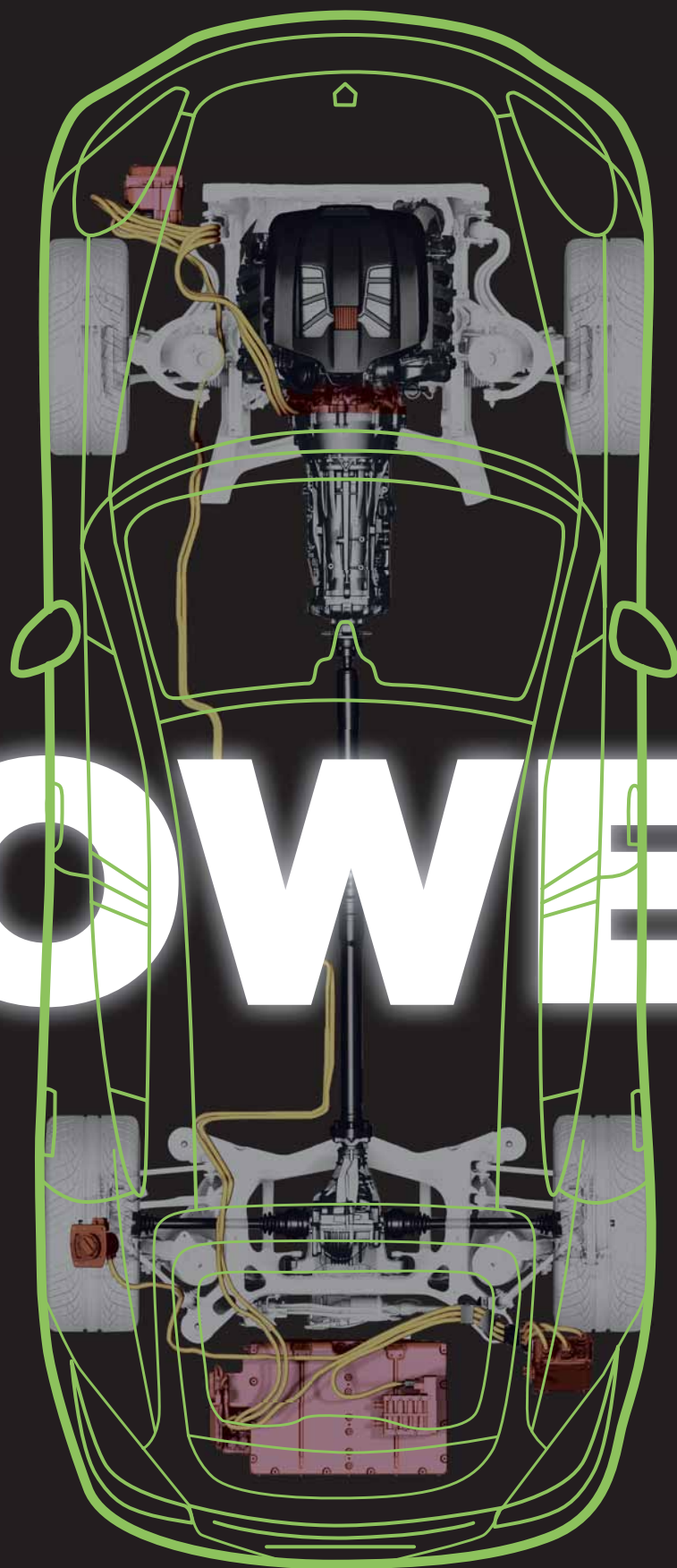
Tesla Model S P100D										
10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	
0.3	0.8	1.2	1.7	2.3	2.9	3.8	4.8	6.1	7.7	



THE
FUTURE
OF

POWER

by DAVID VIVIAN



The McLaren F1 was always supposed to be a line in the sand, but then came Veyron, followed by a whole raft of hybrid hypercars, and now Chiron. What next in the power wars?



TWO-TIME WORLD SUPERBIKE

champion Troy Corser doesn't just have a fast name but delivered perhaps the drollest line ever uttered on the subject of speed. Asked by a wide-eyed reporter after one race what it felt like to do

200mph on two wheels, he replied: 'much like 199mph'.

I interviewed him in the early 1990s and can confirm that, in the spirit of his native Australia's favourite raincoat, the Corser take on most things was dry as a bone. He told me that doing 199, 200 or 201mph meant absolutely nothing to him. All that mattered was his speed in relation to that of the other bikes he was racing – differentials of probably no more than 2-3mph. That was the epicentre of his attention, what his senses and reflexes were attuned to, the font of his personal buzz.

In one respect, of course, he was absolutely right. The expression of extreme speed is like a billionaire's level of liquidity: just a big number. And without a point of reference – the proximity of scenery, another fast-moving car, a low-flying jet – the sensation per se won't even be that engaging. Einstein understood. To really deliver, speed requires heaps of context, not merely a rapidly escalating blur of numbers. Want to experience hypercar-esque 1 G-plus acceleration in the comfort of your own people-carrier? Swivel one of the rotatable seats through 180 degrees and get the driver to stand on the anchors at 70mph on an empty stretch of road. The forces acting on your body will be the same as those you'd experience from a standing start in a 1500-horsepower, 16-cylinder, quad-turbo, 261mph (limited), launch-controlled Bugatti Chiron. You'll be pushed back in the seat with just the same sustained ferocity but, chances are, it will just seem vaguely unpleasant instead of the thrill of a lifetime. You're missing £2.5million of context.

The necessary bond between the hyper-rich and the most expensive and powerful hypercars is what will continue to underwrite not just their survival but also the persistent push for ascendency. And numbers are the drug. The higher they go – price, power, speed – the stronger the weird over-arching psychology they create. We'll call it the never-having-to-try paradox. Because everyone knows he or she doesn't have to, a Bugatti Chiron owner truly giving it the beans on the public highway is probably something you'll never see. Like the nuclear option, the potential is the power, not power itself. Which seems like a bit of a waste. Nor is spare capacity for the sake of it likely to end there. Peak overkill is in sight but we haven't reached it

yet. It means that a 300mph series-production hypercar emerging in the next few years isn't a possibility but a stone-cold certainty, the next ultimate example of 'untouchable automotive omnipotence with nothing to prove'.

The promise will attract the money but, in truth, the untouchable message won't really wash anymore. The Chiron's predecessor, the 987bhp, 253mph Veyron, like the McLaren F1 before it, was meant to be the ultimate embodiment of the notion, a definitive line in the sand. Instead, it effectively kick-started the hybrid hypercar projects prosecuted by Porsche, McLaren and Ferrari with the 918 Spyder, P1 and LaFerrari – all cars that could match the Bugatti's acceleration in any real-world scenario without the need for a bombastic top speed, and run rings around it dynamically. It was only a matter of time before the Veyron became a whipping post for the Nissan GT-R tuning industry, countless YouTube clips visiting ritual humiliation on 'the world's fastest car' in roll-on drag races achingly played out on wobbly smartphone videos usually, to the Veyron's credit, in the Troy Corser 2-3mph differential zone.

In Top Trumps terms, even the mighty Chiron is already

'A 300mph series-production hypercar emerging in the next few years isn't a possibility but a stone-cold certainty'

stuck between a rock and a hard place, pegged to a stats-sheet dead heat in a race to 60mph with an all-electric, five-seater Tesla P100D saloon but also fixed in the crosshairs of the new, circa-290mph Hennessey Venom F5. And it simply wouldn't be considered a bait worth rising to for any self-respecting 2000bhp-plus road-legal drag specialist in a straight-line tussle. A modified but outwardly standard 2006 Ford GT, for example, recently accelerated to 294mph in the space of a mile.

The future will be about packaging performance and efficiency in a tightly defined yet meaningful way. Led by the example of today's hybrid hypercars – most pertinently the Porsche 918 Spyder – electricity will provide both the environmental sweetness and light and the supplementary muscle to hit hard where it really counts, on real-world roads and not some fantasy land-speed-record venue. **x**

HYPERCAR




There has never been a production car with a higher output than the Chiron's mind-blowing 1479bhp. What does it feel like to have that much power under your right foot? Here's where we find out

by RICHARD MEADEN

BUGATTI CHIRON



VERSION 2.0



It's the speedo that gets you.

For a moment you can't quite believe your eyes. Do those numbers really read all the way round to 500kph? The audacity and absurdity of it truly takes your breath away, but then that's always been VW's 21st century mission for Bugatti. To create cars that force you to reappraise what you thought was possible. To rewrite the rules.



If I'm honest, I always struggled with the Veyron. It was expressly created to chase big numbers and appeal to ultra-high-net-worth individuals; people with more money than they know what to do with, buying cars they don't know what to do with. This said, of course I was excited when I got the chance to drive one. And yes, it was madly powerful, rampantly fast and laughably easy to drive. But it was also a cold character. One that didn't seduce me or leave a lasting impression, other than at the effort it must have taken to expunge the emotion from what was at the time the world's fastest production car.

So why am I more excited by the Chiron? Because Bugatti recognised that whatever followed the Veyron had to address those issues. Not the customer profile, or even the obsession with setting blistering new benchmarks. All that stuff goes with the territory. No, what would be addressed was the touchy-feely stuff. The shades of grey that are needed to create a truly three-dimensional driving experience. The things that, if done brilliantly, will make the Chiron an event at any speed, and a car you want to thread through corner after corner as badly as you crave a long piece of straight road with no speed limits.

Things get off to a good start with the styling. The Chiron is unmistakably a Bugatti, but there's more intrigue and attitude. I love the eight-eyed stare and the huge, sweeping arc that defines the flanks. The brutally chopped tail is packed with drama, whether it's the full-width tail light with its one-piece alloy surround machined from a 200kg billet of material

to form this exquisite 1kg piece of automotive jewellery, the gargantuan rear wing that doubles as an air brake, or the sheer volume of hot air that vents through the massive area of mesh. And then there's the 8-litre, quad-turbocharged W16 filling the belly of the beast, open to the elements beneath its slash-cut engine cover.

The interior sustains that drama, thanks to another arc that bisects the cockpit, looping back from the headlining, down the rear bulkhead and in along the centre console. It doesn't segregate driver from passenger, but it creates an unusually intimate environment. One that gives each their own space and somehow focuses attention out through the windscreen.

What frame of reference do you use to assess a car that costs £2.5m, develops 1479bhp and 1180lb ft of torque, accelerates from a standstill to 124mph in less time than a quick car hits 62mph and has its top speed electronically limited to 261mph?

The simple answer would be to look back at the Veyron, but even modern Bugatti's first effort pales when compared with the Chiron. As the engineers tell us at the two-hour technical briefing, 'We couldn't just go and get parts out of a box in the stores. We had to make everything.' That's why, even though the Veyron set so many benchmarks, virtually every key component required replacing, redesigning or re-engineering to add strength and save weight for the Chiron. One of the most impressive examples is the crankshaft, which had to be much stronger but is now 1.4kg lighter thanks to new machining



Above and above right: Bugatti offers 30 leather and eight Alcantara options for the interior, and 23 paint and eight carbonfibre finishes for the exterior, but buyers can also specify something unique – at additional cost – if Bugatti approves of the quality of the materials



'If Bugatti removed the speed-limiter altogether, it would touch 280mph'

processes. The only component allowed to be heavy is the front badge, which is made from solid silver.

So don't be fooled into thinking the Chiron is propelled by a Veyron engine with the wick turned up a bit. Yes, it's an 8-litre W16 force-fed by a quartet of turbos, but most of the internals are all-new. To produce the power increase, the turbos are much bigger than those fitted to the Veyron. Ordinarily this would mean increased turbo-lag, but the engineers have mitigated this by blowing all the exhaust gases through two of the turbos below 3800rpm, then feeding all four beyond that point. The conrods are stronger and lighter. Everything has been subjected to painstaking scrutiny in order to strike a more efficient balance between strength and mass.

The result is huge gains in power and torque over the Veyron, which itself mustered 987bhp in its original guise, rising to 1183bhp in later versions. The Chiron's 1479bhp peak arrives at 6700rpm, while its 1180lb ft is available from 2000rpm all the way to 6000. Those are truly astonishing figures and the key to acceleration times that are no less mind-blowing: from a standstill 62mph arrives in less than 2.5 seconds; 124mph in 6.5; 186mph in 13.6. Word is, were Bugatti to remove the electronic speed-limiter altogether the Chiron would touch 450kph, or just shy of 280mph. As ever, tyres are the limiting factor. Hence the 420kph/261mph upper limiter and the 380kph/236mph 'everyday limiter'. Andy Wallace – veteran of the celebrated McLaren F1 V-max run – describes counting to eight when running the Chiron towards that 261mph limit, for that's about as long as the tyres can stand before heat and centrifugal force threaten to tear them apart.

Entire books could be written on the technology contained within the Chiron. The bodywork is super-thin, super-strong carbonfibre with the finest sliver of aluminium honeycomb sandwiched at its core. The structure beneath uses the same technology to save weight and add strength. Torsional rigidity is 50,000Nm per degree, flexural rigidity approximately 0.25mm per tonne. That's comparable to a current LMP1 car. The Chiron also meets worldwide safety standards, rather than relying on small-volume loopholes.

It has a fully adaptive chassis that optimises damping, ride height, aerodynamics, steering and powertrain to deliver the right blend of compliance, stability, agility and responsiveness across its unprecedented performance envelope. Michelin developed new tyres to cope with the demands of running at 260mph, an aerospace rig being used to simulate the stresses. The carbon-ceramic brake discs are 20mm larger (now 420mm front and 400mm rear) and 2mm thicker. They are gripped by all-new forged aluminium calipers – eight-piston at the front, six-piston at the rear – and built to an asymmetrical design to help dissipate the incredible amount of energy generated when slowing the 1995kg Chiron from high speeds. A new design of heat shield guides air through the discs to further aid cooling, by as much as 50 per cent. They should even stand track use; something the Veyron's stoppers struggled with.

Down to the nitty gritty, then. What's it like to drive? With the Veyron, it was almost as though Bugatti skipped this all-important aspect, such was the focus on hitting those once-incredible power and performance benchmarks, and making sure it was reliable and driveable. This time around,

Bugatti knew the Chiron had to back up the numbers with feel and emotion. And pretty much straight away you sense the connection and detail through the steering that development driver Loris Biccocchi worked so hard to perfect. Of course there's tons of grip and unshakeable traction, but it's the way you can now feel and sense how much you're using and how much is left that marks the Chiron out as something special.

Its weight and that endless plateau of torque mean it's not a flighty, flighty machine in the style of a P1 or LaFerrari, but it manages to feel both planted and calmly agile. More hyper-GT than hyperactive hypercar. Given Bugatti owners tend to have extensive collections of cars (an average of 41, we're told), that's a smart move, for it's what continues to separate Bugattis from the rest. The Chiron even has a luggage hold, just big enough for a carry-on bag. Though as someone pointed out at the briefing, it's doubtful a Chiron owner will be arguing with Ryanair personnel at check-in. Or indeed flying scheduled at all.

The steering is extremely well-judged in terms of response, so you're soon guiding the Chiron instinctively. Accurately, too, which is always a confidence-booster. It feels a size smaller than it is. The problem, if you can call it such, is the range and accessibility of the performance. A squeeze of the throttle sends you surging down the road with the insistence of an avalanche. Give it a push to the carpet and there's the briefest sense of the W16 filling its lungs and then you simply punch from where you were to where you were looking, waaaaay down the straight.

It's more like matter transfer than conventional acceleration. Unfortunately it seems to leave your stomach and your senses somewhere in its wake, at least until your brain begins to recalibrate. Nothing in my experience connects the corners quite like this. It's monstrous.

Thankfully the brakes are more than up to the task of stopping the thing. Those super-trick cooling fins within the disc shrouding work a treat; combined with the air brake, they mean you're in seatbelt freefall when you brake from big speeds. All this stopping power comes with plenty of feel and finesse at lower speeds. The seven-speed DSG transmission, meanwhile, is super-smooth and virtually instantaneous. Left to shift by itself you're always in the meat of the torque – hard not to be, truth be told – but it's also satisfying to flip the paddles yourself.

There are four dynamic modes, plus V-max mode, which is accessed by a secondary key mounted on the driver's door sill. This preps the car for a full 261mph charge, though it defaults back to 236mph if you apply more than a few degrees of steering lock. All these modes are non-configurable – that's to say you can't play around with suspension settings. What you get in each mode is what you get, though the electronics will automatically activate the most appropriate mode. If, for example, you exceed 112mph (180kph) the Chiron switches from EB mode (tailored for comfort with agility) to Autobahn mode – retaining some compliance but with greater emphasis on stability. 'Handling' and 'Top Speed' modes are pretty self-explanatory. There's also a low-speed 'Lift' mode for speed humps and awkward ramp angles.

List price is £2.1million plus taxes (so around £2.5million in the UK). Of the 500 scheduled to be built, half have already got substantial deposits against them. And all from customers who have yet to drive the car. Around half of those are existing Veyron owners, the rest conquest customers. Amazingly, some have placed deposits on two cars: the first to be delivered as early as possible, the second later in the build phase to allow more time for greater personalisation. Now that's



Above left: huge rear aerofoil changes angle depending on whether it's required to increase downforce for cornering, reduce drag for V-max runs, or act as an air brake to supplement the gargantuan carbon-ceramic discs (left)



'It's more like matter transfer than conventional acceleration'



a classy solution to a decidedly First World problem.

Rivals? In all honesty there aren't any. Texan tuning legend John Hennessey is busy developing his Venom F5 – a 290mph successor to the original Venom, which I drove and loved back in 2013 (*evo* 180). Knowing Hennessey, he would be the first to say his cars are entirely different animals. Koenigsegg also has a penchant for chasing monstrous top speeds, but its cars, even the remarkable hybrid Regera, are all about fire and brimstone. Albeit achieved through Christian von Koenigsegg's remarkable ambition and unique vision.

Nothing combines the Chiron's civility and savagery. Nor its engineering integrity and impeccable quality. Its capabilities are mind-blowing, its potency almost unimaginable. And yes, its performance – though ridiculously accessible – is all but unusable unless you're on a derestricted Autobahn. Something tells me this doesn't matter a jot to those who will own one. Nor should it to you or me. So let's just celebrate it for what it is: the most extraordinary supercar the world has ever seen.

It's appropriate to let Wolfgang Dürheimer – career engineer

and president of Bugatti (and Bentley) – have the last word. Sitting next to him at dinner, it's clear the VW Group remains committed to Bugatti and the investment such a brand requires, even in these dark, post-Dieseltgate days. He is adamant the Chiron will be more than a loss-leading halo car. He's also emboldened by feedback from customers who, he claims, tell him 'your car is too cheap!' – feedback that will, in all likelihood, mean the remaining 250 cars will carry larger price tags, though how much larger remains to be seen.

Finally, perhaps as a foretaste of the targets for the Chiron's replacement (sure to be already on his engineers' agenda) and as a daunting broadside fired across the bows of other hypercar builders, Dürheimer is certain the quest for greater power, performance and efficiency will continue:

'The 500kph [that's 311mph!] barrier will one day fall. I am convinced of this,' he says. 'It is part of human nature to cross boundaries and set new records. This striving is our driving force at Bugatti. The Chiron is the result of our efforts to make the best even better. For us, the race goes on.' ❧

Bugatti Chiron

Engine W16, 7993cc, quad-turbo **Power** 1479bhp @ 6700rpm **Torque** 1180lb ft @ 2000-6000rpm **Transmission** Seven-speed dual-clutch, four-wheel drive, rear LSD
Suspension, front and rear Double wishbones, coil springs, adaptive dampers **Brakes** Carbon-ceramic discs, 420mm front, 400mm rear **Wheels** 20in front, 21in rear
Tyres 285/30 R20 front, 355/25 R21 rear **Weight** 1995kg **Power-to-weight** 753bhp/ton **0-62mph** <2.5sec (claimed) **Top speed** 261mph (limited) **Basic price** c£2.5million

evo rating ★★★★★

*Sometimes you can have too much power.
evo writers recall some sweaty-palmed
road-testing moments that make a 1500bhp
Chiron sound like a walk in the park*



WHEN POWER

STUART GALLAGHER

200bhp Escort RS Turbo



Someone on *Performance Ford* thought it was a good idea. Take one Mk4 Escort RS Turbo and tune its crude 1.6-litre CVH engine to within an inch of its life. The goal was to add 70bhp to the rather weedy 130bhp standard figure. For today's turbo engines this would require little more than some beefier injectors, additional cooling and an ECU remap. In 1997 it took six months of engine-building, many broken parts (cams and pistons, mainly), a turbo you could rent out as a bijou flat in London, an induction kit you'd struggle to fit in a dustbin and an exhaust to rival the Dartford Tunnel for girth.

The result? We hit 200bhp and it was awful. Driveshafts snapped, engine mounts broke, and when those 200 rampant horses came crashing in at 5000rpm it was a traction-free zone for the next 500rpm, so you'd either change gear and wait for it to all happen again or the clutch would cry 'enough', which it did with predictable regularity. Rubbish car, rubbish idea.

COLIN GOODWIN

'Vampire' jet car



For lots of power you can't beat a jet engine, particularly if it's fitted with an afterburner. Before Richard Hammond tried to off himself in it, I drove the Vampire jet car at Bruntingthorpe. I did a few runs without the afterburner but the car only went to 205mph (in a measured quarter-mile). I couldn't go home without knowing what it would be like at full beans. So they let me.

'How will I know if the afterburner is lit?' I asked. 'You'll know,' they replied, with large grins. And they were right. Over 270mph in around seven seconds. What's more, the faster a jet goes, the more air it gulps and the more power it makes. When I pulled the fuel cut-off and parachute release lever it was still accelerating (it still holds the British land speed record at a mean speed of 300.3mph, and Hammond hit 314mph before his accident). Unfortunately, as much as I would have liked to have seen 300mph, the sight of a field of unsold Vauxhalls at the end of the runway was getting larger.

WILL BEAUMONT

BMW M6 Competition Pack



Possibly not the most powerful car I've driven, but the BMW M6 Competition Package trying to send 567bhp onto cold, wet tarmac through rear tyres that had taken a hammering on track just a day before certainly felt like one of the silliest. It broke traction with such ease that it felt like the tyres were made of ice. Wheelspin was constant and it meant the car's angle to the road wasn't dictated by the steering wheel, rather by gravity sucking the slipping back end down towards the lowest part of the road. Even traction control ran out of ideas that day.

DAN PROSSER

400bhp Focus ST



I should probably fill this space with a tale of derring-do in some ludicrous 1000bhp hypercar, but when I think of overpowered cars I'm immediately reminded of a Ford Focus I drove



CORRUPTS

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several years ago. It was a second-generation ST that had been boosted by a tuning company to around 400bhp. It was still front-wheel drive, of course, so the thing just vapourised its tyres no matter the gear or road conditions. It did have an LSD, but using a diff to try to contain 400bhp in a front-wheel-drive car is a bit like using your stern voice to restrain Charles Bronson.

DAVID VIVIAN

600bhp Morris Minor



The annual Brighton Speed Trials were a good source of bonkers machinery for us motoring journalists to figure back in the late '80s. James Tiller's battered but brutal Allard J2 was a fun day out – less so, maybe, for snapper Peter Burn who was roped to the roll-bar in lieu of a passenger seat and treated to a 165mph mile-straight run when James forgot he was there. My favourite, though, has to be Nick Mann's 600bhp Morris Minor that had a railway sleeper bolted to the back to aid traction and returned acceleration stats to make a Ferrari F40 blush.

ADAM TOWLER

700bhp Porsche 964 Turbo



Bruntingthorpe, and a 3.3-litre Turbo modified by a well-regarded race engineer at a cost similar to purchasing a Carrera GT, most of it spent on the engine. Earlier, unbeknown to us, some fine-tuning of the mapping had accidentally removed the 1.5bar boost limiter (at which point it already had over 700bhp). Second gear, full throttle, and utter insanity breaks loose, complemented by a shriek from the engineer in the passenger seat as 2bar is exceeded. I thought the little 911 might actually topple over backwards. Later, back on 1.5bar, it hit 212mph.

ANTONY INGRAM

Sutton Mustang CS700



Global car-makers have got pretty good at designing chassis and drivetrains that cope with big power, though the old Mercedes-AMG E63 S always felt rampantly, clammy-palms fast.

But tuning firms can still throw up surprises. The supercharged Sutton Mustang CS700's surprise wasn't the way it drew in the horizon but the black smoke that filled my mirrors (and the 'check engine' light that illuminated on the dash) the first time I gave it a prod. This one wasn't even running the full 690bhp that Sutton eventually wants to extract.

JOHN BARKER

Cortina Cosworth



The turbo chattered madly as the corner rushed to meet us. I shouted to my *Performance Car* colleague in the passenger seat: 'I don't want to worry you,' (I was lying) 'but the brakes have gone!' (I wasn't lying.) The ratty Mk3 Cortina was running a snorty 300bhp-plus Cossie RS motor but, as it was a drag racer, feeble original brakes. We'd easily passed Meaden wringing out a 911 3.3 Turbo but now, it seemed, we were about to become part of the scenery. Britain's Scariest Car? Well, the traces from our heart monitors showed an impressive spike. ☒



ICON

A little light relief

Had your fill of gargantuan turbocharged power outputs? Here's something to refresh the palate. The original Lotus Elise is a sports car that's as delicate and delicious as ever

by JOHN BARKER

PHOTOGRAPHY by ASTON PARROTT



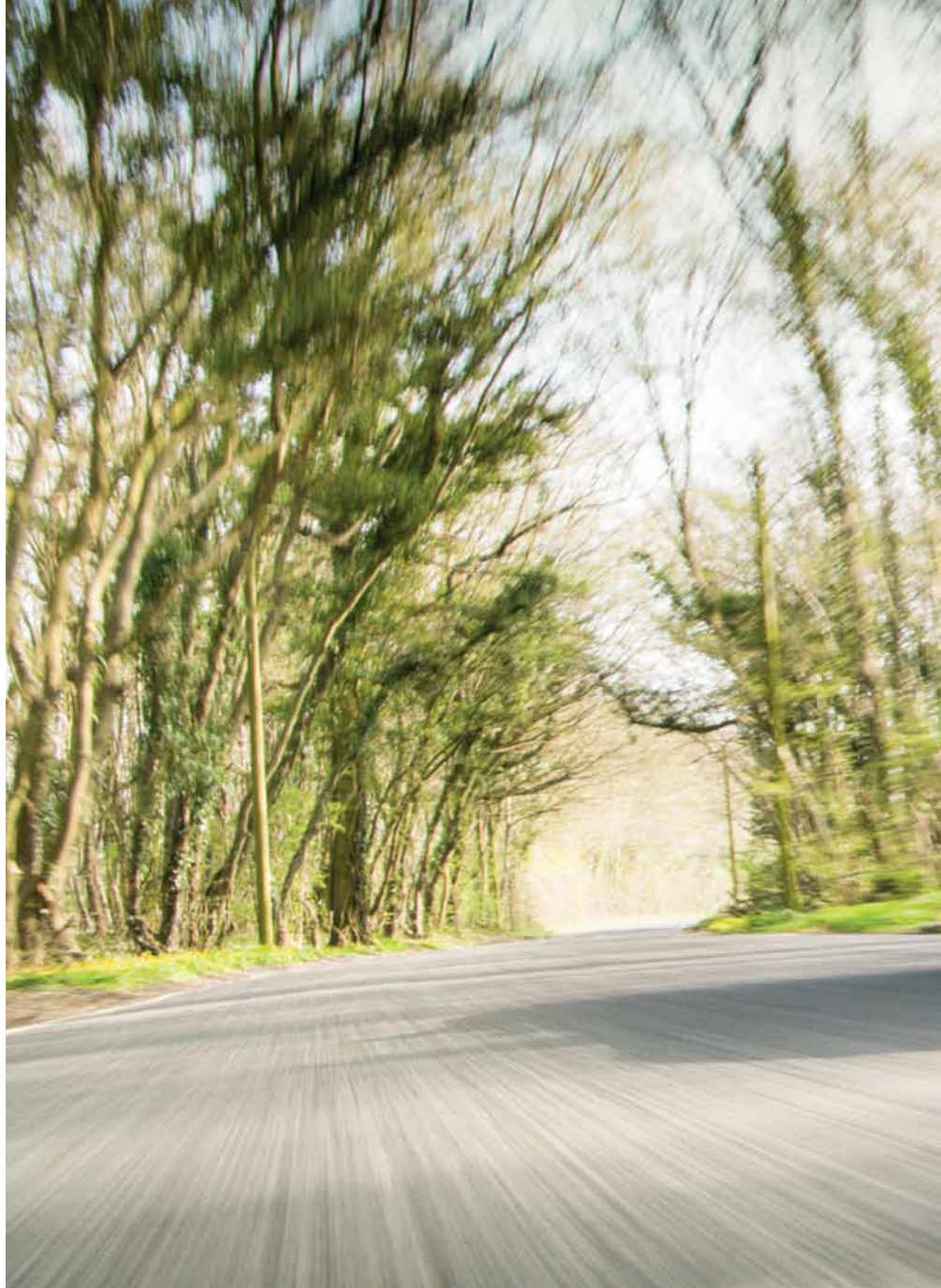
THE FIRST HUNDRED metres down the road in an Elise is rather like hearing the opening bars of a favourite song on the radio; it's hardly begun but already you know you're going to be entertained. Sure, the intro is a bit wobbly (think the opening chords of The Smiths' 'How Soon Is Now?') because the steering is disconcertingly light and the floorpan clatters noisily over bumps, but you know that once it hits its stride you're going to be right into it.

When the Elise appeared in 1996 it seemed almost to have come out of nowhere. Three years earlier, GM had sold Lotus to Italian businessman Romano Artioli. It's unclear why Artioli acquired Lotus for £30million at a time when his gloriously ambitious resurrection of Bugatti with the EB110 was taking him to bankruptcy at 213mph, but he gave Lotus just what it needed – the freedom to build an all-new sports car. The small, affordable and truly innovative Elise was the result and Lotus is still enjoying the benefits today.

Steered by Lotus's guiding principles of light weight and simplicity, the best minds at Hethel concluded that the chassis of the new car should be formed from extruded aluminium sections. Welding was a possibility but aluminium is tricky stuff and thicker sections are needed at weld points. But not if you glue the sections together. Danish company Hydro Aluminium had been working on adhesive bonding, which is also neater and more consistent than welding, and Lotus worked with them to develop the process for its first automotive application.

The bare chassis, minus roll hoop, suspension arms and aluminium brakes (more on them later), weighed just 67kg. For reference, Lotus reckons the carbon tub of the more recent Alfa 4C weighs 65kg... Every new Lotus since the Elise has used a form of that chassis, including even the Corvette ZR1-engined GT1 Elise racer, and if back in 2001 you'd got a close look at the aluminium chassis underpinning the new Aston Martin Vanquish you'd have seen Lotus's fingerprints all over it.

Mid-mounted beneath the rear deck of the Elise was the ideal engine: the compact and lightweight, all-aluminium Rover K-series. Lotus selected the 1.8-litre version of the British-built, 16-valve 'four', producing a modest 118bhp. However, because the Elise weighed in at just 731kg, the multiplication effect of its sub-ton kerb weight gave it 164bhp per ton. That's about the same as a contemporary Z3 2.8, so still modest, but the gutsy little K-series proved the perfect match





‘The Elise gave up its magic freely, at ordinary speeds, to anyone who took the wheel’

Above: early S1 Elise still seduces almost 21 years after the model's launch.

Left: Barker recalls being blown away by it back in 1996 – and the things that made it great then are still just as impressive today

for the Elise's mass and grip, helping create a deliciously well rounded and satisfying car.

Despite being so avant-garde at its core, the Elise was given a retro look by Julian Thomson, with fared-in headlamps and lots of curves, perhaps to distance it from the wedgy Elan M100 that preceded it. That car, which was famously front-wheel drive, had never really hit the spot. Some reckoned it was a good car in a bad market, restricted from reaching its full potential by the early '90s recession. But, like many potential Elan customers, I didn't buy that. It was impressively competent but you had to go hunting for the magic, whereas the Elise gave it up freely, at ordinary speeds, to anyone who took the wheel.

Twenty years on, nothing has changed. This is a very early example, registered just a couple

of months after the launch in September 1996. Its current owner, Ian Lain, bought it in '99 and although it was his daily driver for a couple of years, the Stack instrument cluster shows only 62,000 miles. It's not totally original. The springs and dampers were uprated to S2 spec when they needed replacing, because they were better and less expensive, says Lain. And OE supplier Pirelli no longer makes the diddy Pirelli P Zeros – a mere 185/55 R15 at the front – so instead there are Yokohamas all round, the fronts being mildly fatter 195-section Neovas that slightly muffin-top the alloys.

Up close with the Elise again, I'm reminded that achieving a kerb weight of 731kg meant interrogating every part, hence the wind-up windows, no internal adjusters for the door mirrors, basic slider heater controls and very



little interior trim: just a square foot of mat each side, a coin tray at either end of the dashboard and a pad the size of a geography teacher's elbow patch on each sill. That's it. There's a little bit of genius in the exterior 'door handle', which is just a small plastic ridge hidden under the overhang that your fingers naturally find when you push the lock button.

Caterham Seven-style cars are even lighter, but part of the broader appeal of the Elise is that it has real doors, with glass that goes up and down. And don't underestimate the reassurance you get from the deep-sided aluminium tub when you've slipped down into the shell-like seat (which looks painted-on but is surprisingly comfy and accommodating). The downside is that, with the roof in place, you have to struggle in through a narrow slot. Lain is 6ft 1in and broad of shoulder and says getting in with the roof on is like 'using the

letterbox to get into your house'. Perhaps it's no surprise that in the early concept stage of the Elise it was what Lotus calls a 'stepper', that's to say a car without roof or doors that you step into, like a bath. Explains where the 340R came from, doesn't it?

Once you're settled, the dynamic initiation can begin. How light is that unassisted steering? Well, if you've ever sat in your car with the front wheels jacked off the ground and twirled the wheel, that's pretty much the Elise's steering at town speeds. And that's with wider Yokohamas. In the wet, with so little resistance to work against, you have no sense when the front tyres are slipping wide. And that's not all to watch out for when it's raining...

Aluminium brakes sound right up there with chocolate fireguards, but the car's low mass allowed the use of an innovative technology. The Elise's Metal Matrix Composite (MMC)

discs were made from aluminium with 30 per cent silicon carbide and it was estimated that they would last up to 100,000 road miles. Lain's car still wears its original discs and, with their mirror-like finish, they look better than brand-new cast-iron discs. They haven't been available for years and it's increasingly rare to see them; they go for about £200 a disc, so some owners have them stashed in the loft.

Back in the '90s it was feared that, rather like carbon discs, they could be destroyed by severe overheating, and some owners swapped them, foregoing the very real benefits of lower unsprung mass at each corner to wheel control, and a lovely short pedal, too. But because they use a different principle to regular disc brakes – adherent friction instead of abrasive friction – the first application in the wet can be worryingly unresponsive. Again, not unlike early carbon brakes.

‘Clear of town, the Elise starts to get into its stride and turn on the charm’

No such worries today, with the spring sun beating down and the south coast calling. Clear of town, the Elise starts to get into its stride and turn on the charm. The clatter you hear over sharp bumps and ridges is a characteristic not a fault and you learn to ignore it, realising that the ride is in fact remarkably supple and unusually fluid. The stiff aluminium platform and light brakes allow this comfort and control, this remarkable ride quality that is the original Elise’s outstanding, defining dynamic characteristic. You fear no road surface, relishing the challenges the surface throws at the car, guiding it with confidence onto precisely the line you want.

Greater pace transforms the steering. You find yourself carrying speed and committing confidently to turns and then it dawns on you that the tiny Nardi wheel is suffused with feel, changes of weight revealing the level of grip. The car feels four-square, planted, balanced – you can hustle it, but it’s not necessary to get great cross-country pace out of it. This is the reward for low mass. It’s also the reason why you rarely hanker for more urge from the K-series at your back; it’s so instantly responsive, so generously torquey that it becomes a natural part of the blend, the flow. It sounds eager, too, thanks to the sports exhaust that adds fruitiness rather than shouty volume.

The gearshift is less slick than I remember. The little wand has a snappy throw but the gate feels dry, like there are burrs on the edges of the H-pattern. It’s all good if you add a bit of exaggeration, a bit of a flourish to your cross-gate shifts. A shame, though, that the brakes squeal like a fork across a plate until they’re up to temperature. They’re powerful, with superb feel and response, but it’s a bit distracting.



Above left: pared-down components and bare aluminium floor. **Above:** five-speed gearbox not quite as slick as Barker recalled. **Left:** 118bhp K-series engine still feels perfectly matched to flyweight Elise



‘The dynamics of the Elise are so fluid that the ride and handling are the same thing’



It will kick the tail wide if you're keen, and do it tidily, but that's not really its style. It's the Elise's deftness, its effortlessness across the ground that was unique and compelling back in 1996 and still is now. Back then, I got as many people into it as I could and it entertained and delighted them all, whether they drove or rode in it. Well, almost all. Not Jez Coates, technical director at Caterham Cars. The maker of the Seven had been looking for years to expand its range with a more habitable, lightweight sports car and in August 1996 launched the 21. A month later, Lotus launched the Elise.

It was Caterham's worst nightmare come true. Beneath the 21's swoopy bodywork was a Seven spaceframe with lateral extensions for side impact protection, and there was a boot and real doors, too. It drove well, like a Seven in fact, and in entry-level, 115bhp K-series trim weighed about 60kg less than the Elise. But it was more expensive. Only a bit, but enough.

Jez didn't believe the Elise was deserving of all the praise my fellow journalists and I were heaping on it. So we went for a drive on roads with lots of tricky bumps and surfaces. His mood got darker the further we went and after one particularly challenging section of asphalt that the Elise dispatched as if it was

a large rubber conveyor belt, I shouted over: 'Impressive, isn't it?' The reply was a grudging grunt. The 21 wasn't a bad car but it was doomed, and we both knew it.

Inevitably, when you make something that handles so well, even if it seems to have just the right amount of power, more potent versions come along. I can claim to be the only journalist to have driven the first of them, the 143bhp Elise Sprint, fitted with the VVC K-series. Sprint is an evocative name with authentic Lotus heritage but you'll know the model as the 111S because at the time the use of the Sprint name was successfully contested by another brand. Think about that the next time you're overtaken by a Mercedes Sprinter van...

Just over 10,600 S1 Elises were made before the more grown-up, better-equipped S2 took over in 2001. It's a testimony to the concept that, almost 21 years on from launch, the original 118bhp S1 still delivers. As with other great drivers' cars such as the E30 M3 and the original Elan, all things feel in balance – power, grip, handling and mass. Indeed, the dynamics of the Elise are so fluid that the ride and handling are the same thing. It makes for a uniquely satisfying experience – and guaranteed five-star **evo** icon status. ☒

Lotus Elise S1

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1796cc
Power 118bhp @ 5500rpm
Torque 122lb ft @ 3000rpm
Transmission Five-speed manual, rear-wheel drive
Front suspension Double wishbones, coil springs, dampers
Rear suspension Double wishbones, coil springs, dampers
Brakes Vented aluminium discs, 282mm front and rear
Wheels 5 x 15in front, 7 x 16in rear
Tyres 185/55 R15 front, 205/50 R16 rear
Weight 731kg
Power-to-weight 164bhp/ton
0-60mph 6.1sec (tested)
Top speed 126mph (claimed)
Price new £18,950 (1996)
Value today £12,000-20,000
On sale 1996-2001

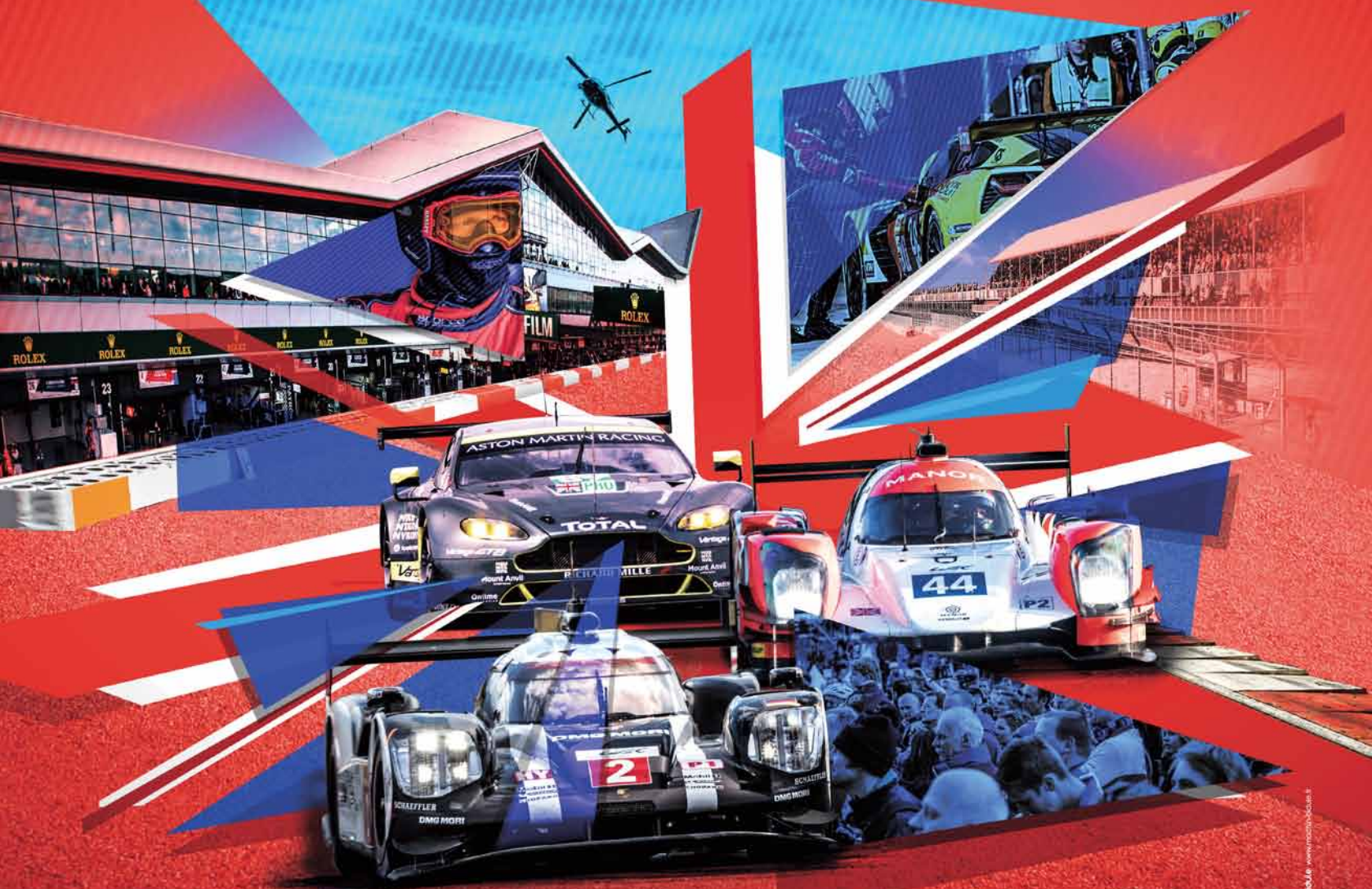
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Market

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HERE'S A GREAT GAME FOR ANY EVO reader to play – from a source of heated discussions in the pub to effective anaesthesia on a gridlocked M25, or the antidote to an interminable wait at an airport gate. It's even better if you have the cash to spend for real – yours, or a finance provider's, of course.

Quite simply, you have £50,000 – and not a penny more – to spend on three typically **evo** cars. Although there's nothing to say you can't skew your selection dramatically towards one particular car, there can be no cheating on the numbers. It also has to be three working cars – not a Ferrari and two moss-festooned fifty-quid sheds. ➔

ANALYSIS £50k THREE-CAR CHALLENGE

A genuine conundrum for some, but just a bit of fun for others – this is the **evo** approach to building a great three-car collection

by Adam Towler





In fact, all of your trio have to be 'decent' examples or better. So while it may still be possible to buy a Ferrari F355 for £35,000, the fact that it has caught fire in the past and the flying buttresses have dissolved into ferrous oxide essentially classes this sort of behaviour as cheating. Other rules? While there's nothing to stop you selecting three sports cars or rally homologation specials, the game does become rather monotonous if you do.

The first point to ponder is whether your trio needs a daily driver. For most, the answer – even hypothetically – will be 'yes', if not for financial reasons then for matters of garage space. If it's just three cars in a 'collection', the question does become a bit easier. Whichever way you view it, you'll need to make your money work quite hard to get the lot to come in at under £50,000.

A hot hatch is a great staple for any collection. We prefer not to get too caught up in the world of investment, but given this is **evo Market**, it'd be remiss to not at least cover that point, and there are plenty of opportunities in this segment alone.

A Clio 182 Trophy or a sensible-mileage Mk1 Focus RS remain attractive places to put your money and very exciting cars to drive at the same time. Nevertheless, if you want to maximise funds elsewhere but still want something that's going to bring a big grin to your face, it has to be an earlier Renault Sport Clio. With 172s currently available for a grand upwards, there is no greater bargain in the market at the moment. The 172 tends to be overlooked for the later 182 models, but both are brilliant hot hatches in the classic mould yet relatively cheap and easy to run.

You can't say that of the real hot hatch classics: cars such as 205 GTIs and the Clio Williams vary wildly in price, but usually something at £5000 or less will require significant expenditure to turn it into a car you're actually going to enjoy driving – and that's hard to put an exact figure on up front.

What of larger hot hatches? The idea of a Mégane R26.R always tempts, but that'll take a £20,000 bite out of the pot. Regular R26s, meanwhile, are around £6000, and good ones may not

'A hot hatch is a great staple for any collection, and offers an easy provision for a daily on the fleet'





get any cheaper. Alternatively, a Mk5 Golf GTI from £4000 makes a very practical but still enjoyable daily-drive hot hatch.

BMW M Power machinery is another obvious inclusion, with almost too much choice. Some options, such as the E92 M3s, cover both daily driver and weekend fun bases. Yet while there's a wide and varied choice of M3s and M5s to be had, sadly even a non-Evo E30 M3 won't leave that much change out of our total amount these days.

Fast saloon – and estate – alternatives from AMG and quattro GmbH are also mightily tempting: the B7 Audi RS4 wagon featured in our recent '£20k Heroes' issue (evo 231) reminded us what a brilliant car this can be, and the B5 RS4 is an emerging classic, although there are still a few bargains occasionally cropping up in the classifieds.

EXPERT VIEW

DAN PROSSER

Road test editor, evo

They say great minds think alike, but on the evidence of this challenge, slightly dim minds think alike, too. The three cars I've made space for in my fantasy £50,000 garage have already been mentioned by Adam above. A little annoying, but I won't let it sway me.

I toyed with the idea of dumping the bulk of my budget on an early Audi R8, but there wouldn't be much left over for the remaining two cars. So I've tried to be pragmatic with my final selection, choosing three

When it comes to sports cars there are almost endless options, but any Boxster is a staple in this price range, while a BMW Z4 M makes an interesting – if flawed – alternative. There's also a broad range of 911s temptingly available, with everything from a leggy gen-one 996 Carrera 4 at £12,000 to higher-mileage gen-two 997s if you're prepared to minimise the expenditure on the other two cars. Or if you want something more raw, how about a Lotus Elise 111R in the high teens, or a nearly new Caterham?

Then there are the Japanese staples: most Subaru Imprezas (outside the specials, such as the P1) are currently very affordable, and a regular Evo V or VI at around £10,000 looks like a tempting option, as does a Tommi Mäkinen Edition Evo VI for a few grand more.

cars that I could see myself buying and enjoying, rather than simply picking one tasty car and filling the rest of the garage with tat.

Yes, I know, a 997 Porsche 911 Carrera is horribly predictable, but every time I see one on the road I find myself pining for it. I think they grow prettier with every passing year and I adore the compact footprint. And I've sampled enough to know they're wonderful to drive.

I'd spend around £27,000 on one, which would afford a 2006 car with under 60,000

miles. You can pick up a Carrera S for that money, but I'd be more concerned about the car's history and condition than whether it's the more powerful version.

I'd want the 911 to be my weekend car, rather than my daily. The car I'd use to hack up and down motorways in would be a VW Golf GTI Mk5. I have a real weakness for this car, so it would be much more than just a tool to me. Around £7000 would buy a decent example.

Finally, I'd drop £16,000 on a Mitsubishi Evo VI. You

SUMMARY

On paper it seems deceptively easy, but this is one conundrum with almost infinite permutations and no right or wrong answer. Personally, I'd keep at least half an eye on future values. That's not so much because of a deep desire to make money – if that's the case the car selection process is dangerously twisted away from driving enjoyment. However, it's nice to protect one's self from depreciation. So I'd go for a classic hot hatch, some kind of 'affordable' water-cooled Porsche, and then maybe an Evo Mäkinen. Or a nice E39 BMW M5. Or maybe an Elise, because a proper sports car would be good to have. Oh... more thought required, then.

Now over to you. Email your three-car, £50,000 garages – fantasy or real – to letters@evo.co.uk

FOUR TO CONSIDER



2010 BMW M3 (E90)

£27,955

It eats up more than half of the proposed budget, yet it also ticks oh-so-many boxes. The naturally aspirated V8 is the star of the show, but the saloon M3 is also practical and proving very reliable – and this example has just 32,000 miles on the clock.

MOTORHOUSECARS.COM



2008 VW GOLF GTI EDITION 30

£9995

Blessed with a superb driving position and one of the best chassis bestowed upon a modern hot hatch, the Mk5 Golf GTI is a strong contender for a £50,000 garage. The Edition 30 got a little more power, BBS alloys and a distinctive bodykit. This 70,000-miler sneaks in at under £10,000.

G50MOTORCOMPANY.CO.UK



1998 MITSUBISHI EVO VI

£11,500

The rally vibe won't be for everyone, but an Evo VI tuned to 350bhp is a machine few other cars could live with on British roads. This is a GSR model, so comes with Mitsubishi's 4WD Active Yaw Control and freakish agility. With 105,000 miles showing, and just MOT'd.

PISTONHEADS.COM



1999 LOTUS ELISE (Si)

£14,995

Making space in a three-car garage for a lightweight roadster will be a given for many, and weighing just 731kg, the Si Elise plays that role superbly. This example, in Rover Nightfire Red and with 36,000 miles, uses the 1.8-litre Rover K-series engine. Catch it while you can...

SEVENSANDCLASSICS.COM

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USED RIVALS TRACK-READY CLASSICS

by Adam Towler



PORSCHE 924 CARRERA GT

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine	In-line 4-cyl, 1984cc, turbo
Power	207bhp @ 6000rpm
Torque	207lb ft @ 3500rpm
Weight	1179kg [178bhp/ton]
0-62mph	6.9sec [claimed]
Top speed	150mph [claimed]
On sale	1979-1981
evo rating	★★★★★

EXAMPLE

1981 £49,995



gmundcars.co.uk
In Guards Red with a black pinstripe interior, this car has covered 78,000 miles and its last keeper owned it since 2003. One of only 406 made.

BUYING ADVICE

'It can be difficult to get some of the parts, particularly on the engine side – coolant pipes, for example. They've always been a special car, and perhaps due to that a lot have sat around in long-term storage. They often don't run right through this lack of use; things like the metering heads and injectors get blocked. They can also have a problem with worn engine mounts – they go soft, allowing the engine to tip, touch the steering column and cause a vibration. Oil leaks are fairly common, and we've seen them when the temperature gauge gets a bad earth and does strange things when you switch the headlamps on. Otherwise, servicing is much like a normal 924.'

Steve Wood, Autofarm

THREE SLIGHTLY UNUSUAL CLASSIC choices this month: a rare Porsche that isn't a 911 at a stratospheric price, a concept car turned one-make racer that morphed into a rarely spotted roadster, and a spectacular mini-supercar that catapulted its British maker into the big time.

The 924 Carrera GT is a true homologation special, with class wins at Le Mans and in rallying – and all still powered by the humble 2-litre engine that had its roots in the VW-Audi empire.



RENAULT SPORT SPIDER

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine	In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc
Power	148bhp @ 6000rpm
Torque	136lb ft @ 4500rpm
Weight	930kg [157bhp/ton]
0-62mph	6.5sec [claimed]
Top speed	131mph [claimed]
On sale	1996-1999
evo rating	★★★★☆

EXAMPLE

1997 £27,994



ronhodhson.co.uk
In rare Sport Red with grey Recaro buckets, this Spider has just 22,000 miles to its name. Comes with a windscreen and new Toyo tyres.

BUYING ADVICE

'The engine and gearbox are fairly straightforward and reliable. It's not actually the Clio Williams engine – that was in the race version – but the similar engine from the Mégane Coupe. These cars tend to be low-mileage, and lots of the problems with them are through lack of use. The cable-operated clutch can stiffen over time, and it's not uncommon for the force required to break the pedal. The suspension is pretty much bespoke and hard to source now, so look for corrosion. Also check the engine mounts and for cracks where the engine's subframe meets the chassis. The hardest thing to get hold of is interior trim and body panels, so make sure any car is cosmetically good.'

Stephen Dell, Renault Alpine Owners' Club

Possessing some of the best box arches of any car, it was a forerunner to the hugely successful 944.

The Renault Sport Spider has always lived in the Elise's shadow. Arguably not quite powerful enough in standard form, it remains a fascinating experience, and just 100 came to the UK.

And finally, anyone who's driven a Noble M12 will recall the sublime handling poise coupled with the huge acceleration. As a dynamic package it was the equal of almost anything else on sale at the time – an amazing feat – and it'll still thrill today.



NOBLE M12 GTO 2.5

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine	V6, 2544cc, twin-turbo
Power	310bhp @ 6000rpm
Torque	320lb ft @ 3500rpm
Weight	980kg [321bhp/ton]
0-62mph	4.1sec [claimed]
Top speed	165mph [claimed]
On sale	2000-2002
evo rating	★★★★☆

EXAMPLE

2002 £32,990



bakerbrothers.co.uk
With a mere 7000 miles on the clock, this 'murdered-out' example of the 2.5-litre M12 comes with air conditioning and leather seats.

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 affect performance, and there's also the high-pressure fuel pump issue: a telltale 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.'

Matt Walton, Jetstream Motorsport

BUYING JOURNEY

evo reader Roger Wilson's lengthy buying history

THE CARS

- 1972 **Mini 850 (1965)**
- 1973 **Mini 1275 GT (1973)**
- 1975 **Ford Cortina 1600 GT (1968)**
- 1979 **Hillman Hunter (1970)**
- 1983 **Renault 16 GT (1976)**
- 1987 **Ford Escort XR3i (1987)**
- 1994 **Renault 5 GT Turbo (1990)**
- 1997 **BMW 325i M Sport (E30) (1989)**
- 1999 **BMW 328i M Sport (E36) (1999)**
- 1999 **Ford Fiesta RS Turbo (1990)**
- 2003 **BMW 330d (E36) (1999)**
- 2005 **Audi S4 (B6) (2004)**
- 2006 **Mercedes-Benz C55 AMG (1999)**
- 2011 **BMW M3 (E92) (2011)**
- 2012 **Audi RS4 (B8) (2012)**
- 2015 **BMW X6 M (2015)**
- 2015 **Porsche 911 Carrera 4 (991.1) (2015)**
- 2015 **Jaguar XK Convertible (2015)**
- 2015 **Range Rover Sport (2015)**

Porsche 911 Carrera 4 (991.1)

'I paid £72,000 for this one-owner, 63-plate, 6000-mile example from a Porsche Centre. Just the most wonderful car, quality and service that I've ever received. It was the car I had wanted since I can remember. I only sold it as I didn't want to use it as my daily driver but also didn't like leaving it in the garage for weekends, as it needs to be driven.'



ROGER WILSON'S MOTORING LIFETIME began, as have so many, with a Mini 850 – the result of a bribe from his father not to buy a motorbike, aged 17. That soon gave way to a genuine performance car in the shape of a Mini 1275 GT, followed by a line of less inspiring cars as the realities of bringing up a family took hold.

The 1990s heralded a return to enjoyable motoring, with a succession of sporting BMWs and some classic hot hatches, including the riotous fun of the Renault 5 GT Turbo and the uncouth

Ford Fiesta RS Turbo. An interloper during the 2000s was a Mercedes C55 AMG, a car Roger describes as 'wonderful' but with 'the worst reliability ever'. Nevertheless, its combination of big power and an auto 'box has been something he's found increasingly appealing in more recent years, abandoning the BMWs (well, mostly) for the comfort of Jaguar and Range Rover.

A brief few years on bikes have provided the hardcore thrills lately, as did the realisation of a dream in owning a Porsche 911 Carrera.



Audi S4 (B6)

'This was an Audi S4 V8 with an ECU remap: wonderful to drive, quick, comfortable, but with a manual gearbox. It cost around £30,000 in 2005 as a one-year-old car, and I eventually moved it on with almost 65,000 miles on the clock. This car made me desire to own a car with an auto 'box. I sold it to a friend who ran it for another two years without any issues.'



Audi RS4 (B8)

'This was a standard-spec car with the S-tronic automatic gearbox. I bought it as an ex-demo car from an Audi dealer, and it cost me around £60,000. Sadly, it turned out to be the most uncomfortable car I've ever driven: it was really stiffly sprung. In fairness, I was 15 years older than when I had my old BMW 325i M Sport. I simply had to admit my mistake and returned the car to Audi after just six days – unfortunately incurring a £6000 loss!'

WHAT NEXT?

'My sensible head says I should buy a Tesla Model S P85+, but can I live with the range anxiety and would I miss the sound of a combustion engine? I thought I might get another Range Rover – they're comfortable and quick, but they're not drivers' cars and with the flaky reliability issues I've had, do I really want to relive those experiences again? Therefore, I've decided what I really want is a quick, comfortable, petrol-powered SUV. So I've paid the deposit and configured a Cayenne GTS in black with Turbo wheels for a 1 April delivery.'

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return of
£19,995

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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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Returned customer (less fee) £78,495

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£89,995



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Buying guide



SKODA FABIA vRS (2010-2014)

A great all-rounder with a trick engine, the second-gen Fabia vRS starts at just £5500. But beware the pitfalls

by Peter Tomalin

THE ORIGINAL FABIA vRS CAME RIGHT OUT OF left field. Introduced in 2003, it provided a genuinely alternative take on the hot hatch thanks to a torque-laden 1.9-litre turbodiesel engine that endowed the previously eminently ignorable Fabia with surprising pace combined with pleasing frugality. We loved it, as did its owners.

When Skoda introduced its replacement in the summer of 2010, there was a slight sense of disappointment that it had gone for petrol power (no, really, there was). Not that the power unit was entirely conventional, being the VW Group's 1.4 TSI 'Twincharger' engine – featuring both a turbo and a supercharger. Very effective it was, too, producing 178bhp in a pleasingly linear manner, and with a nifty





CHECKPOINTS

ENGINE

Spend time researching twincharger engines online and you might get the impression that every vRS is a ticking bomb. As ever, that's not the whole story, although Ed Jackson at VW Group specialist APS confirms that a significant number – mostly early engines, coded CAVE – suffer excessive oil consumption caused primarily by defective pistons. Another common issue is misfiring, often linked to problems with PCV (positive crankcase ventilation) pushing oil into the intake.

The worst cases have seen engine failures, necessitating a replacement engine.

A substantially revised 1.4 TSI (engine code CTHE) was introduced late in 2012 and addressed many of the problems. A sticker at the bottom of the driver's door pillar will tell you which engine you've got. According to the guys at briskoda.net, of the 2900 or so Mk2 vRSs sold in the UK, around 1800 had the CAVE engine and around 1100 the CTHE. They estimate that up to a third of the pre-2012 engines have suffered issues. With the later

unit, the numbers are nowhere near as high.

'Obviously you're better going for the later engine,' says Ed. 'That said, if an early engine has now done 50,000 miles without problems, then it's probably going to be OK. Look for a film of oil in the exhaust, or oil spray on the back of the car after a run. And if there's an oil container in the boot, that's probably a sign it needs regular topping up!'

There's quite a bit you can do to guard against future problems. Doing lots of short journeys is best avoided. Changing

the spark plugs every two years or 20,000 miles, using good-quality oil and checking it regularly, and also using good-quality fuel – all these things can help.

The engine is receptive to tuning – remaps are widely available, as are cold-air intakes and freer-breathing exhausts – but this can exacerbate any problems, so modified engines need meticulous upkeep.

TRANSMISSION

The seven-speed DSG gearbox is generally rugged. A small number

of cars did experience an issue with the mechatronic unit, leading to a loss of drive. Consequently there was a service campaign, 34F7, starting in spring 2014, to change the gear oil from synthetic to mineral oil, with a software update at the same time. Skoda dealers should be able to confirm if the car you're looking at should have had the service action. Look for a note in the service book, and/or a sticker in the wheel-well in the boot, for evidence that it's been done. On the test drive, try the 'box in both modes (Sport

locks out seventh gear) and check for smooth, precise changes with no low-speed judders.

SUSPENSION, STEERING, BRAKES

No particular issues here, so any clunks or creaks are signs that the car hasn't been that well cared for.

BODY, INTERIOR, ELECTRICS

As you may have surmised, any warning lights should be thoroughly investigated, and it's worth having the ECU read for fault codes.

seven-speed DSG gearbox as standard it was enough for a 0-62mph time of 7.3sec and 139mph. It was the fastest Fabia yet, and if it lacked the final sprinkling of magic that, say, a Renault Sport hatch might possess, it was a very decent all-round package.

Well-equipped, too. As well as DSG, you got plenty of toys including air con, excellent vRS-branded sports seats, eye-catching 17in Gigaro alloys (painted black as an option) and the option to have a black or white painted roof. At £15,500 it was good value, and for a further £795 you could have it as an estate. We ran a vRS wagon for seven months and 12,500 miles back in 2011-12 and it proved painless and no little fun. We did note, however, that as with the identically engined Polo GTI we were also running at the time, the twincharged engine had a tendency to consume oil...

Pretty soon after the Mk2 vRS's launch, stories began to emerge of excessive oil consumption and, in some cases, engines requiring rebuilds or even replacements. Browse the internet and you'll find plenty of tales of woe. In truth, the picture is nowhere near as bleak as it might appear, but there have been real issues with the twincharger engine, and it pays to approach Fabia vRS ownership with your eyes wide open.

A warranty could be worthwhile for peace of mind. The standard Skoda manufacturer's warranty was three years long, with the option to add an extra two years. If you can find a car with the balance of the manufacturer warranty, that's obviously well worth having. Dealer and third-party warranties are also available. As you'll see, they could prove a wise investment.



WHAT TO PAY

Cars from 2010/11 with average-to-high miles and a full service history start at around £5500. Similar cars at dealers (so usually carrying a warranty) generally cost about a grand more. At the upper end, £8000 gets you a late car (with the revised engine) with low miles and just one or two owners. Estates are rare and command a small premium.

All Fabia vRSs were well equipped as standard, but black roofs (an optional extra at around £450 when new) and black wheels are sought after, as are heated seats.

The car pictured here is a 33,000-mile example from 2012. It's currently for sale at Steven Egell Toyota in Bromham, Bedfordshire, priced at £7840. Call 01234 827 198.

Above right: sports seats came as standard. **Right:** twincharged 1.4-litre unit can be troublesome, so should be the focus of your attention when viewing a potential purchase



INFORMATION

SPECIFICATION

Engine	In-line 4-cyl, 1390cc, twincharger
Max power	178bhp @ 6200rpm
Max torque	184lb ft @ 2000-4500rpm
Transmission	Seven-speed DSG, front-wheel drive
Weight	1218kg
Power-to-weight	148bhp/ton
0-62mph	7.3sec (claimed)
Top speed	139mph (claimed)
Price new	£15,500 (2010)

PARTS PRICES

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

Tyres (each)	£76.58 (Michelin Pilot Sport 3)
Front pads (set)	£73.20
Front discs (pair)	£120.00
Damper (single)	£98.36
Spark plugs (set)	£63.26

SERVICING

Prices from autops.co.uk, including VAT. Service at 12 months or 10,000 miles, whichever is sooner.

Minor service	£140
Major service (at 40,000 miles)	£295 (includes spark plugs, air filter, pollen filter, etc)

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'I BOUGHT ONE'

MICHAEL JOHNSON

'I bought my vRS new in June 2011. I'd had a Mk1 Fabia vRS for five years before, so I was already a Skoda fan, but as soon as I took the Mk2 on the test drive I was completely sold. It just went so well.

'I still love the car, though I have had some of the usual issues. It was fine up until about 28,000 miles, then I started to get misfires. The tip of the spark plug on cylinder three had eroded. So all the plugs were replaced, and initially everything was fine. But when it got to about 34,000 miles it started to use a lot more oil. It always used a bit – about 250ml every 4000 miles – but it went up to about 750ml every thousand miles. And it started misfiring again.

'Fortunately, after the first three years of ownership, I'd bought an extended warranty for another two years. The dealer – Bickerton in Sheffield – tried a few things, including a modification to the breather pipe, but no change. At just over 40,000 miles, they agreed to fit a new engine.

'I've done 50,000 miles now and the car seems to be fine. It doesn't even use any oil! As far as I'm concerned, Skoda has got on top of the problems. And I have to say I've always had really good service from Bickerton. Servicing itself is reasonable – I've paid £139 for a minor service, £249 for the bigger one with plugs, filters, etc – and I get about 32mpg around town and

up to 43mpg on a run, always on Tesco Momentum.

'I did have an issue with one of the clutch packs at about 25,000 miles – a juddering in first and second gears – and it was changed under warranty. I also had the gearbox recall to have the oil changed from synthetic to mineral. No problems at all since; in fact, the DSG is absolutely brilliant. Despite the problems, I'm still a massive fan of the car.'



IN THE CLASSIFIEDS



**2010 (60) FABIA
vRS HATCH**
£5534

65,950 miles, white, charcoal cloth, black alloys, dealer warranty, 12 months' MOT
evanshalshaw.com



**2010 (60) FABIA
vRS ESTATE**
£7499

44,125 miles, blue metallic, black cloth, tinted rear glass, two owners
hawkins.co.uk



**2013 FABIA vRS
HATCH**
£8450

30,590 miles, red, black cloth, black roof, black alloys, red brake calipers
charleshurstgroup.co.uk

WHAT WE SAID



FIRST DRIVE, AUGUST 2010

'The TSI engine has been around for a while now, powering a variety of VWs and SEATs, but it's a clever piece of kit. The supercharger gets you up and running, giving the small engine plenty of low-down punch. At 2400rpm the turbo comes online and overlaps on the workload until 3500rpm, where it takes over entirely. It's all very clever and it still achieves a combined 45.6mpg.

'The engine is remarkably smooth right across the range, and it's virtually impossible to tell when the charger swap-over takes place – the DSG 'box keeps everything nicely on the boil, too. The car rides well, despite a firm setup, and it has plenty of grip. However, it lacks the chuckability of the very best in its class and the steering doesn't offer quite the level of detailed interaction that you hope for.

'If you are coming from a Renault Sport background you will probably be a little disappointed, but if your starting point was a Citroën DS3 then you'd be quite pleased by the dynamics as the vRS falls neatly between the French pair.' – *evo* 146

RIVALS

RENAULT SPORT CLIO 197

The Clio 197's nat-asp engine has more power but less torque than the twincharged Fabia. £4k-8k gives you plenty to choose from, including Cup models. It also buys you a 182 Trophy...

VOLKSWAGEN POLO GTI

Between 2010 and 2014 the Polo used the same 178bhp 1.4 TSI engines as the Fabia, though performance stats were marginally better. You pay a premium for the badge, with prices starting at £8k.

MINI COOPER S

The R56 Cooper S (2006-14) has similar power (173-181bhp) and performance to the Fabia in a cuter bodyshell, but also has its own engine issues, so buy carefully. They start from around £5k.



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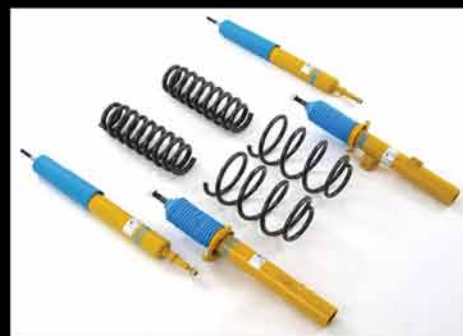
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- E9x 335d



MODEL FOCUS

BMW M3

E90/92

WE'VE SAID IT BEFORE AND we'll say it again: whatever your thoughts on the V8-engined M3 in period, the standout qualities of a high-revving, naturally aspirated V8, particularly when combined with a manual gearbox, make the E90/92 M3 an increasingly appealing car in the current used market. And what an engine it is, producing 414bhp at a screaming 8300rpm, with a soundtrack that's pure race-car howl.

The first of the family to arrive was the coupe, the E92, at the 2007 Frankfurt motor show. With a carbonfibre roof, power-dome bonnet and suitable modifications to the front and rear bumpers over the standard 3-series, the new M3 certainly looked the part. But purists were predictably alarmed at

Labelled 'impure' when it was launched, the V8 M3 is slowly gaining icon status. Here's what you need to know

by Adam Towler

both the increase in size of the car overall and the loss of the classic straight-six engine.

Nevertheless, the V8 is lighter than the six-pot, and the car – on paper at least – more fuel efficient. The reality of running as E90/92, however, can be costly fuel bills; this is an engine that wants to work for a living, not lug around at low revs.

A six-speed manual gearbox was standard, while the seven-speed twin-clutch M DCT 'box was an option, and very popular it proved, too. The saloon variant, the E90, arrived in 2008, and remains rare. There was the E93 convertible version, too, but we'll skirt around that here – no M3 should weigh over 1.8 tons!

Prices today begin around £15,000, and there's plenty of choice on the market.

EXPERT VIEW

GREG DALY

Kallenhard

'In an era of increasingly downsized and turbocharged sports cars, we're finding that the real drivers we do business with are seeking naturally aspirated and free-revving machines to get their kicks with at weekends. The V8 M3s are now starting to be looked upon as a potentially good place to put your money.

'Pricing for the E90s goes from around £15,000, and I can't see them getting cheaper – especially as E46 M3s [the E90s' predecessor] are on the way up, too. For this money you'll get a manual coupe with high miles, which in all honesty shouldn't put you off, but it is essential to understand how the car you're considering has been looked after. Service history with a BMW dealer or specialist is a must, as is evidence of the obligatory initial running-in service.

'The saloon was sold in lower numbers and, as with a lot of M saloons, is a seriously fun family Q-car, and these too can be owned from around £16,000. The vast majority of V8 M3s are priced between £20,000 and £40,000, with lower-mileage and later cars or special editions obviously commanding the higher premiums.

'Manual-gearbox cars with high specifications sell the quickest, due to their rarity. The DCT gearbox was very popular when new, and still is now. It's predominantly trouble-free if serviced on time and is supremely efficient.

'Cars with the electronic dampers always spark interest, as do examples with interesting paint schemes. I'm a big fan of these M3s in bold or primary colours – the Edition 500 [offered in Imola Red, Mineral White or Santorini Blue] and Frozen Silver special editions especially – although they obviously divide opinion. My pick would be a manual coupe with the smaller, 18-inch wheels and a BMW Individual colour – Oxford Green ideally!

'Sadly BMW didn't make a CSL E92 but the Competition Pack is a nod in this direction and quite rare. The GTS and CRT models are extremely rare and obviously most are kept in collections and cover minimal mileages. That's a shame but it's hardly a surprise with GTs holding firm at around £150,000.

'As with any performance car purchase, provenance is key – making sure it's been cared for is a must. If you are able to get a professional inspection, do so, as it could save you plenty. With lots of cars to choose from, you can afford to be selective – for now. Once you find a good one of these M3s, I think they are superb value for money.'





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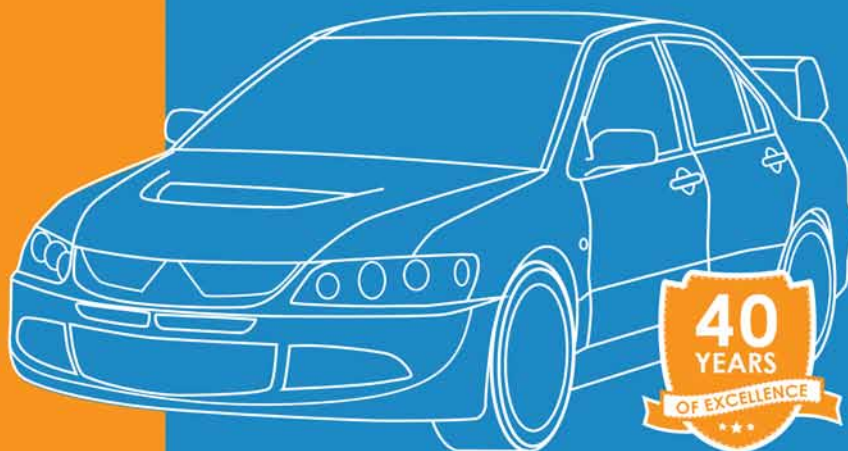
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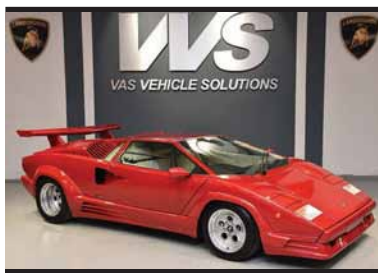
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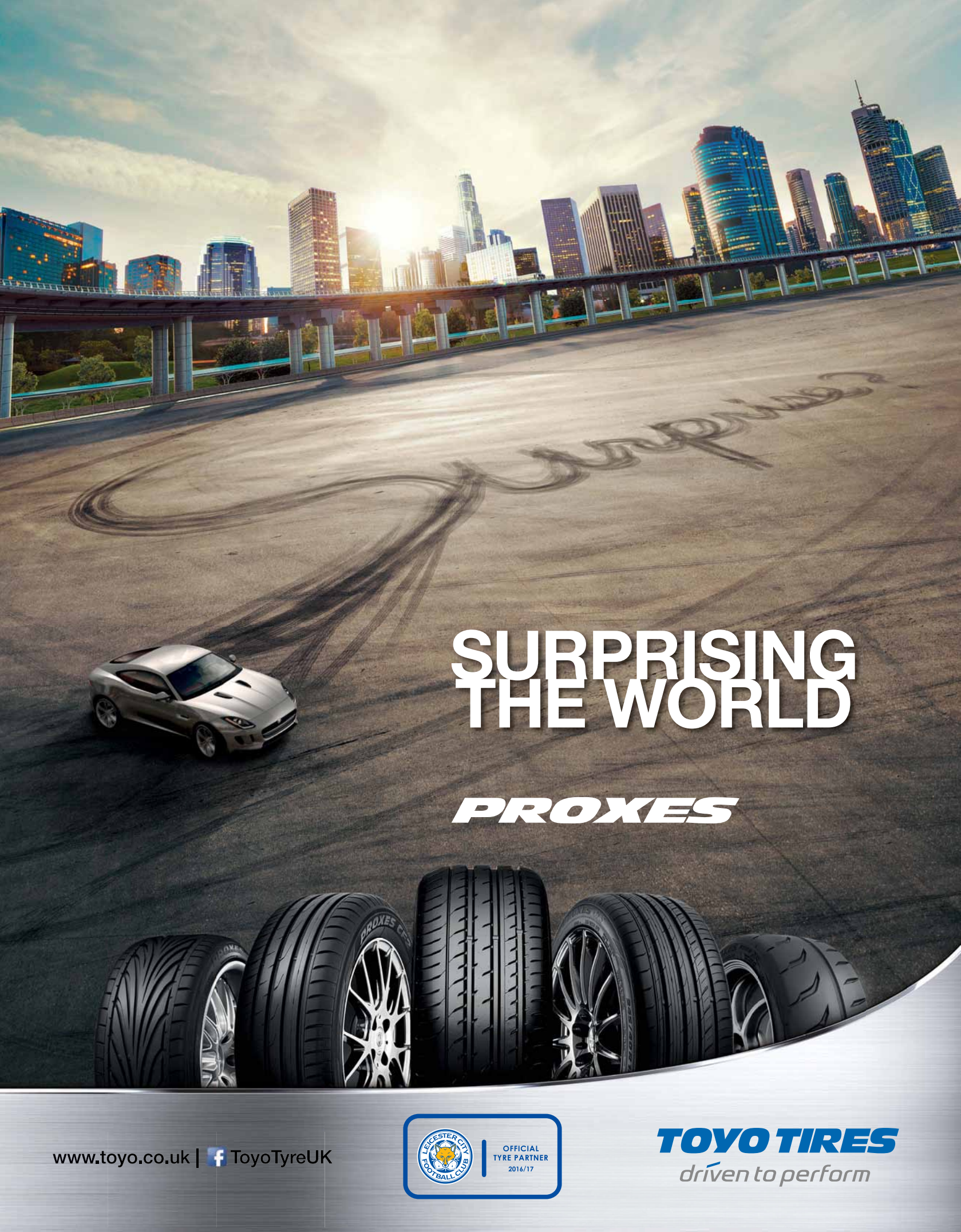
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MINI JOHN COOPER WORKS CHALLENGE // MAZDA MX-5 RF // MERCEDES-AMG C63 S COUPE //
FORD FOCUS ST ESTATE // BMW 18 // SKODA OCTAVIA ESTATE vRS 230 // MAZDA MX-5 Mk1 //
VOLKSWAGEN GOLF GTI CLUBSPORT EDITION 40 // AUDI R8 SPYDER V10 // BMW 2002



WELCOME BACK

Mini JCW Challenge

It took Mini six months to return our JCW Challenge after a simple suspension fix, so what's the story?

WHEN I LAST WROTE a Fast Fleet update on our John Cooper Works Challenge, way back in issue 229, I reported that the car had gone back to Mini after developing a knocking sound from the front suspension. It had been gone for two weeks at the time I wrote that update, and we were soon beginning to wonder how long it would be away for.

The car was eventually returned to us... six months later. We'd started to believe it wasn't coming back at all. The explanation offered by Mini was fairly straightforward: Our car was a very early example, predating the full production run, and so it was fitted with an undisclosed prototype suspension part. That part eventually failed. The production-spec component wasn't going to be available until the Challenge model went into build some time later, and so our car spent many months going nowhere in a compound at Mini's UK

headquarters. I have no reason to doubt any of that.

YK16 XXU was returned to us just as the customer cars were being delivered, so our Challenge is now part of a 100-strong fleet of feisty little track-ready Minis, rather than a one-and-only. We're due to hold on to it until the end of summer, which means we will get back the six months we lost to that failed pre-prod suspension component. We'll also have plenty of opportunities to drive the Challenge on track, where it really belongs, during the run of **evo** track evenings at Rockingham Motor Speedway and the Bedford Autodrome throughout the spring and summer.

If you followed the story of the Mini Challenge in the magazine last year, you'll know all about it, but let me briefly recap. The Challenge is a very limited edition, UK-only, ultra-focused version of the Mini John Cooper Works. **evo** was invited



behind the scenes to participate in its development, which was a rare and enlightening experience. The car takes its name (as well as no small amount of inspiration) from the Mini Challenge single-make race series. It uses uprated components from the same suppliers that feature on the competition cars, including adjustable Nitron suspension (you can see one of the adjustable top-mounts pictured here), Team Dynamics wheels, a Quaife limited-slip differential and Mintex brake

pads. The tyres are grippy Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2s. There are no changes to the powertrain, but with 228bhp as standard from a turbocharged 2-litre engine, I just don't think it needs it.

One of the key selling points of the car is the fully adjustable suspension, which you can tweak for damper stiffness, ride height and camber. No other Mini has offered that level of adjustability before. During our track events, then, I hope myself and other members of the team will get to indulge our race-engineer fantasies by fiddling with the various settings, searching for the perfect setup. Those evenings can't arrive soon enough. **x**

Dan Prosser (@TheDanProsser)

Date acquired	July 2016
Total mileage	6409
Mileage this month	340
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	32.0

'One of the key selling points of this Mini is the adjustable Nitron suspension'



NEW ARRIVAL

Mazda MX-5 RF

evo's resident MX-5-ophile gets the key to a new targa-top RF. Will it prove to be the best of the breed yet?



FIRST ACQUAINTANCE with a new long-term usually involves walking out to the car park, giving it a cursory once-over and then driving it home for the evening. Which in my case is about 25 minutes away down an A-road or, if I'm feeling flush, taking in five or six half-decent corners of the nearest semi-convenient B-road.

If only more introductions could be like the one I had with our newly acquired Mazda MX-5 RF. This car I met outside a quaint country hotel in north Wales for last month's twin-test with the Toyota GT86. I spent the day on some of the region's best driving roads, roof-down in the unseasonal sunshine. From our test location I then drove the four-hour journey to Heathrow (roof firmly up, heater on, radio cranked), where the car awaited me for the return slog around the M25 a few days later.

Far from being a chore, these early miles have been an education. Mazda's roadster has always been useable day-to-day, but the coupe-style RF is quickly demonstrating a wider range of talents than any MX-5 before it. That mixture of **evo**centric back-road driving and the drudgery of pre- and post-flight multi-lane

mundanity couldn't have been a better initiation.

Our RF is a 2-litre (158bhp) Sport Nav, with a basic price of £25,695 and such niceties as heated leather seats, an auto-dimming rear-view mirror, keyless entry and nine-speaker Bose audio. Sport Nav spec also adds Bilstein sports suspension and a body-stiffening strut brace, though as you may have noticed in last month's cornering shots, 'sports' means something different in Hiroshima. A limited-slip diff is standard on all 2-litre RFs with the manual gearbox – like ours.

'It's demonstrating a wider range of talents than any MX-5 before'

From the options list, we've got Ceramic Metallic paintwork (£550) and the £400 Safety Pack, which includes automatic high beams, blind-spot monitoring, and Rear Cross Traffic Alert to avoid parking mishaps (potentially useful; the RF's

rear-three-quarter vision is limited thanks to those buttresses).

Early impressions? A realisation that I'll always prefer the low-slung driving position of a car like the MX-5 to the upright pose one adopts in a hot hatch. Same applies to the car's light weight and the inertia-free feeling that results, and the way the RF feels as though it's pivoting around a central point as you turn, rather than leading with its nose.

And as an everyday car, it's already working well. It's frugal (important on a staff-writer salary), easy to park, its controls make few more demands of you than those of a basic supermini, and the admittedly 'cosy' cockpit isn't an issue for me since I'm the office short-arse.

But best of all, we'll have the RF for a year, and **evo's** track evening dates have just been announced. Can't wait to put it through its paces alongside my Mk1 MX-5. ✕

Antony Ingram (@evoAntony)



Date acquired	February 2017
Total mileage	2999
Mileage this month	1856
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	40.8

BMW i8

Our hybrid coupe has received mostly glowing reports so far, but it isn't completely perfect

I I'VE BEEN FULL OF praise for the i8 in these pages since it arrived. This is because it's a car that quickly gets under your skin, impressing with its breadth of ability and the controlled manner in which it goes about delivering everything you ask of it.

Waft along a motorway? It's as serene as a 6-series. Enjoy the B660? Electric power hauling you through a corner never gets tiresome. Silently drive along a high street feeling as smug as the mate who knew that last drink would be one too many? Absolutely. Few things feel better. It's a car I look forward to every journey with and I miss it when I've swapped into another test car for a few days.

The i8 is not perfect, though. Ignoring the small issue of Mrs Gallagher despising it with a passion I haven't seen since I swapped her beloved MGF for a



telephone-box-red Mk3 Fiesta LX, there's no room for more than the smallest of squashy bags in the boot (think Lotus Elise) and the two rear seats make those in a 911 feel like the rear of an S-class. Granted, all this has little effect on how the i8 delivers thrills, but it's bloody annoying if you want to enjoy the GT abilities of the car and go away for the weekend.

Then there's what I've termed 'i8 hip'. It's the prognosis I've arrived at after 10,000 miles of falling into and climbing out of the driver's seat, and I put it down to the

combination of the low seat and the carbon tub's high sill, which mean you have to twist in an unnatural way to extricate yourself from the cabin. Of course, I could go to a gym and do something about it. I could also give up pork scratchings with beer, but that ain't happening, either.

Final gripe? Inconsiderate parkers. Normally when a lemming parks alongside your driver's door, mirrors virtually touching, you can contort your body through the smallest of gaps to get in, but with the i8, if there isn't enough room to swing the door up, you're stranded or left clambering through the passenger door, negotiating the high sill and wide transmission tunnel before finally falling into place (and hoping you didn't forget to close the passenger door). It's nearly as annoying as Nissan Leaf owners claiming an i8 shouldn't use an EV charging bay at a train station car park, but not quite. ✕

Stuart Gallagher
(@stuartg917)

Date acquired	November 2016
Total mileage	10,233
Mileage this month	1109
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	37.9



Skoda Octavia Estate vRS 230

We won't pretend our vRS is the perfect weekend toy, but how does it compare?

U UNSURPRISINGLY, THE car I spend the most amount of time driving is our Skoda. It's a key element in my work as a car photographer and is one of our fleet's true workhorses.

However, when the weekend arrives, the Octavia is the last car on my list to go driving in for fun. Maybe that's because I'm lucky enough to have other options or





maybe it's because I want a change from my daily drive. Either way, it got me thinking about which other fast estates I've driven that I *would* choose for a weekend blast.

I certainly enjoyed the Mercedes-AMG C43 that I tried recently. It has more personality than the Skoda when it comes to interior design and also sounds great thanks to its 362bhp 3-litre V6. Yet while it was perfect for motorway miles, I actually found it a little large and hard to position on B-roads.

The VW Golf R (pictured, in red) looks great and is exceptional to drive, especially in Race mode. The only downer is its DSG gearbox – the only transmission offered on the estate. I'm just not a fan.

Then there's the Ford Focus ST Estate. Our old diesel-engined long-term was certainly competent, but it would never inspire me to take it


'I started to think about which fast estates I would choose for a blast'



for a drive just for fun. Our current petrol version, meanwhile, is more appealing, but still no more thrilling to me than the Skoda.

The only other estate I have spent a decent amount of time in is my old SEAT Leon Cupra 280 long-term (pictured, in blue). Every time I see

one on the road I remember just how much fun I had in it. The manual six-speed 'box and electronically controlled locking differential combined beautifully. Moreover, it felt *fast*, with 276bhp – 49bhp more than our Octavia – plus 258lb ft of torque from just 1750rpm. Working it through the gears on a twisty road was simply brilliant fun.

So, the SEAT was my favourite package. Yet the Octavia is a close relative, so maybe the only thing it is missing is more power. Perhaps the forthcoming 242bhp Octavia vRS 245 could be the answer. Or the 276bhp engine from the Superb... 

AstonParrott (@AstonParrott)

Date acquired	November 2016
Total mileage	12,975
Mileage this month	1980
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	31.1



Mazda MX-5 Mk1

Our Eunos is back in action, and it recently crossed paths with a lesser-spotted, V6-engined relative

F FANS OF SMALL, CHEAP Japanese roadsters will be pleased to learn my Eunos S-Special is still very much with us. Its absence from these pages since my on-track report in *evo* 226 can be attributed to two things. The first is that I've been jolly busy. The second is that I let the battery run flat.

I'd have sorted the latter much sooner if not for the former, but I have now slotted in a new, Mazda-

recommended Panasonic gel battery, and have been taking the Eunos out each weekend to keep everything running as it should.

Its impending MOT also prompted me to get the car serviced and have a few niggling faults fixed. I used a local garage: Meerkat Tyres and MOT near Bedford, recommended by David Lillywhite, editor of *evo*'s sister title *Octane*. The Mazda got the all-clear, although my missing

passenger seat (I'm planning a pair of more supportive pews) is apparently an 'advisory'. Nobody try and sit there, okay?

You may be wondering about the red car in the picture here, and some will have identified it as a Mazda MX-3. Mazda UK wheeled it out at its recent MX-5 RF launch event and I couldn't resist having a go.

The late 1980s and early '90s were a fascinating period for the Japanese car industry, riding high on the back of an economic bubble. Mazda got more drunk on money and power than most, creating a gull-winged kei-class sports car (the AZ-1), a three-rotor Wankel luxury coupe

(the Cosmo) and the original MX-5. It even developed a W12 engine with three banks of four cylinders, rather than VW's more recent four banks of three, but canned the project when the bubble burst in 1990.

It also dropped V6 engines into just about everything and the MX-3 was one beneficiary, getting a tiny 1.8-litre, 60-degree V6 making 134bhp at 6800rpm. That engine defines this car, making it feel incongruously exotic for a vehicle that is otherwise much like any other cheap-ish Japanese car of its era.

No similarly sized modern car has an engine so sweet, nor so responsive to blips of the throttle.



'No similarly sized modern car has an engine so sweet, nor so responsive to blips of the throttle'



It's neither powerful nor torquey by current standards (118lb ft at 5300rpm for the latter), but it idles with a cultured hum, pulls without a cough from about 10mph in top gear, sounds like a turbine at a 70mph, 3800rpm cruise, and whizzes without vibration to the red line.

The MX-3 handles too, though it's no Integra Type R surrogate as far as front-drive 1990s coupes are concerned. Grip levels are good (it wears beefy 205-section rubber) and it's particularly agile – almost as much so as my Eunos, despite a 190mm-longer wheelbase.

I'll admit that its appeal is limited, even today at its grand-or-so price point, but in a world of turbocharged, three- and four-cylinder small cars, the compact Mazda and its bonsai V6 really got under my skin. ✕

Antony Ingram (@evoAntony)

Date acquired	February 2015
Total mileage	95,775
Mileage this month	111
Costs this month	£109.55 battery £450 service
mpg this month	27.7

Volkswagen Golf GTI Clubsport Edition 40

Better weather plays to the Edition 40's strengths, but it's not all sunshine and light

A AT LONG LAST, SPRING has sprung. The signs? The occasional appearance in the sky of colours other than light grey, temperatures dragging themselves up into double digits, and best of all, tarmac that isn't almost permanently damp.

That last one is particularly welcome for two reasons. Firstly because there's a chance the Golf might actually stay clean for more than 24 hours after washing it (the Oryx White paint looks super-sharp when it's spotless, but is utterly hopeless at disguising dirt), and secondly because while the Edition 40 is a very competent car in the wet, it's only on dry roads that it truly comes alive.

The chassis changes for the Edition 40 promise a grippier front end than that of the standard GTI, and I'm now finally getting to appreciate this on a regular basis. It means you can really attack corners on the way in, while the electronically controlled limited-slip differential completes the picture for the way out. Entry speed too conservative? Then get on the power *before* the apex and let the



'Sometimes I have found myself wishing for DSG'

diff deal with powering you through and away. You can sense both front Pirelli P Zeros are fully hooked up and working hard as the electronics vector the torque (based on the vertical force acting upon each wheel) and keep your line clean. Understeer simply doesn't cross my mind on dry roads, which means concerns about the shortage of steering feel – a bugbear in the wet – all but evaporate, too.

Shortcomings? The brakes occasionally feel a little softer underfoot than I'd like, which is a surprise discovery for someone who isn't often a late-braker. Yet the Edition 40 seems to encourage such behaviour even from me. And this, in turn, has caused another unfamiliar thought to pass through my mind: sometimes, just sometimes, on particularly spirited drives, I have found myself wishing that our Golf had DSG.

The manual gearshift isn't by any means bad, but nor is it a classic with a delightfully mechanical action. So rather than being an added source of involvement and entertainment in the braking zone, it can sometimes just feel like a chore that reduces your commitment levels in a way that flicking a left-hand paddle wouldn't.

There, I've said it. But let's keep this between ourselves, yeah? ✕

Ian Eveleigh

Date acquired	November 2016
Total mileage	8138
Mileage this month	1249
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	30.3



Mercedes-AMG C63 S Coupe

The miles are racking up with ease, not only for the Merc but also its new furry friend

THE C63 S COUPE IS A BIT of a sleeper. Or at least it seems to be as far as the general population is concerned, which is odd, as geeks like us seem to spot it a mile off. Perhaps that smooth shape doesn't give off look-at-me vibes to all and sundry (yet another reason why I love this car).

I've mainly been ploughing up and down motorways lately, which is fine as the Merc makes a great companion. One thing I have noticed is that the speedo increments rise in 10mph steps to 60, then 20mph steps thereafter. Don't worry, I haven't turned into Rain Man. But I have realised why it's so easy to find yourself doing 80 when you meant

to be doing 70. I've taken to selecting the secondary digital readout in the TFT display as a clearer prompt.

With the weather picking up, I've been making use of the huge glass sunroof; either sliding back the blind for more light or popping the trailing edge up for an eddy of fresh air. I haven't opened it right up yet, but I suspect I will once spring is here to stay. I know, it's a heavy piece of glass that raises the centre of gravity, but this is a road car, not Lewis's weekend wheels (not that I condone the new C63 Convertible).

Another reason I'll be glad to see the back of winter is no longer having to spend a packet on screenwash. Is it me, or have the UK's roads

been especially filthy this year? One good thing to come from my regular forays beneath the Benz's bonnet is discovering signs of an unwelcome resident in the engine bay. I'd found some crumbs of nibbled sound-deadening a few months back, but after careful monitoring decided the elusive rodent must have gone. But having looked again recently, it appears it's back, and rather hungrier than on its last visit.

Quite how it has survived in all weathers for thousands of miles, or not hopped out only to be left to fend for itself in the wastelands of a Gatwick multistorey, I don't know. I'll leave a baited trap under the bonnet and see what I find in the morning, but a return to Mercedes UK beckons. I wonder if the press garage has a resident cat? 🐾

Richard Meaden
(@DickieMeaden)



Date acquired	October 2016
Total mileage	6152
Mileage this month	1534
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	22.4



Ford Focus ST Estate

Staff writer Antony Ingram and the ST part ways after a troubled relationship. Does he have *anything* good to say?

AAS YOU'LL HAVE READ earlier in Fast Fleet, I'm now the keeper of a shiny new Mazda MX-5 RF. And as running two Mazda roadsters (the Eunos is also mine) and a hot estate would be a bit extravagant – not least because I only have one parking space at my flat – the ST is moving into someone else's tenure.

As you might have guessed from my previous two reports on the ST, I'm not entirely unhappy about this situation. The nature of magazine long-termers means you sometimes run a car that doesn't necessarily fit your lifestyle, though the estate

body wasn't really an issue, even if I wasn't likely to use it to its full potential. For me the ST's problems are more fundamental, and with its front tyres now 13,000 miles old and wearing thin, its problems have become part of a vicious circle. The front tyres struggle to contain the engine's torque, so they spin, they wear, they spin some more, they wear some more, and eventually you spend every journey wrestling with the steering on the slightest throttle application.

With the weather improving, the Focus is beginning to behave itself, finding more traction from the drier,



warmer roads. If you're interested in running an ST, it really is a car that needs a set of winter tyres to help it claw into cold ground, and it'll save you scrubbing away all the useful meat from your grippier rubber before summer arrives.

Ironically, the lack of grip has shown that this ST, even in estate form, has quite a nicely balanced chassis. The steering feels good, too, when it isn't having to deal with awkward cambers or too much power. And for generally knocking

ATH
DALE



'I've realised why it's so easy to find yourself doing 80mph when you meant to be doing 70mph'

around and carrying out mundane tasks, there are some aspects of the Focus that continue to appeal. The Recaro seats are both comfortable and supportive (though larger-framed types might feel a little pinched between the bolsters), and the engine is more characterful than many, with an almost old-school, boosty feel to its delivery. While this is a nightmare for the front tyres, it's undoubtedly more exciting than the linear surge offered by most rivals.

Alas, the package as a whole isn't really for me. Perhaps its next keeper will find a better side than I did. ✕

Antony Ingram (@evoAntony)

Date acquired	November 2016
Total mileage	13,051
Mileage this month	1061
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	31.3



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I IN THE SUPERCAR GROUP test in the previous issue of *evo*, I described an Audi R8 V10 coupe as feeling very modern. It's a glib description, but a fair one. Ignoring for a moment the fact the R8 still uses a hulking great normally aspirated V10 rather than some joyless downsized turbo thing or, heaven forbid, a hybrid powertrain, Audi's supercar really is at the apex of very-high-performance-car development in 2017.

I compared that hard-top R8 to an Apple product. Slick. Everything just works. The remarkable twin-clutch transmission, the infotainment system and all the minor controls. In all of that stuff and much more besides, the R8 really does give the impression of having a vast multinational corporation behind it. Which it does, of course. Ferraris, McLarens, Aston Martins and the like all feel like products of much smaller companies (which they are, of course), in that some things don't quite fit or other things don't really work or things don't work quite the way you think they should.

Audi R8 Spyder V10

Don't begrudge the Audi its big-business persona. In fact, consider it a major benefit

I don't know if one way is better than the other. Probably both have their merits depending on how the car is being used. But given that this R8 Spyder is my everyday car, the one in which I have to drive 100 miles to Heathrow airport on wet Sunday evenings as well as across sunny moorland roads with the roof down, I happen to think its modernity is a very good thing indeed.

Perhaps the best example of this

is the extra-wide Virtual Cockpit TFT screen in the instrument binnacle. It replaces traditional analogue dials and also does away with the need for a centrally mounted navigation screen. You can scroll through various displays, from a big rev counter and speed readout to a full-width map, and when you're buried deep in the menu system the very large screen means the digital rabbit hole is pretty easy to navigate.



I drive in central London rarely enough that it still feels like a bit of an adventure, and a manic one at that. My knowledge of the road network is also non-existent, so having that massive map display right in my line of sight, the very intuitive satnav directing me through the traffic, is a real comfort. Now try the same in a current Ferrari...

But as modern as the R8 is, and as well executed as all that peripheral stuff might be, there is one thing about it that completely baffles me. When I parallel park, the door mirror adjacent to the pavement sometimes drops automatically, giving me a clear view of the rear wheel so I can be sure not to bash it into the kerb. And sometimes it doesn't. There is no discernable pattern to it. Ultra-modern, then, and just a little bit daft. **X**

Dan Prosser (@TheDanProsser)

Date acquired	November 2016
Total mileage	8100
Mileage this month	1550
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	23.1

BMW 2002

Late and over-budget, our 2002 is finally shaping up, with trim and a roll-cage now fitted to the shell

I I'VE MADE PATHETICALLY, embarrassingly slow progress putting my 2002 back together. My plan... actually, it's been so completely disregarded that it can no longer be called a plan. My idea was to assemble the car during the winter and spring of 2015-16 so that I could use it over the summer. But summer has now been and long gone, it's 2017 and my BMW is still languishing in my conservatory.

Why? Well, prepare yourself for a plethora of pitiful excuses. Firstly, I had to strip down my other BMW, a 318is, and transplant its suspension, brakes, interior and sunroof onto an identical looking but much less rusty shell. Then when I finally started on my '02, I realised that the new paint was far too good for the brightwork, lights and interior trim that were previously on the car, so I've had to



Left: roll-cage went in with the tightest fit imaginable.
Below: beautiful in a pastel blue, and now with headlights



'The flawless paint slows me down whenever I actually do some work on the car'

buy new replacements. Thankfully BMW still makes most of the bits of trim, but they don't come cheap. On my limited budget I have to wait till pay-day to get my next hit of shiny new metal, and that makes the flow of parts miserably slow.

The flawless paint also slows me down whenever I actually do some work on the car. It takes me ages to perform even the simplest of tasks as I fuss around making sure every nut, bolt and washer matches and is as well presented as the paintwork.

I then cover the surrounding area in acres of masking tape to protect the body should I slip with a screwdriver, spanner or ratchet.

I've made some progress, though. I started by fitting the wiring loom after first re-covering it in new loom tape. Then in went the roof lining and most of what minimal interior there will be, followed by the front and rear screens and the roll-cage.

The Safety Devices cage wasn't as nerve-wracking to fit as I thought it might be. The rear section was

easy enough to get inside the car without even removing a door, which was lucky because they had been so carefully aligned by Faircharm Restorations when they painted the car. Once inside, the cage required a fair bit of coercion – it fits so tightly that the vinyl covering the B-pillars almost stopped it slotting into place. The front bars that run parallel to the A-pillars were even trickier as they didn't initially seem to fit with the dashboard in situ. However, with a relaxed attitude to the state of the dash, I forced them into position.

Since then, I have built up the doors and installed the lights, wiper motor, horns and pedal-box. Next I'll build up the suspension, so it's ready for me to bolt on once I've got the car out of the conservatory. ☒

Will Beaumont
(@Will Beaumont)

Date acquired	July 2008
Total mileage	146,050-ish
Mileage this month	0
Costs this month	£495 trim £280 lights £215 rubber seals £720 masking tape
mpg this month	n/a



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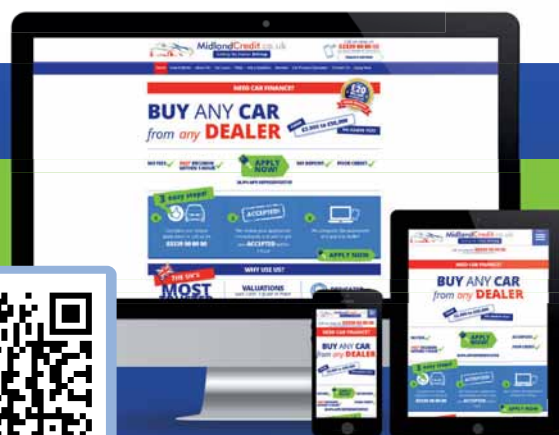


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THE KNOWLEDGE

⬇ = new entry this month. * = grey import. Entries in italics are for cars no longer on sale. **Issue no.** is for our most recent major test of the car (D = Driven, R = Road test or group test, F = Feature, FF = Fast Fleet). Call 0844 844 0039 to order a back issue. **Price** is on-the-road including VAT and delivery charges. **Engine** is the car's main motor only – additional hybrid tech isn't shown. **Weight** is the car's kerb weight as quoted by the manufacturer. **bhp/ton** is the power-to-weight ratio based on manufacturer's kerb weight. **0-60mph** and **0-100mph** figures in bold are independently recorded, all other performance figures are manufacturers' claims. **CO2 g/km** is the official EC figure and **EC mpg** is the official 'Combined' figure or equivalent.

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	CO2 G/KM	EC MPG	EVO RATING	
Abarth 595 Competizione	196 D	£19,090	4/1368	158/5500	170/3000	1035kg	155	7.4	-	130	155	43.5	+ Spirited engine, still looks great - Favours fun over finesse	★★★★☆
Abarth 695 Biposto	205 R	£33,055	4/1369	187/5500	184/3000	997kg	191	5.9	-	143	-	-	+ Engineered like a true Abarth product - Desirable extras make this a £50k city car	★★★★☆
Alfa Romeo Giulietta QV	199 D	£28,330	4/1742	237/5750	251/2000	1320kg	182	6.0	-	151	162	40.3	+ Still looks good, and now it's got the 4C's engine - Pricey, and it has more rewarding rivals	★★★★☆
Alfa Romeo Giulietta Cloverleaf	144 D	70-14	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	73	4/1984	253/6000	258/2500	1420kg	181	5.7	-	152	199	32.8	+ Polished 253bhp all-wheel-drive A1 - Just 19 for UK, Porsche Cayman price	★★★★☆
Audi S3	188 R	£31,230	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1395kg	216	5.4	12.5	155	162	40.4	+ Lots of grip and one of the best-sounding four-pot turbos - Still a little too clinical	★★★★☆
Audi RS3 Sportback	221 R	£40,795	5/2480	362/5500	343/1625	1520kg	242	3.6	-	155	189	34.9	+ Addictive five-cylinder noise; monster pace - Chassis not exactly playful	★★★★☆
Audi S3	106 R	06-12	4/1984	261/6000	258/2500	1455kg	183	5.6	13.6	155	198	33.2	+ Very fast, very effective, very... er, quality - A little too clinical	★★★★☆
Audi RS3 Sportback	156 R	71-12	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	70-15	4/1598	154/6000	177/1400	1240kg	126	7.2	-	133	155	42.2	+ A proper French hot hatch - Petrolheads might find it too 'designed'	★★★★☆
Citroën DS3 Racing	153 D	71-12	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	£18,144	4/1996	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 feelsome as that of some rivals	★★★★☆
Ford Focus ST	119 R	05-10	5/2522	222/6000	236/1600	1392kg	162	6.7	16.8	150	224	30.4	+ Value, performance, integrity - Big engine compromises handling	★★★★☆
Ford Focus RS (Mk3)	229 R	£31,250	4/2261	345/6000	347/2000	1524kg	230	4.7	12.4	165	175	36.7	+ Torque-vectoring 4WD brings new sensations to hot hatch sector - Needs to be driven hard	★★★★☆
Ford Focus RS (Mk2)	195 R	09-11	5/2522	300/6500	324/2300	1467kg	208	5.9	14.2	163	225	30.5	+ Huge performance, highly capable FWD chassis - Body control is occasionally clumsy	★★★★☆
Ford Focus RS500 (Mk2)	181 R	70-11	5/2522	345/6000	339/2500	1467kg	239	5.6	12.7	165	225	-	+ More power and presence than regular Mk2 RS - Pricey	★★★★☆
Ford Focus RS (Mk1)	207 R	02-03	4/1998	212/5500	229/3500	1278kg	169	5.9	14.9	143	-	-	+ Some are great - Some are awful (so make sure you drive plenty)	★★★★☆
Ford Escort RS Cosworth	157 R	92-96	4/1993	224/6250	224/3500	1275kg	179	6.2	-	137	-	-	+ The ultimate Essex hot hatch - Unmodified ones are rare, and getting pricey...	★★★★☆
Ford Puma 1.7	095 R	97-02	4/1679	123/6300	116/4500	1041kg	120	8.6	27.6	122	-	38.2	+ Revvy engine, sparkling chassis, bargain used prices - Rusty rear arches	★★★★☆
Ford Racing Puma	128 R	00-01	4/1679	153/7000	119/4500	1174kg	132	7.8	23.2	137	-	34.7	+ Exclusivity - The standard Puma does it so well	★★★★☆
Honda Civic Type R	227 R	£30,000	4/1996	206/5500	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 tiny after a Mini	★★★★☆
Mazda 3 MPS	137 R	06-13	4/2261	256/5500	280/3000	1385kg	188	6.3	14.5	155	224	29.4	+ Quick, eager and very good value - The steering's iffy	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG A45	221 R	£39,995	4/1991	376/6000	350/2250	1480kg	258	3.9	-	155	162	40.9	+ Tremendously fast - But not a true great	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz A45 AMG	194 R	12-15	4/1991	355/6000	332/2250	1480kg	244	4.3	10.6	155	161	40.9	+ Blisteringly quick everywhere - Not as rewarding as some slower rivals	★★★★☆
Mini Cooper (F56)	194 D	£15,485	3/1499	134/4500	162/1250	1085kg	125	7.9	-	130	105	62.8	+ Punchy three-cylinder engine, good chassis - Tubby styling	★★★★☆
Mini Cooper S (F56)	196 D	£18,840	4/1998	189/4700	206/1250	1160kg	166	6.8	-	146	133	49.6	+ Still has that Mini DNA - Expensive with options; naff dash displays	★★★★☆
Mini John Cooper Works (F56)	211 R	£23,050	4/1998	228/5200	236/1250	1200kg	193	6.3	-	153	155	42.2	+ Fast, agile, nimble - Chassis lacks sparkle found in previous JCWs	★★★★☆
Mini John Cooper Works Challenge (F56)	224 R	£32,000	4/1998	228/5200	236/1250	1215kg	191	6.3	-	152	155	42.2	+ A more hardcore JCW, honed with help from evo! - Just 100 being built	★★★★☆
Mini John Cooper Works Coupe (R58)	164 R	71-15	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 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	73-14	4/1598	215/6000	206/2000	1160kg	188	6.3	-	150	165	39.8	+ Brazenly hyperactive - Too much for some roads and some tastes	★★★★☆
Mini Cooper S (R53)	077 R	02-06	4/1598	168/6000	155/4000	1140kg	143	7.8	19.9	135	-	33.6	+ Strong performance, quality feel - Over-long gearing	★★★★☆
Mini Cooper S Works GP (R53)	144 R	06	4/1598	215/7100	184/4600	1090kg	200	6.5	-	149	-	32.8	+ Storming engine, agility - Tacky styling 'enhancements'	★★★★☆
Nissan Juke Nismo RS	208 D	£21,995	4/1618	215/6000	206/3600	1315kg	166	7.0	-	137	165	39.2	+ Quirky character and bold styling - Not a match for a pukka hot hatch	★★★★☆
Peugeot 106 Rallye (Series 2)	-	97-98	4/1587	103/6200	97/3500	865kg	121	8.8	-	121	-	34.0	+ Bargain no-frills thrills - Not as much fizz as original 1.3	★★★★☆
Peugeot 106 Rallye (Series 1)	095 R	94-96	4/1294	100/7200	80/5400	826kg	123	10.6	-	118	-	35.6	+ Frantic, thrashy fun - Needs caning to extract full potential	★★★★☆
Peugeot 208 GTi	184 R	£18,895	4/1598	197/5800	203/1700	1160kg	173	6.8	17.9	143	125	47.9	+ Agile chassis works well on tough roads - Could be more involving	★★★★☆
Peugeot 208 GTi by Peugeot Sport	225 R	£21,995	4/1598	205/5800	221/1750	1185kg	176	6.5	-	143	125	47.9	+ The most focused small hatch on sale - Nearly £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	★★★★☆
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	★★★★☆

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Andreas Preuninger on the new Porsche 911 GT3



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 300. 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 205 GTI19	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 GTI16	020 R	'93-'01	4/1998	167/6500	142/5500	1215kg	139	7.2	20.1	140	-	30.1	★ One of the great GTIs - They don't make them like this any more	★★★★★
Peugeot 306 Rallye	095 R	'98-'99	4/1998	167/6500	142/5500	1199kg	142	6.9	19.2	137	-	30.1	★ Essentially a GTI-6 for less dosh - Limited choice of colours	★★★★★
Renault Twingo GT	231 D	£13,755	3/898	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	1378kg	181	6.1	14.6	156	190	34.4	★ Fantastic chassis... - ...partially obscured by new-found maturity	★★★★★
Renaultsport Mégane dCi 175 Cup	119 R	'07-'09	4/1995	173/3750	265/2000	1470kg	119	8.3	23.5	137	-	43.5	★ A diesel with a genuinely sporty chassis - Could take more power	★★★★☆
Renaultsport Mégane 230 FI Team R26	195 R	'07-'09	4/1998	227/5500	229/3000	1345kg	171	6.2	16.0	147	-	-	★ The car the R26.R is based on - FI Team stickers in dubious taste	★★★★★
Renaultsport Mégane R26.R	231 R	'08-'09	4/1998	227/5500	229/3000	1220kg	189	5.8	15.1	147	-	-	★ One of the true hot hatch heroes - Two seats, plastic rear windows	★★★★★
SEAT Ibiza Cupra	225 R	£18,100	4/1798	189/4300	236/1450	1185kg	162	6.7	-	146	145	45.6	★ Quick, competent, refined, and manual only - Not exciting enough	★★★★☆
SEAT Ibiza Cupra	183 D	'10-'15	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1259kg	144	6.9	-	142	139	47.9	★ Punchy engine, unflappable DSG - Lacks engagement, DSG only	★★★★☆
SEAT Leon Cupra 300	234 R	£29,840	4/1984	296/5900	280/1800	1300kg	231	5.7	-	155	158	40.9	★ Already potent Cupra gets yet another 10bhp - The Mk7.5 Golf R	★★★★★
SEAT Leon Cupra 290	227 R	'16-'17	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	'03-'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 N'ring/Clubsport	164 R	'11-'13/'14	4/1598	202/5750	206/2250	1166kg	176	6.5	-	143	178	-	★ VXR gets more power and a limited-slip diff - But they come at a price	★★★★★
Vauxhall Astra VXR (Mk2)	207 R	£27,850	4/1998	276/5500	295/2500	1475kg	190	5.9	-	155	184	34.9	★ Better than the car it replaces; loony turbo pace - Lacks RS Mégane's precision	★★★★★
Vauxhall Astra VXR (Mk1)	102 R	'05-'11	4/1998	237/5600	236/2400	1393kg	173	6.7	16.7	152	221	30.7	★ Fast and furious - Lacks a little composure and precision	★★★★★
VW Up/SEAT Mii/Skoda Citigo	171 R	£8275+	3/999	59/5000	70/3000	854kg	70	14.1	-	99	105	62.8	★ Accomplished city car is dynamically sound... - ...but predictably slow	★★★★★
VW Polo GTI	211 R	£19,125	4/1798	189/4200	236/1450	1197kg	160	6.7	-	146	139	47.1	★ Smooth and brawny - Fiesta ST is more engaging	★★★★☆
VW Polo GTI	154 R	'10-'14	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1184kg	153	6.8	-	142	139	47.9	★ Modern-day mk1 Golf GTI gets twin-clutch DSG - It's a little bit bland	★★★★☆
VW Golf 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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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 G63 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 2.0 Turbo Super	234 D	£31,180	4/1995	197/5000	243/1750	1429kg	140	6.6	-	146	138	47.9	+ Keen engine, enjoyable handling - Firm low-speed ride	★★★★★
	Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio	229 R	£59,000	6/2891	503/6500	443/2500	1524kg	335	3.9	-	191	198	40.3	+ If Ferrari built a saloon (really) - Lacks the final polish of German rivals	★★★★★
+	Alfa Romeo Stelvio	234 D	£35,000	4/1995	276/5250	295/1750	1660kg	169	5.7	-	143	-	-	+ Agile feel, quick steering, attractive cabin - Engine not truly inspiring	★★★★★
	Alpina D3 Biturbo (F30)	192 D	£47,950	6/2993	345/4000	516/1500	1585kg	221	4.6	-	173	139	53.3	+173mph from a 3-litre diesel! Brilliant chassis, too - Auto only	★★★★★
	Alpina B3 Biturbo (F30)	188 D	£57,450	6/2979	404/5500	442/3000	1630kg	252	4.3	-	190	177	37.2	+ Understated appearance, monster performance - E90 M3 is better on the limit	★★★★★
	Aston Martin Rapide S	201 D	£147,950	12/5935	552/6650	465/5500	1990kg	282	4.2	-	203	300	21.9	+ Oozes star quality, gearbox on 2015MY cars a big improvement - It's cosy in the back	★★★★★
	Aston Martin Rapide	141 R	10-13	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1990kg	240	5.2	-	188	355	-	+ Better than its DB9 sibling - More a 2+2 than a proper four-seater	★★★★★
	Audi S3 Saloon	192 D	£32,330	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1430kg	210	5.3	-	155	162	26.4	+ On paper a match for the original S4 - In reality much less interesting	★★★★★
	Audi S4 (B9)	225 D	£44,000	6/2995	349/5400	369/1370	1630kg	218	4.7	-	155	166	38.7	+ Strong response and delivery from turbo engine - Chassis feels softer than before	★★★★★
	Audi S4 (B8)	166 D	08-16	6/2995	328/5500	324/2900	1705kg	195	4.9	-	155	190	34.9	+ Great supercharged powertrain, secure chassis - The RS4	★★★★★
	Audi RS4 Avant (B8)	216 R	12-15	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1795kg	251	4.5	10.5	174	249	26.4	+ Looks and sounds the part, thunderously fast - Unnatural steering, dull dynamics	★★★★★
	Audi RS4 (B7)	231 R	05-08	8/4163	444/7800	317/5500	1650kg	255	4.5	10.9	155	-	-	+ 414bhp at 7800rpm! And there's an estate version too - Busy under braking	★★★★★
	Audi RS4 (B5)	192 R	00-02	6/2671	375/6100	325/2500	1620kg	236	4.8	12.1	170	-	17.0	+ Effortless pace - Not the last word in agility. Bends wheel rims	★★★★★
	Audi RS2	214 R	94-95	5/2226	315/6500	302/3000	1595kg	201	4.8	13.1	162	-	18.0	+ Storming performance (thanks to Porsche) - Try finding one	★★★★★
	Audi S5 Sportback	233 D	£47,000	6/2995	349/5400	369/1370	1660kg	214	4.7	-	155	166	38.7	+ Involving and rewarding; strong V6 engine - Gearbox frustrating in auto mode	★★★★★
	Audi S6	091 D	06-11	10/5204	429/6800	398/3000	1910kg	228	5.2	-	155	299	22.4	+ Even faster, and discreet with it - Very muted V10	★★★★★
	Audi RS6 Avant (C7)	203 R	£79,505	8/3993	552/5700	516/1750	1935kg	290	3.6	8.2	155	223	29.4	+ Performance, foolproof powertrain, beefy looks - Feels a bit one-dimensional	★★★★★
	Audi RS6 Avant Performance (C7)	224 D	£86,420	8/3993	597/6100	553/2500	1950kg	311	3.7	-	155	223	29.4	+ The extra power is no hassle for the chassis - A stern test of self-control	★★★★★
	Audi RS6 Avant (C6)	116 R	08-10	10/4991	572/6250	479/1500	2025kg	287	4.3	9.7	155	333	20.2	+ The world's most powerful estate - Power isn't everything	★★★★★
	Audi RS6 Avant (C5)	052 R	02-04	8/4172	444/5700	413/1950	1865kg	242	4.8	11.6	155	-	19.3	+ The ultimate estate car? - Numb steering	★★★★★
	Audi RS7 Sportback	208 R	£84,485	8/3993	552/5700	516/1750	1920kg	292	3.9	-	155	229	28.8	+ Stonking performance, great looks - Numb driving experience	★★★★★
	Audi S7 Sportback	171 D	£64,380	8/3993	552/5700	406/1400	1945kg	216	4.6	-	155	225	-	+ Looks and drives better than S6 it's based on - Costs £8000 more	★★★★★
	Audi S8 Plus	217 D	£98,395	8/3993	597/6100	553/2500	1990kg	305	3.8	-	155	229	28.2	+ Fantastic drivetrain, quality and refinement - Dynamic Steering feels artificial	★★★★★
	Audi RS Q3	206 D	£46,120	5/2480	335/5300	332/1600	1655kg	206	4.8	-	155	203	32.1	+ Surprisingly characterful; better than many RSs - High centre of gravity	★★★★★
	Bentley Flying Spur V8	200 D	£132,800	8/3993	500/6000	487/1700	2342kg	217	4.9	-	183	254	25.9	+ Effortless performance with real top-end kick - Determinedly unsporting	★★★★★
	Bentley Flying Spur V8 S	230 D	£142,800	8/3993	521/6000	502/1700	2342kg	226	4.6	-	190	254	25.9	+ Old-school approach to comfort and luxury - Old-school tech	★★★★★
	Bentley Flying Spur	185 D	£154,900	12/5993	616/6000	590/1600	2400kg	261	4.3	-	200	343	19.0	+ More power than old Flying Spur Speed - Feels its weight; engine sounds dull	★★★★★
	Bentley Bentayga	217 D	£162,700	12/5950	600/5000	664/1350	2365kg	258	4.0	-	187	296	21.6	+ Sublime quality, ridiculous pace - Inert driving experience, SUV stigma	★★★★★
	Bentley Mulsanne	178 F	£229,360	8/6752	505/4200	752/1750	2610kg	197	5.1	-	184	342	19.3	+ Drives like a modern Bentley should - Shame it doesn't look like one too	★★★★★
	Bentley Mulsanne Speed	223 F	£252,000	8/6752	530/4200	811/1750	2610kg	206	4.8	-	190	342	19.3	+ Characterful; superb build quality - A bit pricey...	★★★★★
	BMW 340i M Sport Touring (F31)	228 D	£41,635	6/2998	321/5500	332/1380	1615kg	202	5.1	-	155	158	41.5	+ Feelsome rear-drive chassis - Easy to drive it beyond its comfort zone	★★★★★
	BMW M3 (F80)	211 R	£56,605	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1520kg	284	4.1	8.6	155	204	32.1	+ Looks, performance, practicality - Body control on rough roads; engine lacks character	★★★★★
	BMW M3 (E90)	123 R	08-11	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1605kg	262	4.9	10.7	165	290	22.8	+ Every bit as good as the E92 M3 coupe - No carbon roof	★★★★★
	BMW M3 CRT (E90)	179 R	11-12	8/4361	444/8300	324/3750	1580kg	285	4.4	-	180	295	-	+ Saloon chassis + weight savings + GTS engine = best E90 M3 - Just 67 were made	★★★★★
	BMW M5 (F10M)	208 R	11-16	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1870kg	300	4.3	-	155	232	28.5	+ Twin-turbocharging suits M5 well - Can feel heavy at times	★★★★★
	BMW M5 (E60)	129 R	04-10	10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1755kg	289	4.7	10.4	155	-	19.6	+ Close to being the ultimate supersaloon - SMG gearbox feels old-tech	★★★★★
	BMW M5 (E39)	110 R	99-03	8/4941	394/6600	369/3800	1795kg	223	4.9	11.5	155	-	-	+ Magnificent V8-engined supersaloon - We'd be nit-picking	★★★★★
	BMW M5 (E34)	110 R	92-96	6/3795	340/6900	295/4750	1653kg	209	5.9	13.6	155	-	-	+ The Godfather of supersaloons - The family can come too	★★★★★
	BMW M6 Gran Coupe	190 D	£95,665	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1875kg	299	4.2	-	155	232	28.5	+ Enormous performance, stylish looks - Price tag looks silly next to rivals, M5 included	★★★★★
	BMW M760Li xDrive	233 D	£132,310	12/6592	602/5500	590/1550	2180kg	281	3.7	-	155	294	22.1	+ More capable than you'd think - Too much of a limo to be genuinely exciting	★★★★★
	BMW X5 M50d	191 D	£65,240	6/2993	376/4000	546/2000	2190kg	155	5.3	-	155	173	42.8	+ Straight-line pace - Driving experience identical to standard X5, despite the M badge	★★★★★
	BMW X6 M	212 D	£93,100	8/4395	567/6000	553/2200	2265kg	245	4.2	-	155	258	25.4	+ Big improvement on its predecessor - Coupe roofline still of questionable taste	★★★★★
	BMW X6 M	134 D	09-15	8/4395	547/6000	502/1500	2305kg	241	4.7	-	171	325	20.3	+ Fast, refined and comfortable - But it definitely lacks the M factor	★★★★★
	Brabus Bullit	119 R	£330,000	12/6233	720/5100	811/2100	1850kg	395	3.8	-	217	-	-	+ Seven hundred and twenty bhp - Three hundred thousand pounds	★★★★★
	Cadillac CTS-V	148 R	£67,030	8/6162	556/6100	551/3800	1928kg	293	3.9	-	191	365	18.1	+ It'll stand out among M-cars and AMGs - The novelty might wear off	★★★★★
	Cadillac CT6	226 D	£69,990	6/2997	411/5700	409/2500	1950kg	214	5.7	-	149	223	28.2	+ Caddy's S-class rival scores on comfort - But not on driver involvement	★★★★★
	Honda Accord Type R	012 R	98-03	4/2157	209/7200	158/6700	1306kg	163	6.1	17.4	142	-	29.4	+ One of the finest front-drivers of all time - Lack of image	★★★★★
	Infiniti Q50S Hybrid	195 D	£39,995	6/3498	359/6800	402/5000	1750kg	208	5.1	-	155	144	45.6	+ Good powertrain, promising chassis - Lacklustre steering, strong rivals	★★★★★
	Jaguar XE 2.0d AWD	227 D	£33,825	4/1999	178/4000	317/1750	1615kg	112	7.5	-	140	123	60.6	+ Great chassis gets more traction - Shame the engine isn't as polished	★★★★★
	Jaguar XE S	213 D	£44,865	6/2995	335/6500	332/4500	1635kg	208	4.9	-	155	194	34.9	+ Neat handling, neat design - V6 loses appeal in the real world	★★★★★
	Jaguar XF S	214 D	£49,945	6/2995	375/6500	332/4500	1710kg	223	5.0	-	155	198	34.0	+ Outstanding ride and handling balance - Engine lacks appeal	★★★★★
	Jaguar XF S Diesel	219 D	£49,945	6/2993	296/4000	516/2000	1750kg	172	5.8	-	155	144	51.4	+ Great chassis, good looks, better engine than V6 petrol - It's still a diesel	★★★★★
	Jaguar XFR	181 D	09-15	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1800kg	284	4.8	10.2	155	270	24.4	+ Brilliant blend of pace and refinement - Doesn't sound as special as it is	★★★★★
	Jaguar XFR-S	208 R	13-15	8/5000	542/6500	501/2500	1800kg	306	4.4	-	186	270	24.4	+ XF gets turned up to 12 - Tyres aren't cheap	★★★★★
	Jaguar XJ 3.0 V6 Diesel	148 D	£58,690	6/2993	271/4000	442/2000	1835kg	150	6.0	-	155	167	46.3	+ A great Jaguar - But not as great as the XJR...	★★★★★
	Jaguar XJR	191 D	£91,755	8/5000	542/6500	502/2500	1875kg	294	4.4	-	174	270	24.4	+ Hot-rod vibe, fine cabin - Opinion-dividing looks	★★★★★
	Jaguar F-Pace 3.0 V6 Supercharged	222 D	£65,275	6/2995	375/6500	332/4500	1884kg	202	5.1	-	155	209	57.7	+ A match for Porsche's SUVs - Supercharged V6 needs to be worked hard	★★★★★
	Land Rover Discovery Sport	205 D	£32,395	4/2179	187/3500	310/1750	1863kg	100	9.8	-	117	159	46.3	+ Style, packaging, refinement - We can think of sportier vehicles	★★★★★
	Lexus GS F	221 D	£69,995	8/4969	470/7100	391/4800	1790kg	267	4.6	-	168	260	25.2	+ Superb engine, exploitable chassis - Gearbox is off the pace	★★★★★
	Lexus IS F	151 R	07-12	8/4969	417/6600	372/5200	1714kg	247	4.7	10.9	173	270	24.4	+ Shockingly good Lexus - The M3's available as a (second hand) four-door too	★★★★★

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	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	CO2 G/KM	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	31.7	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ + 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 1lbhp - 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 E63 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 SL63 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 SL63 AMG (W211)	099 R	'06-'10	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	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ + Stomping pace, extreme refinement - Feels remote
Mercedes-AMG 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 MLC63 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 Turbo	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 GTS	208 R	'11-'16	8/4806	434/6700	383/3500	1925kg	229	4.4	-	178	249	26.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ + Vivacious V8, entertaining balance - Can feel light on performance next to turbo'd rivals
Porsche Panamera Turbo	137 R	'10-'16	8/4806	493/6000	516/2250	1970kg	254	3.6	8.9	188	270	24.6	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ + Fast, refined and dynamically sound - It still leaves us cold
Porsche Panamera Turbo S	159 D	'13-'18	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	210kg	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 S 7.3 - 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 PI	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	347/3100	1721kg	214	4.8	-	155	186	34.9	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ + Subtle, well-executed performance car - Plays a little too safe

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OUR CHOICE

Lotus 3-Eleven. It may not be groundbreaking but it is hugely exciting. The V6 sounds fabulous and the open linkage on the manual gearbox looks fantastic. A circuit is obviously its natural habitat but it has surprisingly civilised road manners, so you could happily drive to and from a trackday in it.



BEST OF THE REST

Jaguar's F-type (pictured) impresses in most forms, and we'd defy anyone not to be charmed by Aston Martin's V8 or V12 Vantage S Roadsters. Unsurprisingly, you won't find a duffer 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	COC 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	£9,711	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	£8,12	4/1998	245/8200	155/5200	500kg	498	3.2	-	150	-	33.0	★☆☆☆☆
Ariel Atom 3 Supercharged	138 R	£9,12	4/1998	300/8200	162/7200	550kg	554	3.3	-	155	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Ariel Atom Mugen	165 R	£12,13	4/1998	270/8300	188/6000	550kg	499	2.9	-	150	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Ariel Atom V8 500	165 R	£10,12	8/3000	475/10,500	284/7750	550kg	877	3.0	5.8	170	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Ariel Nomad	210 R	£33,000	4/2354	235/7200	221/4300	670kg	365	3.4	-	134	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Aston Martin V8 Vantage Roadster	130 R	£89,994	8/4735	420/7000	346/5700	1710kg	250	4.7	-	180	328	20.4	★☆☆☆☆
Aston Martin V8 Vantage S Roadster	161 R	£108,995	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1690kg	258	4.6	-	189	299	21.9	★☆☆☆☆
Aston Martin V12 Vantage S Roadster	212 R	£147,000	12/5935	565/6750	451/5750	1745kg	329	4.1	-	201	343	19.2	★☆☆☆☆
Aston Martin V12 Vantage Roadster	175 R	£12,14	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1760kg	294	4.4	-	190	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Aston Martin DB9 Volante	150 D	£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	£12,25	4/2261	280/7700	206/6000	540kg	527	2.8	-	170	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Bentley Continental GT V8 Convertible	168 R	£150,200	8/3993	500/6000	487/1700	2395kg	212	4.7	-	187	254	25.9	★☆☆☆☆
Bentley Continental GT V8 S Convertible	194 D	£160,500	8/3993	521/6000	502/1700	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	£8,2398	8/2398	500/10000	300/8500	520kg	1074	4.8	8.2	150	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Caterham Seven R300	068 R	£12,06	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	4/3855	553/7500	551/4750	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	117/2250	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	£15	8/5000	567/6500	501/2500	1585kg	363	3.9	-	186	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Jaguar F-type V8 S Convertible	183 R	£13,14	8/5000	488/6500	461/2500	1665kg	298	4.3	-	186	259	25.5	★☆☆☆☆
Jaguar XKR Convertible	130 R	£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	290/3200	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	★☆☆☆☆



SUBARU IMPREZA STi PPP

Boosting power to 300bhp, the Prodrive Performance Pack made the STi an even greater threat to your licence. Richard Meaden tested it

It's the torque you notice first. Big and beefy from 3000rpm, the PPP STi has muscle to flex where the standard car flounders. But it's the transition from brawny torque to fizzing top-end power that's the really satisfying, addictively violent sensation. The stock, 262bhp STi, though quick,

has always felt like it's straining against an invisible leash above 6000rpm. The PPP STi fires you like a steam catapult all the way to the rev limiter.

'You don't need a stopwatch to know it's significantly quicker. If anything, the sensations suggest a bigger improvement than the

claimed figures: standstill to 60mph in an eye-watering 4.6sec; 0-100mph in just 12.2sec.

The STi is a more natural handler and more predictable on the limit than the at-times-wayward Mitsubishi Evo VII, and a PPP-equipped STi is the Evo's stiffest opposition yet.'

ISSUE 049, NOVEMBER 2002

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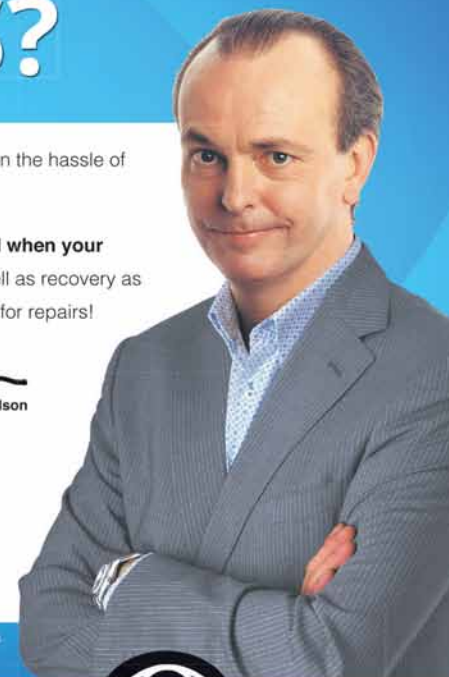
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	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	CO2 G/KM	EC MPG	EVO RATING	
Lotus Elise 1.6 Club Racer	183 R	'11-'15	4/1598	134/6800	118/4400	852kg	160	6.0	-	127	149	45.0	+ Even lighter, even more focused - Are you prepared to go this basic?	★★★★★
Lotus Elise S Club Racer	189 D	'13-'15	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	905kg	244	4.2	-	145	175	37.5	+ Purist approach intensifies ability - Lightest, option-free spec requires commitment	★★★★★
Lotus Elise R	068 R	'04-'11	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	860kg	223	5.6	13.9	150	196	34.4	+ Most thrilling Elise yet - Blaring engine note	★★★★★
Lotus Elise SC	131 R	'08-'11	4/1794	218/8000	156/5000	870kg	254	4.5	11.4	148	199	33.2	+ All the usual Elise magic - Supercharged engine lacks sparkle	★★★★★
Lotus Elise S 1.8	104 R	'06-'10	4/1794	134/6200	127/4200	860kg	158	6.3	18.7	127	-	37.2	+ Brilliant entry-level Elise - Precious little	★★★★★
Lotus Elise 111S	049 R	'02-'04	4/1796	156/7000	129/4650	860kg	197	5.1	-	131	-	40.9	+ A genuinely useable Elise - Air-con? In an Elise?	★★★★★
Lotus Elise Sport 135	040 D	'03	4/1796	135/6200	129/4850	726kg	189	5.4	-	129	-	-	+ One of our fave S2 Elises - Brakes need more bite and pedal feel	★★★★★
Lotus Elise Sport 190	044 R	'03	4/1796	190/7800	128/5000	710kg	272	4.7	12.1	135	-	-	+ Fabulous trackday tool - Pricey	★★★★★
Lotus Elise (SI)	126 R	'96-'01	4/1796	118/5500	122/3000	731kg	164	6.1	18.5	126	-	39.4	+ A modern classic - A tad impractical?	★★★★★
Lotus Exige Sport 350 Roadster	221 R	'05/9000	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1125kg	312	3.7	-	145	235	28.0	+ An Exige with added sunny-day appeal - A Boxster would be more practical	★★★★★
Lotus Exige Sport 380 Roadster	231 R	'06/9000	6/3456	375/6700	302/5000	1110kg	343	3.5	-	178	242	27.2	+ Like the 350 Roadster, but faster and even purer - A Boxster would still be more practical	★★★★★
Lotus Exige S Roadster	186 R	'13-'15	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1166kg	301	3.8	-	145	235	28.0	+ Like the hard-top Exige S, but more road-friendly - 981 Boxster S is a better all-rounder	★★★★★
Lotus 3-Eleven	220 R	'08/2500	6/3456	410/7000	302/3000	925kg	450	3.3	-	174	-	-	+ A fantastically exciting Lotus - If not exactly a groundbreaking one	★★★★★
Lotus 2-Eleven	126 R	'07-'11	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	720kg	267	4.3	-	140	-	-	+ Not far off supercharged car's pace - Pricey once it's made road-legal	★★★★★
Lotus 2-Eleven Supercharged	123 R	'07-'11	4/1796	252/8000	179/7000	670kg	382	3.8	-	150	-	-	+ Impressive on road and track - Not hardcore enough for some	★★★★★
Lotus 2-Eleven GT4	138 R	'09-'11	4/1796	266/8200	179/7200	670kg	403	3.7	-	155	-	-	+ evo Track Car of the Year 2009 - It's a 76-grand Lotus with no roof	★★★★★
Lotus 340R	126 R	'00	4/1796	190/7800	146/5000	658kg	293	4.5	12.5	126	-	-	+ Hardcore road-racer... that looks like a dune buggy from Mars	★★★★★
Lotus Elan SE	095 R	'89-'95	4/1588	165/6600	148/4200	1022kg	164	6.7	-	137	-	21.0	+ Awesome front-drive chassis - Rather uninvolved	★★★★★
Maserati GranCabrio	142 D	'08/940	8/4691	434/7000	332/4750	1980kg	223	5.2	-	177	337	19.5	+ As good to drive as it is to look at - Lacks the grunt of some rivals	★★★★★
Maserati GranCabrio Sport	161 D	'10/4,535	8/4691	444/7000	336/4750	1980kg	228	5.0	-	177	377	19.5	+ Looks, performance, cruising ability - Brakes could be sharper	★★★★★
Maserati GranCabrio MC	185 D	'11/2,370	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1973kg	234	4.9	-	179	337	19.5	+ Most powerful GranCabrio yet - The GranCabrio is starting to show its age	★★★★★
Mazda MX-5 1.5 (Mk4)	230 F	'18/495	4/1496	129/7000	111/4800	975kg	134	8.3	-	127	139	47.1	+ Lightest MX-5 since the Mk1 - Lacks intensity	★★★★★
Mazda MX-5 2.0 Sport Nav (Mk4)	228 R	'23/695	4/1998	158/6000	147/4600	1000kg	161	7.3	-	133	161	40.9	+ Brilliant basic recipe - The desire for stiffer suspension and more power	★★★★★
Mazda MX-5 RF (Mk4)	234 R	'23/905	4/1998	158/6000	147/4600	1045kg	154	7.4	-	134	161	40.9	+ Drives just like its soft-top brother - Significant wind noise with the roof down	★★★★★
Mazda MX-5 2.0i Sport Tech (Mk3.5)	212 R	'09-'15	4/1999	158/7000	139/5000	1098kg	146	7.6	-	138	181	36.2	+ Handles brilliantly again; folding hard-top also available - Less than macho image	★★★★★
Mazda MX-5 1.8i (Mk3)	091 R	'05-'09	4/1798	124/6500	123/4500	1080kg	108	9.3	-	122	-	-	+ Gearchange, interior - Lost some of the charm of old MX-5s; dubious handling	★★★★★
Mazda MX-5 1.8i (Mk2)	017 R	'98-'05	4/1839	146/7000	124/5000	1065kg	140	8.6	-	123	-	32.5	+ Affordable ragtops don't get much better - Cheap cabin	★★★★★
Mazda MX-5 1.6 (Mk1)	131 R	'89-'97	4/1597	115/6500	100/5500	971kg	120	9.0	-	114	-	-	+ The original and still (pretty much) the best - Less than rigid	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG SLC43	222 D	'04/5,950	6/2996	362/5500	383/2000	1520kg	242	4.7	-	155	178	26.2	+ Twin-turbo V6 well-suited to baby roadster - But also highlights the chassis' age	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLK 55 AMG	186 R	'12-'15	8/5461	416/6800	398/4500	1615kg	262	4.6	-	155	195	33.6	+ Quicker and more economical than ever - Needs to be sharper, too	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLK 55 AMG	087 R	'05-'10	8/5439	355/5750	376/4000	1575kg	229	4.9	-	155	-	23.5	+ Superb engine, responsive chassis - No manual option, ESP spoils fun	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLK 55 AMG Black Series	110 R	'07-'08	8/5439	394/5750	383/3750	1495kg	268	4.9	11.2	174	-	-	+ AMG gets serious - Dull-witted 7G-Tronic auto box, uneven dynamics	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG C63 S Cabriolet	226 D	'08/115	8/3982	503/5500	516/1750	1850kg	276	4.1	-	155	208	31.7	+ A born hooligan - Body flex takes away some control	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG SL63	228 D	'11/115	8/5461	571/5500	664/2250	1770kg	331	4.1	-	155	234	28.0	+ Effortless performance - Needs more involvement to go with the pace	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SL500	169 D	'12-'16	8/4663	429/5250	516/1800	1710kg	255	4.6	-	155	212	31.0	+ Wafty performance, beautifully engineered - Lacks ultimate sports car feel	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SL63 AMG	171 D	'12-'16	8/5461	530/5500	590/2000	1770kg	304	4.3	-	155	231	-	+ Monster performance, lighter than before - Still heavy, steering lacks consistency	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG	183 D	'13-'16	12/5980	621/4800	737/2300	1875kg	336	4.0	-	155	270	24.4	+ Chassis just about deals with the power - Speed limits	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SL63 AMG	117 D	'08-'13	8/6208	518/6800	464/5200	1970kg	278	4.6	-	155	328	20.0	+ More focused than old SL55 AMG - Lost some of its all-round appeal	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG	071 D	'04-'10	12/5980	604/4800	737/2000	2035kg	302	4.1	-	155	-	-	+ Gob-smacking performance - Gob-smackingly pricey	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG Roadster	167 R	'12-'14	8/6208	563/6800	479/4750	1660kg	345	3.7	-	197	308	21.4	+ Loses none of the coupe's talents - But (understandably) loses the gullwing doors	★★★★★
Morgan 3 Wheeler	198 R	'08/140	2/1976	82/5250	103/3250	525kg	159	6.0	-	115	215	30.3	+ Quirky, characterful, brilliant - Can become a two-wheeler if you push too hard	★★★★★
Morgan Plus 8 Speedster	202 R	'08/140	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1000kg	368	4.2	-	148	282	23.3	+ Fantastic old-school roadster experience - Gets unsettled by big bumps	★★★★★
Morgan Plus 8	171 R	'08/140	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1100kg	334	4.4	-	155	256	25.7	+ Hilarious mix of old looks and new mechanicals - Refinement is definitely old-school	★★★★★
Morgan Aero SuperSports	145 R	'08/140	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1180kg	312	4.2	-	170	-	-	+ It's an Aero 8 with a V8 and targa top - It's proper supercar money	★★★★★
Morgan Aero 8	105 R	'02-'08	8/4799	362/6300	361/3400	1100kg	334	4.5	-	170	-	25.2	+ Glorious sound, view over bonnet, dynamics - Awkward-looking rear	★★★★★
Nissan 370Z Roadster	143 R	'10-'14	6/3696	326/7000	269/5200	1554kg	213	5.5	-	155	262	25.2	+ The Zed's old-school character remains intact - Its purposeful looks don't	★★★★★
Porsche 718 Boxster	224 D	'08/140	4/1988	296/6500	280/1950	1335kg	225	5.1	-	170	168	38.2	+ Chassis as good as ever - Four-cylinder's tuneless din would be hard to live with	★★★★★
Porsche 718 Boxster S	222 R	'08/140	4/2497	345/6500	310/1900	1355kg	259	4.4	9.8	177	184	34.9	+ Still sensationally capable - Turbo four-cylinder engine lacks appeal of the old flat-six	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster (981)	172 R	'12-'16	6/2706	261/6700	206/4500	1310kg	202	5.4	-	164	192	34.5	+ Goes and looks better - Shame about the electric steering	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster S (981)	186 R	'12-'16	6/3436	311/6700	265/4500	1320kg	239	5.1	-	173	206	32.1	+ Boxster steps out of 911's shadow - But gets 911's less appealing electric steering	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster GTS (981)	203 D	'14-'16	6/3436	325/6700	273/4500	1345kg	246	5.0	-	174	211	31.4	+ Superb dynamics, fantastic engine, great looks - Sport suspension is very firm	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster Spyder (981)	2123 R	'15-'16	6/3800	370/6700	310/4750	1315kg	286	4.5	-	180	230	28.5	+ The fastest, most rewarding Boxster yet - Feedback trails the Cayman GT4's	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster S (987)	161 R	'05-'12	6/3436	306/6400	265/5500	1355kg	229	5.3	-	170	223	29.7	+ Second-gen Boxster's as brilliant as ever - It's a typically Porsche redesign	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster Spyder (987)	188 R	'10-'12	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1275kg	252	5.0	-	166	221	29.1	+ Lighter, more driver-centric Boxster - Collapsed-broly roof not the most practical	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster S (986)	070 R	'99-'04	6/3199	256/6200	229/4600	1320kg	200	5.7	-	164	-	26.9	+ Added power over the non-S Boxster is seductive - Very little	★★★★★
Radical SR3 SL	174 R	'06/840	4/2000	300/6000	265/4000	775kg	393	3.4	-	161	-	-	+ Our 2011 Track Car of the Year, and it's road-legal - You'll need to wrap up warm	★★★★★
Renault Sport Spider	231 R	'96-'99	4/1998	148/6000	136/4500	930kg	157	6.5	-	131	-	-	+ Rarity, unassisted steering - Heavier than you'd hope; disappointing engine	★★★★★
Rolls-Royce Dawn	222 D	'00/000	12/6592	563/5250	575/1500	2560kg	223	4.9	-	155	330	20.0	+ Effortless driving experience - Driver involvement not a priority	★★★★★
Toyota MR2	187 R	'00-'06	4/1794	138/6400	125/4400	975kg	141	7.2	21.2	130	-	38.2	+ Tight lines, taut dynamics - Minimal luggage space	★★★★★
TVR Tamora	070 R	'01-'07	6/3605	350/7200	290/5500	1050kg	338	4.5	-	160	-	-	+ Well-sorted soft-top TVR - Awkward styling	★★★★★
TVR Tuscan Convertible	091 R	'05-'07	6/3996	365/6800	315/6000	1100kg	337	3.8	8.1	195+	-	-	+ Spirit of the Griff reborn - Over 195mph? Really?	★★★★★
TVR Chimaera 5.0	007 R	'93-'03	8/4988	320/5500	320/3750	1060kg	307	4.6	-	167	-	26.4	+ Gorgeous noise, tarmac-rippling grunt - Details	★★★★★
TVR Griffith 4.3	068 R	'92-'93	8/4280	280/5500	305/4000	1060kg	268	4.8	11.2	148	-	-	+ The car that made TVR. Cult status - Mere details	★★★★★
TVR Griffith 500	009 R	'93-'01	8/4988	320/5500	320/3750	1060kg	307	4.8	11.2	167	-	22.1	+ Gruff diamond - A few rough edges	★★★★★
Vauxhall VX220	023 R	'00-'04	4/2198	145/5800	150/4000	875kg	168	5.6	-	136	-	34.4	+ Absurdly good Vauxhall - The badge?	★★★★★
Vauxhall VX220 Turbo	066 R	'03-'05	4/1998	197/5500	184/1950	930kg	215	4.7	-	151	-	-	+ Nothing comes close for the money - Marginal everyday usability	★★★★★
Vuol 05	220 R	'05/995	4/2000	285/5600	310/3000	725kg	405	3.7	-	152	-	-	+ Impressive pace and quality - You can get a more thrills from a Caterham at half the price	★★★★★

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OUR CHOICE

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



BEST OF THE REST

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

		ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	COC G/KM	EC MPG	EVO RATING
Alfa Romeo 4C	209 R	£51,500	4/1742	237/6000	258/2200	895kg	269	4.5	-	160	157	41.5	+ Carbonfibre tub, mini-supercar looks - Hot hatch engine, clunky gearbox	★★★★☆
Alfa Romeo 8C Competizione	120 R	'07-'09	8/4691	450/7000	354/4750	1585kg	288	4.1	-	181	-	-	+ Looks, exclusivity, noise, balance - They're all sold	★★★★★
Alpina D4 Biturbo	206 R	£50,950	6/2993	345/4000	516/1500	1585kg	221	4.6	-	173	139	53.3	+ Fifth-gear oversteer - Sounds like a diesel; fuel economy not as good as you might hope	★★★★★
Alpina B4 Biturbo	206 R	£58,950	6/2979	404/5500	442/3000	1615kg	254	4.2	-	188	177	37.2	+ More fluid than the M4; better traction, too - Not as precise as the M-car over the limit	★★★★★
Aston Martin V8 Vantage	169 D	£84,995	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1630kg	262	4.7	-	180	328	20.4	+ 2012 upgrades keep the V8 Vantage on song - Starting to feel a little dated, though	★★★★☆
Aston Martin V8 Vantage N430	218 R	£89,995	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1610kg	271	4.5	-	189	321	20.5	+ Malleable, involving, can still hold its own - Never feels rampantly quick	★★★★★
Aston Martin V8 Vantage S	168 R	£94,995	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1610kg	271	4.5	-	189	299	21.9	+ Keener engine, V12 Vantage looks - Slightly sluggish auto only	★★★★★
Aston Martin Vantage GT8	229 R	£165,000	8/4735	440/7300	361/5000	1530kg	292	4.4	-	190	-	-	+ Enough drama to fill a Netflix mini-series - Just 150 being made	★★★★★
Aston Martin V12 Vantage S	224 D	£138,000	12/5935	565/6750	457/5750	1665kg	345	3.7	-	205	343	19.2	+ Amongst the best Astons ever made - Old-school automated 'box (so get the manual)	★★★★★
Aston Martin Vantage GT12	214 R	£250,000	12/5935	592/7000	461/5500	1565kg	384	3.5	-	185	-	-	+ The GT3-style Vantage we've been waiting for - Only 100 being made	★★★★★
Aston Martin V12 Vantage	146 R	'09-'13	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1680kg	308	4.4	9.7	190	388	17.3	+ The car we hoped the V8 Vantage would be - Erm, a tad thirsty?	★★★★★
Aston Martin DB11	230 D	£154,900	12/5204	600/6500	516/1500	1770kg	344	3.9	-	200	333	19.8	+ An excellent GT - Suffers in outright handling terms as a result	★★★★★
Aston Martin DB9 GT	214 D	£140,000	12/5935	540/6750	457/5500	1785kg	307	4.5	-	183	333	19.8	+ More power; still has bags of character - Needs eight-speed auto 'box	★★★★★
Aston Martin DB9	178 R	'04-'16	12/5935	510/6500	457/5500	1785kg	290	4.6	-	183	368	18.2	+ A great start to Gaydon-era Astons - Automatic gearbox could be quicker	★★★★★
Aston Martin DBS	142 R	'07-'12	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1695kg	306	4.2	-	191	388	17.3	+ Stupendous engine, gearbox, brakes - Pricey. Can bite the unwary	★★★★★
Audi TT 2.0 TFSI (Mk3)	204 R	£29,915	4/1984	227/4500	273/1650	1230kg	188	6.0	-	155	137	47.9	+ Desirable, grippy and effortlessly quick - Still not the last word in interaction	★★★★★
Audi TT 2.0 TFSI quattro (Mk3)	203 D	£32,860	4/1984	227/4500	273/1600	1335kg	173	5.3	-	155	149	44.1	+ Looks, interior, decent performance and handling - Lacks ultimate involvement	★★★★★
Audi TTs (Mk3)	209 R	£38,790	4/1984	306/5800	280/1800	1365kg	228	4.9	-	155	168	38.7	+ Dynamically interesting (for a TT) - Still not as interactive as a Cayman	★★★★★
Audi TT RS (Mk3)	230 R	£51,800	4/2480	394/5850	354/1700	1440kg	278	3.4	-	155	187	34.4	+ Soundtrack; tremendous point-to-point pace - A bit one-dimensional in the long run	★★★★★
Audi TT RS (Mk2)	158 R	'09-'14	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1450kg	235	4.4	11.1	155	209	31.4	+ Sublime 5-cylinder turbo engine - Rest of package can't quite match it	★★★★★
Audi 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	'07-'15	8/4163	424/7900	317/4500	1560kg	276	4.1	9.9	188	332	19.9	+ A true 911 alternative - Exclusivity comes at a price	★★★★★
Bentley Continental GT V8	178 R	£140,300	8/3993	500/6000	487/1700	2220kg	229	4.6	-	188	246	27.0	+ A proper drivers' Bentley with decent economy - 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 Supersports	234 D	£212,500	12/5998	700/6000	750/2050	2205kg	323	3.5	-	209	-	18.0	+ Massive performance, surprisingly agile - Styling and soundtrack far from discreet	★★★★★
Bentley Continental GT3-R	203 D	£237,500	8/3993	572/6000	518/1700	2120kg	274	3.6	-	170	295	22.2	+ The best-handling Continental ever - Expensive; it still weighs 2120kg	★★★★★
BMW 1-series M Coupe	188 R	'11-'12	6/2979	335/5900	369/1500	1495kg	228	4.8	-	155	224	-	+ Character, turbo pace and great looks - Came and went too quick	★★★★★
BMW M240i Coupe	229 D	£35,090	6/2998	335/6800	369/1520	1470kg	232	4.8	-	155	179	36.2	+ Adjustable and plenty of fun - Lacks finesse and precision	★★★★★
BMW M235i Coupe	225 R	'14-'16	6/2979	321/5800	332/1300	1455kg	224	5.2	12.7	155	189	34.9	+ Powertrain, chassis, looks, size - Limited-slip diff is an option, not standard	★★★★★
BMW M2	230 R	£44,080	6/2979	365/6500	369/1450	1495kg	248	4.5	-	155	199	33.2	+ More progressive chassis balance than the M4 - Feels unsettled on rough tarmac	★★★★★
BMW M4	218 R	£57,055	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1515kg	285	4.3	-	155	204	32.1	+ Ferociously fast - A handful on less-than-perfect or less-than-bone-dry roads	★★★★★
BMW M4 Competition Package	226 R	£60,065	6/2979	444/7000	406/1850	1515kg	298	4.3	-	155	204	32.1	+ Better tied-down than the regular M4 - Torque delivery still rather abrupt	★★★★★
BMW M4 GTS	232 R	'16	6/2979	493/6250	442/4000	1510kg	332	3.7	8.0	190	199	34.0	+ Vast improvement on lesser M4s - So it should be at this price	★★★★★
BMW M3 (E92)	196 R	'07-'13	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1580kg	266	4.3	10.3	155	290	22.8	+ Fends off all of its rivals - ...except the cheaper 1-series M	★★★★★
BMW M3 GTS (E92)	232 R	'10-'11	8/4361	444/8300	324/3750	1530kg	295	4.3	-	190	295	-	+ Highly exclusive, one of the most focused M-cars ever - Good luck trying to find one	★★★★★
BMW M3 (E46)	066 R	'00-'07	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1495kg	230	5.1	12.3	155	-	23.7	+ One of the best BMWs ever. Runner-up in eCoty 2001 - Slightly artificial steering feel	★★★★★
BMW M3 CS (E46)	219 R	'05-'07	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1495kg	230	5.1	-	155	-	23.7	+ CSL dynamics without CSL price - Looks like the standard car	★★★★★
BMW M3 CSL (E46)	200 R	'03-'04	6/3246	355/7900	273/4900	1385kg	260	5.3	12.0	155	-	-	+ Still superb - Changes from the automated single-clutch 'box are... a... bit... sluggish	★★★★★
BMW M3 Evolution (E36)	148 R	'96-'98	6/3201	321/7400	258/3250	1515kg	215	5.4	12.8	158	-	25.7	+ Performance, image - Never quite as good as the E30	★★★★★
BMW M3 (E30)	165 R	'86-'90	4/2302	212/6750	170/4600	1165kg	185	6.7	17.8	147	-	20.3	+ Best M-car ever! Race-car dynamics for the road - Prices have got out of hand	★★★★★
BMW Z4 M Coupe	097 R	'06-'09	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1420kg	242	5.0	-	155	-	23.3	+ A real drivers' car - You've got to be prepared to get stuck in	★★★★★
BMW M6 (F13)	218 R	£93,150	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1850kg	303	4.2	-	155	231	28.5	+ Mighty ability, pace, technology - You'll want the Competition Package upgrade too...	★★★★★
BMW M6 (E63)	106 R	'05-'10	10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1635kg	311	4.8	10.0	155	342	19.8	+ Awesome GT, awesome sports car - SMG gearbox now off the pace	★★★★★
BMW i8	210 R	£99,590	3/1499	357/5800	420/3700	1485kg	244	4.4	-	155	49	134.5	+ Brilliantly executed concept; sci-fi looks - Safe dynamic set-up	★★★★★
Chevrolet Camaro Z/28 *	220 R	\$71,750	8/7008	505/6100	481/4800	1732kg	296	4.2	-	175	-	-	+ Scalpel-sharp engine, great chassis (really) - Feels very stiff on UK roads	★★★★★
Chevrolet Corvette Stingray (C7)	197 R	£62,470	8/6162	460/6000	465/4600	1496kg	312	4.4	9.4	180	279	23.5	+ Performance, chassis balance, supple ride - Body control could be better	★★★★★
Chevrolet Corvette Z06 (C7)	227 R	£89,620	8/6162	650/6000	650/3600	1598kg	413	3.7	-	196	291	23.1	+ Mind-boggling raw speed; surprisingly sophisticated - Edgy when really pushed	★★★★★
Ford Mustang 2.3 EcoBoost	222 D	£30,995	4/2261	313/5500	319/3000	1655kg	192	5.8	-	155	179	35.3	+ Ninety per cent as good as the V8 - Missing ten per cent is what makes the Mustang	★★★★☆
Ford Mustang 5.0 V8 GT	225 R	£34,995	8/4951	410/6500	391/4250	1711kg	243	4.8	11.6	155	299	20.9	+ Looks, noise, performance, value, right-hand drive - Comes undone on rougher roads	★★★★★
Ginetta G40R	165 R	£35,940	4/1999	175/6700	140/5000	795kg	224	5.8	-	140	-	-	+ A race-compliant sports car for the road - Feels too soft to be a hardcore track toy	★★★★★
Honda Integra Type R (DC2)	200 R	'96-'00	4/1797	187/8000	131/7300	1101kg	173	6.2	17.9	145	-	28.9	+ Arguably the greatest front-drive car ever - Too raw for some	★★★★★
Honda NSX (NA2)	188 R	'97-'05	6/3179	276/7300	224/5300	1410kg	196	5.5	-	168	-	22.8	+ The useable supercar - 276bhp sounds a bit weedy today	★★★★★
Honda NSX-R (NA2) *	100 R	'02-'03	6/3179	276/7300	224/5300	1270kg	221	4.4	-	168	-	-	+ evo Car of the Year 2002 - Hard to find in the UK	★★★★★
Infiniti Q60S	228 D	£42,990	6/2997	400/6400	350/1600	1799kg	226	5.0	-	155	208	31.0	+ Impressive tech - Electronic systems reduce feeling of involvement	★★★★★
Jaguar F-type Coupe	204 D	£51,260	6/2995	335/6500	332/3500	1567kg	217	5.5	-	161	234	28.8	+ Drop-dead looks, brilliant chassis, desirability - Engine lacks top-end fight	★★★★★
Jaguar F-type S Coupe	211 D	£60,260	6/2995	375/6500	339/3500	1584kg	241	5.3	-	171	234	28.8	+ Exquisite style, more rewarding (and affordable) than roadster - Scrappy on the limit	★★★★★
Jaguar F-type R Coupe	218 R	£85,010	8/5000	542/6500	501/3500	1650kg	334	4.0	-	186	255	26.4	+ Looks, presence, performance, soundtrack - Bumpy and boistrous	★★★★★
Jaguar F-type R Coupe AWD	227 D	£91,660	8/5000	542/6500	501/3500	1730kg	318	3.5	8.1	186	269	25.0	+ Better than the rear-drive R in the wet - Less involving in the dry	★★★★★
Jaguar F-type SVR Coupe	224 D	£110,000	8/5000	567/6500	516/3500	1705kg	338	3.5	-	200	269	25.0	+ A marginally better drive than the AWD R - Not by enough to justify the extra outlay	★★★★★
Jaguar XKR	168 R	'09-'14	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1678kg	305	4.6	-	155	292	23.0	+ Fast and incredibly rewarding Jag - The kids will have to stay at home	★★★★★
Jaguar XKR-S	168 R	'11-'14	8/5000	542/6000	502/2500	1678kg	328	4.2	-	186	292	23.0	+ Faster and wilder than regular XKR - The F-type R Coupe	★★★★★
Lexus RC200t F Sport	225 R	£36,495	4/1998	242/5800	258/1650	1675kg	147	7.5	-	143	168	39.2	+ Fluid ride - Lacks body control and outright grip	★★★★☆
Lexus RC F	226 R	£59,995	8/4969	470/6400	391/4800	1765kg	271	4.5	-	168	251	26.5	+ Great steering, noise, sense of occasion - Too heavy to be truly exciting	★★★★★
Lexus LC500	231 D	£85,000	8/4969	470/7100	398/4800	1935kg	247	4.4	-	168	-	-	+ Glorious engine, rewarding chassis for a GT car - Numb steering, messy ergonomics	★★★★★



BMW M COUPE

Why would you?
Because it's rare, unique and enjoying a growth in demand. It has the 317bhp straight-six from the E36 M3 (or the 321bhp E46 unit in later examples), a stiffer shell than the Z3 M Roadster and a tuggish stance to complement the hot-rod mechanicals.

What to pay
£25k for a private-sale early car with 80,000-plus miles; £36k-40k with sub-50,000 miles from a dealer. Low-mileage late cars have fetched nearly £60,000.
What to look out for
Rough running and power loss could indicate a VANOS problem

(£600-900 to fix). Ensure the crankshaft bearing shells have been upgraded (around £750) – if the originals crumble you'll be looking at a full engine rebuild. Diff mounting brackets can fail, move around and rip the boot floor, so lift the boot carpet and look for cracks. (Full guide, [evo 230](#).)

SPECIFICATION ('S50' engine)

Years 1998-2002
Engine In-line 6-cyl, 3201cc
Power 317bhp @ 7400rpm
Torque 258lb ft @ 3250rpm
0-62mph 5.4sec (claimed)
Top speed 155mph (limited)
Rating ★★★★★

P26 AAA	£475	P29 BBY	£475	CIG 383	£575
B6 AAB	£775	368 BCA	£1100	P400 CJB	£475
W6 AAR	£475	BC2 Z9	£675	P121 CJC	£475
P2 AAW	£475	BEA 2L	£1900	R77 CJE	£475
AAZ 313	£475	R24 BED	£475	P45 CKE	£575
S44 ABA	£575	P23 BEE	£475	P24 CLB	£475
R26 ABB	£475	M4 BEK	£1400	C4 CLC	£575
V2 ABC	£775	R25 BEN	£475	F80 CLH	£475
T4 ABD	£475	P28 BEB	£575	M33 CLK	£475
ABE 2S	£1200	P19 BEL	£675	Y9 CMB	£1200
P23 ABS	£475	R26 BEL	£475	N5 CLS	£575
P28 ACH	£475	P27 BEN	£1200	P7 CMB	£475
ACH IS4	£1800	R2 BES	£775	P27 CMB	£475
R25 ACK	£475	R31 BES	£475	X66 CMH	£475
A12 ACR	£575	BES 615	£575	L3 CMR	£575
M5 ACS	£1500	C11 BET	£575	P21 CMW	£475
P31 ACS	£475	R26 BET	£475	293 CCM	£475
P10 ACT	£575	I79 BET	£1900	C0 6503	£2300
R44 ACT	£475	S300 BET	£475	P23 COB	£575
K6 ADA	£575	P3 BEV	£1800	R27 COB	£475
R25 ADE	£675	D13 BEV	£1100	K70 COL	£1400
B7 ADF	£575	R27 BEV	£575	R763 COL	£775
R25 ADY	£475	B878 BEV	£575	S80 COO	£475
400 AE	£3800	W2 BEV	£1100	F13 COR	£475
W3 AER	£575	BEZ 38	£675	R21 COR	£675
R25 AGE	£475	BE2 838	£475	P321 COR	£575
E9 AGM	£575	BF 5870	£1200	P23 COS	£475
J9 AGR	£675	BH2 24	£775	AC05 COX	£475
L1 AHN	£675	BIL 6908	£775	C153 COX	£575
AIG 343	£775	F4 BJB	£575	C15 CPW	£1300
P321 AIB	£475	C11 BJB	£575	R27 CRA	£475
P26 AIG	£475	P23 BJB	£475	R7 CRH	£475
P29 AIH	£475	333 BJB	£575	R9 DON	£1500
HI11 AIH	£1600	B1Z 97	£675	T9 CRL	£675
R21 AIJ	£475	BL 632	£3500	R25 CRS	£475
R31 AIL	£475	442 BLG	£975	R21 CRS	£475
L500 AIM	£675	P1 BMC	£475	C5 CRT	£475
GR AKH	£575	R77 BME	£475	S10 CRV	£475
N8 AKP	£475	W6 BMM	£575	G5 CRW	£475
J44 AKY	£1700	W26 BMM	£675	L9 CRY	£475
N4 ALD	£475	BMM 695V	£575	I54 CS	£4200
P25 ALF	£475	P24 BOB	£1300	B1 CSD	£675
N9 ALI	£975	G12 BON	£1200	CSU BSH	£475
P26 ALS	£475	R24 BOD	£475	D2 CSG	£575
ALW AIY	£475	P23 BOO	£475	N3 CTB	£475
P25 AMC	£775	P21 BOO	£575	J7 CUT	£575
P24 AME	£475	T88 BOT	£575	J40 CUT	£575
W5 AMF	£575	H3 BOB	£775	L9 CWS	£575
R27 AMH	£575	R27 BOW	£575	35 CY	£4700
K55 AMH	£675	W18 BOB	£675	295 DA	£3300
R121 AMH	£475	P23 BOX	£575	9718 DA	£1600
W31 AMM	£475	M66 BOY	£475	P25 DAB	£475
R23 AMP	£475	R26 BOY	£475	R25 DAB	£475
P25 AMP	£475	V3 BRD	£675	R24 DAD	£475
P28 AMR	£475	R3 BRE	£675	J88 DAD	£475
P21 ANA	£475	R29 BRN	£475	M70 DAL	£475
P31 AND	£575	P21 BRO	£575	P002 DAN	£475
W700 AND	£575	R555 BRO	£475	P47 DAN	£475
R28 ANE	£675	R123 BRY	£775	F22 DAN	£475
P24 ANG	£575	673 BRY	£1900	P321 DAR	£475
W6 ANH	£675	B5 8082	£1100	B888 DAS	£475
R15 ANN	£1600	Y9 BSB	£575	D2 DBM	£675
H80 ANN	£1600	Y7 BSH	£475	H6 DCB	£475
E753 ANN	£575	BSK I53	£775	N9 DCG	£475
P29 ANS	£475	A3 BSM	£575	N2 DCF	£475
M40 ANS	£575	573 BSM	£1500	W9 DCL	£475
W9 APL	£575	BSV 489	£575	W3 DCP	£475
T2 APS	£575	BI1 BSW	£475	W6 DCR	£475
R24 APS	£475	I7 BU	£4700	G5 DCW	£575
W9 APT	£575	R27 BUC	£475	6884 DD	£1800
E13 APR	£675	K17 BUC	£475	GE DE	£4300
P28 ARB	£575	D6 BUG	£1200	P27 DEB	£1300
R29 ARB	£575	K20 BUG	£675	B12 DEB	£1300
B4 ARC	£475	K17 BUK	£475	P21 DEE	£1200
EB ARG	£775	I27 BLU	£1200	W88 DEE	£1200
R23 ARK	£475	R23 BUN	£475	R21 DEK	£575
P25 ARK	£575	P24 BUN	£475	P21 DEK	£575
R27 ARM	£575	853 BUR	£1200	P26 DEL	£575
P29 ARM	£475	P28 BUS	£475	G321 DEL	£575
R26 ARN	£475	R73 BUT	£475	324 DEL	£1900
D6 ART	£1200	P200 BUT	£475	R24 DEM	£575
P21 ART	£675	A4 BUX	£575	ECU 76	£575
W28 ART	£475	BX6 862	£575	S222 DEN	£575
A55 ART	£775	2192 BY	£1300	P900 DEN	£675
A14 ARY	£1900	I984 C	£3800	S48 DER	£1200
J505 ASH	£575	1985 CA	£2800	X9 DES	£1200
D18 ASP	£475	W9 CAA	£575	L66 DES	£575
A5 ATB	£475	F11 CAD	£575	DES 775	£1700
R18 ATT	£475	P24 CAD	£575	P23 DEF	£475
X13 AUD	£675	J32 CAD	£575	DEW I2F	£575
F14 AUD	£775	D11 CAF	£575	R27 DEF	£475
K800 AUD	£575	CAM 12A	£2200	DE2 789	£575
9716 AW	£2300	S19 CAN	£475	DE2 818	£475
J7 AWB	£675	W3 CAP	£575	3468 DG	£1200
I56 AXA	£575	G97 CAR	£475	E7 DGD	£475
S86 AYD	£575	CAR I2IS	£575	A82 DGG	£475
800 BA	£1300	L122 CAS	£675	V4 DGV	£675
R29 BAD	£575	X12 CAT	£1300	V53 DJB	£575
R121 BAD	£475	P26 CAT	£675	V400 DJB	£575
W9 BAG	£475	D9 CAV	£675	L70 DJC	£775
Y9 BAH	£575	M9 CCM	£475	P123 DJC	£675
P26 BAL	£475	G7 CDB	£575	D2 DJJ	£575
BAL 55E	£1200	J8 CDM	£775	P300 DJM	£575
R29 BAR	£575	G4 CDW	£675	R221 DJP	£475
R28 BAR	£675	R27 CEC	£475	R26 DJR	£475
T99 BAR	£475	R26 CER	£475	P21 DJU	£475
R21 BAS	£475	X33 CES	£475	728 DMC	£575
C20 BAT	£675	Y400 CFC	£475	N4 DLC	£575
B82 BAZ	£775	824 CFJ	£475	S31 DLT	£575
BAZ 356I	£475	L6 CFS	£675	X1 DMT	£1100
A5 BBA	£1200	Y9 CGB	£475	P28 DMB	£475
BBM 838	£1400	L8 CGS	£675	G9 DMR	£675
I95 BBP	£675	R91 CHD	£675	I40 DMR	£1300
J12 BBY	£675	P5 CHS	£675	G7 DMT	£675

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C18 DOB	£575	R29 EVO	£575	GMA 70H	£575	78 JAN	£4800	P70 JUN	£475	4491 LJ	£775	G4 MGV	£575
R70 DOB	£475	T8 EVS	£575	N6 GMB	£575	M700 JAN	£1200	P23 JUS	£475	83 LK	£4700	P12 AM	£975
351 DOB	£2100	R23 EVS	£475	GN 4861	£1600	G9 JAP	£575	364 JXV	£475	J1 LMB	£575	M1B 801	£575
X700 DOC	£475	P28 EVS	£675	GNH 904	£675	P24 JAS	£575	E6 JWB	£575	R21 LMB	£475	M1G 454	£575
P29 DOG	£575	451 EYE	£1300	I79 GNM	£675	R121 JAS	£575	555 JXY	£575	E2 LMD	£675	M1W 313	£775
R29 DOG	£575	555 EYJ	£575	P25 GOR	£475	R28 JAT	£475	N1 KAB	£575	R28 LMC	£475	Y97 MJB	£575
N99 DOL	£575	P24 FAB	£575	R27 GOR	£475	W9 JAW	£575	T6 KAD	£575	A9 LHM	£475	E12 MJF	£575
W81 DON	£575	S24 FAT	£475	K5 GOS	£675	D11 JAW	£575	P25 KAM	£475	54 LN	£4700	P23 MJF	£475
X321 DON	£675	X300 FAY	£475	G11 GOW	£575	VIII JAX	£695	Y9 KAN	£475	T9 LOB	£475	P121 MJH	£475
75 FD	£3400	L6 GPC	£475	L8 GPC	£475	P23 JAY	£1200	W10 KAR	£575	V6 LOC	£575	P26 MJL	£475
M2 DOT	£575	95 FD	£3400	AT GPH	£675	H8 JBS	£775	K444 KAR	£575	Y1 LOL	£1500	P123 MJW	£475
W50 DOT	£475	L6 FEE	£475	AG GPH	£675	X8 JCA	£575	R26 KAS	£575	V28 LOL	£575	R28 MLS	£475
994 DOT	£1400	Y3 FEE	£1400	GR 9992	£2900	R321 JCB	£475	R121 KAS	£475	R21 LOR	£675	P12 MMC	£575
A3 DPT	£475	P23 FEE	£475	M199 GRW	£475	V2 JCD	£675	P28 KAT	£475	H10 LOT	£575	P31 MMM	£475
AD DPT	£475	P23 FEE	£475	DIII GRW	£475	E9 JCE	£475	L14 KAY	£575	R31 LOU	£1400	L8 MMS	£2100
A14 DRB	£475	E19 FEN	£575	GSY 294	£1100	D8 JCL	£475	P23 KAY	£575	N652 LOU	£575	R28 MMS	£475
A63 DRB	£575	P24 FEN	£475	GTF 559	£575	R28 JCK	£475	KAZ 848	£575	880 LPJ	£675	J151 MMS	£1900
J3 DRJ	£775	R29 FEN	£475	X300 GTR	£475	D4 JCL	£675	KAZ 6694	£575	831 LS	£3700	G30 MOF	£575
G9 DRJ	£475	FEZ 898	£875	788 GTV	£775	V6 JDD	£475	KC 6804	£2900	P23 LSA	£475	R24 MOL	£575
CR DRP	£675	I879 FH	£1500	X28 GUS	£475	J2 JDL	£575	103 KOT	£1200	SI LTR	£575	F27 MOL	£475
824 DS	£4100	FHR 947	£675	K37 GUY	£775	J7 JDL	£475	59 KE	£3500	LTR IF	£575	P23 MON	£475
DS 8227	£1500	FLI 8795	£475	200 GUY	£575	P24 JDM	£475	X10 KEN	£1600	LUI 303	£875	P23 MOO	£475
R4 DSG	£575	75 JF	£3900	G2 7348	£675	P23 JDS	£475	KEN 22P	£1200	W5 LUK	£675	S7 MOP	£475
Y4 DSH	£575	F1 6159	£5900	8179 HA	£1100	P24 JDS	£475	86 KEN	£3300	P29 LUK	£575	R23 MOS	£575
DSV 942	£575	FIV 741	£675	K12 HAM	£575	V3 JDT	£475	R23 KER	£575	AR LWH	£475	R121 MOS	£475
X9 DSW	£575	FL 59	£4700	R25 HAR	£675	P24 IDW	£475	P31 KER	£475	555 LYX	£575	S7 MOP	£475
Y9 DTB	£575	M99 FOG	£475	Y222 HAR	£575	Y5 JEF	£1500	R24 KES	£675	L1 LE	£1600	W80 MWD	£475
P23 DUB	£575	594 FOH	£475	R25 HAS	£475	J7 JEF	£1200	SI9 KEV	£1200	555 LYF	£575	W5 MPG	£575
R27 DUG	£475	L80 FOR	£475	J10 HAT	£575	J7 JEF	£1200	880 KEV	£2400	Y17 LYN	£1300	X33 MPG	£475
E39 DUG	£475	G25 FOX	£1200	P23 HAT	£475	W700 JEF	£475	O644 KEV	£575	R28 LYN	£1300	N4 MPR	£675
P24 DUN	£575	31 FR	£4400	R24 HAY	£675	R900 JEF	£575	C70 KEY	£475	31 LYN	£4800	R23 MPS	£475
R24 DUN	£575	R29 FRA	£475	Y31 HAY	£575	R7 JEL	£575	KC 949	£575	V999 MAB	£2575	MR 6646	£2400
HUI DOT	£475	FRE 545	£875	HAZ 512	£475	P24 JEM	£575	KC2 7363	£475	P24 MAC	£1500	V123 MRK	£575
D2X 300	£495	F7Y 70Y	£675	CI HCW	£575	V444 JEN	£1400	4692 KF	£575	R29 MAC	£1600	B20 MRK	£475
61 DY	£3500	L99 FRY	£575	A06 HE	£4200	P25 JES	£1300	E2 KJW	£575	P23 MAD	£775	X15 MRS	£475
D1 DYR	£575	2378 FS	£1700	S12 HED	£875	B166 JES	£575	Y5 KMG	£575	P24 MAD	£875	N6 MST	£575
845 E	£5700	III FV	£3900	R27 HED	£575	JES 735X	£575	SI KN	£4700	W27 MAD	£675	P7 MTC	£675
52 EA	£4500	FW 8041	£1500	G11 HEL	£1200	H4 JFC	£575	C1 KOS	£775	V77 MAE	£475	T7 MTH	£775
H9 EAL	£675	384 FYC	£775	P24 HEL	£575	W9 JGP	£575	KP 8655	£1400	P8 MAF	£675	MTR 33D	£775
HE 712	£3400	P23 GAB	£475	R27 HEL	£575	D7 JGR	£575	3898 KR	£1400	V14 MAF	£475	36 MU	£4700
831 EBY	£1200	R21 GAL	£675	R121 HEM	£475	JH 3	£55000	KRM 893	£1200	K3 MAG	£1400	P23 MUD	£475
EC 8261	£3000	Y121 GAL	£475	P23 HEP	£475	JL 343	£775	548 KTW	£675	W7 MAG	£975	L3 MUG	£475
E77 ECG	£575	V4 GAM	£675	W9 HER	£575	R9 JLL	£475	694 KTL	£775	D615 MAG	£475	P24 MUL	£775
ECF 179	£3000	P26 GAR	£475	P26 HEV	£475	KJ 9946	£3500	Y321 KYM	£475	V333 MAH	£475	G40 MUM	£675
LE 9DA	£575	P24 GAS	£675	R21 HWE	£575	A40 JKG	£475	R26 LAB	£575	R26 MAK	£575	X40 MUM	£775
V28 EDG	£575	R24 GAS	£675	HLI 7580	£475	I52 JKL	£575	R321 LAB	£475	P31 MAK	£575	S99 MUM	£575
V333 EDG	£475	GAS 319	£1800	I418 JH	£575	G9 JKR	£475	S10 LAC	£575	R121 MAK	£475	B13 MUR	£675
Y9 EDG	£475	W31 GAV	£675	K1 HJG	£675	P24 JLB	£475	A20 LAD	£575	R23 MAL	£875	W29 MUR	£575
Y51 EDG	£575	T555 GAV	£575	D3 HUM	£575	P24 LIS	£475	P25 LAD	£475	I03 MAL	£2100	R121 MUR	£475
THI EDG	£475	Y9 GBR	£575	80 HJX	£875	JM 1444	£3300	J97 LAD	£575	C777 MAL	£775	8539 MC	£675
P21 EES	£475	K5 GCM	£475	N9 HMB	£475	P29 JMB	£575	N900 LAD	£475	N80 MAN	£475	7002 MY	£1000
L16 EEF	£475	R8 GCR	£475	37 HN	£3500	P23 JML	£475	W7 LAG	£475	P24 MAP	£475	222 MYX	£675
A99 EFC	£575	901 GCR	£775	23 HO	£4700	P23 JMR	£475	P23 LAM	£475	R151 MAR	£575	R25 NAB	£475
19 EG	£4300	I964 GD	£2800	R18 HOB	£475	R121 JMS	£475	P27 LAN	£475	P23 MAS	£575	V14 NAB	£475
R31 EGG	£200	W7 GDB	£475	P99 HOB	£475	P26 JMW	£575	J9 LAP	£675	P123 MAT	£1500	W2 NAB	£475
200 EJ	£3700	BDN 490	£575	R27 HOG	£775	W9 JNS	£575	R21 LAP	£475	P123 MAT	£1500	P23 NAM	£675
E10 E	£675	G7 DS	£675	K42 HOG	£475	R24 JOD	£475	V50 LAU	£475	D139 MAT	£675	R25 NAM	£475
286 EIV	£875	V7 GEB	£575	R27 HOP	£575	R23 JOE	£1300	B5 LAW	£1400	S14 MAW	£675	C15 NAR	£475
600 EIX	£775	P23 GED	£475	Y19 HOT	£575	R26 JON	£1600	G62 LAW	£675	R23 MAW	£575	V18 NAR	£475
TR EKS	£575	P26 GEE	£475	V21 HOW	£475	JOH 386W	£1100	V66 LAW	£775	S25 MAW	£475	NAR 594	£875
EKU 76	£975	M2 GEF	£1500	R23 HOW	£575	P777 JON	£1300	S80 LAW	£575	S29 MAX	£1500	R24 NAS	£475
6977 EL	£875	R26 GEF	£575	HT HPR	£475	886 JON	£3600	W9 LCM	£575	P31 MAX	£1400	P25 NAY	£575
R28 ELA	£475	Y99 GEF	£475	A6 HBR	£595	C922 JON	£875	849 LED	£575	V50 MAY	£475	P21 NCK	£475
VIII ELE	£575	P27 GEM	£775	IS H36	£2200	886 JOO	£1400	R24 LEE	£1500	MAZ 696	£875	89 ND	£4700
C20 ELM	£475	GEM 31Y	£875	HI HTA	£1100	P23 JOS	£475	P29 LEE	£1400	MAC 3728	£475	S3 NE	£2900
R24 ELY	£675	B5 GEN	£775	16 HU	£4800	R27 JOS	£575	N99 LEG	£475	Y7 MHB	£675	P23 NEL	£575
P28 ELY	£575	S999 GEN	£475	R25 HUD	£475	R28 JOY	£575	LEN 6X	£2500	R23 MCB	£475	Y77 NEL	£475
P321 ELY	£475	GEO IR	£2500	W4 HUG	£575	243 JOY	£2300	A9 LEN	£2700	R25 MCC	£575	R25 NES	£475
P25 EMM	£475	P23 GEO	£575	P23 HUG	£475	P23 JPB	£475	D9 LEN	£1400	R24 MCB	£475	S71 NES	£775
EN2 484	£475	R28 GEO	£675	HOI 676	£475	E3 JPD	£675	S23 LEN	£975	P24 MCK	£575	PR NET	£1200
24 EDO	£4100	P25 GER	£575	L99 HUW	£475	M6 JPG	£675	V29 LEN	£575	R26 MCK	£575	R33 NET	£775

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

	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 Exige Sport 350	221 R	\$55,900	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1125kg	312	3.7	-	170	235	28.0	+ Further honed Exige, with vastly improved gearshift - Still not easy to get into and out of
Lotus Exige Sport 380	231 R	\$67,900	6/3456	375/6700	302/5000	1101kg	343	3.5	-	178	242	27.2	+ Intense, absorbing and brilliantly capable - Perhaps not an everyday car
Lotus Exige S (V6)	209 R	12-15	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1176kg	298	3.8	-	170	235	28.0	+ Brehtaking road-racer; our joint 2012 Car of the Year - Gearshift not the sweetest
Lotus Exige S (S2)	105 R	106-11	4/1796	218/7800	158/5500	930kg	238	4.5	-	148	199	33.2	+ Lightweight with a hefty punch - Uninspiring soundtrack
Lotus Exige (S1)	200 R	100-01	4/1796	192/7800	146/5000	780kg	247	4.6	-	136	-	-	+ Looks and goes like Elise racer - A tad lacking in refinement
Lotus Evora 400	216 R	\$72,000	6/3456	400/7000	302/3500	1395kg	291	4.1	-	186	225	29.1	+ Evora excitement levels take a leap - Gearbox still not perfect; punchy pricing
Lotus Evora Sport 410	230 R	\$82,000	6/3456	410/7000	310/3500	1325kg	314	3.9	-	190	225	29.1	+ Even lighter and sharper Evora - Engine and gearbox behind the best at this price
Lotus Evora	138 R	09-15	6/3456	276/6400	258/4700	1382kg	203	5.6	13.6	162	217	30.3	+ Sublime ride and handling. Our 2009 Car of the Year - The Evora S
Lotus Evora S	168 R	10-15	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1430kg	245	4.6	-	172	229	28.7	+ A faster and better Evora - But one which spars with the Porsche 911...
Maserati GranTurismo	114 R	\$82,890	8/4244	399/7100	339/4750	1880kg	216	5.5	12.7	177	330	19.8	+ Striking, accomplished GT - Doesn't spike the pulse like an Aston or 911
Maserati GranTurismo Sport	188 R	\$91,420	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1880kg	245	4.8	-	185	331	19.7	+ The best everyday GranTurismo yet - Starting to get long in the tooth
Maserati GranTurismo MC Stradale	193 R	\$110,740	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1800kg	256	4.5	-	188	360	18.2	+ Brilliant blend of road racer and GT - Gearbox takes a little getting used to
Mercedes-AMG C43 4Matic Coupe	233 R	\$47,605	8/2996	362/5500	383/2000	1660kg	222	4.7	-	155	178	36.2	+ Fast and instilled with a real sense of quality - Not enough emphasis on fun
Mercedes-AMG C63 S Coupe	229 R	\$69,205	8/3982	503/5500	516/1750	1725kg	296	3.9	-	155	200	24.8	+ Mouth-watering mechanical package; better than an M4 - Light steering
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Coupe	162 R	11-14	8/6208	451/6800	442/5000	1655kg	277	4.4	10.3	186	280	23.5	+ A proper two-door M3 rival - C63 saloon looks better
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Black Series	171 R	12-13	8/6208	510/6800	457/5200	1635kg	317	4.2	-	186	286	-	+ The C63 turned up to 11 - Too heavy, not as fiery as Black Series cars of old
Mercedes-Benz E400 4Matic Coupe	234 D	\$50,775	8/2996	328/5200	354/1600	1770kg	188	5.3	-	155	189	34.9	+ Good looks, classy cabin, relaxed performance - Not much here in the way of real thrills
Mercedes-AMG S63 Coupe	205 D	\$125,595	8/5461	571/5500	664/2250	1995kg	294	4.2	-	155	237	28.0	+ Thunderously fast S-class built for drivers - Lacks badge appeal of a Continental GT
Mercedes-AMG S65 Coupe	209 D	\$183,075	12/5980	621/4800	737/2300	2101kg	299	4.1	-	186	279	23.7	+ Almighty power, fabulous luxury - Nearly £60k more than the S63!
Mercedes-AMG GT	227 D	\$98,195	8/3982	456/6000	442/1600	1540kg	301	4.0	-	189	216	30.4	+ A true sports car that also does luxury - Takes time to reveal its talents
Mercedes-AMG GT S	216 R	\$110,495	8/3982	503/6250	479/1750	1570kg	326	3.8	-	193	219	30.1	+ Fantastic chassis, huge grip - Artificial steering feel; downshifts could be quicker
Mercedes-AMG GT R	232 R	\$143,245	8/3982	577/6250	516/1900	1555kg	377	3.6	-	198	259	24.8	+ Fun and blisteringly fast; a true rival for the 911 GT3 - Could prove too stiff for UK roads
Nissan 370Z	204 R	\$27,445	6/3696	323/7000	268/5200	1496kg	219	5.3	-	155	248	26.7	+ Quicker, leaner, keener than 350Z - Not quite a Cayman-killer
Nissan 370Z Nismo	209 R	\$37,585	6/3696	339/7400	274/5200	1496kg	230	5.2	-	155	248	26.6	+ Sharper looks, improved ride, extra thrills - Engine lacks sparkle
Nissan GT-R (2017MY)	230 R	\$79,995	6/3799	562/6800	470/3600	1752kg	326	2.7	-	196	275	24.0	+ More refinement, much improved interior, still fast - Feels a touch less alert
Nissan GT-R Track Edition (2017MY)	229 D	\$91,995	6/3799	562/6800	470/3600	1745kg	327	2.7	-	196	275	24.0	+ GT-R regains its sharpness - Getting pricey these days
Nissan GT-R Nismo (2017MY)	232 R	\$149,995	6/3799	592/6800	481/3600	1725kg	349	2.7	-	196	275	24.0	+ Incredibly focused - Still too firm to be at its best on UK roads
Nissan GT-R (2021MY-2016MY)	218 R	12-16	6/3799	542/6400	466/3200	1740kg	316	3.2	7.5	196	275	24.0	+ GT-R is quicker and better than ever - But costs over £20K more than its launch price
Nissan GT-R Track Edition (2016MY)	223 R	15-16	6/3799	542/6400	466/3200	1740kg	316	3.4	7.7	196	275	24.0	+ Recreates much of the Nismo's ability, without the rock-hard ride - Interior feels dated
Nissan GT-R Nismo (2014MY)	205 R	14-16	6/3799	592/6800	481/3200	1720kg	350	2.6	-	196	275	24.0	+ Manages to make regular GT-R feel imprecise - Compromised by super-firm suspension
Nissan Skyline GT-R (R34)	196 R	99-02	6/2568	276/7000	289/4400	1560kg	180	4.7	12.5	165	-	20.1	+ Big, brutal, and great fun - Needs more than the standard 276bhp
Peugeot RCZ R	209 R	\$32,250	4/1958	266/6000	243/1900	1280kg	211	5.9	-	155	145	44.8	+ Rewarding and highly effective when fully lit - Dated cabin, steering lacks feel
Porsche 718 Cayman	229 D	\$39,878	4/1988	269/6500	280/1950	1335kg	225	5.1	-	170	168	47.1	+ Chassis remains a dream - Engine feels strangled and sounds horribly harsh
Porsche 718 Cayman S	230 R	\$48,843	4/2497	345/6500	310/1900	1355kg	259	4.4	-	177	184	26.4	+ Faster and better to drive than ever - Turbo four-cylinder is utterly charmless
Porsche Cayman S (981)	202 R	13-16	6/3436	321/7400	273/4500	1320kg	247	4.5	10.5	175	206	32.1	+ The Cayman comes of age - Erm...
Porsche Cayman GTS (981)	219 F	14-16	6/3436	335/7400	280/4750	1345kg	253	4.9	-	177	211	31.4	+ Tweaks improve an already sublime package - Slightly 'aftermarket' looks
Porsche Cayman GT4 (981)	221 R	15-16	6/3800	380/7400	310/4750	1340kg	288	4.4	-	183	238	27.4	+ evo Car of the Year 2015 (even though the 991 GT3 RS was there!) - Second-hand prices
Porsche Cayman S (987)	231 F	05-13	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1350kg	237	5.2	-	172	223	29.7	+ Still want that 911? - Yeah, us too
Porsche Cayman R (987)	158 R	11-13	6/3436	325/7400	273/4750	1295kg	255	4.7	-	175	228	29.1	+ Total handling excellence - Styling additions not to all tastes
Porsche 911 Carrera (991.2)	218 R	\$76,412	6/2981	365/6500	332/1700	1430kg	259	4.6	-	183	190	34.0	+ Forced induction hasn't ruined the Carrera - Purists won't be happy
Porsche 911 Carrera S (991.2)	217 R	\$85,857	6/2981	414/6500	369/1700	1440kg	292	4.3	-	191	199	32.5	+ Blindingly fast - You'll want the sports exhaust
Porsche 911 Carrera GTS (991.2)	233 D	\$94,316	6/2981	444/6500	406/2150	1450kg	311	4.1	-	193	212	30.1	+ Everything a 911 should be - But only in rear-drive coupe form
Porsche 911 Carrera S (991.1)	201 R	12-15	6/3800	394/7400	324/5600	1415kg	283	4.3	9.5	188	223	29.7	+ A Carrera with supercar pace - Electric steering robs it of some tactility
Porsche 911 Carrera 4S (991.1)	179 R	13-15	6/3800	394/7400	324/5600	1465kg	273	4.5	-	185	233	28.5	+ More satisfying than rear-drive 991.1 Carreras - Choose your spec carefully
Porsche 911 Carrera 4 GTS (991.1)	208 D	15	6/3800	424/7500	324/5750	1470kg	293	4.4	-	189	233	28.5	+ The highlight of the 991.1 Carrera line-up - Pricey for a Carrera
Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.2)	121 R	08-11	6/3800	380/6500	310/4400	1425kg	271	4.7	-	188	242	27.4	+ Poise, precision, blinding pace - Feels a bit clinical
Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.1)	070 R	04-08	6/3824	350/6600	295/4600	1420kg	246	4.6	10.9	182	-	24.5	+ evo Car of the Year 2004; like a junior GT3 - Tech overload?
Porsche 911 GT3 (991)	206 R	\$100,540	6/3799	468/8250	324/6250	1430kg	333	3.5	-	196	289	23.0	+ evo Car of the Year 2013 - At its best at licence-troubling speeds
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (991)	223 R	\$131,296	6/3996	493/8250	339/6250	1420kg	353	3.0	7.1	193	296	22.2	+ Sensationally good to drive - They won't all be painted Ultra Violet
Porsche 911 R (991)	229 R	\$136,901	6/3996	493/8250	339/6250	1370kg	366	3.8	-	200	308	21.2	+ evo Car of the Year 2016 - Limited availability
Porsche 911 GT3 (997.2)	182 R	09-11	6/3797	429/7600	317/6250	1395kg	312	4.2	9.2	194	303	22.1	+ Even better than the car it replaced - Give us a minute...
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (3.8, 997.2)	200 R	10-11	6/3797	444/7900	317/6750	1370kg	329	4.0	-	193	314	-	+ Our favourite car from the first 200 issues of evo - For people like us, nothing
Porsche 911 GT3 RS 4.0 (997.2)	187 R	11-12	6/3996	493/8250	339/5750	1360kg	368	3.8	-	193	326	-	+ evo Car of the Year 2011 - Unforgiving on-road ride; crazy used prices
Porsche 911 GT3 (997.1)	182 R	07-09	6/3600	409/7600	298/5500	1395kg	298	4.3	9.4	192	-	-	+ Runner-up evo Car of the Year 2006 - Ferrari 599 GTBs
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (997.1)	105 R	07-09	6/3600	409/7600	298/5500	1375kg	302	4.2	-	193	-	-	+ evo Car of the Year 2007 - A chunk more money than the brilliant GT3
Porsche 911 GT3 (996.2)	221 R	03-05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1380kg	272	4.3	9.2	190	-	-	+ evo Car of the Year 2003 - Chassis is a bit too track-focused for some roads
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (996.2)	068 R	03-05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1330kg	286	4.2	9.2	190	-	-	+ Track-biased version of the brilliant GT3 - Limited supply
Porsche 911 GT3 (996.1)	182 R	99	6/3600	360/7200	273/5000	1350kg	271	4.5	10.3	187	-	21.9	+ evo Car of the Year 1999 - Porsche didn't build enough
Radical RXC	189 R	\$94,500	6/3700	350/6750	320/4250	900kg	395	2.8	-	175	-	-	+ A real trackday weapon - Can't match the insanity of a Caterham 620R
Radical RXC Turbo	205 R	\$129,000	6/3496	454/6000	500/3600	940kg	491	2.6	-	185	-	-	+ Eats GT3s for breakfast - Might not feel special enough at this price
Radical RXC Turbo 500	209 D	\$143,400	6/3496	530/6100	481/5000	1100kg	490	2.6	6.8	185	-	-	+ Huge performance, intuitive adjustability, track ability - Compromised for road use
Radical RXC Turbo 500R	227 D	\$201,000	6/3496	600/6700	465/4200	1070kg	561	2.8	-	185	-	-	+ Immense accessible performance - Fit, finish and detailing lacks finesse at this price
Subaru BRZ	204 R	\$22,495	4/1998	197/7000	151/6400	1230kg	163	7.6	-	140	181	36.2	+ Fine chassis, great steering - Weak engine, not the slide-happy car they promised
Toyota GT86	234 R	\$22,495	4/1998	197/7000	151/6400	1240kg	161	6.9	16.5	140	181	36.2	+ More fun than its Subaru BRZ cousin - Same lack of torque, poor interior quality
VW Scirocco GT 2.0 TSI	155 R	\$26,125	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1369kg	158	6.5	-	153	139	47.1	+ Golf GTI price and performance - Interior lacks flair
VW Scirocco R	200 D	\$32,580	4/1984	276/6000	258/2500	1426kg	187	5.7	-	155	187	35.3	+ Great engine, grown-up dynamics - Perhaps a little too grown-up for some

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OUR CHOICE

McLaren 675LT. The 'long-tail' is the step forward we've been hoping for from McLaren's super-series cars, adding a real sense of involvement to the incredible pace that's been building since the 12C. In fact, the 675LT is so intense it might even make you question if you need a P1.



BEST OF THE REST

The Ferrari 488 GTB (left) has a stunning turbocharged engine and the chassis to exploit it. Lamborghini's Aventador offers true supercar drama, especially in Supercervo form, while the Pagani Huayra rivals it for theatre (albeit at four times the price) and was our joint 2012 **evo** Car of the Year.

	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	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	'05-'07	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-'12	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	234 R	£122,450	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-'15	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-'15	10/5204	542/8000	398/6500	1570kg	351	3.8	-	198	346	19.0	+ An R8 fit to take on the 458 and 12C - Firm ride may be too much for some	★★★★★
Audi R8 GT	169 F	'10-'12	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	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	'05-'11	16/7993	987/6000	922/2200	1950kg	521	2.8	5.8	253	596	11.4	+ Superbly engineered 4WD quad-turbo rocket - Er, lacks luggage space?	★★★★★
Bugatti Veyron 16.4 Super Sport	151 R	'10-'14	16/7993	1183/6400	1106/3000	1838kg	654	2.5	-	268	539	12.2	+ The world's fastest supercar - Limited to 258mph for us mere mortals	★★★★★
Bugatti EB110	078 R	'91-'95	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	'09-'13	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	'09-'15	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-'15	8/4497	597/9000	398/6000	1395kg	435	3.0	-	202+	275	23.9	+ <i>evo</i> Car of the Year 2014 - If you don't own a regular 458, nothing	★★★★★
Ferrari F430	163 R	'04-'10	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	'07-'10	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	'99-'04	8/3586	394/8500	275/4750	1390kg	288	4.5	9.0	183	-	17.0	+ Worthy successor to 355 - Not quite as involving as it should be	★★★★★
Ferrari 360 Challenge Stradale	068 R	'03-'04	8/3586	420/8500	275/4750	1280kg	333	4.1	-	186	-	-	+ 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	'06-'12	12/5999	611/7600	448/5600	1688kg	368	3.5	7.4	205	415	15.8	+ <i>evo</i> Car of the Year 2006 - Banks are getting harder to rob	★★★★★
Ferrari 599 GTO	161 R	'11-'12	12/5999	661/8250	457/6500	1605kg	418	3.4	-	208	-	-	+ One of the truly great Ferraris - Erm, the air con isn't very good	★★★★★
Ferrari 575M Fiorano Handling Pack	200 R	'02-'06	12/5748	508/7250	434/5250	1730kg	298	4.2	9.6	202	-	12.3	+ Fiorano pack makes 575 truly great - It should have been standard	★★★★★
Ferrari 550 Maranello	169 R	'97-'02	12/5474	485/7000	415/5000	1716kg	287	4.3	10.0	199	-	12.3	+ Everything - Nothing	★★★★★
Ferrari GTCC Lusso	225 D	£230,340	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-'15	12/6262	651/8000	504/6000	1880kg	347	3.7	-	208	360	15.4	+ Four seats and 4WD, but a proper Ferrari - Looks disdained opinion	★★★★★
Ferrari LaFerrari	203 R	'13-'15	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	'02-'04	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	'96-'97	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	'87-'92	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	'04-'06	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	£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	'92-'94	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	c£1.09m	8/5032	1124/7100	885/2700	1435kg	796	2.8	-	273	-	-	+ As fast and exciting as your body can handle - It's Veyron money	★★★★★
Koenigsegg One:1	202 R	c£2.0m	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	'08-'13	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	'06-'08	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	'06-'11	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	'09-'11	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	'01-'06	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	'10-'12	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	'04-'05	12/5988	621/7500	481/5500	1445kg	437	3.8	-	205	-	-	+ Rarer than an Enzo - The Ferrari's better	★★★★☆
McLaren 540C	234 R	£126,000	8/3799	533/7500	398/3500	1311kg	413	3.5	-	199	258	25.5	+ An excellent 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	'14-'17	8/3799	641/7250	500/6000	1428kg	456	3.0	-	207	275	24.2	+ Better brakes, balance and looks than 12C; more power too - Which all comes at a price	★★★★★
McLaren 675LT	228 R	'15-'17	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	★★★★★
McLaren 675LT Spider	222 D	'16-'17	8/3799	666/7100	516/5500	1368kg	495	2.9	-	203	275	24.2	+ Spectacularly fast; involving, too - Might mess up your hair	★★★★★
McLaren 12C	228 R	'11-'14	8/3799	616/7500	442/3000	1434kg	435	3.1	-	207	279	24.2	+ Staggering performance, refinement - Engine noise can be grating	★★★★★
McLaren P1	228 R	'13-'15	8/3799	903/7500	664/4000	1490kg	616	2.8	-	217	194	34.0	+ Freakish breadth of ability - At its mind-bending best on track	★★★★★
McLaren F1	228 R	'94-'98	12/6064	627/7500	479/4000	1137kg	560	3.2	6.3	240+	-	-	+ Still the most single-minded supercar ever - There'll never be another	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG	159 R	'10-'15	8/6208	563/6800	479/4750	1620kg	335	4.1	8.4	197	308	21.4	+ Great engine and chassis (gullwing doors too!) - Slightly tardy gearbox	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG Black Series	204 R	'13-'15	8/6208	622/7400	468/5500	1550kg	408	3.6	-	196	321	20.6	+ Stunning engine, superb body control - Be careful on less-than-smooth roads...	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren	228 R	'03-'07	8/5439	617/6500	5									

TRACK TIMES

⊕ = new this month. **Red** denotes the car is the fastest in its class on that track.

ANGLESEY COASTAL CIRCUIT

📍 **LOCATION** Anglesey, UK
 📍 **GPS** 53.188372, -4.496385
 📍 **LENGTH** 1.55 miles



Car	Lap time	issue no.	YouTube
BAC Mono 2.5 (fastest sports car)	1:07.7	229	Yes
Radical RXC Turbo 500 (fastest coupe)	1:10.5	-	Yes
McLaren P1 (on Pirelli P Zero Trofeo R tyres) (fastest supercar)	1:11.2	200	Yes
Porsche 918 Spyder	1:12.4	200	Yes
McLaren P1	1:12.6	200	Yes
Ferrari 488 GTB	1:12.8	228	Yes
McLaren 675LT	1:12.8	228	Yes
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (991.1)	1:13.6	-	Yes
Porsche 911 Turbo S (991)	1:13.6	-	Yes
Ferrari 458 Speciale	1:14.2	198	Yes
McLaren 570S	1:14.5	-	Yes
Porsche 911 Turbo (991.1)	1:15.2	210	Yes
Aston Martin Vantage GT12	1:16.0	214	Yes
Nissan GT-R (2014MY)	1:16.9	210	Yes
Mercedes-AMG GT S	1:17.0	210	Yes
Porsche 911 Carrera (991.1)	1:17.8	199	Yes
Porsche Cayman (981)	1:18.9	209	-
Aston Martin N430	1:19.1	210	-
Lotus Exige S (V6)	1:19.1	209	-
SEAT Leon Cupra 280 Sub8 (fastest hot hatch)	1:19.1	212	Yes
BMW M4	1:19.2	199	Yes
BMW i8	1:19.4	210	-
Honda Civic Type R (FK2)	1:19.5	212	-
Renaultsport Mégane Trophy 275	1:19.6	212	-
BMW M5 Competition Pack (F10M) (fastest saloon)	1:19.7	-	Yes
Audi 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 Exige S (V6)	1:04.4	177	-
Porsche 911 Carrera (991)	1:05.1	177	-
Chevrolet Camaro Z/28	1:05.1	220	Yes
Porsche 911 GT3 (997)	1:05.2	-	Yes
Porsche Boxster S (981)	1:05.5	177	-
Porsche Cayman GTS (981)	1:05.5	-	Yes
Porsche Cayman S (981)	1:05.5	189	-
Caterham Seven 420R	1:05.7	220	Yes
Jaguar F-type S Convertible	1:06.5	-	Yes
Vuhi 05	1:06.5	220	Yes
Zenos E10 S	1:06.6	214	-
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Black Series	1:06.9	177	-
Renaultsport Mégane 275 Trophy-R (fastest hot hatch)	1:07.3	205	Yes
SEAT Leon Cupra 280 Sub8	1:07.6	220	-
BMW M135i	1:07.7	177	-
Porsche Cayman (981)	1:07.7	-	Yes
BMW M235i	1:08.7	-	Yes
Mini John Cooper Works GP (R56)	1:08.7	181	-
Renaultsport Mégane R26.R	1:08.9	181	-
Ford Focus RS500	1:09.4	181	-
VW Golf GTI Performance Pack (Mk7)	1:10.3	192	-
Toyota GT86	1:12.8	177	-

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Friday 7 July, 3.30pm

Friday 1 September, 3.30pm

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