













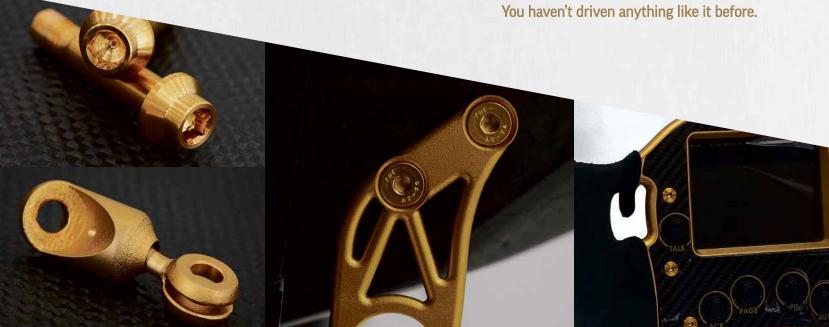
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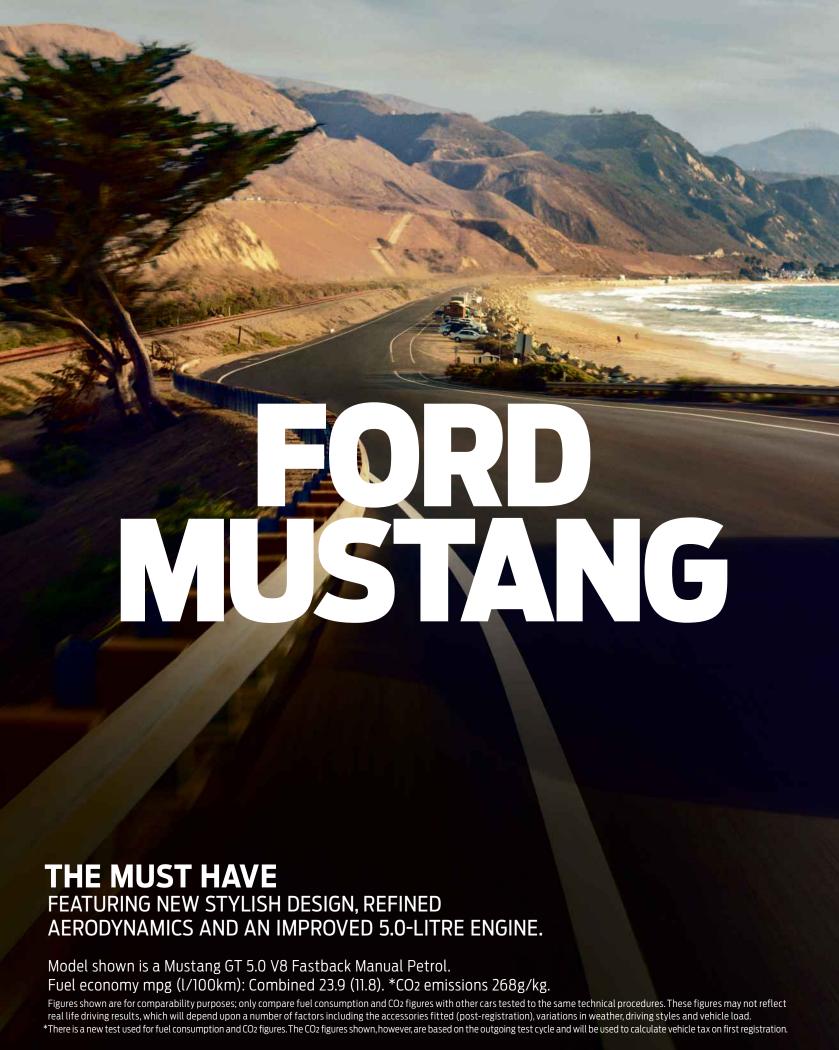
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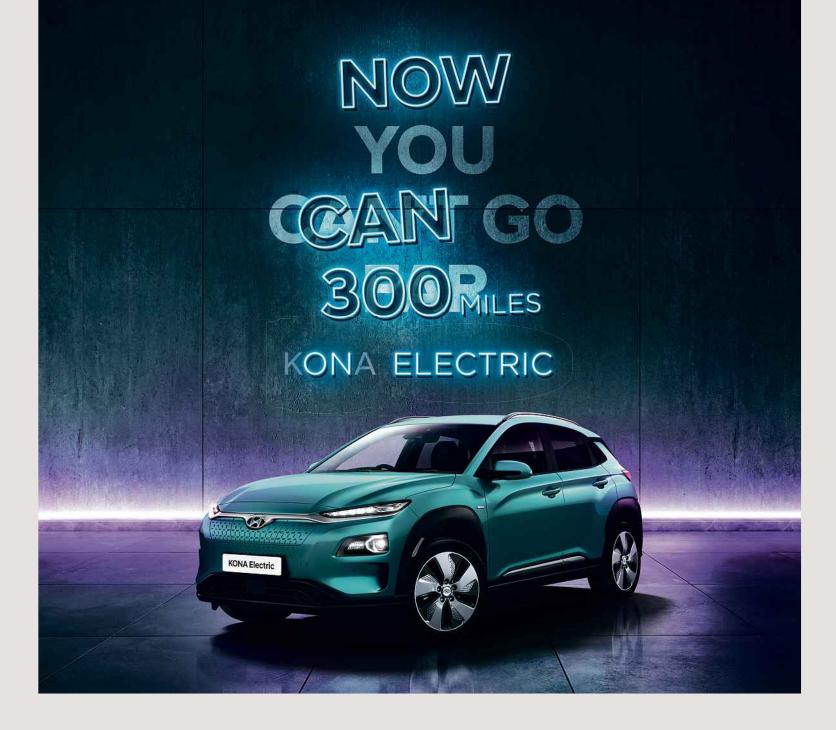
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Ed speak



THE BEST DRIVER RACES THE BEST CAR. YOU MIGHT

have seen this quoted in press reports and across social media after Lewis Hamilton recorded the most Formula 1 race victories in history. Naturally it sparked the tiresome debate that Hamilton's achievement was down to the car rather than his ability behind the wheel.

Hamilton is undoubtedly in the best car, but he has also been instrumental in making the Mercedes an unbeatable car. Technology may dictate the motorsport rules but you still need a driver to work with an engineering team to determine what does and doesn't work. And to also make those split-second decisions when they are three

abreast heading into turn one.

But to denounce any driver's achievement and put it all down to the car they have negotiated their way to race is a level of naivety that's hard to comprehend. If winning in a Mercedes is so easy, why does Toto Wolff ask Daimler to send a cheque for \$54million to Hamilton each year? Surely you'd pluck a driver willing to pay you for the opportunity to be a six-time world champion, wouldn't you? After all, there are plenty out there who think they could match Hamilton's achievements given the same opportunities judging by the noise created each time he breaks another record.

And that's the issue. Very few of us are in the position to know what it takes to be a professional sportsperson, even fewer will have the opportunity. Yet there are many who instantly dismiss some frankly staggering personal sporting achievements on the grounds it wasn't all down to them. But isn't that true of all successful athletes? They rise to the top of their chosen game because someone at sometime saw something special in them and invested time, money and resources in making them the best of the best.

From athletics to football, cycling to sailing, cricket to rugby, every person competing at the top level of any sport is doing so because they are part of a team, both on and off the field. Hamilton wasn't the only driver to have been given the opportunity he was by Mercedes and McLaren at the beginning of his career, but it's safe to say he grasped that opportunity tighter than any and has been instrumental in building a team that's enabled him to make history we are unlikely to witness again in F1.

Stuart Gallagher, Editor @stuartg917

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The fuel consumption or electric range achieved, and CO2 produced (where applicable), in real world conditions will depend upon a number of factors including, but not limited to: the accessories fitted (pre and post registration); the starting charge of the battery (electric only); variations in weather; driving styles and vehicle load. The all-new e-208 & e-2008 are battery electric vehicles requiring mains electricity for charging. The WLTP (Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicles Test Procedure) is used to measure fuel consumption, electric range and CO2 figures. Figures shown are for comparison purposes and should only be compared to the fuel consumption, electric range and CO2 values of other cars tested to the same technical standard. Information correct at time of going to print. Visit peugeot.co.uk for latest pricing and specification details.



by ANTONY INGRAM PHOTOGRAPHY by MATT HOWELL

Cupra Leon e-Hybrid

The first Cupra Leon is here – and it's a plug-in hybrid.

Can it convince hot hatch fans to embrace the batteries?

EMEMBER THE HONDA CR-Z? SURE YOU do; it was the small coupe that looked like a sci-fi CRX and thrummed along courtesy of a 1.5-litre four-cylinder, with a manual gearbox and a snip of hybrid assistance. Sales were never particularly high and the reviews were gently positive rather than glowing, but it really seemed like the future for a bit.

Inevitably, Honda pulled the plug on the slowselling hybrid in the UK in 2013, and the factory in Suzuka stopped building them for the domestic market in 2016. This was also the year that Bowie, Ali and Prince left this mortal plane, and if there's any silver lining to losing so many of the greats that year it's that they've not had to endure the coronavirus pandemic, TikTok, and perhaps worst of all, the car industry's continuing inability to create a truly engaging, affordable hybrid.

Why is this still the case? The CR-Z was a perfectly good jumping-off point even if it didn't set the world alight itself. It looked neat, the electric motor sandwiched between the engine and gearbox put a spring in its step, the manual shift was typically Honda-snappy and it'd do 40mpg-plus even on a bad day. All it needed was a bit of development – less weight, even more





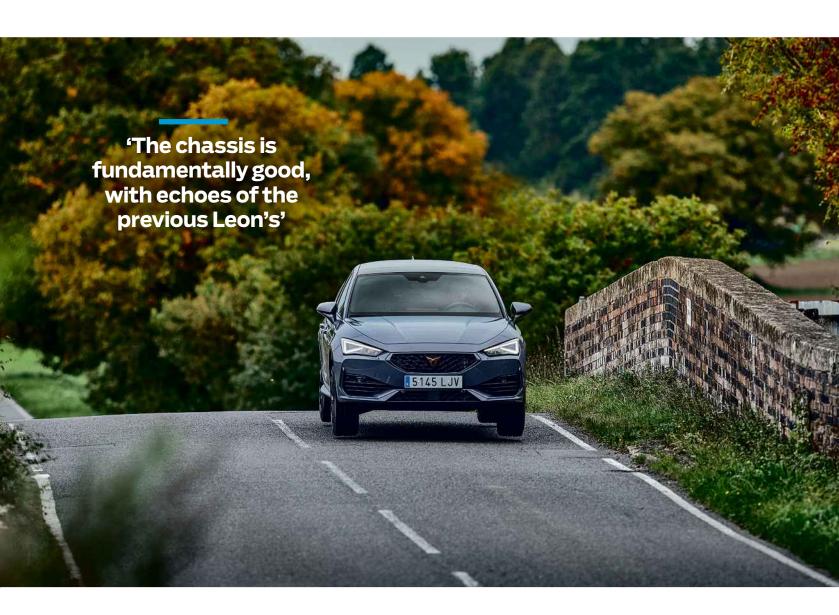
pep, a little less cost. But pickings have not been rich, unless you are, in which case i8s, NSXs and hypercars are your oysters.

Volkswagen tried to redress the balance in 2014 with the Golf GTE. Styled like a bluescale GTI and motivated by a 1.4 TSI and electric motor combo it had the right look and feel. Until you drove it, when you couldn't really get away from the 1524kg kerb weight (248kg more than the GTI) and its effect on every aspect of the way the GTE behaved. It was lovely to knock around in day-to-day – what Mk7 Golf wasn't? – but the reality was more of a Volkswagen Prius than a truly sporty hybrid.

Only VW and Audi offered their group's plug-in set-up in its first generation, but this time around Skoda and SEAT are in on the act too. Well, Skoda and Cupra, now that SEAT's sporty badge has been spun off into its own bronze-tinted brand. And in the Leon e-Hybrid you see here you'll find the latest iteration of the drivetrain that powered those GTEs.

It comprises a 1.4-litre direct-injected and turbocharged four-cylinder capable of 148bhp and 184lb ft of torque, snuggled up to a 113bhp, 243lb ft electric motor fed by a 12.8kWh lithium-ion battery pack. As ever, you can't just tot up the individual outputs to arrive at peak figures, as internal combustion engines and electric motors work in





Above left: e-Hybrid has an ungainly amount of air in its wheelarches for a hot hatch. Left: interior favours touchscreens over physical buttons. Right: bronze details abound, including the faux tailpipe finishers

very different ways, so Cupra quotes combined maximums of 242bhp and 295lb ft, with no specified engine or motor speed for either.

Incidentally, that power output will be equalled by the conventional 2-litre, EA888-powered Leon also joining the range, which gets a seven-speed dual-clutch transmission while the e-Hybrid's is a six-speed. Both cars are front-wheel drive, as will be the punchier 297bhp variant due soon, while Leon ST (estate) buyers will have the option of a 306bhp motor and Haldex all-wheel drive, much like last time around.

It's the hybrid you see here though, whose tax-friendly CO2 rating of around 32g/km (an exact figure is yet to be confirmed) and GTI-matching performance will no doubt be appealing to customers squeezed out of more conventional hot hatches by ever-escalating costs. With a claimed EV-mode range of 32 miles there's also enough juice to cover the average commute, provided you have somewhere to charge it each day. Cupra quotes a 1596kg kerb weight, so if you want to make the



most of the car and give that weight a purpose, you really should try to plug it in.

The need to stash a battery has had an unfortunate effect on the car's styling too. The latest Leon isn't unattractive, and the combination of grev paintwork ('It looks like a binbag,' says evo art editor Rich Browne) and copper detailing is down to personal taste. But it also looks like someone at Cupra specified the springs from the Formentor crossover, because the Leon sits a good couple of inches too high for a proper hot hatch stance, while its conventionally powered counterparts look much more hunkered-down. No doubt companies like Abt will make plenty of

money from lowering kits over the next few years.

They might struggle to apply their touch to the cabin, which has more copper/bronze accents, and a vaguely Lamborghini look to the shape of certain surfaces, with hexagonal vents and an appealing LED-lit sweep from the door cards around the dashboard at the base of the windscreen. Like its MOB stablemates there's an emphasis on digital information, with a TFT instrument cluster and a touchscreen atop the dash, but with minimal physical controls Cupra has gone with Golf-style flash over Audi and Skoda's more usable, slightly more button-heavy interpretation.

The seats and wheel are both good to use, but other elements not so much. Exhibit A is the Porsche 992-style gearshift nub in the centre console, fashioned from even nastier plastic. The gearshift paddles behind the wheel are formed from a similar substance and are no better on the fingertips. That's if your fingertips can even reach them, as they're set far enough around to be a stretch for mine, as if Cupra would rather you didn't bother changing gears yourself (prescient, as it turns out). Maybe that's something for those tuners to fix. The wheel itself is where all the buttons from the centre console seem to have ended up, though happily these include dedicated plastic peninsulas

Driven







for the starter and driving mode buttons, both of which can require a bit of hunting for these days.

Switching on the car doesn't necessarily mean starting the engine in a hybrid, and even without a full charge your first few movements will likely be silent. The sensation never really gets old, and compared to the rowdy cold-start procedures of some rivals there's less to irritate the neighbours too. With a full box of electrons there's enough juice for a real-world 20 miles in EV mode alone, but predictably I'm one of those people who has no choice but to park on a street nowhere near any kind of power outlet. Since I also didn't fancy going to a motorway services just to occupy a charger space that someone with a full battery electric vehicle might actually need to use to continue their journey, the car functioned as a regular hybrid for most of its week with us, lugging around an empty battery underneath it like a pregnant cat.

The Cupra doesn't feel entirely happy with its combination of engine and motor. The latter generates plenty of twist, but its power figure is pretty puny for a 1.6-ton car, so EV-only sprints are relatively gentle. It also seems easily befuddled when asked to transition between electric and combustion power under harder acceleration, like there's an overworked switchboard operator under the bonnet attempting to cross half a dozen wires to make things go. In more powerful hybrids the brief wait for combustion to kick in is usually masked by quickthinking electric step-off, but in the time it takes the Leon to wake up, the average dual-clutch hot hatch would already have covered several car lengths.

It's confusing in other ways too. In time you'd get used to the way regen cleverly kicks in to bring you down from the national speed limit to a 30mph zone at the perfect time, but the way you're not

always sure whether the car will drag or coast is an inconsistency that takes some adapting to. If you have the temerity to switch to Sport or Cupra mode in this hot hatchback, an action that puts the transmission in Sport, you'll also get regular visual warnings that occupy the entire instrument display suggesting you should maybe pop the gearbox back into Normal to save fuel.

The regen does weird things with brake feel, lane keep assist kicks in every time you restart the car (and after switching it off, it resets your instrument display, like one of those seats in three-door cars that never returns to the right place when you let someone in the back), and the EV torque tugs unpredictably at the steering out of junctions. It's all just bizarrely disjointed, like Cupra couldn't decide whether the car should be a hot hatch or a Prius rival.

Thankfully things improve if you start ignoring the

inconsistencies and adopt a regular hot hatch driving style. There's little notable difference between the car's behaviour in Normal, Sport and Cupra modes, so you might as well use Cupra all the time. This also gets the most audible piped-in sounds – a curious but not unappealing five-cylinder-style growl that actually continues under throttle even if the engine is off – and regeneration when lifting off that is stronger and applied more predictably.

Slowing down is spoiled somewhat by a complete absence of engine or exhaust noise on the overrun. This also means there's no audible clue to whether you're attempting a tight turn in second or fourth gear, which can lead to an awkward moment when you try to accelerate out the other side. Given the current gear is represented by a tiny number hidden in the busy instrument cluster, you either have to memorise gearchanges or just leave it in auto.

A saving grace is that, much like the Golf GTI and Audi S3 we've recently tried, the Cupra has a fundamentally good chassis. Planted without being inert, it's blessed with smooth and consistent steering, good traction once the engine's calling the shots rather than the electric element muddying things, and brakes that feel better when they're operating under friction rather than regeneration.

It's nicely balanced too. While never quite hiding its bulk, there are echoes of the previous Leon here in the strong front-end bite and the manageable way in which the rear end arcs around to help you place the nose. The wide, 235-section Goodyear Eagle F1 SuperSport tyres are thankfully more performance than economy orientated and generate good grip, and the lofty ride height seems to benefit a generally pliant ride – albeit one occasionally spoiled by sideto-side rocking over certain surfaces, or thumps from

a 19-inch wheel troubling the suspension's limits.

However, the chassis, unfortunately, is not enough to recommend the Cupra Leon e-Hybrid. It's a car infused with the confusing inconsistency that seems to stem from the Cupra brand itself: whether to be sporty and youthful like Cupras of old, or sophisticated and environmentally conscious to reflect the way the industry as a whole is moving. In the meantime, buy a Prius if you want an excellent hybrid car, and maybe stick around for the conventionally motivated Cupra Leons if you fancy a proper hot hatch.

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1395cc, turbocharged, plus 85kW electric motor

Power 242bhp Torque 295lb ft Weight 1596kg (154bhp/ton)





HIS IS NOT A DRIVER'S CAR, DESPITE it being the only Rolls-Royce saloon designed and engineered 'for being driven in' and 'for driving', but the new Ghost is the nearest Goodwood's only car manufacturer gets to building such a thing.

And quite a thing it is too, at over five and a half metres long, more than two metres wide and crushing the scales at 2490kg, although compared to some luxury SUVs that last figure doesn't sound that bad. Well, obviously it is an obscene weight for a car, but considering what goes into constructing a Rolls-Royce Ghost you might expect that number to start with a three. I mean, there's 100kg of sound insulation alone...

This new Ghost is the first 'post-opulence' Rolls-Royce – a philosophy that matches the requirements of RR customers who have a desire to be less conspicuous and overt... by buying a 5.5-metre long, near 2.5-ton saloon car that set

them back £208,000 before local taxes and selecting their preferred mix of leather and lambswool. Just when you thought the world couldn't get any stranger.

The latest Ghost is built on a new modular aluminium architecture that allows for the dimensions to be adapted to suit the vehicle that it's underpinning, from Phantom to Cullinan. And while the strands of BMW DNA are no longer so prevalent in what was Rolls-Royce's best-selling car (a title the aforementioned SUV is likely to claim sooner rather than later), the 6.75-litre V12, now stamped with a Rolls-Royce part number even though it isn't cast in the Sussex countryside, still has a Munich twang to it.

From bumper to bumper this Ghost is an all-new design, the detailing less shouty, the shutline count reduced to an absolute minimum and none of them wider than a hair's breadth. But it remains a vast car, with a heft to its body

that from some angles gives the impression it's sinking into the surface beneath.

Its size doesn't diminish once you're driving it, either. You sit high behind the wheel and might even find yourself raising the seat a little higher still, so you can at least see the outer edges of the aluminium real estate that makes up the bonnet. Yet despite the cleaner design you still feel as conspicuous as you would sitting in a Caterham, roof down in the rain, trying to blend in to a morning commute on London's M25.

Suspending the new Ghost are air springs and adaptive dampers, the latter pre-set by Rolls-Royce with no options for further configuration by the driver. Not that you ever think twice about it, just as you also don't think twice about not being able to manually select any of the eight forward gears. Four-wheel drive is now joined by four-wheel steering, but it would be a stretch to suggest it sharpens the car's agility; rather it









makes it more manageable and manoeuvrable. There is also a 12V active anti-roll bar fitted to the multi-link rear axle that works with a frontmounted camera to react accordingly when a lump, bump or tiresome compression is detected.

All this engineering deserves acknowledgement for resulting in a vehicle that can be driven with all the ease and comfort of any mainstream luxury car but in surroundings that push refinement and luxury to another level. Yes, it feels ridiculously large for our roads when you're sitting up front (and even larger when you're in the rear), and in today's world of cast-iron body control there's more lean than you'd anticipate, but it doesn't distract or leave you hanging on. It just feels right, the Ghost remaining consistent and predictable as you guide it with the lightest of touches in blissful isolation from those around you. A Bentley Flying Spur is sharper, more direct and arguably as well appointed, but the car from



Crewe lacks the presence and sense of occasion of Goodwood's newest family member. The Ghost provides an incredibly grand way to arrive, although the journey is unlikely to be filed among your greatest driving memories.

The fitment of a mass damper to the doublewishbone front suspension is intended to minimise shocks over poor surfaces, but it still can't isolate you from all that mass being worked over beneath you. There's also a degree more tyre noise than you'd expect when travelling across coarse surfaces, and while wind noise doesn't penetrate the door and window seals you're still aware that a car of these proportions will never be truly silent when cutting a hole through the air.

It cuts that hole surprisingly quickly though, as you'd expect of a machine calling upon 627lb ft of torque at just 700rpm above its twin-turbo V12's 900rpm idle speed. And that V12 operates with an eerie silence and is accompanied by an automatic

Above: interior options include a wide range of leather colours (or combinations of colours) and high gloss or open pore veneers, and if you can't find a combination to suit your taste, you can always go bespoke...

transmission that delivers shifts as seamless as the powertrain in an electric car. Which begs the question: why isn't the Ghost electric? If today's Rolls-Royce customers operate in a postopulence world, surely this should also extend to them driving a post-ICE car?

Stuart Gallagher

Engine V12, 6749cc, twin-turbo Power 563bhp @ 5000rpm **Torque** 627lb ft @ 1600rpm **Weight** 2490kg (230bhp/ton) **0-62mph** 4.8sec **Top speed** 155mph (limited) Basic price £249,600

> Luxury and refinement unrivalled by others Still better to be driven in than to drive

> > evo rating ★★★★☆



T'S UNLIKELY VOLVO WAS TOP OF YOUR list to be the first to build a rival to the Tesla Model 3, but that's exactly what it has done with its Polestar 2, its first all-electric car. Built in China by Volvo's electric car offshoot Polestar, the 2 is based on the Swedish-built XC40, using the crossover's all-steel chassis, adding 150kW electric motors on the front and rear axles and installing a 78kWh battery pack in the transmission tunnel and under the rear seat.

Despite its Far East birthplace, the 2's design has a clear Scandinavian influence, which is no bad thing for attracting customers on the cusp of transitioning from an ICE car to an EV and who aren't bowled over by the designs that leave Franz von Holzhausen's sketch pad at Tesla. And as one Model 3-owning friend of **evo** pointed out: 'It's nice to see that the doors fit and the boot doesn't look like it will resemble a pond every time it rains.'

What strikes you about the Polestar 2 is how tall

it is (thanks to sitting on a platform designed for a crossover) and how heavy it looks in the body; you get a lot of real estate for your £46,900 – or £51,900 in the tested Performance spec – and, at 2048kg, a lot of weight, too. Hauling that weight is the equivalent of 402bhp and 487lb ft, the latter available from zero 'revs', and the resulting 199bhp per ton on a par with a Mégane 275 Trophy. Not that the hot hatch can match the Polestar for off-the-line shove, with that instant torque seeing the 2 reach 62mph in 4.7sec.

Like all electric cars, full-throttle applications result in instant forward propulsion in near absolute silence bar some tyre and wind noise, and whine from the motors. The 201kg-lighter Model 3 feels more sprightly and reacts with more vigour and violence, but Polestar hasn't gone for all-out YouTube views. Which is refreshing, because there's no more an uncomfortable experience than full-bore launches in an electric car.

But it does have that 402bhp, and in Performance trim is also equipped with dinner plate-sized Brembo brakes and, rather curiously, 20-way adjustable Öhlins dampers. So while the trafficlight grand prix wasn't top of Polestar's list, clearly there's some intention to appeal to the driver.

The fitment of Öhlins dampers has resulted in a great deal of chatter, although curiously only some of this has touched on the ride, which is truly, unacceptably awful. At times you think the springs and those fancy Öhlins have made way for batteries. There is no need for a car such as this to, firstly, have such a poor ride quality (Polestar has set the ride on our test car to what it considers 'standard') and, secondly, be fitted with 20-way adjustable dampers that even the PR said only three people would ever experiment with (him, a chassis specialist paid to do so and possibly an inquisitive journalist). For a car designed to segue motorists into 21st century mobility it feels at odds to bring with it a piece of









'Clearly there's some intention to appeal to the driver'

technology from the 20th century enjoyed only by those with very specific ride and handling needs for their very niche sports cars. If only Polestar's owners, Geely, also owned a company considered to be the world's number one for ride and handling that could help with the 2's set-up...

Away from the 2's ride, Polestar has blended ICE familiarity with EV convenience well. The interior is pure Volvo but with the added benefit of an infotainment system that works, although the seats aren't as comfortable as those in a Swedish-built product. The necessity to retain the

transmission tunnel for battery storage does mean the open cockpit and sense of space other EVs offer is absent, however. The autonomous systems you'd expect of an EV, such as active cruise control and the equivalent of Tesla's Autopilot, are all here, too. The former is better calibrated in the Polestar, the latter far smoother in operation in the Tesla.

If you fancy taking control yourself you'll find the 2 has plenty of grip and corners with a flatness that comes as no surprise considering how it thumps down the road. The artificial weight dialled in to the steering does an OK job of letting you know what's going on up front, but you make small adjustments late in a corner when your eyes, not the steering, tell you a little more or less lock is required. Those vast Brembos never feel like they will let you down and are neatly calibrated, with the configurable regen settings making the 2 a pretty good one-pedal car.

There's a refreshing lack of driver modes, not having a 'start' button will frustrate a few people Top left: front Brembo brakes part of £5000 optional Performance package. Top Right: ride quality is poor, not helped by the 20-way adjustable Öhlins dampers. **Above:** cabin is unmistakably Volvo in its design

making the switch to an EV – get in, select Drive and away you go – and it's a car that generates considerable nods of appreciation. A claimed 292 miles of range makes a nice headline, but the reality is closer to 200-230 miles. It's taken a while, and it's from an unlikely source, but finally there's a credible alternative to Tesla.

Stuart Gallagher

Motors 2 x 150kW Power 402bhp Torque 487lb ft Weight 2048kg (199bhp/ton)

0-62mph 4.7sec **Top speed** 127mph **Basic price** £51,900

It's an EV that doesn't look like it's melted in the microwave ☐ There's more to a performance car than straight-line speed

evo rating ★★★☆☆







I think the Ford is aurally more appealing. The Hyundai's delivery makes for a lively drive though, because although peak torque is a flat on the torque 'curve' – 203lb ft from 1750 to 4500rpm – the engine feels a bit more *fizz-bang!* than that, with a kick at 3000rpm, and that's fine because it's more exciting and the chassis can handle it thanks to the Torsen diff.

The steering is well weighted, reasonably direct and has linear responses, unlike the Fiesta's with its bright, enthusiastic pick-up off-centre. I don't mind this characteristic in the Ford because it makes the car feel alert and up for it right from the off, but the Hyundai doesn't need this because it comes good in the corners. You know you're in a small, tall car on lumpier surfaces, but the ride is good, and pushing on over such roads the i20 is calmer and better composed than the regular Fiesta ST, which starts to unravel dynamically.

Hyundai's N engineers worked hard to get the body strengthening they needed within the constraints of standard i20 bodyshell production. They've added welds at crucial load points, beefed up the front subframe mounting and, as on the i30 N, fitted a brace bar between the rear suspension turrets. Hyundai quotes a kerb weight of just under 1200kg, the same as the Fiesta.

The i20 N should have decent grip because



Above: 201bhp and 203lb ft 1.6-litre four is a peppedup version of the unit found in Kia's Ceed GT and Proceed GT. **Right:** steering wheel home to 'N' mode switches and a red button to engage rev-matching

the P Zeros have been tuned to suit the car. Carry ambitious speed into a tight corner, get on the throttle early and the i20 doesn't push a little wide with understeer as most front-drive hot hatches would. Instead the i20 N seems to tighten its line. This is the Torsen working its magic.

Because you're anticipating the front pushing wide, the fact that it doesn't makes it seem like it's actually tightened its line. In fact, the further you drive the i20 N, the more impressive the diff installation becomes. It seems that you get all the benefits – terrific traction and cornering grip and







accuracy of line - with none of the side effects. We have yet to try it in the wet, but in the dry there's no tug or weave under acceleration, even on crowned roads, and no steering corruption. There's just lots of positive drive, as opposed to the subtle but nonetheless restrictive interventions of ESC systems that manipulate brakes and throttle.

I wasn't sure what we would learn on the truncated version of the Nürburgring GP circuit, coming as it did after a drive of the revised i30 N. which now has 276bhp (up 5bhp on the old Performance version). It's a great fast hatch, the i30, but it felt a bit lost and inert on the wide track, whereas the i20 N felt brilliant, even though it has considerably less power.

In the pre-drive technical briefing there had been talk of 'corner carving', which sounded like marketing guff but is in fact a great description of what the i20 does. You pick your line, aim for your apex and the i20 turns willingly and you find yourself going for the throttle much earlier than expected. This only seems to help; the nose hooks up and goes exactly where you want, straight to the apex, every time. It feels born to do this, carving cleanly from apex to apex for the whole lap, hooked up and holding the line hard as all 201bhp and 203lb ft is deployed. It's terrific fun, so clean and accurate and positive, and flattering.

Everything else works too: the upsized brakes have power and bite, the shift of the beefed-up sixspeed gearbox feels light but drops home positively, the seats are supportive... You'll have gathered by now that it's an impressive bit of kit and will certainly give the Fiesta ST a hard time when it arrives next May. The one area where it hands an advantage to the Fiesta is that it's only available as a five-door, while you can get a three-door Fiesta. You could argue that the Ford is a better-looking car too.

Dynamically, though, the Hyundai ups the stakes. There's no definitive price yet, but expect it to offer good value, just like the i30 N. With the Torsen diff as standard, we reckon the i20 N will be priced at around £23k – between the stock Fiesta ST-2 (from £22,275) and the ST Performance Edition (£26,495). The latter doesn't have any more power but it does have the dynamic composure on B-roads that the standard ST lacks, and it's going to need it to see off the i20 N.

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1591cc, turbocharged Power 201bhp @ 5500-6000rpm **Torque** 203lb ft @ 1750-4500rpm **Weight** 1190kg (172bhp/ton) 0-62mph 6.7sec Top speed 143mph Basic price c£23,000 (est)

evo rating ★★★★

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NEWS, INTERVIEWS, TECH AND EVERY NEW CAR THAT MATTERS



Taxidermy: is the French performance car stuffed?

The French government is increasing its punitive taxes on cars based on their CO2 emissions, threatening to kill off the country's performance car sector as we know it

by STUART GALLAGHER



RANCE HAS TAKEN ANOTHER SWIPE at the performance car, with its alreadysevere CO2-based taxes in some cases more than doubling for 2021. The increases will result in a new Renault Mégane RS costing its first owner as much as €10,488 in CO2 tax on top of its €40.700 price tag.

These latest increases will most certainly kill off the hot hatch and the wider performance car sector as we know it in France, with the ramifications possibly impacting other key markets within Europe, too. With France essentially shutting its borders to current performance cars, this once strong market will no longer be able to support any business cases set out by manufacturers to produce performance derivatives of more mainstream models if they are powered by petrol alone. In a global market where the cost of sale is scrutinised down to the last penny or cent, making an argument for a highperformance model that needs to be a sales winner and not just a halo car just got harder now France is effectively out of the game.

In 2021 the rates kick in with a €50 tax on cars omitting 133g/km of CO2, rising to a maximum of €29,070 for 218g/km or more; it was initially going to be as high as €40,000 for cars producing 225g/km of CO2 - rising to €50,000 in 2022 - but a recent U-turn by the French government has seen the upper bands scrapped. For now at least.

The writing has been on the wall for a while, with Renault Sport slowly and quietly retreating from a sector it not only led in terms of innovation but also sales. The last hot Clio was barely lukewarm and the current Mégane RS, in pre-facelift guise at least, left us cold, although having set the bar so high in the past our expectations have always been above the norm for any Renault Sport product. France's emission-based taxation had already resulted in Hyundai stopping sales of the i30 N there last year, Toyota and Subaru withdrawing the GT86 and BRZ respectively in 2018, and Kia's Stinger never reaching the country. There are currently no plans

'THESE LATEST INCREASES WILL KILL OFF THE PERFORMANCE CAR SECTOR IN FRANCE'

for a replacement hot Clio in its current form (more below) and with the next Mégane heading down an electrified path a new Trophy feels like a wish too far.

Electrification is also the route Peugeot Sport is taking for its future models, starting with the 508 PSE hybrid, with its combined 355bhp peak coming from a 197bhp 1.6-litre turbocharged four-cylinder engine mated to two circa-110bhp electric motors, which allow it to avoid any CO2-based sales tax. Any next-gen 208 and 308 GTi models will utilise the same principle, which also means the hot hatch's biggest nemesis, weight, will have a field day.

Plug-in hybrid powertrains are now the preferred route for French manufacturers because if they enable the car to travel at least 50km (31 miles)

on electric power alone they are not subject to the CO2 tax, nor the new sliding-scale tax on weight to be introduced in 2022. This tax is one **evo** can get behind, however, for it punishes heavy cars by charging €10 for every kilo over 1800kg.

France's emissions taxes aren't aimed specifically at killing off the performance car – they also put a squeeze on older models that have hung on in a post WLTP world. However, it's a move that potentially endangers the advancements of 'right sizing' when it comes to engine selection, as it could lead to cars being fitted with inappropriate engines for their role, for example large saloon cars getting small, turbocharged four-cylinder engines that meet tax thresholds but end up working beyond

their maximum efficiency rates, when a largercapacity engine would require less energy to deliver the same performance. Also of concern is that France doesn't stop at new cars, with CO2-based tax scales applied to used cars too, taking into account their emissions and power output.

The approach taken by the French authorities is on the draconian side, although someone paying €29,070 in CO2 tax for a V8 Mustang in 2021 might have stronger words to use, but it will also fuel debate about whether similar penalties should be adopted by other countries. After all, if you want to drive people into zero-tailpipe-emissions vehicles, what better way than taxing them out of cars that produce emissions at street level?

EXAMPLE COSTS UNDER THE NEW FRENCH TAX SYSTEM

Model	Ford Fiesta ST	VW Golf GTI	Alpine A110	Porsche 911 Carrera	Mercedes-AMG E63	Audi RS4	Bentley Bentayga V8
CO2 (g/km)	138	169	163	233	265	220	302
Emissions tax	€170	€2918	€1901	€29,070	€29,070	€29,070	€29,070
Weight tax*	€0	€0	€0	€0	€750	€0	€6160

*applied from 2022

Alpine to replace Renault Sport

Hot Renault models to wear 'A' badges as Alpine copies Cupra and Abarth

RENAULT'S NEW CEO, LUCA de Meo, has wasted no time in implementing his tried and tested product strategy when it comes to the company's next generation of performance cars, with Alpine to take responsibility for its range of hot hatches, bringing an end to the Renault Sport engineering business controlling the performance models.

During his time at Fiat, de Meo resurrected the Abarth name to carry Fiat's 500 and 124 Spider to a performance car-orientated audience. More recently, while at SEAT, he turned Cupra, the former go-faster SEAT trim line, into a standalone performance brand.

Alpine has already been reconfigured within Renault as a new business under the control of the firm's Formula 1



Above: new A110 variants could be inspired by the Sports X concept and Cup racer

team boss, Cyril Abiteboul, and the F1 team will be rebranded Alpine from the 2021 season. Alpine will also return to the top tier of sportscar racing in 2021 with the name appearing on an Oreca chassis powered by a Gibson V8 and based on a current Rebellion Racing R-13, its performance balanced to compete in the LMH class.

De Meo is keen to stop Alpine's

current nostalgia trip and focus on how it can be relevant for the future, which will initially see the Alpine name appear on regular Renault models after they have gone through a bespoke R&D programme to provide them with a unique proposition. In light of the French government's taxes on CO2 and weight, expect any Alpine-badged Clio, Mégane or Captur (of course there was

going to be a small crossover in the mix) to feature at least a plug-in hybrid element to their powertrain.

It could also be good news for the A110, with de Meo claiming he wants the 'life cycle management' of Alpine's midengined sports car to mimic that of Porsche's 911, with different versions expanding the offering and appeal. A spider version would be the obvious starting point, with a possible next step being more stripped out and powerful variants mimicking the look of the Cup, GT and rally A110s. Don't write off an electric A110, either. De Meo has said this would require an outside partner to bring to fruition, which probably means Mate Rimac has already had a call from Paris.



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Speed freak

Bugatti Bolide takes the Chiron platform to the extreme. Does a crack at the Nürburgring track record beckon?

HE BUGATTI CHIRON HAS SPAWNED countless special editions since its launch, from the retro-rehash Centodieci to the record-breaking Super Sport 300+. Now Bugatti has taken things a step further by creating the Bolide, a track-orientated model that wraps a bare-bones, lightweight body around the Chiron's mighty W16 powertrain.

Beyond the marque's trademark horseshoe grille the result bears little resemblance to its road-going siblings. Sitting just 995mm tall, the design is intended to be reminiscent of the Bell X-1 aircraft in which, back in 1947, Captain Charles 'Chuck' Yeager became the first person to break the sound barrier. A complex, stacked wing set-up can be found at the rear, with a central fin mounted on the engine cover for increased stability, while mammoth 400-section Michelin slicks are also clear to see; for reference, the Chiron uses meagre 355-section rear rubber.

Still driving all four wheels is Bugatti's 8-litre quad-turbocharged W16, which on 110-octane racing fuel can now produce 1824bhp and 1364lb ft of torque – up 345bhp and 184lb ft over a standard Chiron – for a quoted 2.17sec 0-62mph time and top speed in excess of 310mph. The Bolide is also said to go from 0 to 249mph and back to rest in just 24.64sec, 6.84sec quicker than Koenigsegg's Regera.

To ensure the 16-cylinder engine can withstand the toils of a track session, Bugatti has optimised

its cooling and oil systems whilst fettling all four turbos to produce more boost at higher engine speeds. Three air-cooled oil coolers are employed to help keep the engine, transmission and differential within suitable operating temperatures, and there's a water pre-cooling system to give a helping hand.

The Bolide's real party piece is its 1250kg dry weight – astonishing when the powertrain weighs nearly 500kg alone. To streamline weight, air-to-air intercooling is utilised instead of water-to-air, while 3D-printed titanium components, a wound carbonfibre driveshaft, forged magnesium wheels and a stripped cabin all contribute too. Combine this weight figure with the Bolide's 1824bhp output, and you get an unrivalled 1483bhp-per-ton dry power-to-weight ratio.

Suspension is of a pushrod design with the horizontal dampers visible through apertures in the bonnet. Extreme aerodynamics were also high on the agenda, with a peak downforce rating of 1800kg on the rear axle and 800kg at the front at 199mph. A 'morphable outer skin' is also used for the roofmounted intake to reduce drag by ten per cent.

Bugatti hasn't decided if it will put the model into production, but it has claimed the Bolide will lap the Nürburgring Nordschleife in 5min 23.1sec – just seconds off the Porsche 919 Hybrid Evo's record time. It would certainly be fascinating to see if it could do it...





SPECIFICATION

Engine
Power
Torque
Weight (dry)
Power-to-weight (dry)
0-62mph
Top speed
Basic price

W16, 7993cc,quad-turbo
1824bhp @ 7000rpm
1364lb ft @ 2000-7025rpm
1250kg
1483bhp/ton
2.17sec
>310mph
TBC

Take a Bow

KTM adds an extra cross to its Bow with the track-only GTX

ROM ITS ORIGINS AS AN OPEN-TOP, road-legal rival to Caterhams and Ariels, the KTM X-Bow has now evolved into an extreme closed-cockoit track-only machine.

Called the X-Bow GTX, it uses the familiar carbonfibre-tub chassis engineered and built by Dallara in Italy, but from there the package gets significantly more serious with a 523bhp version of Audi's 2.5-litre turbocharged in-line fivecylinder engine and motorsport-derived drivetrain components. The extra performance from the engine – which produces 394bhp in Audi RS applications - comes from a new injection system, intake, wastegate, exhaust and ECU. No internals have been significantly changed. Torque peaks at 479lb ft and is sent to the rear wheels through a sixspeed sequential transmission with an electronic shift mechanism that helps strip 7kg from the package's weight. The clutch has a race compound, and there's a mechanical locking differential too. KTM has not released acceleration figures but says the car will reach 176mph.

The new bodywork is carbonfibre and is far more aerodynamically efficient than the bodies of the more open X-Bow models. It's also able to support more effective aero kit, which is dominated by a large top-mounted rear wing. There are no doors, so access to the cockpit is via a roof canopy that lifts up and forwards.

Hanging from the carbon tub are a set of

Sachs dampers, manually adjustable for rebound, compression and ride height. The coilover units are mounted in a traditional upright position on the rear axle, but as with all X-Bows are in a pushrod layout up front. Unfortunately, due to the new carbonfibre skin, they are no longer visible from outside.

The steering has been switched to a new EPAS system, with three weight settings available, while the traction control and anti-lock braking are also adjustable via a digital interface on the steering wheel. The interior is totally stripped down, with structural carbonfibre exposed throughout the cabin and a roll-cage beneath the canopy.

The braking package is made up of 378mm front discs with six-piston calipers, and a 355mm/four-pot combination at the rear. Five-lug lightweight racing wheels are standard, although centre-lock units are available as an option.

Arguably the most crucial figure on a track car is weight, which for the GTX sits at 1048kg – quite a lot more than rivals from Ariel and Caterham, but the KTM does benefit from an enclosed body and isn't too far behind in power-to-weight terms thanks to its extra horsepower.

At nearly £250,000 the X-Bow GTX is a very expensive toy though, and it also arrives at the same time as another high-end track-only proposition powered by Audi's five-cylinder engine. Turn the page to find out more...





SPECIFICATION

Engine

Power Torque Weight Power-to-weight

0-62mph Top speed Basic price In-line 5-cyl, 2480cc, turbocharged 520bhp @ n/a rpm 479lb ft @ n/a rpm 1048kg 504bhp/ton TBC 176mph c£250,000



Dutch delight

Donkervoort's featherweight track-only version of the JD70 arrives with 573bhp per ton... and a £214k price tag

UTCH BOUTIQUE SPORTS CAR manufacturer Donkervoort has revealed its most extreme model yet: the awkwardly named D8 GTO-JD70 R.

Designed to be a track-only version of the JD70 that was built to celebrate the 70th birthday of company boss Joop Donkervoort, the R, like all Donkervoorts, finds its origins in the Lotus Seven. and like Caterham, Donkervoort has created its own variation on the theme – but with a rather more eccentric twist.

The numbers are suitably mad, partly down to the Audi-sourced 2.5-litre in-line five-cylinder engine under the long, louvred bonnet. Producing 409bhp and 413lb ft of torque, the engine hasn't changed markedly from the units found in the RS3 and TT RS, but the 725kg car it's attached to here is rather different, being based on a tubularsteel chassis inherited from the Seven, but then wrapped in structural carbonfibre panels that give the car its distinctive looks but still those familiar proportions.

As a result, the JD70 R's power-to-weight ratio sits at a remarkable 573bhp per ton, 27bhp per ton more than the Ariel Atom 4. As you'd expect, performance is impressive, with 62mph arriving in 2.7sec and 124mph in 7.7sec. That 0-62mph time is a tenth of a second quicker than both said Atom and the Caterham Seven 620R can manage, while also being only a few tenths behind some of the fastest accelerating cars on sale.

Power is sent to the rear wheels via a new six-speed sequential transmission sourced from Ouaife, replacing the standard JD70's five-speed manual. The new transmission does yield a 15kg weight penalty, but it was rationalised as a worthy compromise considering the extra performance it would bring to the package on a circuit. The 'box is



Above: Donkervoort says the JD70 R has been built 'to embarrass other sports cars and their owners'

also capable of flat upshifts and there's an autoblip function in there too. Both the limited-slip differential and propshaft have been reinforced to suit. Suspension is double wishbones all-round, with new four-way mechanically adjustable dampers and bespoke coils fitted, giving the driver the ability to tailor the set-up to different tracks and surfaces. The anti-roll bars front and rear are also new adjustable units, and the bushes are stiffer than the road car's.

The braking hardware is identical to that of the standard JD70, consisting of 310mm front and 285mm rear wave-pattern discs, gripped by sixpiston Tarox calipers at the front and, optionally, at the rear too (four-piston items at the rear are standard). Pads and brake fluid are specific to the R. and the front brake bias is adjustable via a switch on the dash. There's also the option of a new Bosch Race ABS system, which is 12-way adjustable and allows the driver to dial in the precise amount of assistance he or she wants during the course of a session.

All this sits behind a set of forged Rays alloys (17-inch front, 18-inch rear), with carbonfibre wheels an option to further reduce unsprung weight. Donkervoort offers two different steering





CATERHAM 620R The high-performance Seven reinterpretation you think of first, the superb 620R tops Caterham's current range and, unlike the Donkervoort, can also be driven on the road.



ARIEL ATOM 4 Ariel's new-age British

lightweight remains a thrill-seeking missile in '4' form, replacing the shrill of a supercharger with a bigger turbo punch. Sounds like a compromise. It's not.



McLAREN 570S GT4

If you're going to drop big money on a track-only toy, why not buy an actual race car? The £34k saving over the GTO will also go some way to paying for the cost of trailering it to circuits.

racks, both now assisted with a racer-derived lightweight EPAS system. At its fastest the JD70 R's steering ratio is a darty 2.7:10.

You can make your own mind up about the way the D8 GTO-JD70R looks, but in a similar fashion to the Morgan Aero 8 it has that curious combination of a contemporary skin wrapped over a set of proportions dating back to the middle of the last century, which certainly ensures it won't go unnoticed.

So in the armed warfare between superlightweights, the Donkervoort hits hardest, and for the trackday enthusiast who has already had an Atom, a high-end Caterham and perhaps even a McLaren or two, the notion of a Lotus Seven reimagined for the 21st century and stuffed with one of Audi's finest five-cylinder engines makes for a captivating package.

That is, however, assuming you have very deep pockets. While Ariel's superb Atom 4 might sound like an expensive toy at £40,000, and the £54,000 Caterham 620R even more so, Donkervoort's latest and greatest — which remember is no longer road legal — will set you back around £214,000.

That sort of money more than gets you into not just a track car, but a race car too, in the form of McLaren's 570S GT4...

SPECIFICATION

Engine

turbocharge
Power 409bhp @ 58

Torque Weight

Power-to-weight 0-62mph

Top speed Basic price In-line 5-cyl, 2480cc, turbocharged 409bhp @ 5850-7000rpm 413lb ft @ 1750-6350rpm

725kg 573bhp/ton 2.7sec 174mph £214,000





OLKSWAGEN HAS BROUGHT BACK the Clubsport name for a highperformance, front-wheel-drive Golf GTI designed to tackle the Renault Mégane RS and Honda Civic Type R head-on. Sitting beneath the slightly more grown-up four-wheel-drive, 316bhp Golf R (unveiled after we went to press - visit evo.co.uk for details), the new Clubsport promises to be the most focused of all performance Golfs.

It packs an uprated version of the latest GTI's evo4-generation EA888 engine, with 296bhp and 295lb ft of torque thanks to a larger Garrett turbo and higher-pressure injection. This puts it 54bhp and 23lb ft ahead of the standard Mk8 GTI, and 10bhp and 15lb ft up on its closest equivalents from the previous generation Golf, the Mk7.5 TCR and Mk7 Clubsport Edition 40.

As with the aforementioned TCR, a manual gearbox will not be offered; instead the new



Clubsport will come only with a seven-speed DSG transmission. It has been given shorter ratios, though, and an electromechanical locking differential is standard, all helping to get the Clubsport to 62mph in 'under six seconds'. For reference, the regular GTI takes 6.3sec with DSG, 6.4sec with a manual 'box.

The Clubsport's chassis has also been through an overhaul, with VW's engineers setting up the front axle with increased camber, while the multi-link rear has picked up new control arms, wheel hubs, damper bearings and damper hydraulics. Spring rates have gone up by five per cent at the front and 15 at the rear. which should equate to a 'pointier' front end and a more mobile and adjustable tail.

The standard wheel size is 18 inches, but 19s are an option, as are 19-inch Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2s, which will measure 235/35 on all four corners; the standard tyre is Goodyear's new Eagle F1 SuperSport. Behind the wheels is an uprated brake package, with the front axle getting a pair of larger, 357mm drilled discs matched with two-piston calipers.

The 242bhp GTI's impressive showing (evo 279) bodes well for the Clubsport, but it'll need to be pretty special to unseat the Civic Type R at the head of the class (see page 74), let alone reach the dizzying brilliance of the last GTI to feature the Clubsport moniker, the superb Mk7 Clubsport S (see page 66).

WATCHES



Bamford G-Shock 5610

£149 bamfordlondon.com

Perhaps best known for its customised takes on luxury analogue watches, Bamford now offers this highly affordable twist on Casio's classic digital G-shock, complete with Bamford's signature blue accent.



Farer GMT Bezel Automatic

£1250 farer.com

Farer's latest offering features a GMT function, allowing the wearer to keep track of two time zones simultaneously. Three different designs are available, including this classic white-dial sports model.



Tissot Alpine On Board

£1895 tissotwatches.com

This new collaboration between Tissot and Alpine is called 'On Board' because the watch's main timekeeping module can be detached from the lugs and strap and affixed to an A110's dashboard using a special holder.



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cars are heavier mainly because they are so much bigger and packed full of tech and features.'

Aluminium weighs almost three times less than steel and is often touted as the metal for lightweight construction, so why do so many production cars with an aluminium chassis or monocoque not deliver an appreciable weight saving?

'In general, I would disagree,' says Fletcher. 'There is an appreciable weight difference in aluminium-construction vehicles, but it's not two-thirds. A competitive aluminium sports car monocoque is circa 200-250kg, in steel this would be 300-350kg. Although aluminium is a third of the density it is also a third of the stiffness modulus; the main advantage is gained and recovered through section modulus [linked to the physical size of a beam]. For high-volume cars these section sizes can compromise other vehicle attributes such as ingress/egress and vision angles.

The weight advantage, aluminium versus steel car bodies, is 30-40 per cent, he says, adding that this saving is then often used to increase content for the consumer rather than give a weight saving.

'You need to use the advantages of aluminium in the car's design,' says

not needed. It is also worth noting that an aluminium body, weighing around 200kg, is only a small part of a car's overall mass. There's no point making it lightweight if you then just hang heavy parts from it. A quote attributed to Colin Chapman resonated with me: "Lightweight design is more important than material." The Alpine A110 is a shining example of this approach, a ground-up design that focused on making the car lightweight. The achievement of this car, with a 1100kg kerb weight, should not be understated. It's a huge step.'

'Generally speaking, aluminium is not as strong or stiff as steel for an equivalent structural cross section,' says Vann. 'However, increase the size of the cross section and its strength and stiffness match a steel one whilst saving weight. Aluminium is more expensive and can be tricky and expensive to join and so tends to suit bigger, premium cars where cross sections can be bigger and the material cost borne by the price of the vehicle.

Several OEMs claim a 40 per cent body weight reduction, he says, but if the aluminium body of an A8 weighs 241kg, he calculates that a steel-bodied Audi A8 would be 100kg heavier. 'Noteworthy,' he adds, 'is that the 2018 A8 is about 200kg heavier than the 2002 A8 [both used aluminium], similar to the Ford Focus example.





This page, clockwise from above: GT4 race cars are showing the possibilities for natural fibres; Evija's one-piece carbonfibre monocoque is a Lotus first; BMW i3's structure is carbonfibre; Audi's A8 uses a mix of aluminum, steel, magnesium and carbon to cut weight; current Ford Focus is larger and heavier than 1999 original. Opposite and previous page: Alpine A110 keeps weight down thanks partly to an aluminium body and chassis





Carbonfibre is more increasingly common in production cars but mainly for addenda, yet BMW used it to make the structure of the i3 back in 2013. Why hasn't it been more widely adopted?

Put simply, cost,' says Fletcher. 'Carbon offers excellent lightweighting opportunities through its high strength, good specific stiffness and directional nature. You can achieve something like 50 per cent weight reduction versus steel. The issue is cost and scaling. F1-style autoclave processes are very expensive and only suitable for low-volume applications, like the Lotus Evija. With non-autoclave technologies tooling costs increase dramatically but the piece price drops, making them appropriate for higher-volume applications, but the raw material costs are still very high.' There is a point where vehicle price and production volume make carbon viable, he says, but it's narrow and very sensitive to volume changes.

'For mass production, composite-material

body panels must be made in about 60 seconds or less, precluding traditional hand lay-up,' says Vann. 'Shortening the manufacturing cycle time requires special tooling that combines heat and pressure, and that requires large investment by the car maker.' He says that producing the carbon substrate itself is energy-intensive, 'potentially creating lots of CO2 emission if green energy is not

used, which can undo the CO2 savings from using less fossil fuel to propel the vehicle over its lifetime'. Carbonfibre is also difficult to repair, he adds.

Motorsport has traditionally pioneered weightsaving techniques. Are there any currently employed that might find their way into production cars?



Tim Kearney, director of vehicle Integration at **Group Lotus:** 'There are lots, but they need to be implemented with care. Motorsport is a fantastic development environment but it has a singular focus: lap time. We need to adopt technologies with a more balanced attribute outlook. Our customers want cars that are quick but also quiet, efficient, comfortable and convenient. An area we follow closely from motorsport is systems integration, particularly battery integration to the vehicle structure.'

John McQuilliam, engineering director at Prodrive Composites: 'One interesting area is natural fibre-based composites. For instance, the regulations for GT4 require body parts that are not on the road car – spoilers and wings, for instance – be made with natural fibres. This has demonstrated that natural fibre composites can compete with traditional carbon and glassfibre.'

'The holistic thinking and aggressive lightweight targets for motorsport are things that could transfer to road cars,' says Pook. 'When a car gets heavy the

problem snowballs, as components need to get stronger, it gets heavier again, and so on.'

Given that batteries for EVs typically add 200-300kg, where are the weight savings that will offset this coming from?

'In the short to medium term BEVs cannot be lighter than a conventional ICE variant for equivalent power and range,' says Vann. There will be continued gains from multi-material bodies, he says, but short-term weight savings will come from the batteries too. 'Each year sees an increase in cell energy density and volumetric density, so for a given capacity the weight of battery cells reduces and the battery enclosure becomes smaller and lighter also. Medium term, a move to solid-state batteries will not only further increase energy density but may reduce the battery cooling required, reducing battery system cost, weight and size. Lastly, the ability to fast-charge batteries in ten minutes could also reduce most peoples' requirement for a large, heavy battery.'

'Integration,' says Kearney. 'Most current products are ICE vehicles adapted to EV. In the future we will see the propulsion components more fully integrated into vehicle structures, carrying load and providing primary structural reinforcement. There are also significant weight opportunities in advanced materials and architectures. We [Lotus] are leading an engineering partnership with UK government support to develop a next-generation lightweight Battery Electric Vehicle architecture.'

'As an EV has regen and puts the energy it used to get going back into the battery as you slow down, the overall mass is much less important,' says Pook. But he also thinks that while currently there isn't the need to take mass out of electric vehicles, this will change over time as people understand the impact of having so much material in a car, and the compromises it brings.

They will come to the realisation that they want them to drive better, he thinks. That's a hope we all share, I expect.



Shami Kalra

Watchmaker and car enthusiast

A childhood surrounded by German metal has influenced Shami Kalra's car choices, while a passion for motorsport has fuelled the meteoric rise of his Omologato watch brand

by STUART GALLAGHER

Y UNCLE WAS VERY INFLUENTIAL IN my life when it came to cars. He was a Mercedes-Benz dealer in the 1970s and when he came to visit he was in 450 SEL 6.9s, 280 SEs, the R107 SLs, all the cool stuff. This was the time when waiting lists ran into years, so he did well. Whenever he turned up in something new it was an event in our house. Everyone had Ford Cortinas and Consuls and all the usual stuff, but he'd turn up in these cool cars. It wasn't only Mercedes, he'd arrive in BMW 2002s and one of the first Mk1 Golf GTIs. He always had German cars around him, I guess that rubbed off on me.

It rubbed off on my father too, because we had a Golf when I was growing up and he bought himself a W124 230 E Mercedes when I was 17 and said he was going to buy me my first car. 'Great,' I thought. As a 17-year-old. What's more important? Then one morning he said, 'I've bought you your first car.' It was a 1758cc Austin Maxi automatic in what I can only describe as 1970s sh*t brown. I always wanted a VW Beetle, but this was a car and the start of my driving career.

It didn't hang around long and I quickly found a 1955 1200cc Beetle. It had a hole under the rear seat but generally it was in pretty good condition and I drove it everywhere for everything. I loved it.

I did some restoration work on it, had it resprayed and kept buying parts for it. It was a true first-love car. I couldn't get enough of it. Until one winter when it started leaking so much

I couldn't drive it anymore and swapped it for a 2CV. I loved the Citroën's quirkiness. It wasn't conformist, it was just really cool, and for two years I enjoyed every mile in it, but when I got a proper job and had to start commuting, it had to go and I bought a Golf.

I had adored my Beetle but my VW affiliation started with that Golf, and the 16 or 17 I had between 1988 and 1994. I couldn't get enough of them. I started with a 1.3 C and by the end progressed to the icon: a Mk2 'big bumper' eight-valve GTI. Naturally it was stolen, because it was the '90s and no hot hatch was safe, and this coincided with our first child being born so I went all grown-up and bought a Mercedes.

It was very comfortable and all the rest of it but my mind kept rolling back to those Beetle days and the evening when I was out with my younger brother driving nowhere in particular, as you do when you're 17, and we stopped at AFN Chiswick, the Porsche dealer, to look at the 911s and 928s parked inside.

It was midnight so the police stopped and asked what we were doing on the forecourt, explained how we would never be able to afford anything from here and to move on. It was my 'How dare you speak to me like that' moment. It always stuck in my mind and I had a wry smile the day I bought my first Porsche, a 987 Cayman S.

It was three months old, pretty much brand new and I just couldn't believe it was mine.









'DRIVING GIVES ME THE SAME **BUZZ TODAY'**

Porsches had been around the family at times - my uncle had a couple of 944s and my cousin had a 911, my neighbour a 930 - and I've loved the brand since that first day of Cayman ownership. I think I'm on number 15 now, everything from a Panamera to a Macan, and now, very fortunately. a 991-series 911 GT3. I'm also one of those owners who does the unthinkable and drives his cars, and it doesn't appear to have impacted its value.

To this day I regret selling my Cayman S. I loved that car and it's not helped that the owner is local to me and I still see it around. We were doing OK as a business and I didn't need to sell it, but we needed a new kitchen and various other things so it went. I don't think there's a better car than

a Cayman S if you want an everyday sports car. The chassis is absolutely brilliant.

A car I regret buying is another Porsche, a 944. It was so disappointing. Growing up in the '80s it was one of those aspirational dream cars. a proper, 'Wow, I have to have one of them,' And then I did and I just couldn't see the appeal. It didn't feel special enough, or feel like a genuine Porsche. I also didn't like my 1982 911 SC. It was rotten so I spent time and money restoring it, painting it duck-egg blue with orange Fuchs wheels and giving it a restomod before I even knew what that was. Someone paid me around £45,000 for it, and to this day I couldn't see the appeal, or rather the value these things reach. I'd rather have a nice 997 Carrera with a manual gearbox – it's modern enough to live with but has a hint of a retro look about it.

Before this Porsche love affair I bought a Series 1 Lotus Elise, and like my Cayman S I've regretted selling it to this day. When I sold the Cayman I had a GT3 too, so while the loss was hard to stomach I still had a Porsche in my life, but when I sold the Lotus, that was it. I had nothing to replace it with. I will have another one day, although I'm worried about the direction Lotus is going. I do wish they would find a way to bring an Elise to market for around £30.000.

Selling a car was also one of the biggest influences on my career. I was working as a designer, designing merchandise for automotive brands, and things were OK. Business was steady. But like all things, one day it wasn't and everything had to go. I was in my office staring at £9.61 in our bank account, with my wife asking what we were going to do. I didn't have an epiphany, but I did start playing in Photoshop with some motorsport liveries on watches, looked at a couple and thought, 'I'd buy that.' So Omologato was born on a Friday night. By the following Thursday we had sold £1000 of watches.

I had been a fan of motorsport since my teenage days. My dad had a meeting at a racetrack and brought me along. He had no interest in the sport but I was hooked. The



Far left: Kalra loved the Series 1 Elise he owned and vows to have another Lotus one day. Left: he isn't afraid to put miles on his GT3, and bitterly regrets selling his Cayman S (below)







noise, the excitement. I couldn't get enough of it. Then I got into karting but I was too late to do anything professionally, not that I had the money to get involved, but I was still addicted to watching it.

When I started Omologato it was out of necessity, but I never thought it would take me to those places I always dreamed of working. I started with two designs and a 30-day free trial for Shopify and this year we had Juan Pablo Montoya racing at Le Mans in a car supported by Omologato, and next year we'll be running in the Paris-Dakar, too. We're the official timekeeper at Monza and are under discussions with other circuits around the world to establish further partnerships. But with everything I do I have to maximise

the opportunities. I don't just want to sit back and see the logo on a car or at a circuit, I need to bring the relationship to life. It's what inspires our next designs and products.

This year has been tough because nothing can replace being at a motorsport event, but Omologato has had one of its best years and we haven't stopped planning and investing for 2021. One of the toughest parts is not being able to meet new people and make new relationships – these provide great inspiration. It's been just as hard not being able to get out and drive somewhere cool. Driving still gives me the same buzz today as it did when I passed my driving test and my father handed me the keys to that Austin Maxi. It always will.'

Above right: it's fair to say Kalra had a passion for Golfs – he owned more than a dozen during the late '80s and early '90s, including a 'big bumper' Mk2 GTI. Right: Kalra longed for a VW Beetle during his youth, and a 1955 1200cc example would be the second car he owned



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THIS MONTH

Richard Porter tackles more motoring definitions in the penultimate instalment of our automotive A to Z



V-angle

The relative positions of the cylinder banks in a V-format engine. Typically 90 degrees in a V8 and 60 degrees in a V6 for optimum balance, though there are many exceptions to the rule, such as 90 degree V6s, which usually betray a relationship to an existing V8 (or one that was intended to appear later, as in the case of the Peugeot-Renault-Volvo V6). Extra points for the flat-12 'boxer' engine in the Ferrari BB 512, which isn't a boxer at all because opposing cylinders share a crankpin so it is therefore a 180-degree V12. So there.

Engine format once used by Lancia and Ford, amongst others, before falling out of favour on account of being, in engineering terms, rough as arseholes.

- 1. Zany engine layout briefly flirted with by Volkswagen during the era when Ferdinand Piëch kept making them do mad engineering things just to prove they could. Swiftly abandoned because there seemed to be literally no point to it.
- 2. Flimsy piece of paper demonstrating that you are the registered keeper (but not necessarily the owner) of a car. Although you could say the same of a cat.

Ubiquitous but frequently unsatisfying engine format, especially in American cars of the '80s and '90s where it had some weird stated capacity like 4.1 liter and managed to make a lot of mooing noises while generating 107 horsepower.

V8

Frequently delightful engine format, capable of being a wet, lumpy slugger in some old American muscle car or a taut, modern zinger, as found in many modern Ferraris. Arguably the greatest engine format in history, though on borrowed time these days, sadly.

Unusual but amusing engine format, known for its fruity growling and thereby instantly increasing the appeal of any given car by about 200 per cent. e.g. Porsche Carrera GT, Audi R8, Lexus LFA, McLaren MP4/5.

The gov'nor of engine formats, appearing as silky magic under the bonnet of the Jaguar XJ12 and performing muscular choral music inside various Ferraris. Hearty and inherently balanced, but getting rarer by the minute. Sob.

Vacuum

Technically, a space devoid of content, though also used to refer to a space in which air pressure is lower than in the atmosphere, as found in the intake manifolds of cars and the

Above left: a V8, specifically the LT2 unit from a 2020 Corvette. **Below:** a V12, this one from AMG. **Bottom:** the V5 engine offered by VW between 1997 and 2006







domestic appliances you use as you fruitlessly attempt to get all the crumbs out from under the driver's seat.

Vague

Criticism applied to steering, gearshifts and car sales people's understanding of the products they're supposed to be selling.

Valve cap

Tiny plastic or metal air inlet protector, the loss of which is one of the most casually irksome things in car ownership.

Valve timing

Choreography of an engine's aspiration through the precise opening and closing regimes of the inlet and outlet valves into the combustion chambers, once fixed but now frequently variable to the benefit of efficiency. It might be assumed that Honda pioneered variable valve timing in road cars but Vauxhall was experimenting with a crude way to alter these characteristics as early as 1919 and the first production car with a variable system was the Alfa Spider 2000 of 1980.

Valve

Entry/exit mechanism of (most) internal combustion engines and a word rendered very exciting in the '80s when prefixed by the number 16.

Van

Panel sided commercial vehicle, the driver of which is coming through that gap whether you like it or not, mate.



Vanity plate

American expression for what in Britain is known as a 'twat reg'.

Variable

Word used to describe a number of automotive things including steering assistance, steering ratio, transmission, compression, spring rate, torque split, valve timing and the efforts of the BMW design department.

Vehicle

How police people refer to cars because in training college they all get taught to speak in that weird and slightly unnatural way, as if they've all spent too long with Ron Dennis.

Velour

Soft textile once considered the height of luxury when used as car upholstery, now rarely seen in new cars (possibly because Vauxhall used up all remaining supplies on the Senator).



Vent spews

Technical name for the tiny 'hairs' on new tyres that are the result of molten rubber making its way up the narrow air release pipes on the moulds during the production process. A better name would be 'pneubs'.

Ventilated discs

Disc brake design with a slotted gap between the inner and outer friction surfaces to allow heat to dissipate. First used on aircraft, as with most automotive innovations (except electric windows).

Venturi

An effect in which pressure reduces as a fluid flows through a restricted section of pipe, as discovered by Italian physicist Giovanni Battista Venturi. Not to be confused with the Venturi Atlantique, which was not 'discovered' by anyone, especially those in the market for a mid-engined sports car.

Any car made before 1905. Not popular on the classic scene because they're hard to relate to unless you're 150 years old and because anyone who drives one looks permanently cold and tense.

VIN

Vehicle Identification Number. Unique ID that identifies when and where a car was made, and by who. Saying 'VIN number' is a textbook example of RAS (Redundant Acronym Syndrome) syndrome. See also: 'PIN number'.



Viscosity

A liquid's resistance to flow or, in simple terms, its thickness. So water is not very viscous at all, whereas runny honey would be, like, 25W-70.

Viscous coupling

Vehicle transmission component that transfers torque through a fluid, often used in the centre differential of four-wheel-drive cars. Here a difference in speeds between front and rear axles causes the corresponding plates inside the diff to turn at different speeds, rapidly heating the surrounding fluid and making it more viscous, thereby permitting it to transfer torque by bringing the speeds of the opposing plates closer together. Not to be confused with a vicious coupling, e.g. the marriage of Johnny Depp and Amber Heard if some of those things that came out in court are to be believed.

Voice activation

Feature that never works quite as well as you'd hope. I said, feature that never works quite as well as you'd hope. FEATURE. THAT. NEVER, WORKS, OUITE, AS, WELL. AS. YOU'D... Oh, forget it. Wait a sec; why are you calling my brother?

Volume

Of stereos and boots and cars made in significant quantities (e.g. 1980s Porsche 911s, not that you'd know it from the second-hand prices).



VR6

Clever but strange 'in-line V' engine developed by Volkswagen in the '90s and used to delightful/disappointing effect in the Corrado and Mk3 Golf respectively.

Vulcanise

To change the characteristics of rubber by giving it to the actor Leonard Nimoy.

Nutty VW Group engine format, obscure even by their standards and fitted only to one model for a short period of time, after which it was realised that no one particularly wanted a Passat with a 4-litre engine and the whole thing was quietly dropped.

Less obscure engine format, favoured in recent years only by the VW Group (who else?). Best



Clockwise from above left: a Wankel rotary engine from, you guessed it, Mazda's RX-8; the W12 engine from the Volkswagen Group powered Spyker's C12 supercar; and the W16 quad-turbo engine fitted in Bugatti's Chiron

known for its work in Bentleys, but also fitted in VW's Phaeton W12 and Spyker's C12.

W16

Ultra-bonkers engine format used to successful effect in the Bugatti Veyron and Chiron. Favoured for its compactness, although since an entire Chiron drivetrain weighs more than an Ariel Atom that's a relative thing.

A rotary internal combustion engine, invented by a Nazi. Was never much in favour in cars and has now disappeared, though Wankels are still used in certain types of military drone where their compactness is useful and their flaws are irrelevant because they'll get blown up before their rotor tip seals wear out.

Wasteqate

Valve fitted within the plumbing of a turbocharger to regulate the level of boost pressure. Not to be confused with a dump valve, which is fitted within the plumbing of a turbocharger to permit some arse in a heavily lowered Mk4 Golf GTI to make a right racket as he drives slightly too fast and then repeatedly lifts off while circling your local town centre.

Water cooling

What Porsche enthusiasts believed was the equivalent of the sky falling in circa 1997 before turning their fury to something else, such as different methods of steering power assistance.

Webbing

What seatbelts and ducks' feet are made of.



Weight distribution

Something BMW used to boast about a lot. Now it makes front-wheel-drive cars and whenever the subject is mentioned it just coughs loudly before shouting, 'Oh wow! Look over there!' and then running off.

Weight

The natural nemesis of Gordon Murray. That and koala bears.

Well

Where the spare wheel lives, when cars had such things. Also the worrying first word spoken by a mechanic when asked what's wrong with your car.

Whale tail

Name for a large item found on the back of Porsche 911 Turbos, Ford RS Cosworths and actual whales.

Wheel bearing

The thing that is making one of the worrying noises in the minicab you're in.

Wheel horsepower

A measure of the power available to move a car, accounting for losses in the drivetrain and from engine ancillaries. Such figures will be lower than those quoted by manufacturers, which are 'at the engine', so don't account for



drivetrain losses. And the complete opposite of the old SAE gross horsepower standard used by American car makers up until the early '70s, in which an engine was run with no ancillaries or exhaust, and then the resulting number probably rounded up a bit. Hence all those amazingly powerful '60s muscle cars.

Wheelmar

A way to refer to a professional driver, if you want to sound like a bit of a berk.

Wind tunnel

Facility used to flow air over a static car to replicate moving conditions in the real world and hone aerodynamic characteristics, as regularly featured in '80s car adverts. Fun fact: most wind tunnels suck rather than blow the air over the car because it gives a smoother flow.

Wing mirror

What people over a certain age call side mirrors even though they haven't been on the front wings for decades (except in Japan for some reason).

Winter tyres

Tyres with larger, deeper tread pattern and made of a compound that stays softer at lower temperatures, mandatory in some European countries but less enthusiastically embraced by people in the UK because they can't be arsed, even though winter tyres are actually really good, bordering on the miraculous.

Wire wheels

Feature fitted to cars up until the 1970s, since when owners have been trying to get them clean again.

Wiring loom

The electrical nervous system of a machine and where all the problems live in old Italian cars.

Wishbone

A-shaped wheel location component, the snapping in two of which would very much not bring great fortune.

Works

Word denoting something related to a factory racing operation, and therefore quite exciting. As used a lot by Mini.

Wraparound

Word used to describe windscreens, dashboards, and a type of sunglasses that don't really suit anyone. ■



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by RICHARD PORTER

DOA: Renault Clio RS16

With 271bhp, a manual gearbox and a weaponised chassis, this 'SuperClio' could have restored the Renault Sport Clio's reputation, but instead it had to be sacrificed for a higher cause

FFICIALLY THE RENAULT CLIO RS16 WAS a concept car, created by Renault Sport as a 40th birthday present to itself. But while most concepts are made of spit and tissues, this swollen Clio was capable of being used hard, as it proved at its reveal in May 2016 when Heikki Kovalainen thrashed it around the Monaco Grand Prix track. The following month the same stridently yellow 'concept' appeared at the Goodwood Festival of Speed, where it spent a long weekend zooming repeatedly up Lord March's driveway for the amusement of onlookers.

Plainly this wasn't a concept at all, as was later confirmed to members of the media invited to a Renault test facility to meet the black RS16 engineering mule and hear more from the small, self-described 'commando' team who had confected this tiny ball of muscle in just five months. It was codenamed KZ01, they explained, which sounded very corporate until you said 'kay zee one' out loud in a French accent and realised the wry nod to the madness inherent in the idea.

And what an idea it was, the ingredients running like this: 271bhp 2-litre turbo engine from the Mégane 275 Trophy-R, six-speed manual gearbox, limited-slip diff, trick 'Perfohub' front suspension from the previous Renault Sport Clio allied to Mégane hubs and the 360mm front brakes from the



Trophy-R's optional Nürburgring pack, rear axle from the Clio R3T rally car, Öhlins dampers, 60mm wider tracks, 19-inch Mégane wheels running Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2s, and an Akrapovic exhaust.

This was, said its creators, the 'SuperClio', though they admitted they'd abandoned a lunatic plan to make it mid-engined. This would have given no handling advantage, they claimed. Anyone caught in a wildly rotating Clio V6 might agree. The engineers also reckoned that moving the engine would have added weight, whereas by sticking with a front engine — while ditching the double-clutch 'box of the Clio 200, binning the back seats and air-con, and installing a lithium-ion battery — the SuperClio was no heavier than the car on which it was based.

Some of the details within the RS16 belied

how hard the engineers had strived to make it production-ready, despite the hurried development programme. To accommodate the larger Mégane engine, they'd used subframe parts from the Kangoo van, while the Clio electronics talked to the brains of an unfamiliar engine using software adapted from the Dacia Sandero. These were not so much bodges as cost-effective parts-bin solutions to ensure that a production RS16 could be built for reasonable money. Renault Sport went so far as to say that if and when the car was signed off, its factory could build two or three a day.

Building it, however, was also where the problem lay. In 2016 the Dieppe plant was being prepared for the brand new Alpine A110, and trying to introduce another model line, clever parts sharing or not, would demand time and people that could not be spared. The alternative was to delay the RS16 until the A110 was on stream, but this would have slipped the SuperClio's on-sale date into 2018 and by then, Renault management agreed, the momentum would have been lost. Though two more prototypes were built for durability work and the car was crash tested in left- and right-hand-drive variants, the mouth-watering Clio RS16 wasn't to be. But this story doesn't have an entirely unhappy ending because it died to make sure we got the Alpine A110.





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Essence of evo

Having been a huge fan of **evo** from the very beginning, I have read most of the sentences written that have tried to convey the Thrill of Driving to the reader. However, in Issue 279 it seems that sneaky lensman Andy Morgan has managed to reduce those thousands of words into one single image.

A sun-dappled B-road, a 'committed' John Barker, and the fabled E30 M3 on (barely) three wheels is unequivocally the very essence of evo in just one picture. A picture that deserves to be framed and hung on the wall of every evo reader's home in celebration of, and the motivation for, the Thrill of Driving.

Steve Hedderman

All the rage

I think the term 'LOL' is overused, but I did literally laugh out loud at Angry Jethro (column, evo 279) - from his venting about the latest crop of performance cars to his observations about 'wacky' motoring podcasts.

Angry Jethro needs his own monthly column alongside the original Jethro.

Petro Bartoszyk, Cambridge

Brexit benefit

Since we have left the EU, can we now forget the crazy EU emissions standards that are making our cars more complex, heavy and expensive, while in real-world driving don't actually reduce CO2 emissions at all?

We all know today's hybrids never deliver the claimed mpg/CO2 numbers in reality, and meanwhile we are also prevented from having some great new **evo** models such as



the new Z-car from Nissan (Ignition, evo 279).

Just a thought.

Richard Carter, Sherborne, Dorset

Liveable Lotus

Reading the Lotus Evora GT410 versus Porsche 911 Carrera comparison (issue 278) brought home to me again why I only read evo to find out about modern cars: no one else describes in such comprehensible words how cars actually feel when driven.

In your test I found all the arguments for why I made an early Evora S my choice for the car 'you'd happily keep forever'. It starts with the view through the panoramic windscreen, with the two wheelarch bulges adding perspective. Then there's the supple working of the suspension I can feel through my bum even as a non-professional driver, the clear information the hydraulic steering assistance lets through to my fingertips, and the 'natural' melodious exhaust sound, instead of a PlayStation-like artificial noise.

But why is **evo** nurturing old prejudices by sowing doubts about the useability of the Lotus for 'every day, for every journey and in all possible conditions'? OK, in my early car there's no climate control, and quickly clearing the screens in the harshest winter weather can be a bit of a nuisance too, but bar those handful of days in the year, my Lotus is pure fun all the time, and reliable. In the 200.000km I have driven it since 2011 I have never had any problems. With a custom-made tow-bar I don't even need a 'normal' car to transport my bike and skis.

Even though I have the



LETTER OF THE MONTH

Regression analysis

IS IT ME OR IS THE WORLD REGRESSING, PROPELLED BY

a curiously rapid decrease in human intelligence? And is this being demonstrated by the automotive industry, with manufacturers competing to see who can best design their new models to be less elegantly engineered and beautiful but more complex, big, ugly, heavy and expensive than the previous ones?

Flicking through evo 279 it would seem so, with page after page of freshly minted mediocrity and massive misshapen monstrosities: the tediously complex hugeness that is the new Golf GTI, the nauseating ghastliness of the Aston Martin Vantage Roadster's interior, the prodigiously portly two-ton Porsche Panamonster...

It wasn't until page 70, however, that the depths of this automotive regression were fully plumbed with the new BMW M3/4. The exterior, a combination of slabby, large-arched dull 'Nissanity' and the ugliest front end since the '94 Ford Scorpio. Inside, offensively tasteless seats face off against an incoherent dash, the 'random geometric' theme extending to a 'double boomerang' rev counter. That these cars come only in 4WD and auto-gearbox form in the UK, I dare not contemplate.

Mentally bludgeoned and staggering, but hoping to survive the magazine, I vaulted the revamped Vanquish, only to be finally floored by the Fast Fleet's inelegant and uninteresting BMW M135i xDrive. It seems there really is no escape.

James Gardiner

The Letter of the Month wins a Straton watch

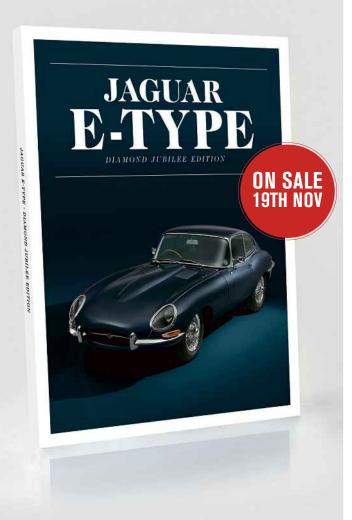
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opportunity to use a Porsche 991.2 GT3, I prefer the Lotus for daily work. As your test says, it provides sensory pleasures at low speeds, which is important to me, living and working in a congested part of my country.

It is therefore a pity that the reliability and useability of a Lotus model conceived for daily life is nowadays still questioned. On the other hand, trying to sell Evoras (like the 430) at very close to Porsche GT3 money did not work at all here in Switzerland. Enthusiasts expect a price advantage for the Lotus for its lower count of technical features compared to the Porsche – even though when you live with the car you discover that you don't need them.

Bruno Meier, Switzerland

Getting a grip

From my own experience and from **evo**'s too, it seems technology and regulations are ruining modern cars. Most cars now have a number of electric-driven systems that were previously mechanical, or have processes that have become synthetically enhanced.

The emotion, the mechanical noises, the sensations, the feel that the car is working with you, responding to your inputs and the road, all no longer seem to be present or have been significantly diluted in modern cars. This is a huge loss, and it's only by driving old cars again that you realise just how much these things were present and how much joy they bring to the art of driving.

It seems the only thing most manufacturers are now able to achieve are huge power and torque numbers and dreadful noises that sound like a broken exhaust.

Steering feel has fallen by the wayside and it is rare for **evo** to

mention it positively in reviews. However, I do notice the majority of **evo**'s road testers do not hold a steering wheel correctly, which may exacerbate the problem. If you grip the wheel like a club hammer, you won't feel through the fingertips. You will also likely break your thumbs in a crash, were the wheel to rotate sharply.

Anthony Shilson

Perhaps it's the chunkier rims found in some modern cars that's making it look like we're grabbing hold of the wheel for dear life, but we promise that we're not. The road test team even have a full complement of thumbs to prove it – Letters Ed

Specs appeal

Even if I won 'the big one' on the lottery I'm sorry to say that currently there is no new car on the market that I would wish to buy. No Ferrari, Lamborghini, Porsche, BMW, fast Ford or Mercedes, and definitely no Audi.

I may be a bit old, but I'm right in the middle of midlife-crisis territory and this situation is not right. A manufacturer needs to do something. What I really want is something cheap, light and thrashy, with three cylinders, narrow but grippy tyres, a manual 'box and bouncy suspension. Please.

James Bowen

We think you'll find that's called a Ford Fiesta ST or Volkswagen Up GTI – Letters Ed

The new holy trinity

GMA T.50, Aston Martin Valkyrie, Lotus Evija. Yesterday, today and tomorrow's definitive visions of the Thrill of Driving, Murray, Newey, Kershaw.

What of the rest? McLaren Speedtail, Koenigsegg Jesko,





me cold. Our home-grown stars unashamedly target the driving experience. They're as light as they can be. Autonomy doesn't feature. And there's a golden-age feel to the intensity of their engineering, don't you think?

for aero, powerplant, visuals and

emotion. Rimac C Two. Pininfarina

Battista? Tech showcases - as is.

or dressed in couture. Both leave

Start lining up that test guys, it's going to be epic.

George Svarovsky

Longing for lockdown

For some the days of full lockdown were difficult, and I understand that jobs have been lost too, but for me as a key worker it was a selfish gift in some ways. The weather in April played its part too, along with the rather sticky Pirelli P Zero Corsas I had just had fitted to my FK2 Civic.

My 20-mile commute on absolutely deserted A- and B-roads meant that I was probably among only a few people in the country to have a smile on my face upon arrival at work. Usually those roads were full of people on auto-pilot, doing the school run or heading to work, but now they were empty and able to be enjoyed like I never knew they could be (responsibly of course). What a pleasure!

Oh how I long to experience such roads again, especially when I find myself once again stuck behind a Zafira, kids in the back looking at me, driver having no intention of overtaking the tractor ahead doing 25mph in a 60...

Brad Johnson, Doncaster



Inspired by evo

It's safe to say that 2020 was not the year we all had planned. Insignificant though it was in the grand scheme, it was still disappointing to have to cancel the boys' road trip to the North Coast 500 that I had planned for June. Twenty-four of us in 20 cars are now hoping to make it happen in 2021.

But what about this year? Inspired by many back issues of evo and a little pooled knowledge, a new 'Wales, Lakes, Pennines, Dales & Moors' route was drafted for a smaller, 'rule of six' group. We'd be driving an Audi TT RS and RS3, an M4 Comp, an Exige, a 981 Cayman GT4 and Astons Vantage and DBS (a baton was passed between these last two halfway round).

Heading via Cheddar Gorge (for the views rather than the roads) we made our way to Abergavenny for dinner. An early start then saw us around the Brecon Beacons and the Black Mountain Pass, over to Aberystwyth and the back roads to Devil's Bridge and the Elan Valley for lunch. Two nights in Betws followed, allowing time on the fairly quiet and amazing roads of north Wales. Why had we not done this before...?

Then it was up to Coniston, the Ruskin Museum, the Wrynose, Kirkstone and Honister passes, over Alston Moor, Haydon Bridge and through Mickleton for a couple of nights in Darlington. More research took us to Reeth, Nateby, Ingleton and Pateley Bridge. Wow - what a mix of roads! Then it was a final fling over the Moors before the slog back south.

Six nights, 1700 miles, great cars, fantastic roads, good company, decent Brazilian, Indian, Mexican and Spanish dinners... Who needs Europe? Thanks for the inspiration!

Gareth Richardson, Lingfield, Surrey



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RICHARD MEADEN

The unexpected restorative powers of a chance encounter with a skilled driver

THINK WE CAN ALL AGREE 2020 IS PROVING to be an absolute stinker. Fatigued by the relentlessness and hopelessness of Covid, ground down by the futility of planning anything more than a few weeks ahead and deflated by the paucity of good things to get out and do, I don't mind admitting I'd begun to wonder if we'll ever return to enjoying anything resembling carefree fun.

Much I suspect like you, my go-to tonic for any kind of mental malaise is driving cars. But recently even this was failing to deliverer a reliable boost. As regular readers of this column might have detected, I've become increasingly guilty of talking myself into a downer. Cars had become too fast, I wrote. Too many supercars,

I wrote. Can't enjoy fast cars on the road anymore, I wrote. Bah and indeed humbug.

Then came October. Traditionally eCoty time, the month began with the rag-tag band of brothers that is the evo team engaged in the biggest test of the year. Perversely, while 2020 has been an absolute git, it has also been a belter for new fast cars of all shapes, sizes and prices. In this regard even I've had to concede we've got things pretty good.

Don't worry, I won't trump John Barker's notorious eCoty plot spoiler by revealing the winner an entire month early. In fact I won't even tell you the list of contenders. You'll just

have to buy the next issue to see the test in all its glory. What I will tell you is that this year's eCoty is a two-parter that started in north Wales with no fewer than 16 cars and finished with an eight-car shoot-out on some of the best roads in Scotland. I've been doing this for a long time, but can't remember a better couple of weeks or a finer group of cars.

I'm not sharing this because I wish to regale you with smug tales of how driving many (many) hundreds of thousands of pounds' worth of sports and supercars on amazing roads miraculously restored my mojo. Though, shockingly, I have to say it did do a pretty good job of perking me up. No, the reason I'm taking you through the last few weeks of my working life is that it was another entirely unexpected moment - again on eCoty - that somehow put things into context.

I was heading north from home towards our first overnight stop in Hawick in the Scottish Borders. Three or so hours into the

four-plus hour trip, I was travelling solo in something exotic and Italian, slicing across country having left the main motorways behind. It was raining and the light was fading and thoughts of a warm fire and a cold pint were beginning to enter my mind.

I'd pretty much had the road to myself, but up ahead in the distant gloom I could see a pair of tail lights burning in the murk. It was one of those instinctive moments when a quick calculation of our relative speeds suggested whoever was up ahead was - how can I put this? – making the most of the opportunity.

Squeezing a little more speed from my car, I steadily closed in. I can normally identify tail lights from a good distance, but the spray and the fading light made it impossible. Part of me wondered if it was someone else heading up to eCoty (the brisk

> but measured pace certainly suggested this to be the case), but as I got closer, to my surprise and amusement, I realised it was a small van.

> Ordinarily I would have looked for a safe opportunity to pass and continued on my way, but this was different. I reckoned the driver was a local, probably on their way home, on a fabulous road they know like the back of their hand. There was nothing risky about their driving, but they were going quickly, carving perfect lines between the sweeping curves, and intelligently losing speed with smooth lifts of the throttle rather than clumsy stabs at the brakes. I knew I was in the presence of a

quality driver when villages were driven through at less than the posted limit. It was masterful, considerate, risk-free stuff.

We continued like this for a good 20 miles or so. Me following at a respectful distance, but close enough to make it clear I was tagging along in their wake, enjoying a drive that was evidently a journey this van driver did every day. When eventually they slowed and signalled to turn off I was sad our good-natured chase had come to an end.

Did they even know they'd inadvertently been part of a shared petrolhead moment? I wondered this myself, until a brief but deliberate click of the hazard lights served as acknowledgement that they'd known all along, and thoroughly enjoyed it. What I'm certain they didn't realise is that they'd set the tone for what would turn out to be an epic eCoty. Nor that they had provided a perfect and much-needed reminder that the best drives often come at the most unexpected moments. Whoever you were, thank you.

'Ordinarily I would have looked for an opportunity to pass and continued on my way, but this was different'





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RICHARD PORTER

It's time for some hard truths about motor racing's influence on road cars

HE WELL-KNOWN F1 JOURNALIST WAS UP ON his hind legs, raging through the civility filter of social media at the editorial boss of Certain Car Magazines That Aren't evo. The Well-Known F1 Journalist was adamant that innovations from Formula 1 transfer to road cars all the time. The Well-Known F1 Journalist claimed to be amazed and astonished that other car media professionals weren't aware of this. The Well-Known F1 Journalist said there was a long list that proved his point. The Well-Known F1 Journalist was asked to name something off this list and came up with an example that was incorrect. Yet still The Well-Known F1 Journalist raged on.

The Well-Known F1 Journalist was wrong. There's little from

F1 that ever makes it onto road cars. The white heat of motorsport might provide some advances in lubricants and metallurgy and, by extension, in the design of things like piston rings for high performance road cars, but even then the crossover is less than direct, simply because what's required of a road engine is not what's needed to power a racing car.

A bespoke competition engine is blueprinted, hand built, and designed to survive for a short amount of time under extreme stress. A road car engine, even one in a hypercar, has to last for the duration of the warranty and beyond. The greatest achievement of the W16 in the Bugatti Chiron is not that it can belt out over

1500 horsepower but that it can do so while conforming to all of Volkswagen Group's toughest durability and driveability tests so that it's as dependable and docile as a Golf when required.

Conversely, there are two 'F1 derived' hypercars in development at the moment that, so rumour has it, are stuck in development hell. One is said to be unpleasantly noisy inside, the other has proven to be a bastard to homologate thanks to an engine that was built to race, not to do boring things like meet emissions rules and idle unobtrusively in a traffic jam. Little wonder there's bugger all crossover between F1 and the road when the requirements of the cars for each role are so vastly different.

If The Well-Known F1 Journalist wasn't talking out of his hat, where are the demonstrable road car changes shown by manufacturers who have flitted in and out of Formula 1? BMWs didn't get less high tech or of lower performance when the

company bailed on the sport. Alfa Romeos don't seem to have got more sophisticated or demonstrated any tangible evidence of new thinking since they started to inhabit BMW's old Swiss shoes. Even the long-standing teams with road car divisions might struggle to point out where the tech transfer lies. They'll mumble something about carbonfibre, but laying up a handful of monocoques for a full F1 season is a discipline of little use when you need to turn out hundreds and thousands of road car monocoques a year. McLaren might also point to its centre-hinged paddleshift that allows upand downchanges with one hand and which is, I grant you, quite nifty. But beyond that, direct F1 tech transfer is hard to pinpoint.

Look at this another way: plenty of road car makers don't have an F1 connection and manage to match strides all the same.

> Lamborghini, for example. Or, in a less sporty realm, Hyundai. Are their cars less dynamic/ reliable/efficient than, say, Renaults?

> It's easy to believe F1 is some glorious engine room from which innovations fly like sparks and that the cars in showrooms are somehow improved by association with the sport, but evidence, or lack of it, suggests it's just not true. We've had more obvious, identifiable road car technology from aviation than from Formula 1.

> I was thinking about this again the other day when, fresh from reading The Well-Known F1 Journalist huffing about his mythical list of F1 innovations, I got talking to a friend about the last Ford GT. Just not cricket, said my mate.

They rushed that car through and brought a gun to a knife fight just so they could claim class victory to play on the whole '50 years since '66' thing rather than having the bottle to go toe-to-toe with the big lads in the LMP1 category. I completely disagreed. Why would Ford spend a load of cash to get its corporate arse handed to it by Toyota when for the same or less they could grab what they needed, sell a nice story, and be home in time for tea and medals?

My friend was, I fear, romanticising racing as something other than ruthless and calculating. Just as, surprisingly, The Well-Known F1 Journalist had fallen under the ridiculous myth that Formula 1 directly and relentlessly improves and advances road cars. It doesn't. And it doesn't because - hold on, here's the hard-to-swallow bit, as in both cases to think otherwise is to acknowledge an awkward truth that ruins the misty-eyed romance - motor racing is just marketing.

'Even longstanding teams with road car divisions might struggle to point out where the tech transfer lies'





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HARACTER IS HARD TO DEFINE BUT A VERY easy thing to recognise. It reaches out through mechanical components and grabs us by the guts and heart. Character is why you still pine after the old Clio Cup or 320i you once owned even though

you've moved on to faster and 'better' things. Even the most unenthusiastic drivers aren't immune. You'll have a friend or family member who claims to have no interest in cars at all but fondly remembers 'Bertie' or 'Betty' or whatever they named their most dilapidated, dearly departed four-wheeled companion. Character is at the very heart of why we love cars. Sounds stupid, but it's true.

Of course, character can be imbued or manipulated. Engineers have done it for decades. Tuning exhaust sounds, pushing our

buttons with quirky interior features and most pertinently for evo readers - enhancing or creating dynamic traits that allow the driver to really impose themselves on the way the car behaves. Handily, different manufacturers value different sounds, wildly different tactile sensations and put their faith in a plethora of mechanical layouts. People who love cars really are spoilt. Whether you're shopping for a hot hatch, supersaloon, sports car or supercar, you'll quickly recognise and adopt the character that most fits with your own.

I think this is the root of why we're collectively struggling with the idea of a

BEV-powered future. Unlike with conventional cars there is incontrovertibly a 'best' way to engineer a BEV, so everyone will essentially end up with the same skateboard layout to ensure a low centre of gravity and then play around with driven wheels and torque vectoring depending upon power output and application.

Power delivery is uniform. Whether you have a mid-sized saloon or a 2000bhp supercar the EV experience is all the torque all the time. Amazing for 0-60mph stats and genuinely aweinspiring. For a while, at least. In my experience EV life has a blissful honeymoon period, giving way to respect and admiration, followed inevitably by either boredom or complete apathy. Rather than taking on a persona that's bigger than the sum of their parts, electric cars tend to do extraordinary things and make them feel mundane. You could define this capability as anti-character. Your aunt won't be naming her car Tilly the Tesla and enthusiasts will end up choosing their future models based on past glories.

Which got me thinking. Perhaps rather than trying to impose a new sort of character on machines that fundamentally have none, we should look to the past for inspiration. There's a horrible word often thrown around in meeting rooms: gamify. 'How can we gamify this idea?' Normally this is the point where I'd start throwing things, but I think EVs are ripe to be gamified.

Here's how it works. A sophisticated EV architecture has a motor at each wheel, offering an unbelievable amount of control over chassis behaviour. These power units can also be tuned purely with software with no inherent mechanical foibles (turbo lag, for example). So whilst all EVs currently offer instant maximum torque and perfect linearity, there's no reason why this has to be the case.

So why can't I have an app to alter that behaviour? And

since Land Rover has already shown us 'Transparent Bonnet' technology and we now have electronic rear-view and side mirrors, why can't my view out match the dynamic behaviour I've downloaded? Not only could engineers recreate a big-boost turbo delivery, or a screaming short-stroke motor, but when I look out of the windscreen I could see over the sharp wings of a Ferrari 812 Superfast, or as eyes flick to the rear-view mirror the world could be receding behind the rubberedged whale tail of a 930 Turbo. The driving experience - steering response, weight

- could all feel authentic, too. One car, multiple personalities. Your dream garage realised on one highly intelligent platform. Character, copied or not, preserved forevermore.

The idea has another advantage, too. Rather than engineers obsessing over the last tenth of a second or trying to create driving experiences so 'everyman' that they end up disappearing into nothingness, they'd have no choice but to focus on the minutiae. They'd not only dedicate weeks to replicating the steering of a Lotus Elan but also be reminded why it was so celebrated in the first place. Tuning a power curve of a virtual Plymouth Superbird or an NSX-R would spark a passion for theatre as much as bludgeoning performance. Lessons learnt during gamification would inexorably feed back into new-car development and maybe the generic nature of BEVs would start to disappear. Not only would old heroes be accessible to everyone, they'd inform the direction of travel for future icons, too.

distribution, balance and body movements

@JethroBovingdon





HESE ARE THE ELITE OF HOT HATCHBACKS.

Not necessarily the fastest in a straight line, but the warriors ruthlessly trimmed down to their optimum fighting weight, with months clocked up in the gym and superberry smoothies in their tanks. Consider today, then, a welcoming party for Mini's latest and third entry into this, the slenderest of market segments. The company's 2006 Cooper S Works GP was arguably the initiator of this breed of trackday-focused hot hatch, vehicles with two seats and scaffold bars of some description that owe their raison d'être to non-competitive driving on track, rather than an outright mission brief for motorsport as once epitomised by Rallye-model Peugeots, or indeed Rallyes from Volkswagen.

Of course, the car we all instantly think of when it comes to such a device is the Mégane R26.R, and in recent years it's the French machinery that has dominated this sector, with perhaps the exception of another car we have present here, the 2016 Volkswagen Golf GTI Clubsport S. Based on the Mk7 GTI, this two-seat wunderwagen blitzed not only the Nürburgring, where it lowered the hot hatch record to an absurd 7min 49sec, but also eCoty in the same year, famously clinching the runner-up spot.

That mention of being two-seat only is worth pausing on for a moment. Traditionally, no one gains entry to this exclusive club unless they've stepped across the Maginot Line of hot hatchdom: to sacrifice a tenet of the original hot hatch idea – practicality – in search of lower mass and, hence, greater circuit ability. It's a pivotal moment, because in doing so you end up with the obvious compromises of a front-wheel-drive, hatchback-based performance car, with the same occupant capacity as an outright sports car, itself purpose-designed for speed and driver satisfaction. Any hot hatch that takes the leap had better deliver in the entertainment stakes, or else...

We all know that the Golf is great. As I drive to our test location, Silverstone's Stowe circuit (currently home to Aston Martin), the memories of an extraordinary car come flooding back: the instant, any-rev response of the 306bhp EA888, the keenness that only saving the kilos can imbue. We already know, too, that 'Hardcore Mégane Take 3' is not without problems of its own, for all Renault Sport's reputation and the car's dazzling performance. As much as the Golf thrilled in eCoty 2016, the Mégane Trophy-R in fullspec, £72,140 form, with carbon-ceramic brake discs and carbonfibre wheels, failed to really hit the mark in eCoty last year. It simply proved a frustrating machine – brilliant on track, eternally hit-and-miss on the road. Here we're using the non-carbon car, at a still pricey £51,455, and moreover Renault has attempted to answer our criticisms of its onroad behaviour by tailoring its set-up to British roads. Will this be the golden key that unlocks its undeniable potential? Don't forget, it's the current Ring lap record holder, with a time of 7min 40.1sec.

First though, to the newcomer: the Mini. I park the Golf next to it in the pitlane at Silverstone and stare in puzzlement for a moment. Looks, as ever, are subjective, but for me this is a design that sends one eyebrow sky-high; on one hand brazenly aggressive (that rear wing) and on the other with some bizarre features (those flat-pack wheelarch extensions, that entirely fake bonnet vent). It's powered by the familiar BMW B48 engine, arguably one of the most charmless 2-litre turbocharged units ever made, albeit, I concede, an effective one. This is no ordinary B48 though, because in this 302bhp form it uses a reinforced crankshaft, new pistons, and runs more boost from a bigger turbo. It's the 332lb ft that really catches the eye, but then again this Mini is far from being mini in all senses of the word. However, it does endow the GP3 with fearsome acceleration, 0-62mph covered in just 5.2sec and the car running all the

Opposite: thirdgeneration Mini GP is the most attention-seeking yet; its switch from manual 'box to a torqueconverter auto is getting all the wrong kind of attention, though











way unfettered to a maximum speed of 164mph - the fastest outof-the-box car in the BMW Group. The motor is connected to an eight-speed torque-converter gearbox and deploys drive through a mechanical limited-slip differential, with a chassis that's wider in track, 10mm lower than a regular JCW, and whose metal and harder rubber bushings are partnered with a more aggressive geometry set-up for the suspension. This latest JCW GP weighs 1255kg, and 575 of them are earmarked for the UK out of a total production run of 3000.

I head out onto the circuit, perched on a slightly underwhelming sports seat, my fingers on the paddles ready to take control of the gearbox, a couple of slower laps ahead to get some heat into the tyres, and... this all just feels weird. The lack of interaction given no manual 'box is a strange sensation in a small, tightly focused hot hatch. Sure, the grown-up fast ones usually now have twinclutchers, but Clubsport S, hot Méganes, Civic Type R - they all feature a stick and three pedals, and can you imagine a Fiesta ST without them? That keen sense of involvement is a hot hatch staple, and without it the driving experience feels a lot quieter intensifying the brain's scrutiny on other areas.

The real issue here is that a torqueconverter is absolutely not the stuff of hot hatch dreams. It doesn't have the positivity and response of a DCT, but worse is if you let the revs get near the red line. Now, despite pulling the paddle, you're stuck in a no man's land, waiting for the next gear to select after a yawning gap, the engine

Above: its looks are understated in this company, but the Golf Clubsport S is all about the driving experience. which made it a worthy runner-up at eCoty 2016

hanging on to its maximum revolutions in a tuneless wall of noise. I make a significant mental note to upshift a little earlier than my ear suggests would be wise, and concentrate on the torque steer instead.

The track is not the smoothest of layouts, but out of the hairpin the Mini likes to kick back through the steering, and there's even more of a torque reaction under heavy braking, where you've got to keep a firm hand on the car's trajectory. It's quite a handful; the motor feels punchy, the brakes capable, while the steering has that love-it-orloathe-it Mini staple of a very quick ratio just off the straight-ahead to induce some of the hyperactive feel inherent in smaller Minis of ten and fifteen years ago. Hmm.

By contrast the Mégane has got you by the throat, dangling a metre





off the ground, from the very first lap. On cold Bridgestones it has to be the most sideways front-wheel-drive car – possibly any sort of car full stop - that I can recall. It's like an old Super Tourer before the tyres have 'come in', a serial oversteer merchant if you so much as think about lifting off the throttle. The angles it'll go to - admittedly recoverable - are extreme (with the ESP switched off), and they'd certainly focus the mind on a wet winter's morning commute. Once that rubber has come up to temperature the Mégane is awesome, just as the full-spec car was at Ascari last autumn. Because it works the rear of the car so much, understeer is all but banished from the Mégane's vocabulary; the front dives in, you can manipulate it if desired by a lift of the throttle, and pretty soon the car is pointing straight, directly through and out of the corner, allowing you to use every last bit of the fizzy 1.8-litre's power onto the next straight. Rarely has any car felt so at home on a circuit, for like anything that excels in this environment it feels happy here, exuding endurance, looking after its brakes and tyres even when pushed hard.

Unfortunately our Golf today is equipped with the alternative OE tyre - a Pirelli P Zero - to the Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 all previous examples we have tested have been fitted with. Yet despite the change of footwear the qualities of the Clubsport S are obvious: the way it feels so light and agile, so up on its toes, but bizarrely at the same time with that typical Mk7 Golf polish that almost seems at odds with a two-seat track car. Old Pirellis are not a

Above: this Trophy-R may lack the carbon accoutrements of the eye-wateringly expensive fully optioned version, but it's still devastatingly capable on track

good partner for the diff to work with, though, so there's plenty of wheelspin leaving the tighter corners, and understeer rather than tail-led heroics through the faster stuff because they just won't dig in and allow the tail to rotate, but the cool precision of the steering and the essential rightness of the package are evident. These are still road cars though, and heading out onto some classic English country lanes soon filters the pack more clearly.

The Mini is the first to fall here and, sadly, from quite a great height. I think it's fair to say that editor Stuart Gallagher detests it, and as much as I search for the good in it, I'm afraid I just can't get it to resonate as a package with me at all. On closer inspection those unusual track width extensions (what to actually call them?) look like something knocked together for a GCSE CDT project and appear to be held on by sticky pads. They're actually made of recycled parts of i3s and i8s, but the Mini's visual busyness is in stark contrast to the simplicity of a genuine homologation special of the moment, the Toyota GR Yaris. There is no adaptive damping, and where sometimes such purity of focus can be a good thing, in the GP3 that simply means the ride is very unyielding, and on poorer B-road surfaces a hindrance to fast driving. Predictably, that also means the diff struggles to deploy all that 332lb ft of thrust, meaning plenty of torque steer, and the gearbox... oh, the gearbox. Come on BM... sorry, Mini, we know you still have some fine manual gearboxes — the M2's, for example...

Cars are always a product of where they are born, and I don't doubt the GP3 will be effective at the Ring, and it's surely enjoyable too flicking it into Hohe Acht with a GT3 RS gasping for pace in

the mirror. But the execution simply doesn't work on our roads: it's uncomfortable but often ineffective with it, and the very notion of having a hot hatch with a slusher 'box is a mix even Heston Blumenthal would struggle to perfect. It feels artificially nervous and manic one minute, dull and uninvolving the next, and captures little of the pintpot loony spirit characterised so well by the first two GP models. Frankly, its qualities and components seem so disparate to each other that it's a struggle to effectively sum up what is one of the strangest and most disappointing cars we've driven for some time.

As for the Renault, its problem is perhaps that it's too focused on one target. It feels like a ruthless exercise in making a large five-door hatchback lap the Ring in almost exactly 7 minutes and 40 seconds of blistering commitment, but something, somewhere, very important has been sacrificed in the process. The old R26.R was an equally brilliant – if slower – car on track, but it was also the sort of machine that you'd



want to drive down your favourite B-road, just for the sake of it, again and again. As we said during our first drive of this reconfigured Trophy-R (evo 278), the changes to the suspension are a significant step in the right direction, the car no longer hopping from bump to bump and much better able to deploy its 296bhp without hunting all over the place, but it's still a fight if the road isn't smooth. Sometimes that can feel like highly charged fun, other times like you're having to force the car to do something it doesn't want to do, a sentiment that could be applied to the gearshift quality as well. There are still too many occasions when a corner is something merely to be completed, rather than an exercise in entry, line and exit. I greatly respect the Trophy-R for what it can do, but at this price point in particular, I don't yearn to own one.

So it's the old-timer that takes the plaudits because real class doesn't date. Although it's nearly ten seconds slower than the Mégane

around the Nordschleife (and half a second slower around Bedford Autodrome's West Circuit), in reality it's only a small percentage off the Mégane for on-track ability and pace. And yet in return it's a much more multitalented, multitextured sort of car, far more at home on the road. In fact, you could quite easily use it as a daily – not that it's the most practical of hatchbacks, but at least having a hatch with only two seats makes more sense in a three-door shell. Being able to soften the adaptive damping works wonders, and there's never a moment when the S feels out of its depth. It's one of those rare cars where the more challenging the road, the more it rises to the occasion, so the more you just want to keep driving it.

The customer base for a two-seat hatchback that only really works on the circuit but costs nearly Cayman GT4 money is tiny, but the market for one costing just over half that price and which is also a cracking road car is significantly bigger. For now, VW still rules.









the type guaranteed to have your significant other downing their chosen tipple with a look of abject despair. Did you know the 2020 Civic Type R has a more densely packed sequence of fins in its radiator core? The gap between each row is reduced by 0.5mm down to 2.5mm. You want more? Don't worry, there's plenty.

Possibly every mid-life facelift of a performance car has the same miniscule improvements made, tiny advantages eked out by world-class engineers, sometimes offset by increasingly stringent emissions or safety legislation, or input from marketeers. It is, however, a level of scrutiny and microscopic development deeply associated with the Japanese marques, which are, at the very least, unmatched

at letting us know about the whole process, whether that's this month's evolution of the Nissan R35 GT-R or endless derivatives of the Subaru Impreza.

Honda hasn't flinched in any way when it comes to this update on the indomitable Type R. But one thing is for certain: if you hated the way it looked before, you're still going to loathe it (just as if you have a penchant for vents, angles, big wings, black wheels and bazooka exhausts you'll still love it). The only visual differences are small painted blades at the front and the rear, new fog light surrounds, and a revised grille that allows a 13 per cent increase in airflow, which Honda wanted to achieve for track work as part of its increased cooling target. The front air dam underneath the nose has also been adapted to offset the aerodynamic imbalance caused by the grille modification. Naturally.

In fact, the real meat of the changes to this Type R happen to be exactly where they count: with the driving experience. And

if you know the FK8, you'll be fully aware that the manner in which it drives is undoubtedly its strongest suit. This is the car that showed how when Honda was truly serious about a Civic hot hatch it could deliver the very best there is, even usurping Renault Sport as the ultimate evo choice. There's been many a group test and big event (Track Car of the Year in issue 254, for example) where the Civic has run rings around cars costing twice its price or more, and left us astounded in the process.

During the first few miles in the updated car I'm... well, not sure actually. Most of what I recall about the Type R is present and correct, but the ride never seems to settle on the road and I'm switching down to Comfort mode more than I remember. But when I swap into a sister car, which we'll subsequently cover many more miles in, it doesn't feel too stiff at all. I won't dwell on the situation, save to say Honda tells us this second car is representative. We'll have to take its word for it.

Don't go thinking the Type R is one-dimensional from the statement I'm about to make, but so much is obviously right about this car in the first mile – and it always has been. It's like running through a mental checklist: fab bucket seats, check; good steering wheel, check, and now with Alcantara, yay!; natural, engineeredin-feel response to the first steering input, check; super-direct and mechanical gearshift mechanism, yep, even just putting the car into first gear. But some things are even better. The front brake discs are now two-piece items, with the main objective being to improve the pedal feel, which was already very sturdy underfoot but now has a perfect weighting for judging brake inputs and heeland-toe work. The new discs also shave 2.5kg off the unsprung mass, which is handy. That gearshift too - it's also improved, Honda having an entire slide with figures illustrating how the switch from a ball gearknob to a teardrop shape has helped with the weighting of the throw. They're not wrong, for the little aluminium lever slices through the gate with a pleasurable feel that matches anything else in production.

I think this last point sums up the Type R in many ways. It may be 'just' a hatchback, but in its own way it feels every bit as well engineered and thought out as a 911 GT3. In fact, in the past we've often applied the comment 'If Porsche made hot hatches...' to this car, and not without good reason. It really is that good.

Naturally, Type R project leader Hideki Kakinuma and his team haven't been able to leave the suspension tuning alone either. There are stiffer bushings and low-friction ball joints, and revised geometry settings, while the adaptive dampers can now monitor what's happening ten times faster than before.

So, you can feel how good the Type R is in those first few miles, but it's when you reach a decent road that it really comes alive. Quite simply there's a level of pace here that means nothing is getting away from the Type R unless the road is straight, smooth and flat for miles. It doesn't matter what supercar you could be driving, a well-driven Type R has everything - and I mean everything – covered. Every element of the car exudes a steely precision, the steering even more positive than before, the ride

Right: bucket seats are excellent, and Alcantara on the steering wheel is a welcome addition; the infotainment set-up trails the opposition, though









'IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU THROW AT THE TYPE R, IT'S JUST **NEVER FAZED'**

even more iron-fisted in its control. +R mode is still too much for a B-road, but Sport does just fine, and Comfort remains a useable option for when you're really not in the mood. You can brake really late and deep into a corner and never feel the chassis is getting nervous, but simultaneously it's also a very, very long way from feeling inert, working the rear axle to complement that turn-in and positioning the car's attitude for less scrub on the exit. Traction on the way out of a corner is exemplary thanks to the dark arts of the limited-slip diff - and that even applies on streaming-wet roads, the 20-inch Continentals resisting wheelspin and torque steer admirably. It doesn't matter what surface or sequence of undulations you throw at the Type R, it's iust never fazed by anything.

The engine's outputs are unchanged, but then there was nothing wrong with the 316bhp and 295lb ft of the pre-facelift car. There's an upgrade to the 'fake noise', which is more of an acquired taste, and the in-line four isn't the most musical of units at higher revs, but it does love to be worked constantly to its red line in a way many turbocharged engines don't.

All of which means it's hard to think of a rival front-drive hot hatch that can match the Civic, and Honda has tried to broaden its appeal further by introducing some new variants, too. On top of the basic and GT trim levels (the latter adding £2000 and bringing a few extra creature comforts such as parking sensors, satnay and dual-zone climate control), there'll soon be a Sport Line derivative, priced in line with the GT and matching its kit levels, but featuring a smaller rear wing, no pinstriping, a quieter interior and 19-inch rims with Michelin Pilot Sport 4 S tyres (rather than the usual Continentals), all of which may go some way to appeasing those who simply can't get on with the way this car looks. At the other end of the spectrum is the Limited Edition, in retina-bursting yellow, with a 47kg weight saving that includes less soundproofing material and forged wheels shod with Michelin Cup 2 tyres. If the standard car already feels like it could go toe-to-toe with a Mégane Trophy-R on a track, then the Limited Edition promises to be right at the forefront of any on-track hot hatch battle.

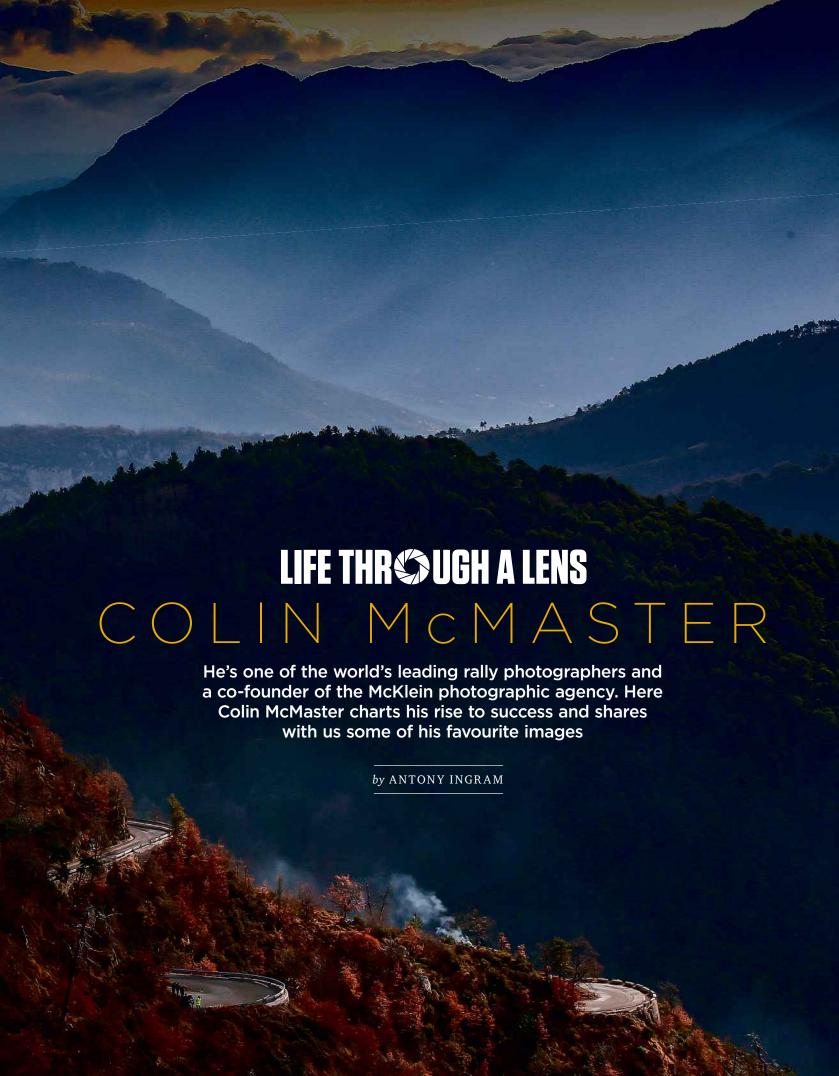
Does the Type R have a weakness? Apart from its exterior design, that would probably be its interior, and in particular the Garmin satnay and infotainment set-up, which is miles behind much of its competition. The Civic also only has four seat belts, which is a disaster for those with larger families needing their hot hatch to do the mundane stuff as well as the B-road blasts. But overall there's still nothing quite like an FK8 Civic Type R, and with this subtle but comprehensive round of upgrades, Honda has made the task of toppling it even more formidable still.

Left: teardrop-shaped gearknob has improved shift feel further. **Right:** 'Racing Blue Pearl' is a new colour option; looks are still love 'em or loathe 'em, though











'I'VE HAD HARDER JOBS!' JOKES COLIN McMaster over the phone as we talk five time zones apart. McMaster is in Barbados, on a job for spectacular American rally driver Ken Block, awaiting the obligatory Covid test results that will allow him to leave his villa... and the pool... by a beach. Rallying certainly isn't always that glamorous, but it was the joy of travel that played a big part in why McMaster made the switch from his initial career path shooting Formula 1.

'I really liked the freedom of rallying and the photographic opportunities it presented,' he explains. 'When you work at circuits, you fly to the country, pick up your hire car, and then you're hotel, track, hotel, track, whatever, back to the airport - you never see the country, you just see the circuit. With a rally you travel around the country, or the region where the rally's based. It just woke me up to what travel was really about. So basically I just fell in love with rallying.'

McMaster's path into photography started at 11 years old, when he was gifted a camera for his birthday. 'It took 110 cartridge film, which is a tiny, horrible little negative format. The camera was fixed focus, fixed everything - aperture, shutter speed - so a point-andshoot with nothing else, but I loved it.'

Combined with a father who competed in motorcycle racing and a grandfather who wrote about it, racing was already in the blood, but it was a move to South Africa aged 15 that really spurred on the career.

'What really accelerated my photography was the inability to speak Afrikaans. They had something like four hours of Afrikaans a week at this school I went to, and we decided



'The Col de l'Orme, Alpes-

Maritimes [previous pages]. Look at the view! I know a lot of photographers outside of motorsport, and one I really respect who does fashion was wowed when she saw it. It's a picture that works even without a rally car - you'd struggle to even see Loeb! It shows what rallying is all about.'

'This [above] was in 2016. You don't see the cars that many

times during an event, so if you're going to pick a stupid shutter speed like 1/40th of a second, or 1/25th, you're gambling a bit, but it paid off.'

'Richard Burns and Colin McMaster! I've got Robert Reid's overalls, pace notes, watch, helmet, shoes... shot on film, I'm triggering it with a cable release under the pace notes. This [right] was Finland, a test with Burnsy. He was a good mate, best man when I got married! It was the end

of the test and he knew the stage well, so it was proper.'

'This jump [far right] is on the Panzerplatte stage on Rallye Deutschland, in 2002. I was in a helicopter, pointing the 300mm out the window; with the long lens you compress it all and see the shape of the road. Loeb won the event, so the picture also tells a story. Nowadays the crowd are 100m away, and there's a big plastic arch over the jump. It'll never be repeated again.'

















Thierry Neuville, Turkey

'Every year there's a competition, rally photo of the year. I entered this in 2018 and it won! Voted for by the public, not by the organisers. So I've included this one because it was the rally photo of the year 2018.'

Sébastien Loeb & Sébastien Ogier

'This [left] is one of my favourite rally pictures of all time. It's not set up, this is genuinely the two greatest current-era world champions just having a quiet moment. They'd parked in a quiet side street to escape the crowds.

To have that moment with them, undisturbed. I like this because they're oblivious to me as well.'

Thierry Neuville, France

'I just love this picture [top] because of the glowing discs. Some of the fans had lit fires and were holding flares. It was bloody dark! There's no better place for night rallying than Monte Carlo.'

Elfyn Evans, Sweder

'This [above middle] was last year. I put a flash strobe light behind the car and one to the side. It's a bit of luck, I'll confess, but the light flare from his headlights down my lens, he's hit the snowbank, perfectly lit, and the lights just make the picture.'

Carlos Sainz, Wales

'Right place, right time [above], but that was no fluke! I recced the Margam Park stage and holed the sump on my car 100m from where Luis Moya's kicking that car. I was framing the house, and that's where he stopped. Sainz just had to finish 4th or 5th to win the title so was cruising. He destroyed the engine going too slowly, I destroyed a Volvo going too quickly!'

there was no point in me starting that, as we were only there a year. I persuaded the school to let me do photography. Basically I could roam around the grounds taking pictures. I built a darkroom at the school and that made me instantly popular, because it was a room you could physically lock. All the smokers became my best friends because I had the key!

'So as well as that and the background of a family who were entrenched in motorsports, we would go to the racetracks, go on safaris, see the landscapes – there was so much you could photograph in South Africa, and I soon became the photographer in the family.'

When the family returned to the UK, McMaster used contacts through his grandfather to shoot images for junior drivers in Irish motorsport, supplying newspapers and magazines, opening the door to both press access and, importantly, contact with others in the industry. That led to a position at Oxfordshire-based Words and Pictures, a photographic agency that covered events from the BTCC to Formula 3 and Formula 3000. From there McMaster transitioned to F1.

'By around the end of '92 I was doing Formula 1 testing, at places like Paul Ricard. To me that was fantastic – this was all I wanted in life, to go around photographing F1. I did a good job in testing and then I was on the plane to Brazil in March '93. I did a full season of F1 in '93, '94 and '95. At the time the PR girl for Subaru lived near the Cotswolds, and knocked on the door one day as they'd just signed Colin McRae, and British American Tobacco as a sponsor...'

McMaster started shooting promotional and lifestyle material for McRae and Subaru, building up a rapport with the Scot and travelling to the Asia-Pacific rallies McRae was competing in at the time. 'I used to know the barman at Changi Airport, Singapore. He'd recognise me 'cos I was going in and out of there so often! I was doing F1, rallying, still shooting some touring cars at the weekend, and thought, "It can't go on like this."

In the end, McMaster's love of rallying won out, and that's where the McKlein story starts. 'With a rally you don't see the cars that much – each day you might see them three or four times maximum, so it was quite obvious that the best thing you could do was team up with some other photographers and offer a service for clients, and that's what I did with a German photographer and another British guy – Reinhard Klein and Bob McCaffrey. We joined forces and started McKlein in 1997.'

That combined expertise, the love of travel and love of the sport has taken McMaster to some amazing places, but he loves the process of shooting a rally too. 'The key to it is the recce. I will always dedicate two or two-and-a-half days to drive the stages myself. You can talk to co-drivers and they're pretty good at recommending spots too, but that's normally for action 'cos they write down pace notes: "big jump here", "big cut" or whatever. You have to work out how to get somewhere too—it could mean driving in before the roads are closed, parking up, and losing the best part of a day to create the image that you want. I don't like standing next to other photographers either. It's nothing personal, I just want to have something unique!'

Kit gets a bit of a beating at rallies, and McMaster points out that he's a couple of generations behind with his Canon camera bodies, some of which are brought along to set remotely for areas inaccessible (or inadvisable) for snappers to stand. There's a wide choice of lenses too: 'I have a core set. I take a 35mm, an 85mm and a 300mm lens. I take those three to more or less every rally I do, and then I just fill the bag a little bit according to the rally I'm going to.'

Then there's the unique challenge of shooting each rally: 'If you go to an event like New Zealand you have to understand landscapes, scenery, topography. These make your photos recognisably New Zealand, so you have to understand that element of photography, and make the framing work. If you go to Finland you have to understand the sport, the dynamics of the cars. Finland is less scenic, but more three-dimensional – you need to know what they'll do on the high-speed sections, the jumps, the crests, the corners. So it's a different skill set that you need to capture two different types of events.

'Tarmac's another one – there's no snow, or dust, so that dynamic element's gone from your pictures compared to a gravel event. With a tarmac event you've got to find where there are deep cuts, you might see some sparks from the undertray, you might get a locked tyre, smoke and that sort of thing. If it's low light in the morning or evening you might see glowing discs, you know? That's quite a challenge in rallying to capture all these different elements... I'm finding it interesting talking about it because it's second nature to me now, but it took a while to get there.'

So does McMaster prefer the scenic or reportage elements of rally photography, or the pure action? 'An editor I worked with told me to always try to come back with one picture that sums up the whole event. And it's always stuck in my mind, can you actually achieve that? You'll struggle to do it with a pure action shot – there has to be something more to it. With rallying you've got the possibility to make a composition that works without a car. The car is just the icing.'





Ott Tänak, Finland

'This jump [top] in Finland is on a left-hand corner, and it's called the Amazon jump. Finland, Tänak, proper attack, sideways – I love it. I entered this in the rally photo competition and thought I might as well just prepare the acceptance speech, but it didn't win!'

Teemu Suninen, Turkey

'You're only as good as your last picture. Normally Turkey is just harsh light in the middle of summer, but they ran two lateafternoon stages this year due to Covid changes. Proper dust, low light, perfect [above].'

Colin McRae, Cypru:

'All McRae's doing here [top right] is closing his boot, but the front page in *Motoring News* was "McRAGE!" Colin was leading in 2002 on the last day, but then he rolled. They fixed the car, he went out again, rolled again and went the wrong way down the stage! This was at the end of the stage after he'd dropped down to 5th or something.'

Ken Block Switzerland

'Love working with Ken Block. If he asks you for something, you make sure you get it, because he doesn't ask you for much. He's the only driver I know that'll give it a bit extra for a picture! He said to me the note was "5 right, 100 to fifth-gear crest". Basically he's got 100m to make up his mind if he's going to lift... He even put "media" in the notes to say I'll be there with a camera. And that's the result. he gets it, you get the picture [right], and he tells six million people about it on Instagram!'







The latest Bentley Continental GT V8 and Aston Martin Vantage offer two different takes on the front-engined supercoupe formula. But which should you choose?



by RICHARD MEADEN PHOTOGRAPHY by ANDY MORGAN

BRITONS



HESE ARE ENTRY LEVEL MODELS.

The first rungs of Aston Martin and Bentley's respective ranges. While you let that sink in for a moment, let's pause to ponder their objectives, specifications and vital statistics.

Superficially these are two very similar cars. Both the product of storied British brands (OK, British so long as you ignore the mix of German, Middle Eastern and

Canadian ownership...), each boasts a 500-plus bhp 4-litre, twin-turbocharged V8 engine mated to an eight-speed torque-converter automatic transmission. Likewise, each promises to be the sportiest and purest driver's car in their marque's model portfolio.

Scratch deeper beneath the surface, however, and the differences in approach are more significant than the similarities in brand and hardware, the Continental GT V8 being a luxurious all-wheel-drive 2+2, while the Vantage is a resolute rear-wheel-drive machine strictly tailored for two.

All-out each gets tantalisingly close to 200mph, though the Aston is quicker to 62mph, hitting the benchmark time in 3.6sec versus 4.0 dead for the considerably heftier, 2165kg Bentley.

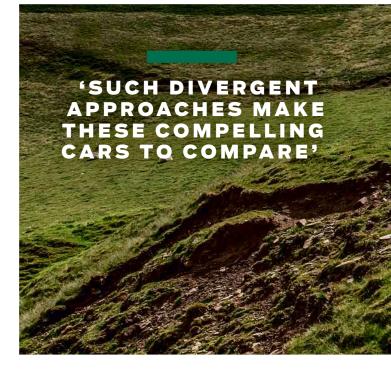
Ignoring any dealer discounts that might be floating around, the Aston starts at £124k with the auto 'box (as here), while the better-equipped Bentley begins just beyond £150k. Typical options will realistically add a further £25k or so to each. They may be the babies of the range, but both are very grown-up purchases.

Such divergent approaches to building supremely potent, prestigious and desirable coupes make these compelling cars to compare. In so doing we'll get to the heart of what separates each brand and zero in on what that means in terms of driving dynamics and owner appeal.

Shunning alphabetical convention we'll start with the Bentley. The latest-gen Conti GT has proportions and features familiar from the original, but the shape is so much more defined. It has evolved from something rather amorphous to something truly sculptural. It expresses a true sense of speed through a dramatically streamlined shape – one never better expressed than in the sharp lines that form at the headlights and flow all the way down the flanks of the car. Even the headlights themselves are extraordinary things, with jewellery-like facets that mimic a piece of cut glass.

This car's mid-green exterior and dark green interior may sound like the car equivalent of a verdant double denim, but it works exceptionally well. The quality of the leather and the stitching is first rate, though the design is quite blingy. Especially in combination with the high-gloss surfaces and chrome switches. It may not be to all















tastes, but there's no question it has the quality to carry it off, largely thanks to Bentley's production department being prepared to sign off large amounts of budget to make sure everything looks and feels of the highest possible quality.

The Aston is much more overt in its exterior styling. It's undeniably and deliberately divisive. In fact you could say it's the apex of Aston's reaction against those who complained about the previous-generation Vantage, DB9, DBS and Rapide being Russian dolls. Beautiful ones, admittedly, but all sharing the same features.

The busy, aggressive approach continues inside, with dozens of switches and heavily hooded instruments. You sit low, so there's an exaggerated cockpit-type feel, but it all just seems to try a bit too hard. Worse, compared to the Bentley it all feels rather flimsy and lacking in substance. The Conti's quality comes at a price in terms of weight, but unfortunately the lasting impression of the Vantage's rather brittle interior is one of cost saving, not weight saving. It's also well off the pace in terms of infotainment.

The flip side comes when you begin to drive. Even judged in isolation the Vantage is truly intense. Push the starter button

and it immediately pulses with energy from that AMGsourced, AML-tweaked V8. It's got some teeth, no doubt about it. You feel in close proximity to the heart of the car and the moving components that give it life and vibrancy. The Bentley is by definition a more discreet character. It starts with a promising, pulsating soundtrack, but after clearing its throat for theatrical effect the engine quickly fades into the background, felt but not heard.

These first impressions extend into the wider driving experience, the Aston feeling much more exciting from the off. It connects you to everything, and because there's more energy in the car you immediately put more energy into your driving. I only use the Bentley's paddleshift very occasionally, and largely because I feel I ought to for the purposes of the test, but it feels much more natural to use the Aston's paddles, as you're keen to put your stamp on how you make progress.

It might be a basic measure, but to me this desire to roll up your sleeves is a litmus test of how engaged you feel in the process of making progress. Advantage Vantage, then.

It's no great surprise, for Aston pursued a deliberately aggressive course with this car, the need for each model's



styling and dynamic behaviour to be reflections of one another being the mantra within Aston for all the Palmer-era cars.

Whatever you think of the Vantage's styling, there's no denying its dynamic fingerprint is a match for its attacking looks. Everything about the way it moves is amplified, that inherently sporting feel increasing incrementally as you toggle through the dynamic modes. Never less than firmly suspended, it supports itself with iron-fisted resolve, but also offers pliancy in its softer modes.

When the opportunity comes to press on with something approaching full commitment there are times when you need to put some more support into the car. This is delivered nicely in Sport+, which better controls vertical movement, particularly at the rear. This greater sense of being tieddown fosters huge confidence without adding too much tension into the damping, so the car still works with the road. Indeed, unless the surface gets particularly rough you can quite happily stay in Sport+ and not feel like you're having your teeth rattled. It's nuanced, not about body control and corner speed at all costs.

The paddleshift transmission is very good, at least by

torque-converter standards, but lacks the snap and immediacy of the best double-clutch 'boxes. This said, I'm pretty certain there's never been a more dynamically focused car fitted with a torque-converter 'box, so the fact it delivers rapid upshifts, crisp throttle-blip downshifts and rarely denies a pull for a lower gear under maximum braking efforts means that, although it's not the last word in driver engagement, it doesn't get in the way of your enjoyment.

The steering is quick-witted and has a real sense of urgency. You don't have to make large applications of lock to get the car to dive for an apex, but this means you have to calm your inputs down in order to become at one with the Vantage's voracious appetite for direction change.

It rotates with real enthusiasm, enough to test your trust that it's actually got enough grip at the rear to keep pace with the front end's rate of response. But when that penny drops, wow! You can step up several gears in terms of the commitment you show the car and the manner in which you throw it into a corner. It excels at rapid direction changes, carving through turns like a slalom skier.

Matching the chassis is straight-line performance that

Above: Continental GT wears a sharper suit in its current form, but if it's presence you're after. look no further than the Vantage (left)









Top row: Bentley test car wears optional 22-inch wheels with standard cast-iron brakes; interior quality feels fitting for a £150k car

has a raw, explosive quality. It perhaps sounds derogatory to suggest the Vantage has a hot-rod quality to the way it punches though the gears, but it's actually a compliment. That Merc motor may have a brutish quality familiar to AMG customers – something that arguably dilutes Aston's standalone DNA – but its brute force also has echoes of old-school pre-Gaydon Astons. In short, you wouldn't want to spill its pint.

Completing the package are the optional carbon-ceramic brakes of our test car (evo's Fast Fleeter). They're a little sharp on initial application, but you can compensate quite intuitively, so you rarely have to consciously moderate and modulate your inputs. Once beyond that initial bite point the brakes have terrific stopping power, stamina and feel.

This all combines to create a car that relentlessly eggs you on. Empty roundabouts, open corners, T-junctions, traffic lights – all offer you the opportunity to grab some illicit fun and burn some rubber. You need to have your wits about you if

your intention is to provoke a slide, for the breakaway is sharp and requires both swift corrective lock and confident throttle control to achieve more than an edgy stab of oversteer.

It might not conform to Aston's gentlemanly stereotype, and certainly requires skilled hands to fully exploit and enjoy, but if you place a greater emphasis on dynamism than decorum you'll find a kindred spirit in the Vantage.

To say making the switch to the Bentley is like chalk and cheese is masterful understatement, for from the moment you grip the steering wheel and squeeze the throttle the difference between them is stark. Chassis-wise the Bentley always feels slightly underdamped. Of course it has a lot of weight to contain, and you certainly don't want something so stiff it rides like a 2.2-ton skateboard, but still you can sense Bentley's struggle to find a sweet spot between the car being crashy and wallowy. This said, the current Conti is noticeably more agile and enthusiastic than its predecessor, though the spectre









of mass and momentum is always lurking in the shadows.

Were you so inclined, and had the room to do so, I'm sure you could switch everything off, lob it into a corner and get the tail to slide, but you would do so in the knowledge such treatment goes against the grain. It is not that car.

What the Conti excels at is putting the full force of its performance down into the road. It has levels and layers of performance that you access almost by accident, because it fosters an inherently less punchy driving style.

Instead of yearning for opportunities to get the thing slicing and slithering through corners, you just build speed and then stay there, enjoying apparently boundless traction and stability, combined with abundant torque and a mighty sense of acceleration. If you enjoy going very quickly with little apparent effort, you'll find the Conti GT extremely impressive.

It's inert compared to the Aston's darty, high-energy style, but make no mistake, when you decide to really give it some, the Conti is monstrously quick across the ground. Its weakness is that compared to the Aston it does feel a bit onedimensional, because it hasn't got the ability to meaningfully raise its game beyond that effortless manner of delivery. Perhaps unsurprisingly there's an Audi RS6 sensation to driving it quickly, albeit while being surrounded by more quality and carrying more mass. Like its VW Group siblings it has an ability to deliver shocking speed, but it does it in a prescriptive manner.

It would be easy to take from all this that the Aston is relentlessly uncouth, but that would sell it short. It's quite happy to drive in a more relaxed way and simply go with the flow, but compared to the Bentley it's adrenalised, as though poised on the brink of some kind of fight-or-flight mode. This makes it exciting and provides ready reminders you're in something with unusual potency. Nevertheless, this energised character compromises the Vantage's abilities

Bottom row. opposite page: our Fast Fleet Aston has 20-inch wheels and optional carbonceramic brakes: interior is shown up by the Conti's

as a GT car. Road noise, wind noise and engine noise are all significantly more intrusive than in the Bentley. Consequently the Vantage is the more selfish choice. Less the car in which you'd embark on a really nice touring holiday with your partner, more the car you'd take for a weekend hoon with your mates.

By contrast the Bentley is a soothing and relaxing car, and one that you can also drive bloody quickly without your passengers being aware of quite how fast you're going. Covert speed rather than overt speed, if you like.

Which would I have? It's very hard to choose between them, even though they're totally different cars. In my heart I'm more aligned with the Aston, but I wish it had a bit more of the Bentley's quality and polish. Then again, I wish the Bentley had a pinch more of the Aston's attitude and ability. Not just outright dynamic prowess, but its ability to excite at a visceral level.

There's no question the Bentley is a quality piece, and I'd be lying if I denied that the older I get, the more I've come to appreciate cars that will make mighty yet effortless progress. Yet still I know I would feel I was missing out on an essential degree of sporting capability and excitement if I chose Crewe over Gaydon.

In an unexpected way this pair shine a light on the trouble with many of today's premium performance cars.

The Vantage is a car that encourages you to drive quicker and with more commitment than is compatible with today's roads, yet the Bentley is also quick enough to be too fast to routinely or responsibly unleash on all but the quietest and most remote stretches. Perhaps counterintuitively, because it's more garrulous in character you get more from the Aston more of the time than the cool, calm and collected Conti GT. As ever, you pays your money and you takes your choice.

For most people the Bentley is the easier purchase, simply because it's easier to live with – less extreme and exuding an extraordinary sense of quality, refinement and prestige. If you have the means it would be an absolute pleasure to live with on a daily basis.

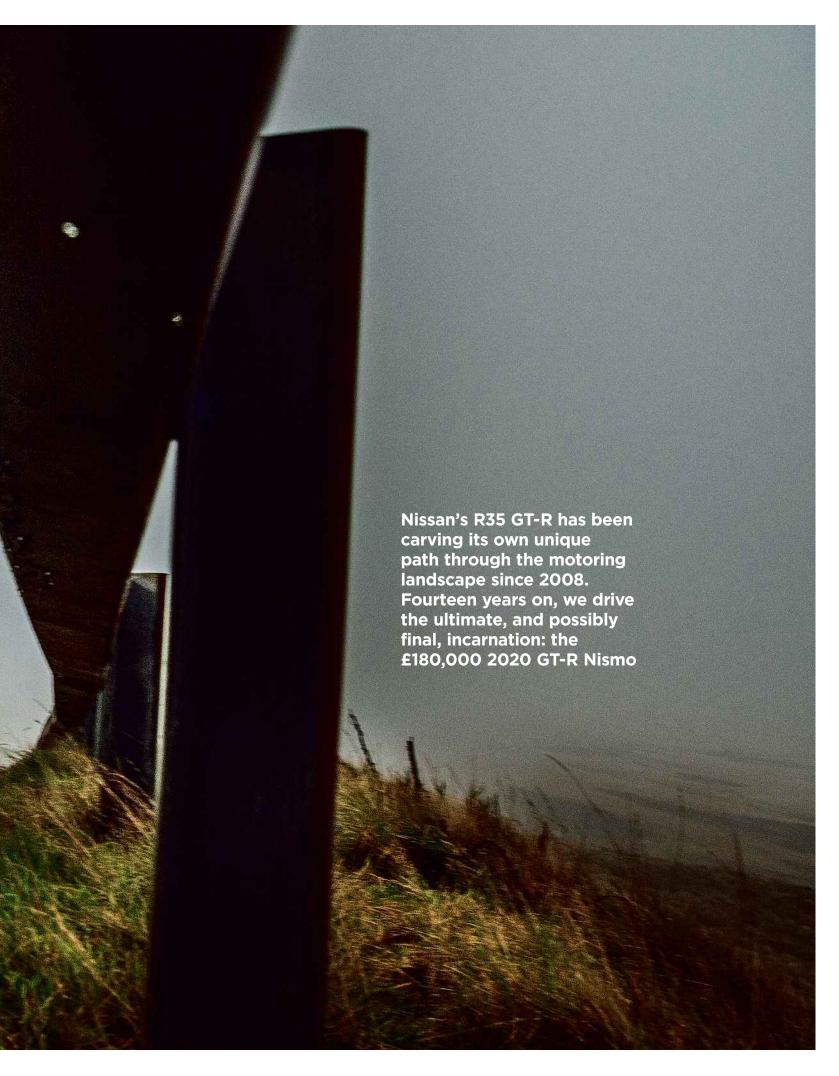
The Aston needs the right roads and opportunities to shine brightest, and presents you with greater compromises in those times when you find yourself mired in more humdrum scenarios. What's undeniable, and what ultimately elevates the Vantage above the Conti GT as a driver's car, is you always have the promise of those intense moments where, no matter how fleetingly, you and the car can raise your game to access an intense and rarefied zone.

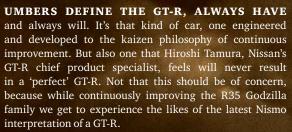
For as long as The Thrill of Driving remains this magazine's strapline, cars such as the Vantage will always prevail over cars like the Bentley. Even if it is by the narrowest, most focused and most subjective of margins.











Technically this is the 2020 model year Nismo GT-R, a car announced at the tail end of 2018, that we drove at the Lausitzring in the summer of 2019... and then 2020 did its thing so now it's late autumn as the latest Nismo finally lands at **evo** Towers v2.0 to scare the neighbours.

GT-Rs have always looked tough, Nismos tougher still. Slab sides with carbonfibre hanging from them. Creases as sharp as a Miyabi Artisan knife. Body panels slashed with intakes, aero devices shaped for a purpose that didn't include aesthetics. Its European contemporaries might look as sophisticated as Fleming's Bond ordering a martini, but the GT-R has an air about it that makes it more Jack Reacher walking into a bar fight. It operates in a different sphere to its contemporaries, too. Once the top of a healthy Japanese performance car tree, it now looks down on a barren trunk with only a few compatriots for company. The days of Impreza and Evo varieties of all sorts hanging from every branch are gone (although a green shoot is growing quickly in the guise of Toyota's GR Yaris), which makes Nissan





and Nismo's commitment to the cause even more honourable, especially so when you consider Nissan isn't exactly in a healthy condition right now. That it continues to direct resources to a 592bhp, four-wheel-drive performance car that bears next to no resemblance to anything else in its line-up is more than commendable. It's bloody inspiring.

Despite a design that's heading into its teenage years and is as familiar as that of any rival of equal iconic status, you approach a GT-R that wears the full Nismo battledress with a degree of apprehension. It's in the same league as a GT2 RS, 620R or AMG GT R Pro when it comes to palm perspiration levels. Bravado is very quickly replaced with modesty, with what lies beneath this Nismo's carbon skin running faster through your mind with every step closer you take to it.

As with rivals that focus on driver involvement and ultimate performance, lightness has been added in the form of carbonfibre, here for the bonnet, bootlid, roof, bumpers and front wings (whose GT3 RS-style cuts add 6.8kg of downforce while creating no additional drag). Combined, these reduce the body's weight by 10.5kg. With an additional 9.5kg saved in other areas and 16kg knocked off courtesy of the carbon-ceramic Brembos, the Nismo comes in at 1703kg.

It's not a sophisticated noise when you pull the aluminium door closed. The combination of the Nismo's lighter-than-expected construction and dated fixtures and fittings will come as a shock

to those used to Europe's latest premium performance products. There is a nod to 2020, though, with carbon adorning the transmission tunnel and Alcantara the dash top, while the Recaro seats pinch, hug and hold you in all the right places, although they seat you a little high, or rather don't drop low enough

Above: touches of carbonfibre and Alcantara do their best to lift the otherwise dated cabin: driver sits too high in the excellent Recaro seat

into the body of the car. Should you value tech and touchscreens over 592bhp straight-six motors and Dunlop tyres that have had their outer tread grooves removed to increase the contact patch area, you'll probably get straight back out again. There is Apple CarPlay, but really that shouldn't be your focus here.

But this has always been the case with the GT-R: you either get it or you don't. Many don't and buy a 911 instead, and while Porsche's perennial sports car has been an ever-present rival to the R35, the two couldn't be more individual. Only in recent years has the GT-R, in Nismo trim, come close to the 911 RS models, and even then it sits somewhere between the naturally aspirated GT3 RS and the demonic GT2 RS in character and performance. You're unlikely to find someone who would dispose of either Porsche to own the Nismo, but there are also those who wouldn't give the 911s a second glance on their way to buying a GT-R. That Porsche has launched and facelifted two entire generations of 911 Turbo and has just released its third in the time the R35 has been











in production you can view in two ways: either Nissan is a little slow on the take-up and is milking the R35 for all it can, or it still doesn't consider the project finished and has yet more to come. I'm firmly in the latter camp.

The straight-talking VR38DETT doesn't sugar-coat the process of burning 98 octane and oxygen. Its starter button requires you to depress it a fraction longer than in more modern machinery and the result is as far a cry from an augmented amplified sound as you can get. Stone cold on a dawn autumn morning it has the gravelly tone of someone who spent the night with a bottle of bourbon and one too many packets of Marlboro Reds. The GT-R was considered to have a rough edge to its mechanical soundtrack in 2008 and time hasn't smoothed those vocal cords one bit. And it's all the better for it.

It's in and around the straight-six that so much work has been done on this latest Nismo. With a pair of turbochargers taken from Nissan's GT3 race car, their responses over those of a regular GT-R, the previous Nismo and the latest Track Edition are more noticeable than you'd ever expect. Once you've eyeballed every temperature gauge offered (there remains one for everything that has a fluid passing through it) you start to explore the throttle's travel. There's some lag - it's to be expected - but there's also less of it, and even on small throttle inputs the GT-R fills its lungs and heaves down the road with that trademark punch that has you involuntarily tensing as you would if you knew someone was about to leave their size-nine footprint on the small of your back. Some things never change.

What has changed is how Nismo has sharpened this GT-R's response times. The race car's turbos make do with ten vanes rather than 11 and they are all 0.3mm thinner, which results in a near 15 per cent reduction in mass, and inertia drops by nearly a quarter, combining to improve throttle response by as much as 20 per cent. Away from the numbers it results in an almost instantaneous response to your throttle inputs once that slight initial lag is overcome. Yet despite peak torque not arriving until 3600rpm, speed and revs pile on with a rabid ferociousness, and despite the timber it carries this GT-R still moves across the landscape with McLaren-esque athleticism as it calls on all of its 353bhp per ton.

Then there is the noise. The induction growl, the angry, guttural roar that echoes along the titanium exhaust before exploding into the atmosphere through blue-tinged quadruple exhaust pipes, the whine from the turbos – all of them assault your senses, fight for your attention, but still your focus remains pinned to the horizon as the Nismo claws you into its grasp and a steely resolve falls over you. If you only ever drove this GT-R in a straight line and experienced its monstrous thump and lightning pace you'd be left short of breath but desperate for one more hit.

Thankfully we've more than a straight line to play with. It's not a softly sprung car, the Nismo GT-R. They may have reduced the front spring compression by five per cent and the rebound by 20, but the GT-R remains a car you'd be kind to call stiffly sprung and not so far off from being cruel if you described it as having the ride quality of a cart. But this is when you're milling about and using a £180,000 GT-R for the everyday grind, because when you combine the performance of the blown six with the chassis the Nismo has been bestowed with, the whole package crystallises and the GT-R magic catches you in its spell.

It comes down to the control the chassis delivers. The steering feels light on first acquaintance, overly so if it's been a while since you last drove the least Nissan-like Nissan, but the directness and clarity that allows you to position it in, through and out of a turn remains unique to

Left: 3.8-litre V6 gains turbos from the GT3 race car. Far left: carbonceramic brakes (410mm front, 390mm rear) are now standard the GT-R. There will forever be sections of the internet dedicated to pulling apart the dynamics of the R35 as a point-and-squirt oaf with the tactility and involvement of a supertanker. These tend to be the views of those who have never driven an R35.









Below left: Nissan says it has improved the six-speed dualclutch transmission, but it still betrays the GT-R's age Squeeeeze the throttle deeper into the footwell, keep your grip on the wheel relaxed, let the inherently stiff body absorb any slack, and the Nismo flows with an unexpected delicacy, settling into a rhythm as you link the exit of one turn with the entry to another in ever shortening blinks of your eyes. What

body roll there is remains measured and consistent, the Nismo settling on its Bilstein-supplied chassis with a precision that instils confidence and encourages you to explore deeper into the armoury on offer. Perhaps the biggest surprise is how keenly the Nismo reacts and moves to your commands, especially so the front end, which works every millimetre of its Dunlops' increased contact patches to generate more grip under higher loads. In the dry you'll need a commitment level that's borderline reckless to breach traction, while in the wet and on poor surfaces there's a level of grip that takes a few committed braking points and apexes for your grey matter to compute just how hard you can lean on the front axle into a corner and call upon the rear to get the job done on exit. It may lack the sophistication of today's latest all-wheel-drive, 600bhp super sports cars but the Nismo GT-R drips character from every piece of carbon that's been thrown at it.

Dig deeper and you find yet more precision and composure, and soon the GT-R has banished those early thoughts of a fidgety, roughriding machine that made low-speed journeys so tiresome. You feel, sense and experience those trad R35 high points but with more clarity, polish and involvement. You could drive a cheaper, more accessible 992 Carrera S across the same road at a similar pace, but Japan's warrior offers a more exciting, engaging and rewarding

alternative drive. It's a unique experience; no other car thrills and excites like a GT-R. Never has, unlikely ever will.

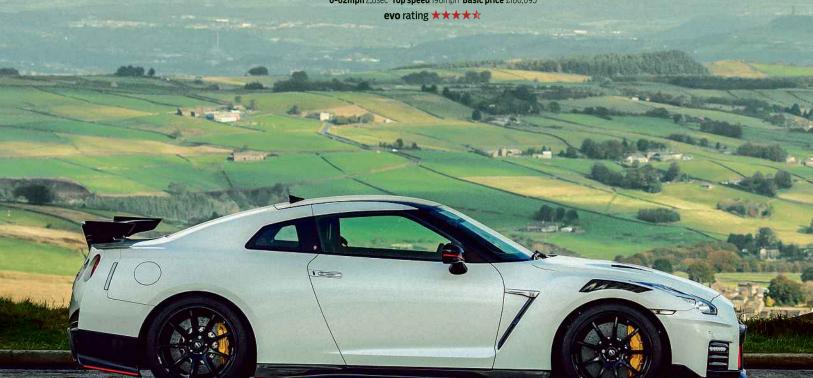
The only component that holds the Nismo GT-R back and highlights its age is its six-speed dual-clutch 'box. Updated software has brought quicker upshifts and sharper downshifts in the most extreme R mode, and it needs them. Left in its regular mode the upshifts can't keep up with the rampant acceleration, the delay between pulling a paddle for a downshift and the gear engaging measured in moon cycles. It's a glaring chink in the GT-R's otherwise impenetrable armour.

There's no denying the GT-R remains an acquired taste and a brave purchasing decision when you consider the other cars you can buy for this level of financial commitment. Especially when £35k gets you an original R35 and for an additional £20k Litchfield will provide you with a 750bhp upgrade... Cost aside, however, the R35 Nismo GT-R remains one of the great driver's cars. It hooks you in from the moment it takes its first lunge for the horizon and leaves you transfixed and addicted to its performance every time you experience the brutality of it all. It's a physical and demanding car delivering a thrill we once craved and celebrated, and there's every reason why we should still do so today, even if the £78k cheaper Track Edition offers 90 per cent of the Nismo's performance.

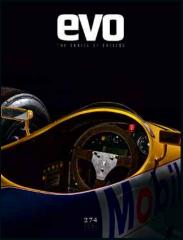
There is also the very serious possibility this could be the last GT-R. Having forecast a \$4.1bn loss for the year to March 2021, after posting a \$6.2bn loss the previous year, even the most ardent enthusiast and GT-R fanboy must understand the challenges Nissan faces in making the decision to develop a replacement for such a wonderfully bespoke, niche and small-selling super sports car. But if this is to be Godzilla's last breath as we know it, it's one hell of a finale. ■

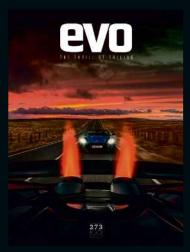
Nissan GT-R Nismo Engine V6, 3799cc, twin-turbo Power 592bhp @ 6800rpm

Torque 481lb ft @ 3600-5800rpm Weight 1703kg Power-to-weight 353bhp/ton
0-62mph 2.8sec Top speed 196mph Basic price £180,095











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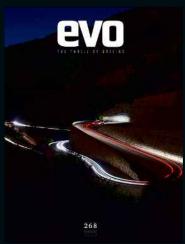
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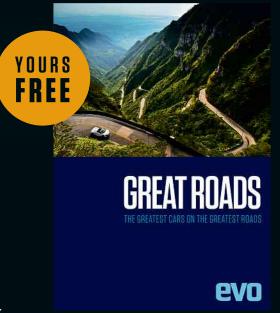
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INO VACCARELLA CLOSED THE DOOR ON HIS

classroom for the last time that week. His students had long since ran outside into the baking Sicilian sunshine, excited about playing football in the streets of Palermo and, no doubt, the spectacle of the Targa Florio road race that weekend, which would allow them to get literally within touching distance of the world's fastest racing cars as they passed by their front doorsteps at speeds of 150mph and more. Unfathomably, given the magnitude of the challenge and its correspondingly gruesome dangers, in 1970 the race formed part of the then WEC-equivalent World Championship of Makes, and moreover, their teacher Signor Vaccarella was in with a chance of winning outright at the wheel of a factory team Ferrari.

Anyway, where was I... Ah, the road to Penybontfawr. Yep, as you were...

Unsurprisingly, Vaccarella knew the roads around the island forwards, backwards and inside out. What was more of a challenge was that Ferrari was bringing its frontline V12-powered endurance racer, the 512 S, the same car that a fortnight earlier it had entered at Monza, and that two weeks later would be lining up at 'the old' Spa. Yet, rather than bring its rival 917 to Sicily, Porsche had prepared a fleet of 350bhp 908/3 Spyders specially for the Targa little more than karts with an air-cooled flat-eight wedged perilously close behind the driver's shoulders. Given there were nearly 900 corners a lap to contend with, having a car that weighed under 700kg with the wheelbase of a supermarket trolley was a significant advantage; Vaccarella would have to sweat it out under a blazing Mediterranean sun in the 900kg-plus, 550bhp beast better suited to the Mulsanne Straight.

It's most definitely not a good idea to drift off dreaming about 1970s sports prototype racing cars when you're at the wheel of a Ferrari 812, roof or no roof. A car of barely concealed savagery, it can on occasion also be a soothing machine, as smooth as the patter of the salesman who talked you into spending £300,000 and a whole chunk more on options in the first place, but by the same token you must never completely relax, because to do so at the controls of a naturally aspirated 789bhp V12 is to flirt with potential carnage. And yet... and yet... Nino's Sicilian heroics in the 220mph-plus 512 are all I can think about as the 812 and I engage in hand-to-hand combat across the narrow, twisting lanes of north Wales, deeper into Snowdonia: a very big, very angry Ferrari on a very small, drastically unsuitable road; the alarming sensation of holding a hand grenade and wondering whether now might or might not be the right time to pull the pin out.

It's true, I may have paid more attention in GCSE Maths if my teacher had also won the Le Mans 24 Hours outright (as Vaccarella did in 1964). Not only may I have gained a sound grasp of trigonometry and long division,

but I might have eventually become a potential customer for this, the Ferrari 812 GTS, a convertible version of the superbad, superfast, er, Superfast. Vaccarella's 512 was also the open version, the rush of air over the Spider's cockpit some relief during his 11-lap workout. I'm a fraud in comparison, the warm autumnal air gently lapping around my ears, all modern automotive conveniences on board, and all that horsepower that dwarfs the figure developed by the 512. Still, the GTS is about double the weight of the old racer, at 1645kg dry, and is also some 120kg heavier than the Superfast.

It's hard to convey in the pictures just what a formidable car the 812 GTS is. Everything about it screams power, expense and decadent consumption. It takes the same mechanicals of the Superfast and opens the lid via a folding metal hard-top, which retracts into the body behind the rear deck in 14 seconds. Until its launch last year, Ferrari hadn't made such a car in regular production form since the oftenreplicated Daytona Spider of the early '70s, although with limited-run machines such as the 550 Barchetta and 575M Superamerica it's not a market niche that Ferrari had abandoned completely in recent years.



Right: 789bhp means the GTS is happy to break traction at the rear at will, but you need to be on top of your game if you do so with the stability aids fully off





It's that sense of intimidating size that preoccupies the mind every time you lower yourself down into the leather-scented GTS cockpit. The passenger seat feels as though it's sitting over on the pavement, and the car's extremities appear to cover a vast portion of the county you're in. Helpfully, the rising edges of the front wings, swollen humps with a mesh covering for the air exit, are a corner marker in the style of a Land Rover, a necessary outlier to help judge width. Lowering the roof is as easy as you may expect, a touch of a button all that's required, and the rear screen is also powered, increasing airflow with the roof down, but also providing fresh air and an amplified soundtrack when the roof is closed. Otherwise, it's all entirely familiar to anyone who's had the privilege of tooling around in a current or recent generation of Ferrari, down to the twin

info displays and their control buttons either side of the rev counter, and of course, the famous manettino switch on the steering wheel.

Thumb the plump, angry red starter button on the wheel and the V12 kicks into life. Even the way it fires up expresses its highly strung state of tune. If the engine is cold, expect a rolling barrage of exhaust noise through the rear pipes as the cats heat up rapidly, assisting in getting this enormous engine – somehow – through current legislation. There's a thrum and tingle through the car – it's not rough in any way, but already even a giant of a car such as the GTS is patently ruled by the motor that lurks underneath that comically proportioned bonnet.

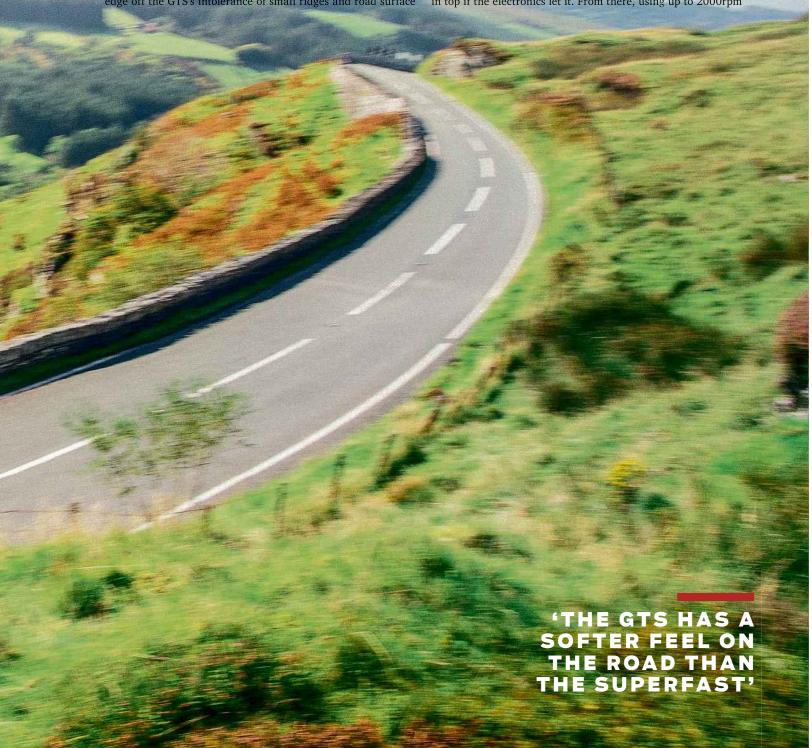


of Tour de France Blue it just screams 'LOOK AT ME AND MY ENORMOUSLY POWERFUL CAR!', and there is many a moment during my time with it that my grin is of the meek and apologetic variety. Correspondingly, it's not a car to generate envy, however decadent it may be, something that seems peculiar to big frontengined supercars in a way that sometimes is not the case with the mid-engined stuff. Perhaps it's the more stately, old-money aura of a classically formed berlinetta versus the racerish flash of a low-slung mid-engined machine that makes the difference?

Immediately the GTS has a softer feel on the road than the Superfast. The dampers have been recalibrated to compensate for the extra weight, and the GTS is a little more laid-back as a result, but that's not to say that you won't toggle the 'Bumpy Road' button in search of a better ride still. To do so just takes the edge off the GTS's intolerance of small ridges and road surface

damage, with the inevitable flip side that when pushing hard it can sometimes leave the car a little stretched to control its mass fully; that's the time to do without it. It's also the time to switch to Race mode, if you haven't already done so, or be a little bolder and go for CST Off, which peels away certain electronic safety nets but in usual Ferrari style leaves some semblance of a guardian remaining. I find myself drawn towards the latter increasingly on this journey because not only does it allow you to get a sense of the raw power of an unfettered V12, but also to experience what effect that has on the chassis.

It hasn't taken long to compartmentalise the GTS's delivery. The seven-speed twin-clutch 'box won't let the revs drop below around 1600rpm in a higher gear, but the V12 will pull with vigour from this point. It would probably walk away from idle in top if the electronics let it. From there, using up to 2000rpm





gives more than enough performance for the everyday. You'll keep up with traffic, maybe even overtake the odd dawdler, and feel generally unstressed about life. Having that much power in reserve tends to have that effect.

Using between 3000 and 4000rpm from the Tipo F140GA V12 is more than enough to get along indecently quickly on the road. You can really feel the guts of the 529lb ft of available torque now, and hear the familiar gargle of the F140. Is it sacrilege to admit that I don't actually enjoy the sound of this engine that much? Well there, I said it anyway. It's a busy, tight, shrill sort of sound, one with plenty of drama, but not the musical yowl and twang of Vaccarella's 512 V12, or even a Lamborghini Aventador's for that matter. Its voice alone doesn't make the hairs on the back of my neck stand to attention, but using up to 5000rpm does, because this is supercar performance now, riding the crest of that power wave, each gearchange slotting in almost before the brain has registered the message was sent via synapse to the fingers to squeeze the right-hand paddle. Suddenly this big, top-down cruiser has got very serious indeed, and the concentration needs to be attuned to suit.

Sometimes it's hard to get beyond this point in the GTS. It does depend on the road, naturally. Perhaps on a Middle Eastern highway, broad, ripple-free and empty, it's easy to drive everywhere as though your hair is on fire. Not in Wales though. Not today. This cross-country route to the far reaches of Snowdonia misses out much of the A5 and correspondingly provides much more of a test, from medium-fast curves between hedges connected by medium straights, to much tighter sections with awkward crests, single-track stretches and difficult cambers. Then there's the blast across the moor too, more of an exercise in restraint less the speedo readout goes ballistic in the blink of an eye.

Get to 6000rpm and the GTS changes. The V12's note hardens and the whole car is now shot through with an industrial-grade adrenaline hit, presumably ingested via a bucket to this prancing horse. It's very much a conscious decision to leave your foot planted on the pedal, such is the reach of this engine. The noise is now thick and dominating, even with the roof lowered, and the scenery is beginning to go in reverse. As I climb the hill out of one village and up the side of a mountain I don't get much further, because I'm off the power, hard on the brakes, trying to rein it all back in again, almost flicking the nose into the first corner, then back the other way, using the throttle to balance the car, not to break the horizon. But then the road opens up again, and now the revs

'YOU'LL NEVER FORGET HITTING THE V12'S 8500RPM POWER PEAK'



climb. Let's say it's in second gear to at least assume some semblance of legality.

It just doesn't seem possible that an engine displacing six-and-a-half litres can get so feral at the top end like it's a Honda K20. If there's one thought that won't leave me in all my time with the GTS it's simply, 'How do they do that?' All those engine parts, so meticulously designed, fastidiously reduced in mass, all moving together in unison thousands of times per second, for hours, months and years. An engine built to last your long-term ownership of the car, to start every morning, to tolerate queuing to park at the supermarket, and yet one that revs out just a mare's whisker short of 9000rpm. If nothing else, it feels like a triumph of engineering.

You'll never forget your first time hitting the V12's 8500rpm power peak. The drama is heightened by the sound and force of air rushing over and around your head, whipping away the inevitable screams of excitement (and perhaps terror from your passenger). I don't mean to sound wet, but it's a level of performance that's just not useable on the road. It's too much, too great a level of violence compared to other traffic just bumbling along, largely minding its own business. Overtake someone using the full beans and it's like you're trying to blow them out to the Irish Sea. Get really brave and work through the gears and the speedo will be reading jail-time numbers before you've even had the slightest notion of the consequences. The full, bonkers rev range therefore exists partly as a Top: naturally aspirated V12 is unchanged from the Superfast and as epic as ever Above: 398mm front, 360mm rear carbon-ceramic brakes are the same too







forbidden fruit, always trying to lure you in, but also as something you dip into every now and then, when the road and surroundings allow, when perhaps no one is looking. It becomes a very personal exercise between you and the car - between you and the V12, really. It's part of what makes the car special, an affirmation of Ferrari's work to keep the big, naturally aspirated V12 for as long as the legislators will allow.

Having been so consumed by the GTS's engine, the rest of the car takes a little longer to come into focus. The typically light, fast steering of a modern Ferrari takes a while to acclimatise to, but once you've clicked mentally with its ways it's amazing how natural it feels before long. There are some very clever things with acronyms going on beneath the surface, hinting and cajoling with the steering's torque what you should and shouldn't be doing. Of course, the structure doesn't have the impregnability of a carbonfibre tub, but it does a fair job of feeling all as one - don't expect drastic rear-view mirror wobble here. If you really hustle it you're aware of mass moving around; as already mentioned the firmer damping mode is really a must, and the throttle application of the engine alters the pitch and yaw of the chassis in a pronounced way.

Feeling brave? Twist and hold the manettino and go for 'all off'. The GTS doesn't need provocation or setting up for a sideways corner, it merely needs a stab of throttle and it'll spin up its rears, but that in itself is quite a challenge: too much throttle initially and the risk is the rear overtaking the front, which on the public road doesn't bear thinking about. The easy trap to fall into, though, is to be too aggressive coming off the gas as much as going on it, because the formidable compression of the V12 at higher

revs means snapping shut the throttle has a drastic effect on the attitude of the car and requires a very, very quick steering input back the other way to save the situation. I guarantee your heart will be beating a lot faster afterwards.

The accuracy you can summon in the GTS is the greatest impression it makes. As I reach my destination on what feels like the very last day of summer, the road narrows along a rock face on one side and a big drop on the other. Here, a soft thisp sound accompanies the rise and fall of the V12 along the valley, and it's only when photographer Aston Parrott confirms things via the display on the back of his camera that I realise it's the gentle slap of individual stems of long grass on the GTS's front left corner. The car is entirely filling its side of the road down to the final centimetres, but just a couple of fingers' width away from the jagged rocks I'm brushing the protruding grass - the confidence I have to do that is entirely due to the inherent precision of the 812 and the relationship I've built up with this extraordinary car.

Vaccarella's 512 was probably doing the same and then more, but he'd never have heard it above the scream of the unsilenced V12 and partisan crowd. He came third that year behind two 908 Porsches, in the circumstances a brilliant result. That Ferrari can still make a car such as the 812 GTS also feels like a brilliant result for those of us lucky enough to try, let alone buy, this grandest of open GTs.

It's not just the melancholic autumnal sun that sets across the long bonnet as I drive home eastwards, but the feeling that there won't be many more days with new Ferraris like this one. An electric replacement will undoubtedly be faster, more violent still, but it'll never connect with the soul like the 812 GTS.

Ferrari 812 GTS

Engine V12, 6496cc Power 789bhp @ 8500rpm Torque 529lb ft @ 7000rpm Weight (dry) 1645kg Power-to-weight (dry) 487bhp/ton 0-62mph <3,0sec Top speed >211mph Basic price c£300,000

evo rating ****





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TYRE TEST 2019 1

Great tyres can transform your performance car, but which options are the best of the current crop? The annual **evo** tyre test has the answers

by JOHN BARKER

PHOTOGRAPHY by ASTON PARROTT

T'S THE TURN OF THE 19-INCH ULTRA HIGH PERFORMANCE (UHP) TYRE

this year, in the best-selling 235/35 R19 size, a size that's the most popular partly because it's used by many of today's high performance hatchbacks.

Most of the premium tyre brands are represented in our test, including Goodyear with its all-new Eagle F1 SuperSport, the notable exception being Bridgestone, which has a new Potenza set for launch in 2021. Of the other absentees, Yokohama couldn't meet our request in time due to Covid-19 related staff layoffs, Hankook, Toyo and Falken all have revised tyres on the way, and Maxxis, which we included unofficially in last year's test of 18-inch UHP tyres, unfortunately did not have any stock for this test.

As always in the **evo** test, the results are decided in part by objective testing and in part subjective. A tyre that delivers good numbers doesn't necessarily feel good beneath you, and the reverse can also be true, so we rate them all for steering feel and feedback, for the confidence they inspire on track, and how refined and responsive they are in a general driving environment too. In this way we aim to provide a full and rounded view of each tyre to better inform your next purchase.



THE CAR

Once again, test car duties were ably filled by the Volkswagen Golf GTI, in this instance a Mk7.5 Performance version, with 242bhp and, more pertinently, a solid 273lb ft of torque from just 1600rpm, sent through the front wheels via a seven-speed DSG gearbox. As ever, the GTI provides a consistent and feelsome platform that can exploit a tyre's ability to the full, wet or dry, but equally will expose any weakness, whether it's lack of traction or grip, poor balance or vague feedback. Helping to ensure the required consistency are supportive seats, air conditioning and durable brakes.

THE TRACK

Covid-19 travel restrictions demanded a different approach this year but one that still gave excellent results. Objective tests such as wet and dry braking and aquaplaning were carried out, as they normally would be, by Continental staff at Continental's Hannover test track. The difference is that subjective testing was carried out in the UK, at the MIRA proving ground, with the support of Continental UK staff and facilities on site. So the wet and dry handling tests, lap timing and subjective assessments, and the road route, were carried out by evo here in the UK.

THE TYRES

All of the tested tyres were independently sourced by **evo**. Prices shown are an average from a number of suppliers. EU Tyre Labels ratings in brackets: RR = Rolling Resistance, Wet = wet grip, Noise = dB



2. Dunlop Sport Maxx RT2 235/35 ZR19 91Y XL (RR C, Wet A, Noise 68) £150



1. Continental

SportContact 6 235/35 7R19 91Y XI

(RR E, Wet A, Noise 72)

£133

3. Goodyear
Eagle F1 SuperSport
235/35 ZR19 91Y XL
(RR E, Wet A, Noise 72)



4. Michelin Pilot Sport 4 S 235/35 ZR19 91Y XL (RR C, Wet A, Noise 72)



5. Nokian Powerproof 235/35 ZR19 91Y XL (RR C, Wet A, Noise 72) £110



6. Pirelli P Zero (PZ4) 235/35 ZR19 91Y XL (RR E, Wet A, Noise 71) £124



7. Vredestein Ultrac Vorti 235/35 ZR19 91Y XL (RR E, Wet B, Noise 70)

WET HANDLING - LAP TIME

Tyre	Seconds	%
Pire ll i	46.0	100
Goodyear	46.7	98.5
Nokian	46.7	98.5
Michelin	46.8	98.3
Dunlop	47.2	97.4
Vredestein	48.0	95.8
Continental	48.5	94.8

WET HANDLING - SUBJECTIVE

Tyre	Points	%
Pire ll i	62.0	100
Dunlop	58.5	94.4
Nokian	56.5	91.1
Continental	56.0	90.3
Goodyear	55.5	89.5
Vredestein	55.0	88.7
Michelin	54.5	87.9



WET HANDLING

WE CHOSE A RELATIVELY SHORT BUT CHALLENGING LAP

on the MIRA wet handling circuit. The sprinkler-fed circuit is quite narrow, demanding accuracy, and throws a couple of transitions into the mix, plus a trailing-throttle cresting corner and a long, large-diameter circle that leads onto the longest straight.

The Pirelli was the star turn here, almost a second faster than the next best and subjectively head and shoulders above the rest too. The Pirelli offers the best of everything, with a strong sense of grip and a very secure balance, so you can push the very grippy and decisive front end and carry speed without the risk of the rear getting loose. Fast and secure, it was in a different league to everything else.

Fifth on lap time but second subjectively was the Dunlop, which also offered good bite and a good feeling of grip on the slick surface. It was a little more willing to move the back end to help decisive turn-in, but this never developed into anything more and so was exploitable, while traction was superb. A confidence-inspiring tyre.

The Nokian and Goodyear were equal second fastest but of the pair the Nokian was preferred subjectively, impressing with its turn-in grip and stable balance. It offered great traction, just needing a moment longer to get straight on corner exits compared with the Pirelli. The Goodyear also offered good traction, carried speed well and gave better feedback through the wheel, but felt more delicately balanced, the front and rear feeling on tip-toe at the limit.

Slowest by a significant margin was the Continental, which was at odds with how it felt, with good turn-in aided by an exploitable rear that would slip a little but not go too far. However, it had poor traction out of corners, needing to be almost straight before it would take power.

Sixth fastest and sixth subjectively was the Vredestein. An overly tactile and noisy tyre even on the wet surface, it was nonetheless effective, offering good traction and turn-in and a stable feel in the tricky transitions. On lap time, the Michelin was fourth fastest, just a tenth behind the Nokian and Goodyear. It offered stability under braking, sharp turn-in and excellent traction, but was least well rated subjectively because while the front end was hooked up the rear couldn't keep up; it felt lightly loaded and loose at crucial points, giving the car a nervous feel.



WET CIRCLE

THE CLOSELY MATCHED TOP THREE

here were also in the top four on the wet handling circuit. On a wetted asphalt surface with an inner diameter just short of 70m, the Michelin generated the highest lateral G, lapping in 12.39sec. This put it fractionally ahead of the Pirelli and Goodyear, which were tied on 12.42sec. There was then a step to the Dunlop and Nokian, tied on 12.54sec, and then came the Continental on 12.60sec. Slowest of all was the Vredestein, trailing the Continental by more than a tenth of a second.

WET CIRCLE

Tyre	Seconds	%	
Michelin	12.39	100	
Goodyear	12.42	99.7	
Pirelli	12.42	99.7	
Dunlop	12.54	98.8	
Nokian	12.54	98.8	
Continental	12.60	98.3	
Vredestein	12.71	97.5	



BRAKING AND ROLLING RESISTANCE

FULL ANTI-LOCK STOPS REVEAL A tyre's ultimate performance in the crucial braking tests, stopping in a straight line from 80kph (50mph) in the wet, and from 100kph (62mph) in the dry. Having set the benchmark on the wet circle, the Michelin topped the table in wet braking and did the same in the dry too. In the wet it stopped in 26m dead, a significant 1.7m better than the next tyre, the Continental. In the dry, it stopped in 33.6m, this time just a fraction (0.2m) ahead of the next best, which was

A close third in the wet was the Goodyear, 0.3m beyond the second-placed Continental, with the Pirelli in fourth with a further 0.7m. The Pirelli and Goodyear swapped places in the dry, stopping 0.5m and 1.1m after the standard-setting Michelin respectively.

again the Continental.

The Nokian finished fifth in both the wet

and the dry tests, off the pace by 2.8m in the former and 1.9m in the latter. Lower ranking in both tests was the Vredestein, which took 3.6m longer to stop than the Michelin in the wet, and 2.5m more in the dry. However, it was the Dunlop that took longest to stop in the wet, a full car length more than the Michelin. It was sixth in the dry.

Since 2012 all new tyres have come with a rolling resistance rating, from A (best) through to G (worst), the difference in fuel economy between these bookends being 0.5 litres per 100km. Independent testing doesn't always correlate to the stated rating, however, and here we see the Continental, which is rated E, outperforming our C-rated tyres - the Dunlop, Michelin and Nokian. The rest are rated E, though the Goodyear generates appreciably less rolling resistance than the last-placed Pirelli.

WET BRAKING

Tyre	Metres	%
Michelin	26.0	100
Continental	27.7	93.9
Goodyear	28.0	92.9
Pirelli	28.7	90.6
Nokian	28.8	90.3
Vredestein	29.6	87.8
Dunlop	30.1	86.4

DRY BRAKING

Tyre	Metres	%
Michelin	33.6	100
Continental	33.8	99.4
Pirelli	34.1	98.5
Goodyear	34.7	96.8
Nokian	35.5	94.6
Dun l op	35.6	94.4
Vredestein	36.1	93.0

ROLLING RESISTANCE

HOFFING HEGICI	AHOL	
Tyre	Co-eff	%
Continenta	0.831	100
Dunlop	0.840	98.9
Michelin	0.873	95.2
Nokian	0.894	93.0
Goodyear	0.917	90.6
Vredestein	0.977	85.1
Pire ll i	1.017	81.7





Michelin were noticeably further off the

pace this time, with Continental again

trailing in last place.

residual lateral acceleration generated in

5mm of water tackled at a number of speeds

between 60 and 90kph (37 and 56mph).

89.1

85.2

80.8

Vredestein

Goodyear

Michelin

Continental

3.01

DRY HANDLING

THE DRY HANDLING LAP WE FASHIONED ON THE handling circuit at MIRA was short but demanding. It started off slightly uphill, the flying start leading into a slight kink left at speed and then immediately into a long right, the left-right testing stability in transition, the right-hander with its 75m radius testing outright grip and balance. A short straight then led into a shallow right and the braking zone for a tight right-left chicane, testing turn-in and poise, and traction on the exit. The final leg was a gradually tightening, 80m-radius right-hander with a late, slightly downhill apex.

Equal fastest were the Michelin and Pirelli on 52.15sec. As usual, all the tyres were close on time but quite different in feel, so although the seven tyres were covered by just one second, subjectively they scored very differently. The Pirelli matched the Michelin's time but subjectively was rated fourth while the Michelin was rated best. The Michelin felt so keyed in to the surface, so grippy and stable, that it made the lap feel easy. It carried speed with confidence everywhere but especially into the first sequence, the left kink into the long right, which it rolled into with just a slight lift while some others needed a dab of brake. It was a positive, inspiring performance.

No other tyre quite matched it but the Continental came closest, despite being a half second off its pace and fifth fastest. It too had great traction and carried speed into the first curve, and bolstered confidence with its positive response and very mild scrub in the faster turns. A great dry-road tyre. Third on lap time and third subjectively, the Goodyear felt like a tyre that wanted to be the Michelin, giving even crisper steering response and delivering great turn-in and traction. It just lacked the Michelin's stability at the limit.

The Pirelli made the speed and felt great on its first lap, matching the Michelin's crisp transition, traction and stability, but it seemed to lose its edge quickly, its keenness softening noticeably on the second lap. The Nokian was sixth on lap time and equal fifth subjectively. It felt stable and calm, springing no surprises, but it felt rather woolly in feel and precision.

The Dunlop was the slowest of the seven but equal fifth subjectively. It didn't have the grip or positivity of the best, scrubbing wide and feeling imprecise and sounding a bit hard-pressed too. The Vredestein was equal third fastest with the Goodyear but lowest rated subjectively. It was a bit noisy and made everything seem like hard work.



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ROAD ROUTE

OUR FIVE-MILE 'ROAD ROUTE' WAS

fashioned entirely within MIRA, which offers a huge variety of surface finishes, along with features such as expansion joints and raised and sunken manhole covers.

The Michelin was our favourite, giving steering with a wonderful sense of connection with lots of feedback. It wasn't as crisp on centre at higher speeds and was reasonably loud on coarse surfaces, but it dealt well with sharp impacts. Close behind was the Continental, which wasn't quite as connected or tactile at lower speeds but felt calm and more direct at higher speeds. It also had obvious noise on coarse surfaces but was able to smooth off abrupt inputs.

The Nokian put in a good performance too, taking the sting out of ridges and being reasonably quiet on all but the poorest surfaces, but its steering felt a little light at low speed and lacked feedback. So too did the Dunlop, and its ride was rather hit and miss, smoothing some impacts but wrong-footed by others. The Pirelli scored the same as the Dunlop, being impressively quiet on highly textured surfaces but noisy elsewhere, while its steering was softer in response than the best.

The Golf's steering felt light and glassy on the Vredestein but improved with speed, while there was an underlying noise and it felt clumsy over some bumps. The Goodyear had great steering feedback but was noisy and tough over many of the surfaces.

ROAD ROUTE

	Points	%	
Michelin	25.0	100	
Continental	24.5	98.0	
Nokian	23.5	94.0	
Dunlop	22.5	90.0	
Pirelli	22.5	90.0	
Vredestein	22.0	88.0	
Goodyear	22.0	88.0	



RESULTS

7 TH VREDESTEIN
The Ultra Vorti is a decent tyre that showed well in the aquaplaning tests and set a good lap time on the dry circuit too. It was at or near the bottom of the table in many tests, though, and subjectively was noisy and lacked the connection of the best. It's worth noting that an updated version is due in the new year. BLACKCIRCLES SAYS... Despite not scoring highly on tyre label scores for fuel efficiency, customers have overall been happy when buying this tyre. Positive reviews often comment on road holding and

6 TH DUNLOP 93.0 By far the best in aquaplaning, the Sport Maxx RT2 was also highly rated on the wet handling circuit. It wasn't as impressive in the dry though, being marginally the slowest on track and middleranked subjectively, and also marked down on the road for a lack of feel and refinement. BLACKCIRCLES SAYS... With an overall review score of 4.6/5

braking performance.

on Blackcircles.com, over 1900 motorists have been impressed with the Dunlop, many commenting on its low noise and reliable grip.

TH GOODYEAR 93.
The Eagle F1 SuperSport had 93.7 steering feel and feedback as good as the best, helping it achieve strong dry results. It delivered good objective wet performances too, but while its steering was outstanding its refinement was less good: on poor surfaces it was noisy and bumpy.

BLACKCIRCLES SAYS... Released last year, the Goodyear is a tyre that has impressed customers at Blackcircles.com, leading to a 4.7/5 overall review score. Excellent grip and handling are often cited.

TH NOKIAN 94.4 A great result for the Powerproof. It's not the most tactile or the sharpest steering here but it delivered strong performances in the wet, including equal second fastest on the wet track and good aquaplaning resistance. This it

combines with decent everyday refinement and good value. BLACKCIRCLES SAYS... The Nokian is not a tyre that we sell. As such we are unfortunately unable to provide any insight into its popularity with our customers.

3 RD PIRELLI The 'PZ4' P Zero was 95.0 outstanding in the wet, setting the fastest time and feeling the most connected and grippy on the wet circuit, which it backed up with strong aquaplaning performances. It lacked the steering feel and feedback of the best but was good in the dry too, setting the equal fastest lap time.

BLACKCIRCLES SAYS... A new model, this latest P Zero is already gaining good reviews amongst our customers, with a score of 4.6/5. Positive reviews have highlighted excellent grip and wet performance.

ND CONTINENTAL 95.6 The SportContact 6 lacked corner traction in the wet, as is reflected in its slowest wet handling time and bottom-of-

the-table aquaplaning results, but it was good elsewhere and subjectively was highly rated in the dry and on the road route for its steering feel, calm poise and decent refinement.

BLACKCIRCLES SAYS... The Continental consistently scores well amongst our customers, with an overall rating of 4.6/5. Reviews regularly focus on the tyre's good levels of grip, handling and performance.

1 ST MICHELIN 96.5 The Pilot Sport 4 S was good in 96.5 the wet and outstanding in the dry, setting the fastest dry lap time and topping our subjective ratings on track and on the road route, where it impressed with superb steering feel and feedback and ride comfort. A great tyre that will improve the feel of your performance car.

BLACKCIRCLES SAYS... This tyre is a firm favourite with our customers, over 1700 reviews resulting in an overall score of 4.7/5. Frequently praised are the tyre's grip, comfort and handling performance.



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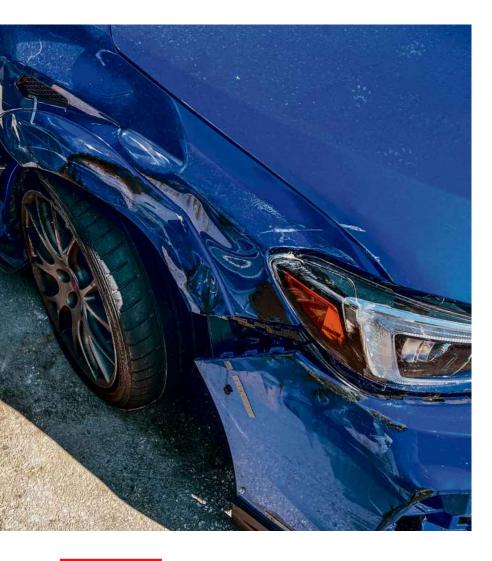




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Subaru STI S209

It's an unhappy ending for this special limited-edition Subaru as it meets an early and unfortunate demise. Its unlucky owner picks up the tale...

HERE WAS NO FAST FLEET report on the S209 last month because I spent it first prequarantining outside the Schengen Area for 14 days, before going on an essential 12-day business trip to San Francisco and then spending a further ten days in Swiss quarantine in France upon my return.

Altogether this meant 36 days of not driving the S209, so when I eventually got back home I was very excited about a long-planned trip to finish driving every single Alpine pass and col over 6000ft with my great mate Quinton, who was flying in to Munich and renting an M2 Competition at a very reasonable price from Sixt. 'Drive Smug' indeed.

As a Lake Geneva-area resident I had to avoid Germany, and as a UK resident he had to avoid stopping in Switzerland, but the last passes of our decade-long project were in Austria and Italy, so it was on.

I set off early in the morning to take the autoroute past Lausanne, aiming for the famous abandoned Hotel Belvedere on the Furka Pass. Quinton and I have driven more than a hundred passes over the years, including his favourite, the Furka, at least three times, and my favourite, the Spluga, twice, and a spellbinding run on the Turini that I will never forget.

A short time after setting off, while still in Switzerland, I encountered roadworks between Martigny and Sion, with narrower



p132 Audi RS7 Sportback



p137 Porsche 911 Carrera (993)



p138 Toyota GR Supra



p138 VW Passat R-Line Edition







lanes denoted by temporary orange markings. As I slowly overtook a lorry doing its maximum 85kph it drifted left out of its lane into mine. It was too late for me to brake, so I tried to stay centred on the narrowing gap, thinking the lorry's driver would surely see me and swerve back to the right, but no. Both of the Subaru's side mirrors exploded at the same time as the left-hand one touched the central divider and the right-hand one the lorry. A moment later both sides of the car made contact, squeezing the STI like a bar of soap. Next the left side of the Subaru started to rise upwards due to the triangular base of the central barrier, and then the car went airborne – three metres above the ground according to witnesses, pirouetting as it flew. After three-quarters of a clockwise barrel roll the STI glanced the top of the barrier with its left side as it came back down, somehow finishing back in its lane... Air Subaru Flight S209 had landed.

The two shocked bikers who came to drag me out of the smoking car were surprised that I could get out and walk, and so was I. I'd like to publicly

'Both sides of the car made contact and the STI was squeezed like a bar of soap'

thank those bikers - Lolo and Vanko - for coming to my aid, plus the Valais Police, the ambulance service, the Hôpital de Sion, and my wife and daughter for collecting me from hospital. I'd also like to recommend Subarus for their great crash protection, and pay tribute to Harold Round and Arthur Parrott for inventing the aeroplane airbag in 1919, John W Hetrick and Walter Linderer for separately inventing the automotive airbag in the early 1950s, and Allen K Breed for inventing the crash sensor in 1967. I dread to think where I'd be without these innovations – the police officer who handled my written report of the incident and the

insurance analyst who wrote off the car both told me that it was a miracle I was alive; sobering stuff to hear from two people who live crashes every day.

So that, I'm afraid, brings the S209's Fast Fleet story to a premature end. It seems like only yesterday that I was eagerly anticipating its arrival at Liverpool docks, its first journey being on a cargo ship to there from the States – the only market in which the limited-edition S209 is sold. After some running-in miles and an oil change it found itself going head-tohead with Mercedes-AMG's new A45 S for a twin-test in evo 272. The AMG, with its 415bhp, four-wheel drive and take-no-prisoners attitude, had been described by some as a spiritual successor to the best Subarus (and Mitsubishi Evos) of old, so the opportunity to pit it against the best on sale today was irresistible.

On that test Adam Towler and Dickie Meaden were both enamoured with the S209, declaring it a car with an appeal that grows with miles in a way the A45 can't match, and Adam concluding that Subaru's 'unique way of making driver's cars is as appealing as ever'. But there was nevertheless some disappointment with its 2.5-litre flat-four, which with





341bhp has just 31bhp more than the regular STI, and 74bhp less than the Merc. I more than agreed, so quickly remedied the situation with a Cobb Accessport tuning device, which remapped the engine to over 420bhp. This instantly felt more appropriate and is an upgrade I'd recommend to the remaining 208 S209 owners.

How this more powerful S209 would have performed on those Alpine passes, or fared over more adventures to come, we'll never know, but one thing that's for certain is that this S209 shone brightly during its short existence, and ably demonstrated that there's life in the old Subaru formula vet. Safe travels.

David Price

Date acquired February 2020 Duration of test 7 months Total test mileage 3200 Overall mpg 22.6 Costs Cobb Accessport \$675, oil change £83, plus hospital bills **Purchase price** \$63,995 (c£49,000) Value today Not much



Dacia Duster

Modest it may be, but the Duster is not short of admirers

T REOUIRES A RESET TO LIVE WITH THE Duster. Not so much due to the way it drives - though there is an element of performance recalibration required, more of which later - but what it says about you.

It's a vanity thing, of course. One fuelled by society's increasing and unhealthy obsession with the image we project to others. This probably sounds rich coming from someone who has spent the vast majority of his adult life driving cars he can't afford, but it's the truth.

The funny thing is, the Duster has so far garnered universal praise from everyone I've come into contact with. Yes, I get ribbed from time to time with 'What did you do to upset editor Gallagher?' but such comments are always at my expense. not the car's.

I find this interesting, because there aren't actually that many genuinely affordable, unassuming and unpretentious new cars that have enough about them to warrant any kind of acknowledgement. At least from people who profess to like cars. But the Duster appears to spark conversations far more readily than if I were smoking around in a supercar or spangly SUV. It's actually very refreshing, especially as you never get the judgemental side-eye from strangers that often comes when you're driving something more prestigious or provocative.

Driving-wise I've settled in nicely to life with 115bhp. The stumpy gearing still bugs me (though my dog-leg conversion still works nicely) and I'd be lying if I said I didn't miss an engine that liked to rev. Nevertheless I'm really impressed by the way the Duster tackles back-roads.

Once wound up it carries plenty of speed across the ground. More than enough to expose belowaverage drivers in much faster cars. This is alright so long as they were already behind you, but the one thing you learn about the Duster is that while it'll whistle along nicely on a clear road, it doesn't possess much in the way of overtaking poke.

Sometimes this means you simply drop back and relax, but the paucity of power is also making me relearn skills acquired many years ago, when momentum, timing and immaculate pre-planning were part and parcel of a clean overtake. It all combines to deliver that long-forgotten feeling of being satiated without the guilt of knowing you've been travelling at suicidal speed.

Housekeeping-wise the Duster hasn't used a drop of oil or AdBlue, and continues to return a solid 42mpg+ in everyday driving with 45+ on motorway runs. After the rigours of being used like a van during our house move I'd worried the interior might bear a few scuffs and scrapes, but it has scrubbed-up a treat, suggesting it's as rugged as its looks suggest. The only thing I'm disliking is the Desert Orange paintwork, and I'm not so keen on the rather blingv alloys, but otherwise Dacia life is surprisingly sweet. Richard Meaden (@DickieMeaden)

Date acquired January 2020 Total mileage 4200 Mileage this month 757 Costs this month £0 mpg this month 42.1



Audi RS7 Sportback

Our Audi takes on a big rival in the form of BMW's M8 Gran Coupe

IVING IN THE SHADOW OF THE RS6 CAN'T be easy for the RS7. The former is the king-of-cool über family car, worshipped far and wide and an ever present in numerous three, five and even ten-car fantasy garage lists as the 'daily'. With good reason, because few cars manage the duality of being a practical family car that can also cause its driver to raise a smile when they find themselves alone on a road more interesting than those often taken with the family on board.

In theory the RS7 should offer the same, albeit with no room for the hound in the boot. But in the past it has been a close relative to the RS6 in name only, feeling flat-footed, a little dull to drive and performing to the fast-Audi stereotypes of old.

However, the new RS7 has proven to be a genuine RS6 alternative, and in the seven months ours has spent with us, only when the Towler clan (deputy editor Adam being the current custodian of the 7) has needed to go on holiday en masse has the increased capacity an estate car offers been missed.

Perhaps the biggest challenge for the RS7 isn't from within, however, but from outside Audi Sport's family, because if you want in the region of 600bhp in a four-door, slightly coupe-looking body you are somewhat spoilt for choice. Also in the VW Group is Porsche's Panamera, while Mercedes-AMG has its GT 4-Door and BMW has updated its entry with the car you see here: the M8 Gran Coupe, which is available to UK customers in Competition trim only.

Technical make-up for both the M8 Competition Gran Coupe and RS7 Sportback is borderline offthe-shelf premium supersaloon. Twin-turbocharged V8? Check. Circa 600bhp? Yep, 592bhp for the RS7 and 616bhp for the M8. Five-hundred-plus lb ft of torque? Please, anything less would be an insult. Eight-speed automatic gearboxes? What else would you expect, other than possibly a doubleclutch unit? Unfortunately, more mainstream manufacturers are now sticking to torqueconverters, claiming the shift speeds are close enough to those of a double-clutch 'box and that the cost of developing both is a luxury rather than a necessity. BMW has also followed Audi's 40-year tradition and now only offers its range-topping M-car with xDrive four-wheel drive. Although, unlike the Audi, you can, through diving into the submenus of the iDrive system, make your M8 Gran Coupe rear-wheel drive.

The initial thought when bringing the M8 to



the RS7's party was that the BMW would be sharper in those areas where the RS7 still reverts to brand type. There have been a number of times with our RS7 when whoever has been behind the wheel has enjoyed the unexpected interaction it provides. Its V8 has an enthusiastic character that's matched with a crisp throttle and neatly suited ratios, providing a drivetrain that favours pushing from the rear rather than pulling from the front, ably assisted by the standard Sport Differential. But go beyond this 70 per cent operating window and the weight and size of the RS7 comes into play, the road never feeling big enough to exploit its performance and give it the space to move around. At around five metres long and two metres wide, an RS7 needs a fair bit of room when it gets moving.

BMW M GmbH knows how to make its performance cars feel special and dance around

regardless of the speed you are travelling and the road you find yourself on. To a point, anyway. And indeed where the M8 outperforms the RS7 is when you go looking for, and need, that last 20-30 per cent of feedback and precision. As with our RS7 you need to find the right modes: Comfort dampers for both, Sport steering to add some weight, the sharpest throttle and shift speeds, and any differential settings available to you switched to their most alert and reactive mode. Configured accordingly the M8 GC is less prescriptive than the RS7 in all that it does. Its body control and damping is more in tune with your expectations, its steering quicker – less feelsome than the Audi's, requiring a higher degree of load before you feel confident it's hooked up, but when it is the M8 carves a more precise line. And its V8 is more energetic and reactive to inputs and therefore easier to maintain a balanced engine speed with when required.

However, the RS7 has the more immersive V8,

'BMW M GmbH knows how to make its performance cars feel special and dance around'

both in terms of noise and how it builds through its powerband, and thumps along on its torque, a benefit of it being used across the VW Group from Bentley to Lamborghini, and by Porsche in-between, meaning Audi is able to tap into the available data and tune accordingly. In the M8 you merely gain speed, albeit at a frantic pace, whereas in the RS7 the octaves rise and fall in keeping with your pace, adding a fizz of excitement along the way.

FAST FLEET

BMW scores higher with its carbon-ceramic brakes (a £7995 option, compared to £9200 for the equivalent on the Audi), which are much easier to moderate and natural in pedal feel, making for far smoother and more consistent braking when you're pushing on. And when there is 2000kg or more to slow you need the anchors to be on your side. (The M8 tips the scales at 1980kg, the Audi tips them even further at 2065kg.)

But for all its involvement and the thrills

delivered by the M8 GC Comp, boy do you need to be travelling to experience them. In pure terms the BMW is a more focused, more athletic supersaloon than the Audi. It certainly answers the question more comprehensively than the RS7 does when it comes to asking which delivers the greatest performance when speed and space aren't restricted. But here's the crux. These are road cars, designed to offer a level of performance a cut above the norm, which they both most certainly

'If you're not exploiting all of the M8's performance, its advantage is all but eradicated'



do, but if you're not exploiting all of the M8's performance, its advantage over the RS7 is all but eradicated. If anything, at more level-headed speeds the RS7 gives more back more of the time.

An unexpected black mark for the RS7, however, is its interior. Much is made of the quality Audi manages to engineer into its cockpits, and our RS7 feels as solid today as it did before it started its non-stop life with









us. But for all the shiny piano-black trim and the welcome use of Alcantara, there is too much £47,000 A7 TDI in here to justify the £95,000 starting price for an RS7 (our fast fleeter came in at £140,000...). The from-£123,880 M8 looks and feels far more bespoke, with the quality of its materials on a par with those of the machine produced in Ingolstadt. It also has the quieter interior to cover big miles in. Both cars swallow 300 miles (the best their fuel range will offer) in the blink of an eye, and only a ride quality that's focused on performance, especially so in the case of the BMW, hampers these two from being leftfield alternatives to a more traditional GT car.

If our time with the RS7 Sportback has demonstrated anything it's that the RS6 Avant no longer holds the driving advantage. The 7 might not be as iconic nor have the social media #want

factor, but it can be considered on a par in terms of driver appeal if not dog-carrying ability. (Does anyone actually do this with their RS6, by the way, or is it just a term thrown around in a similar fashion to people talking about hosing out the interior of their Land Rover Defenders?)

The M8 Competition Gran Coupe is the better driver's car than the RS7, but its biggest problem is the M5 Competition, which is £22,000 cheaper, and for that saving I'd be happy to forgo the former's more bespoke interior design. I'd still have an RS6 over an RS7, too.

Stuart Gallagher (@stuartg917)

Date acquired April 2020 Total mileage 6893 Mileage this month 754 Cost this month £0 mpg this month 25.9



Porsche 911 Carrera (996)

The new engine may not be ready yet, but it's got a very tasty exhaust system waiting for it

'M GOING TO KEEP YOU GUESSING FOR at least another month. The 996's rebirth is making great progress at Litchfield but until the engine choice is up and running, all the bugs are ironed out and I'm confident the plan has been a success, my lips remain sealed. All I will say is that if things go as intended the 996's power-to-weight ratio should eclipse those of the first two GT3 models, and my little old Carrera will punch like a car developed by the good people of the Motorsport department.

Before the big reveal I wanted to talk about some of the cool little details I've accumulated for the rest of the, ahem, reimagining. I only use that word in case it adds £200,000 to the resale value. Anyway, whilst I've gone big on suspension (KW Clubsport two-way adjustable plus RSS Tarmac Series adjustable arms front and rear, and their bump-steer kit), I decided not to go crazy on a high-end exhaust system. Why? Because despite all the grand claims, actual performance improvements on a normally aspirated flat-six can barely be measured on a dyno whether

you spend £1500 on a full system or £8000. Much as I like stupidly expensive things made of titanium and Inconel, the bhp-per-£ just isn't worth it. Plus, I wanted to save some pennies for heat management. Much more important.

After much research and many excellent testimonials, I opted for a full stainless system including 200-cell cats made by Topgear in Bridport, Dorset. They're fast building a nice reputation amongst those of us who love our 911s but can't quite stretch to GT3 RS-level budgets. Even better, they do a 'mild' sound that's not much more than OEM in terms of decibels. On some primal level I love the idea of a 911 that howls so proudly you can hear it from two counties away, but in reality I'd just feel a bit of a dick. Stealth and trackday-friendly noise levels seems much the better way.

Decision made, the next step was to make my 'budget' system look cooler and perform, erm, cooler. I've always wanted ceramic-coated headers for the 996 (mostly because they look great, admittedly) and Zircotec performance coatings in Banbury had

also been on my radar for years. They're suppliers for supercar OEMs, pretty much the entire F1 grid, BTCC and GT teams and, now, Project Arena Red. They seemed less excited about this than me.

Zircotec's unique plasma-spray technology was developed for the nuclear industry and has since been adopted widely in top level motorsport. Its benefits are vast and measurable – exhaust temperatures are reduced by up to 33 per cent, engine bay temperatures are significantly cut (by greater than 50 degrees in some cases), there's increased gas flow, and because the coating is just 0.3mm in thickness, weight increases are negligible.

The iconic and most effective coating is the Performance White system. It looks incredible, too. However, the coating marks up really easily as it's a porous material, so Zircotec recommends its Performance Colours range for road cars. Suitable for applications up to 900 degrees Celsius and with a sealed finish, the Performance Colours range has a three-year warranty and there are 14 shades from which to choose. It's not cheap,







but the performance, longevity and aesthetic benefits are compelling. My full exhaust system cost £2240 to coat.

Picking a colour is the stuff of nightmares. There are the 'safe' options: Solid Black, Metallic Black, Sterling Silver. And some statement colours: Fern Green, Chilled Red, Yellow Gold. I guess I opted for something in-between. The tubular manifolds would be Ultra Blue and the rest of the system Antique Silver (which is almost champagnecoloured and I thought might be close to the Performance White coating). As it turned out the burnished-titanium metallic blue I'd envisaged for the headers turned out to be almost bright blue. A bit of a shock. But I've quickly grown used to it. Love the sparkling Antique Silver, too.

So my 'budget' system has a new air of motorsport cool plus it should perform way, way better. Now... back to work on the engine it'll be hanging from.

Jethro Bovingdon (@JethroBovingdon)

Date acquired May 2013 Total mileage 150,432 Mileage this month year 0 Costs this month exhaust £1455, exhaust coating £2240 mpg this month n/a



Porsche 911 Carrera (993)

The 993's new wheel and tyre combo gets put to the test



HE OPPORTUNITY FINALLY CAME TO take the 993 out on some proper driving roads after a hectic return to work post lockdown.

The plan was to meet up with a bunch of industry mates for breakfast and then go for a drive in our own cars, leaving any press cars behind for once. The mix of metal was brilliant, including a BMW 2002, a Honda Integra Type R, a Lancia Delta Integrale, a Peugeot 106 Rallye and my 911.

The roads we chose included several that are well known to **evo** for testing and photoshoots. Much as it's fun to explore new or rarely visited territories, there's a lot to be said for driving on familiar routes, as they enable you to focus more on the car and assess it relative to others you've driven along the same route - or in my case an earlier iteration of the same car.

The weather was plenty warm enough, so the new Yokohama Advan A052 weren't running in compromised conditions, and sure enough they provided huge amounts of grip. The real surprise for me, though, was how the 911 felt on its new Billet 117 wheels. You hear all the time how important unsprung mass – or reducing it – is. but I didn't think a total saving of 10kg would make such a big difference. The 993's steering has become more accurate and the entire car now feels more composed over bumpy British B-roads, with the suspension working more effectively. The combination of wheels and tyres has transformed the driving experience, and with the recent Momo



steering wheel upgrade too (see evo 279) the whole car is an absolute pleasure to drive.

The day was a massive success, then, both in terms of testing the upgrades and meeting up with mates. Here's hoping we can all get out on the roads and spend time with fellow car enthusiasts as much as possible over the coming months.

Aston Parrott (@AstonParrott)

Date acquired April 2016 Total mileage 86,366 Mileage this month 511 Costs this month £0 mpg this month 28.0



Toyota GR Supra

Deputy editor Towler offers a second opinion on our Supra

T'S BEEN A LITTLE WHILE SINCE I drove a new Supra, and although this vellow example has been with us for a number of months now, all things Covid have meant the Fast Fleet isn't quite as promiscuous as it usually is.

The Supra is a car I feel I should be more excited about than in reality I actually am, especially when it's painted in a yellow that's so deep and lustrous it's almost luminescent. For me it's one of those designs that has angles of extraordinarily strong appeal, and others that just don't work at all, leaving me somewhat perplexed as to my definite opinion.

And driving Ev's long-termer initially fails to provoke a different reaction over and above the cars we originally drove last year (evo 263 and 265). It's rapid, keen to turn, often very short on traction, and working an eight-speed torque-converter with tiny paddles holds very little driver appeal for me at all. Essentially, it feels exactly how I imagine a coupe version of a BMW Z4 with nicer steering would be.

Where I do think the Supra scores highly is in being a fine GT; in fact, if only the ride was a little more relaxed it would excel at being a cosy, but practical, grand tourer for two with oodles of effortless pace on demand. As it is, even with the damping set to its more comfortable setting, the car never quite relaxes with the road in the way I'd like.

'If only the ride was a little more relaxed it would excel at being a cosy, but practical, grand tourer for two'

The old 'A80' Supra was a GT. Most were ordered with the auto 'box. It seems to me that the Supra myth has built up around Japanese tuning videos and Hollywood films, creating an image in the minds of those too young to remember earlier generations of Supras when they were new that it's a car with about 800 horsepower and wings off an LMP1 car. In the face of that, this new Supra was always going to struggle to satiate that iconography, given it's oh-so-close roots to a Z4. Push all that to one side, and the car that remains is a very likeable one, if you give it the time to show its true qualities.

Adam Towler (@AdamTowler)

Date acquired March 2020 Total mileage 10,171 Mileage this month 750 Costs this month £0 mpg this month 29.5

VW Passat R-Line Edition

An embarrassing mishap leads to a damaged tailgate

HE TIME HAD FINALLY COME FOR THE best shoot of the year: evo Car of the Year. As you'll see in the next issue, for 2020's test we visited Anglesey Circuit and then Scotland, and the Passat would be my trusty companion for the entire gig - or so I thought.

Things got off to a great start, the VW, fully loaded with photography gear, making light work of the five-hour drive over to north Wales, but the next day things would take a turn for the worse.

In a pit garage at Anglesey, we readied the Passat for a car-to-car shot. Adam Towler hopped in the driver's seat, while I positioned myself in the boot, safely harnessed in place, with the tailgate open so that I could photograph the eCoty contender that would be following us around the track.

'Ready?' shouted Adam from up front. I confirmed that I was, so he gently pulled away only for there to be the most horrific smashing noise followed by a shower of broken glass.

Blame an early start and not enough caffeine, but none of us had noticed that the garage's metal shutter door wasn't fully raised, so the poor Passat's open tailgate didn't fit beneath it. The result? A smashed rear screen, a broken wiper motor, a small dent in the tailgate and much embarrassment.

Volkswagen Roadside Assistance came to our rescue, arranging for a new screen to be fitted the next day, but the wiper motor was beyond repair and unfortunately the damage to the tailgate prevented the glass from being replaced, so HMS Evo had to return to VW for a full repair job and miss out on leg two of eCoty.

Aston Parrott (@AstonParrott)

Date acquired January 2020 Total mileage 7059 Mileage this month 702 Costs this month TBC mpg this month 28.2



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CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE



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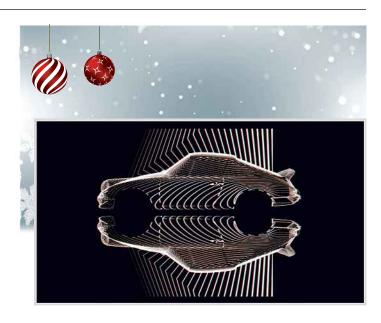
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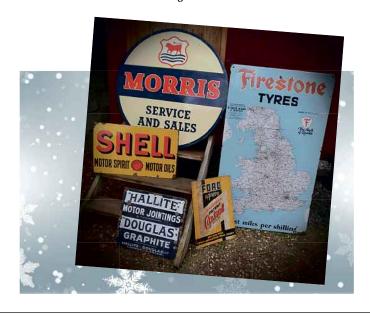
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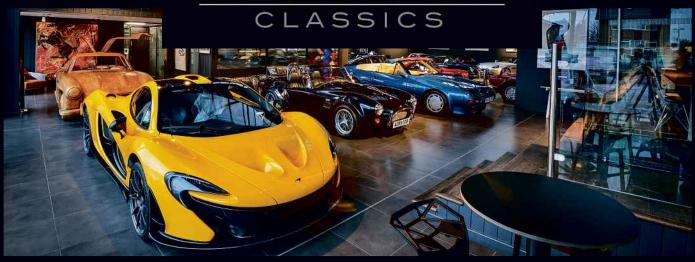


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• new entry this month. Cars in italics are no longer on sale. Issue no. is for our most recent major test of the car (D = Driven, T = Driven Too, I = Ignition, F = feature). Call 0330 333 9491 for back issues. Engine is the car's combustion engine only - electric motors aren't shown. Weight is as quoted by the manufacturer for the car in basic spec, e.g. with a manual gearbox. In most cases this is to DIN standards (i.e. with fluids but without a driver), but where the manufacturer only quotes a 'dry' weight (i.e. without fluids) this is indicated by *. Note that a dry weight will make the car's power-to-weight ratio (bhp/ton) appear more favourable. 0-62mph (claimed) is the manufacturer's 0-62 figure, with a manual gearbox where offered. Our 0-60mph and 0-100mph (tested) figures could be with either a manual or automatic gearbox/DCT.

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REST OF THE REST

The **Renault Mégane RS** has a strong B-road game, especially if you steer clear of the unforgiving Cup chassis. Meanwhile the **Hyundai i30 N** is an intriguing and impressive alternative to the usual suspects. If it's a smaller hot hatch you're after, look no further than the characterful **Ford Fiesta ST** (left) or our supermini choice, the **Volkswagen Up GTI**.

	MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (OR TEARS ON SALE)	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLAIMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTED)	мах мрн	EVO RATING	
	Abarth 595 Competizione	256 T	£21,985	4/1368	178/5500	184/3000	1035kg	175	6.7	-	-	140	+ Spirited engine; still looks great - Favours fun over finesse	***
	Abarth 595 Esseesse	264 D	£25,295	4/1368	178/5500	184/3000	1044kg	173	6.7	-	-	140	+ A bundle of fun if you're in the mood for it - Dynamically dated; expensive	***
	Abarth 695 Biposto	205 F	'14-'18	4/1369	187/5500	184/3000	997kg*	191	5.9	-	-	143	+ Engineered like a true Abarth product - Expensive for a city car	****
	Alfa Romeo 147 GTA	187F	'03-'06	6/3179	247/6200	221/4800	1360kg	185	6.3	6.0	15.5	153	+ Mk1 Focus RS pace without the histrionics - Slightly nose-heavy	****
	Audi A1 40 TFSI	256 D	£24,470	4/1984	197/6000	236/1500	1260kg	159	6.5	-	-	155	+ Capable - It's no S1 replacement	***
	Audi S1	246 F	74-78	4/1984	228/6000	273/1600	1315kg	176	5.8	-	-	155	+ Compliant and engaging chassis; quick, too - Looks dull without options	****
	Audi A1 quattro	264 F	73	4/1984	253/6000	258/2500	1420kg	181	5.7	-	-	152	+ Polished 253bhp all-wheel-drive A1 - Just 19 came to the UK, with a Porsche Cayman price	****
•	Audi S3 Sportback	279 D	£38,475	4/1984	306/5450	295/2000	1500kg	207	4.8	-	-	155	+ Less one-dimensional than its predecessor - Breaks little new ground	****
	Audi RS3 Sportback	256 F	£46,285	5/2480	394/5850	354/1700	1510kg	265	4.1	-	-	155	+ Hugely quick point-to-point - Sometimes speed isn't the be-all and end-all	***
	Audi S3	188 F	'13-'20	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1395kg	216	5.2	5.4	12.5	155	+ Lots of grip and one of the best-sounding four-pot turbos - Still a little too clinical	***
	Audi RS3 Sportback	221 F	75-76	5/2480	362/5500	343/1625	1520kg	242	4.3	3.6	-	155	+ Addictive five-cylinder noise; monster pace - Chassis not exactly playful	****
	BMW M135i xDrive	271 F	£36,430	4/1998	302/5000	332/1750	1525kg	201	4.8	-	-	155	+ Strong performance, monster 4WD traction - Engine lacks character	****
	BMW M235i xDrive Gran Coupé	274 D	£37,595	4/1998	302/5000	332/1750	1570kg	195	4.8	-	-	155	+ Quick, with an able chassis and quality cabin - Just not that exciting	****
	BMW 125i M Sport	176 D	72-78	4/1997	221/5200	229/1400	1400kg	160	6.4	-	-	155	+ Performance, price, running costs - Dull four-pot soundtrack	****
	BMW M135i	212 F	'12-'15	6/2979	321/5800	332/1300	1430kg	228	5.1	5.2	-	155	+ Powertrain, noise, chassis - M235i looks nicer, and has an LSD option	****
	Citroën DS3 1.6 THP	142 F	'10-'15	4/1598	154/6000	177/1400	1240kg	126	7.3	-	-	133	+ A proper French hot hatch - Petrolheads might find it too 'designed'	***
	Citroën DS3 Racing	153 D	71-72	4/1598	204/6000	203/2000	1240kg	167	6.5	-	-	146	+ A faster, feistier DS3 - Not as hardcore as its 'Racing' tag suggests	***
	Citroën Saxo VTS	020 F	'97-'03	4/1587	120/6600	107/5200	935kg	130	8.7	7.6	22.6	127	+ Chunky, chuckable charger - Can catch out the unwary	****
	Citroën AX GT	195 F	'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	****
	DS 3 Performance	222 D	76-78	4/1598	205/6000	221/3000	1175kg	177	6.5	-	-	143	+ All the right ingredients - Undercooked	***
	Fiat Panda 100HP	273 F	'06-'11	4/1368	99/6000	97/4250	975kg	103	9.5	-	-	115	+ About as fun as small cars get - Optional ESP can't be turned off	****
	Ford Fiesta ST-Line 140	251 F	£18,440	3/998	138/6000	133/1500	1144kg	123	9.0	9.2	26.4	125	+ Quality chassis makes for a born entertainer - Tall gearing and dull engine can spoil the fun	****
	Ford Fiesta ST	259 F	£20,700	3/1497	197/6000	214/1600	1187kg	169	6.5	-	-	144	+ Highly talented, with real depth to its character - Can get wrong-footed on bad tarmac	****
	Ford Fiesta ST Performance Edition	269 F	£26,495	3/1497	197/6000	214/1600	1187kg	169	6.5	-	-	144	+ All the good things about the regular Fiesta ST, but with added composure - How much?!	****
	Ford Fiesta ST	207 F	73-77	4/1596	197/5700	214/2500	1088kg	184	6.9	7.4	18.4	137	+ Chassis, price, punchy performance - Have you heard of Mountune?	****
	Ford Fiesta ST200	253 F	76	4/1596	212/6000	236/2500	1088kg	198	6.7	-	-	143	+ Massive fun - They only made 400	****
	Ford Fiesta Zetec S	123 D	'08-'13	4/1596	118/6000	112/4050	1045kg	115	9.9	-	-	120	+ Genuinely entertaining supermini - Renault Sport Twingo and Suzuki Swift are even more fun	****
	Ford Fiesta ST	075 D	'05-'08	4/1999	148/6000	140/4500	1137kg	132	7.9	-	-	129	+ Great looks, decent brakes - Disappointing chassis, gutless engine	****
	Ford Focus ST (Mk4)	267 F	£31,995	4/2261	276/5500	310/3000	1433kg	196	5.7	-	-	155	+ A return to form - Lacks the poise and precision of the very best	****
	Ford Focus ST (Mk3)	207 F	75-78	4/1999	247/5500	265/2000	1362kg	184	6.5	-	-	154	+ Excellent engine - Scrappy when pushed	***
	Ford Focus ST (Mk2)	119 F	'05-'10	5/2522	222/6000	236/1600	1392kg	162	6.8	6.7	16.8	150	+ Value, performance, integrity - Big engine compromises handling	★★★☆
	Ford Focus RS (Mk3)	246 F	75-78	4/2261	345/6000	347/2000	1547kg	227	4.7	4.9	12.6	166	+ Torque-vectoring 4WD brings new sensations to hot hatch sector - Needs to be driven hard	****
	Ford Focus RS Edition (Mk3)	246 D	78	4/2261	345/6000	347/2000	1547kg	227	4.7	-	-	166	+ Front limited-slip differential brings more precise handling - Pricey and still heavy	****
	Ford Focus RS (Mk2)	195 F	'09-'11	5/2522	300/6500	324/2300	1467kg	208	5.9	5.9	14.2	163	+ Huge performance, highly capable FWD chassis - Body control is occasionally clumsy	****
	Ford Focus RS500 (Mk2)	256 F	'10-'11	5/2522	345/6000	339/2500	1467kg	239	5.6	5.6	12.7	165	+ More power and presence than regular Mk2 RS - Pricey	****
	Ford Focus RS (Mk1)	207 F	'02-'03	4/1998	212/5500	229/3500	1278kg	169	6.7	5.9	14.9	143	+ Some are great - Some are awful (so make sure you drive plenty)	****
	Ford Escort RS Cosworth	271 F	'92-'96	4/1993	224/6250	224/3500	1275kg	179	6.2	-	-	137	+ The ultimate Essex hot hatch - Unmodified ones are rare , and pricey	****
	Ford Puma 1.7	095 F	'97-'02	4/1679	123/6300	116/4500	1041kg	120	9.2	8.6	27.6	122	+ Revvy engine, sparkling chassis, bargain used prices - Rusty rear arches	****
	Ford Racing Puma	262 F	'00-'01	4/1679	153/7000	119/4500	1174kg	132	7.9	7.8	23.2	137	+ An affordable exotic - Corroding rear arches	****
	Honda Civic Type R (FK8)	267 F	£31,550	4/1996	316/6500	295/2500	1380kg	233	5.8	5.9	12.6	169	+ Wildly exciting, with improved refinement - Looks remain challenging for some	****
	Honda Civic Type R (FK2)	227F	75-77	4/1996	306/6500	295/2500	1378kg	226	5.7	5.4	12.4	167	+ Great on smooth roads - Turbo engine not as special as old nat-asp units; styling a bit 'busy'	****
	Honda Civic Type R (FN2)	102 F	'07-'11	4/1998	198/7800	142/5600	1267kg	158	6.6	6.8	17.5	146	+ Looks great, VTEC more accessible - Steering lacks feel, inert balance	***
	Honda Civic Type R Mugen (FN2)	248 F	'09-'11	4/1998	237/8300	157/6250	1233kg	195	5.9	-	-	155	+ Fantastic on road and track - Only 20 were made, and they're a tad pricey	****
	Honda Civic Type R (EP3)	258 F	'01-'05	4/1998	197/7400	145/5900	1204kg	166	6.8	6.8	16.9	146	+ Potent and great value - 'Breadvan' looks divide opinion; duff steering	****
	Honda Civic Type R (EK9)	210 F	'97-'00	4/1595	182/8200	118/7500	1040kg	178	6.8	-	-	135	+ Sublime early incarnation of the Type R recipe - Good ones are thin on the ground	****
	Hyundai i30 N	259 F	£25,995	4/1998	247/6000	279/1750	1400kg	179	6.4	-	-	155	+ Very close to the Performance version on abilitybut not that far away on price	****
	Hyundai i30 N Performance	267 F	£29,495	4/1998	271/6000	279/1750	1429kg	193	6.1	6.6	14.9	155	+ A brilliant, thoroughly developed hot hatch - Imagine if it was lighter too	****
	Hyundai i30 Fastback N Performance	269 F	£29,995	4/1998	271/6000	279/1750	1441kg	191	6.1	-	-	155	+ As above, but with a fractionally more mature ride and soundtrack - As above	****
	Kia Ceed GT	267 F	£25,850	4/1591	201/6000	195/1500	1386kg	147	7.2	-	-	143	+ Feels like a detuned i30 N - Lacks personality	***
	Kia ProCeed GT	259 D	£28,135	4/1591	201/6000	195/1500	1438kg	142	7.2	-	-	140	+ Flexible engine, handsome shooting brake body - It's warm rather than hot	***
	Kia Proceed GT	217 D	73-78	4/1591	201/6000	195/1500	1359kg	143	7.3	-	-	150	+ Fun and appealing package - Soft-edged compared to rivals	****
	Lancia Delta HF Integrale Evoluzione II	271 F	'93-'94	4/1995	212/5750	232/2500	1340kg	161	5.7	-	-	137	+ One of the finest cars ever built - Demands love, LHD only	****
	Mercedes-AMG A35 4Matic	267 F	£35,970	4/1991	302/5800	295/3000	1480kg	207	4.7	-	-	155	+ A formidable A-to-B device - Some front-drive rivals are more fun	****
	Mercedes-AMG A45 S 4Matic+	272 F	£50,570	4/1991	415/6750	369/5000	1560kg	270	3.9	-	-	167	+ A 21st-century reincarnation of late-'90s imprezas and Evos - It costs £50k	****
	Mercedes-AMG A45	221 F	75-78	4/1991	376/6000	350/2250	1480kg	258	4.2	3.9	-	155	+ Tremendously fast - But not a true great	***

Proceedings			SALE			_								
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Subarulmpreza ST1330S 124 708-710 4/7245 325/5400 347/3400 1505kg 219 4.4 - - 155 + A bit quicker than the regular ST1but not better										-				****
Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk2) 775 F 172-79 4/1986 134/6900 1184/400 1045kg 130 8.7 - 121 * Still a great pocket rocket - Not quite as a displacible as the original ******* Toylor Vinki Sport (Mk2) 775 F 172-77 4/1986 132/6900 1048/400 1030kg 130 8.7 - 121 * Still a great pocket rocket - Not quite as a displacible as the original ***** Toylor Vinki Sport (Mk1) 132 F 05-71 4/1986 122/6800 1094/800 1030kg 130 8.7 - 121 * Still a great pocket rocket - Not quite as a displacible as the original ***** Toylor Vinki Sport (Mk1) 132 F 05-71 4/1986 122/6800 1094/800 1030kg 130 8.7 - 121 * Still a great pocket rocket - Not quite as a displacible as the original **** Toylor Vinki Sport (Mk2) 132 F 05-71 4/1986 122/6800 1094/800 1030kg 130 8.7 - 121 * Still a great pocket rocket - Not quite as a displacible as the original **** Toylor Vinki Sport (Mk1) 132 F 05-71 4/1986 122/6800 1094/800 1030kg 12 8.9 - 122 * 124 * Intertaining handling well-built-tacking in steering feedback *** **** Vauxhall Corsa V/R 1478 1478 4/1989 189/5800 182/1980 186/500 1276kg 161 6.8 - 143 * Appealingly festly supercharged supermini - Artificial steering; they only made 400 *** **** Vauxhall Corsa V/R 1478 1478 4/1989 189/5850 182/1980 1166kg 165 72 - 140 * Looks snazzy, punchy engine - Lacks feel, uncouth compared with rivals 1 * Ask and the still a s														****
Suzuk Swift Sport (Mk2) 175 F 12-17													,	
Suzuki Swift Sport (Mki) 132F 105-11														
Toyota Yaris GRMM										-				****
Vauxhall Corsa VXR													+ Appealingly feisty supercharged supermini - Artificial steering; they only made 400	****
Vauxhall Corsa VXR 164 F 07-14 4/1598 189/8580 192/1980 1166kg 165 72 140 + Looks snazzy, punchy engine - Lacks feel, uncourth compared with rivals ********************* Vauxhall Astra VXR (Mk2) 207 F 112-18 4/1998 276/5500 295/2590 167kg 190 6.0 - 55 + Loony turbo pace - Lacks the Peanual's Sport Megane's precision ********** Vauxhall Astra VXR (Mk1) 102 F 05-11 4/1998 276/5500 295/2590 178/5kg 190 6.0 - 55 + Loony turbo pace - Lacks the feature of the part of														***
Vauxhall Corsa VXR Nürburgring/Clubsport 164 F 11-13/14 4/1598 202/5750 206/2250 1166kg 176 6.8 - 143 + VXR gets more power and a limited-slip diff - But they come at a price Vauxhall Astra VAR (Mkl) 207 F 12-18 4/1998 237/5500 295/2500 1478kg 190 6.0 - 155 + Loony turbo pace - Lacks the Renaul Sport Méganes precision ************************************										-				
Vauxhall Astra/GT CVXR (Mk2) 207F 12-18 4/1998 276/5500 295/2500 1475kg 190 6.0 - - 155 + Loony turbo pace - Lacks the Renault Sport Mégane's precision ****** Valuxhall Astra VXR (Mk1) 102F 75-71 4/1998 237/5600 236/2400 1393kg 173 6.4 6.7 167 152 + Fast and furious - Lacks a little composure and precision ************************************														****
Volkswagen Lipo GTI										-				****
Volkswagen Polo GTI 034 F 01-04 4/1598 123/6500 112/3000 1038kg 120 8.2 8.9 30.1 127 + Looks, performance, chassis - Lacks the fizz of the 106 GTI														****
Volkswagen Polo GTI														****
Volkswagen Polo GTI														
Volkswagen Golf GTI (MkR) 279 D £33,46 4/1984 242/5000 273/1600 184/g 153 7.4 - 142 + Modern-day Mkl Golf GTI gets twin-clutch DSG - It's a little bit bland														
Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk8) 279 D £33,460 4/1984 242/5000 273/1600 1354kg 182 6.4 - 155 + An alluring blend of the best GTI ingredients - The competition is stiffer than ever ★★★★★ Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk7.5) 233 D 17-18 4/1984 227/4700 258/1500 1289kg 179 6.4 - 155 + Still the most capable all-round hot hatch - Should be more thrilling ★★★★★ Volkswagen Golf GTI Performance (Mk7.5) 245 F £32,985 4/1984 242/5000 273/1600 1312kg 187 6.2 6.5 1.6 155 + A GTI with an extra 15bhp and an LSD - Could still be more thrilling ★★★★★ Volkswagen Golf GTI CK (Mk7.5) 267 F £37,665 4/1984 242/5000 280/1095 1410kg 206 5.6 - 155 + A GTI with an extra 15bhp and an LSD - Could still be more thrilling ★★★★★ Volkswagen Golf GTI CK/MK7.5) 267 F £37,665 4/1984 286/5400 280/1095 1410kg 206 5.6 - 155 + A GTI with an extra 15bhp and an LSD - Could still be more thrilling <td>Volkswagen Polo GTI</td> <td>154 F</td> <td></td> <td>4/1390</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>153</td> <td>7.4</td> <td></td> <td>-</td> <td>142</td> <td>+ Modern-day Mk1 Golf GTI gets twin-clutch DSG - It's a little bit bland</td> <td>****</td>	Volkswagen Polo GTI	154 F		4/1390				153	7.4		-	142	+ Modern-day Mk1 Golf GTI gets twin-clutch DSG - It's a little bit bland	****
Volkswagen Golf GTI Performance (Mk7.5)					242/5000	273/1600	1354kg	182					+ An alluring blend of the best GTI ingredients - The competition is stiffer than ever	****
Volkswagen Golf GTITCR (Mk7.5) 267 F £37,665 4/1984 286/5400 280/1950 1410kg 206 5.6 - 155 + Quicker than a regular GTI-1t's no Clubsport S Volkswagen Golf GTITCR (Mk7.5) 267 F £36,180 4/1984 296/5500 295/2000 1450kg 207 4.7 4.5 11.6 155 + Outrageous yet accessible performance - Proper excitement is sometimes elusive ****** Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk7) 200 T 3-17 4/1968 181/3500 280/1750 1302kg 141 7.5 - 143 + Pace, fueleconomy, sounds good for a diesel- Lacks the extra edge of the GTI ***** Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk7) 236 F 15-17 4/1985 201 258 1524kg 134 7.6 - 138 + The most enjoyable plug-in hybrid in its price range - Golf GTI still quicker and more fun ***** Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk7) 236 F 13-17 4/1984 217/4500 258/1500 1276kg 173 6.5 - 153 + Brilliantly resolved - Lacks the punch of newer rivals Volkswagen Golf GTI Clubsport Edition 40 (Mk7) 230 D 16-17 4/1984 286/5350 280/1700 1300kg 224 6.3 - 155 + A faster, sharper, more entertaning GTI - Some rivals are more exciting on track ***** Volkswagen Golf GTI (Liubsport S (Mk7) 259 F 16 4/1984 306/5800 280/1800 1285kg 242 5.8 5.8 12.8 165 + Runner-up at evo Car of the Year 2016 - Only 400 were built ***** Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk7) 172 F 09-13 4/1984 207/5300 207/1700 1318kg 160 6.9 6.4 16.5 148 + Still a very accomplished hot hatch - 207bhp isn't a lot any more														****
Volkswagen Golf R (Mk7.5) 267 F £36,180 4/1984 296/5500 295/2000 1450kg 207 4.7 4.5 11.6 155 + Outrageous yet accessible performance - Proper excitement is sometimes elusive ***** Volkswagen Golf GTD (Mk7) 200 13-17 4/1968 181/3500 280/1750 1302kg 141 7.5 - 138 + Pace, fuel economy, sounds good for a diesel - Lacks the extra edge of the GT1 *** Volkswagen Golf GTE (Mk7) 236 F 13-17 4/1959 201 258 1524kg 134 7.6 - 138 + The most enjoyable plug-in hybrid in its price range- Golf GTI still quicker and more fun *** Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk7) 236 F 13-17 4/1984 217/4500 258/1500 1276kg 173 6.5 - 153 + Brilliantly resolved - Lacks the punch of newer rivals Volkswagen Golf GTI (bubsport Edition 40 (Mk7) 230 D 16-17 4/1984 286/5350 280/1700 1300kg 224 6.3 - 155 + A faster, sharper, more entertaning GTI - Some rivals are more exciting on track Volkswagen Golf GTI (bubsport S (Mk7) 259 F 16 4/1984 306/5800 280/1800 1285kg 245 5.8 5.8 12.8 165 + Runner-up at evo Car of the Year 2016 - Ouly 400 were built view of the Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk6) 172 F 109-13 4/1984 207/5300 207/1700 1318kg 160 6.9 6.4 16.5 148 + Still a very accomplished hot hatch - 207bhp isn't a lot any more														****
Volkswagen Golf GTD (Mk7) 200 D 13-17 big 4/1968 18/3500 280/1750 130/kg 14 lift 7.5 big - 143 big + Pace, fuel economy, sounds good for a diesel - Lacks the extra edge of the GTI ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★														
Volkswagen Golf GTE (Mk7) 236 F '15-'17 4/1395 201 258 1524kg 134 7.6 - 138 + The most enjoyable plug-in hybrid in its price range - Golf GTI still quicker and more fun ************************************														****
Volkswagen Golf GTI Clubsport Edition 40 (Mk7) 230 D '16-'17 4/1984 286/5350 280/1700 1300kg 224 6.3 - - 155 + A faster, sharper, more entertaning GTI - Some rivals are more exciting on track ****** Volkswagen Golf GTI Clubsport S (Mk7) 259 F '16 4/1984 306/5800 280/1800 1296kg 225 5.8 18.8 165 + Runner-up at evo Car of the Year 2016 - Only 400 were built ****** Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk6) 220 F '14-'17 4/1984 296/5500 280/1800 1/20kg 215 5.1 5.2 12.4 155 + Runner-up at evo Car of the Year 2016 - Only 400 were built ******* Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk6) 172 F '09-'13 4/1984 207/5300 207/1700 1318kg 16 6 6.4 16.5 148 **Still a very accomplished hot hatch - 207bhp isn't a lot any more ********	Volkswagen Golf GTE (Mk7)	236 F	'15-'17	4/1395	201	258	1524kg	134	7.6			138	+ The most enjoyable plug-in hybrid in its price range - Golf GTI still quicker and more fun	***
Volkswagen Golf GTI Clubsport S (Mk7) 259 F 16 4/1984 306/5800 280/1850 1285kg 242 5.8 12.8 165 + Runner-up at evo Car of the Year 2016 - Only 400 were built ************************************														****
Volkswagen Golf R (Mk7) 220 F '14-'17 4/1984 296/5500 280/1800 1401kg 215 5.1 5.2 12.4 155 + A VW 'R' model you can take seriously - Mégane 275 just edges it as a pure driver's car ************************************														
Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk6) 172 F '09-'13 4/1984 207/5300 207/1700 1318kg 160 6.9 6.4 16.5 148 + Still a very accomplished hot hatch - 207bh p isn't a lot any more														
Volkswagen Golf R (Mk6) 140 D 10-13 4/1984 266/6000 258/2500 1446kg 187 5.7 155 + Great engine, tremendous pace and poise - High price, adaptive dampers optional	Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk6)	172 F	'09-'13	4/1984	207/5300	207/1700	1318kg	160	6.9	6.4	16.5	148	+ Still a very accomplished hot hatch - 207bhp isn't a lot any more	****
	Volkswagen Golf R (Mk6)	140 D	'10-'13	4/1984	266/6000	258/2500	1446kg	187	5.7	-	-	155	+ Great engine, tremendous pace and poise - High price, adaptive dampers optional	****

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (OR YEARS ON SALE)	ENGINE CYL/GC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/ TON	0-62MPH (CLAIMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	O-10 OM PH (TESTED)	MAX MPH	EVO RATING	
Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk5)	259 F	'04-'09	4/1984	197/5100	207/1800	1336kg	150	7.3	6.7	17.9	146	+ Character and ability; the GTI's return to form - Lacking firepower?	****
Volkswagen Golf R32 (Mk5)	087F	'06-'09	6/3189	246/6300	236/2500	1466kg	170	6.5	5.8	15.2	155	+ The traction's great and you'll love the soundtrack - We'd still have a GTI	****
Volkswagen Golf R32 (Mk4)	053 F	'02-'04	6/3189	237/6250	236/2800	1477kg	163	6.6	6.4	16.3	154	+ Charismatic - Boomy engine can be tiresome	****
Volkswagen Golf GTI 16v (Mk2)	195 F	'88-'92	4/1781	139/6100	123/4600	960kg	147	7.9	-	-	129	+ Still feels everyday useable - Too many have been modified	****
Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk1, 1.8)	224 F	'82-'84	4/1781	112/5800	109/3500	860kg	132	8.2	-	-	114	+ The car that started it all - Tricky to find an unmolested one	****

SALOONS / ESTATES / SUVs



OUR CHOICE

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

The Jaguar XESV Project 8 delivers unapologetic supersaloon thrills aplenty – just be sure to order a Touring Edition. If you have a preference for German metal, consider the rampant Mercedes-AMG E63 S (saloon or estate) or BMW M5, or the Audi RS6 Avant. In the class below, try the BMW M3 or Mercedes-AMG C63 S.

Alfa Romeo Giulia 2.0 Turbo Super	234 D	£33,595	4/1995	197/5000	243/1750	1429kg	140	6.6	-	-	146	+ Keen engine, enjoyable handling - Firm low-speed ride	****
Alfa Romeo Giulia Veloce	244 F	£39,875	4/1995	276/5250	295/2250	1429kg	196	5.7	-	-	149	+ Supple and satisfying - Engine reluctant to rev	****
Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio	278 F	£67,195	6/2891	503/6500	442/2500	1620kg	315	3.9	-	-	191	+ If Ferrari built a saloon (really) - Lacks the final polish of German rivals	****
Alfa Romeo Stelvio Speciale AWD	234 D	£43,705	4/1995	276/5250	295/1750	1660kg	169	5.7	-	-	143	+ Agile feel, quick steering, attractive cabin - Engine not truly inspiring	****
Alfa Romeo Stelvio Quadrifoglio	244 D	£71,880	6/2891	503/6500	442/2500	1830kg	279	3.8	-	-	176	+ Rivals the Macan GTS - Needs optional P Zero Corsa tyres to give its very best	****
Aston Martin Rapide	141 F	'10-'13	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1990kg	240	5.3	-	-	188	+ Better than its DB9 sibling - More of a 2+2 than a proper four-seater	****
Aston Martin Rapide S	201 D	'13-'19	12/5935	552/6650	465/5500	1990kg	282	4.4	-	-	203	+ Oozes star quality; gearbox on 2015MY cars a big improvement - It's cosy in the back	****
Aston Martin Rapide AMR	261 D	£194,950	12/5935	595/6650	465/5500	1990kg	304	4.4	-	-	205	+ Powertrain, performance, personality - When it goes off sale, so does Aston's 5.9 V12	****
Aston Martin DBX	277 D	£158,000	8/3982	542/6500	516/2200	2245kg	245	4.5	-	-	181	+ Drives nothing like an SUV - Still heavy and thirsty like an SUV	****
Audi S3 Saloon	192 D	'13-'20	4/1984	306/5500	280/1800	1430kg	210	5.3	-	-	155	+ On paper a match for the original S4 - In reality much less interesting	****
Audi RS3 Saloon	243 F	£47,310	5/2480	394/5850	354/1700	1515kg	264	4.1	3.6	8.8	155	+ Mini RS4 looks; stonking pace - Not the most involving driving experience	****
Audi S4 Avant (B9, diesel)	266 D	£49,425	6/2967	342/3850	516/2500	1825kg	190	4.9	-	-	155	+ Effortless performance, well-judged chassis - Diesel power won't be to everyone's taste	
Audi S4 (B9, petrol)	225 D	'17-'19	6/2995	349/5400	369/1370	1630kg	218	4.7	-	-	155	+ Strong response and delivery - Chassis feels softer than before	****
Audi RS4 Avant (B9)	246 F	'18	6/2894	444/5700	442/1900	1790kg	252	4.1	-	-	155	+ Very 'real world' fast - Some may feel it lacks character and drama	****
Audi RS4 Avant (B8)	216 F	'12-'15	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1795kg	251	4.7	4.5	10.5	174	+ Looks and sounds the part, thunderously fast - Unnatural steering, dull dynamics	****
Audi RS4 (B7)	250 F	'05-'08	8/4163	414/7800	317/5500	1650kg	255	4.7	4.5	10.5	155	+ 414bhp at 7800rpm! And there's an estate version too - Busy under braking	****
Audi RS4 (B5)	192 F	'00-'02	6/2671	375/6100	325/2500	1620kg	236	4.9	4.8	12.1	170	+ Effortless pace - Not the last word in agility; bends wheel rims	****
Audi RS2	214 F	'94-'95	5/2226	315/6500	302/3000	1595kg	201	4.8	4.8	13.1	162	+ Storming performance (thanks to Porsche) - Try finding one	****
Audi S5 Sportback	233 D	'17-'19	6/2995	349/5400	369/1370	1660kg	214	4.7	-	-	155	+ More capable than you think; strong V6 engine - Gearbox frustrating in auto mode	****
Audi RS5 Sportback	264 D	£69.525	6/2894	444/5700	442/1900	1720kg	262	3.9	-	-	155	+ High-speed composure - Flat-footed on more technical roads	****
Audi S6 Avant (C8)	263 D	£63,315	6/2967	344/3850	516/2500	2020kg	173	5.1	-	-	155	+ Diesel suits the S6 ethos - Poor low-end engine response	****
Audi RS6 Avant (C8)	272 F	£92,790	8/3996	592/6000	590/2050	2075kg	290	3.6	-	-	155	+ Power, poise, build - Needs Dynamic Ride Control suspension to be at its best	****
Audi RS6 Avant (C7)	203 F	13-18	8/3993	552/5700	516/1750	1935kg	290	3.9	3.6	8.2	155	+ Performance, foolproof powertrain, beefy looks - Feels a bit one-dimensional	****
Audi RS6 Avant Performance (C7)	224 D	15-10	8/3993	597/6100	553/2500	1950kg	311	3.7	J.U	-	155	+ The extra power is no hassle for the chassis - But it is a stern test of your self-control	****
Audi RS6 Avant (C6)	116 F	'08-'10	10/4991	572/6250	479/1500	1930kg 1985kg	293	4.5	4.3	9.7	155 155	+ Was the world's most powerful estate - Power isn't everything	****
Audi RS6 Avant (C5)	258 F	'02-'04	8/4172	444/5700	413/1950	1965kg 1865kg	242	4.5	4.8	9.7 11.6	155 155	+ Was the world's most powerfulestate - Power isn't everything + The ultimate estate car? - Numb steering	****
							242		4.8	11.0	155		
Audi RS7 Sportback	268 D	£97,090	8/3996	592/6000	590/2050	2065kg		3.6	-	-	155	+ Surprisingly agile and involving - Sometimes feels its weight	****
Audi S8 Plus	217D	'16-'19	8/3993	597/6100	553/2500	1990kg	305	3.8	-	-		+ Fantastic drivetrain, quality and refinement - Dynamic Steering feels artificial	****
Audi SQ2	261 D	£37,395	4/1984	296/5300	295/2000	1510kg	199	4.7		-	155	+ Nothing - Everything	***
Bentley Flying Spur	272 D	£168,300	12/5950	626/6000	664/1350	2437kg	261	3.8	-	-	207	+ The best limo for those who enjoy driving - Needs to lose a few hundred kilos	****
Bentley Flying Spur V8	200 D	'14-'19	8/3993	500/6000	487/1700	2417kg	210	5.2	-	-	183	+ Effortless performance with real top-end kick - Determinedly unsporting	****
Bentley Flying Spur V8 S	230 D	'16-'19	8/3993	521/6000	502/1700	2417kg	219	4.9	-		190	+ Old-school approach to comfort and luxury - Old-school tech	****
Bentley Flying Spur	185 D	'13-'18	12/5998		590/1600	2475kg	253	4.6	-	-	199	+ For those who still want their Flying Spur with a W12 - Car feels its weight; engine sounds dull	****
Bentley Bentayga V8	247 D	£136,900	8/3996	542/6000	568/1960	2388kg	231	4.5	-	-	180	+ The pick of the Bentayga range - A top-end Range Rover is still more polished	***
Bentley Bentayga	217 D	£162,700	12/5950	600/5000	664/1350	2440kg	250	4.1	-	-	187	+ Sublime quality, ridiculous pace - Inert driving experience, SUV stigma	****
Bentley Mulsanne Speed	279 F	'14-'20	8/6752	530/4000	811/1750	2685kg	201	4.9	-	-	190	+ The last Bentley with the 'six-and-three-quarter' - We won't see its kind again	****
BMW 320d xDrive M Sport (G20)	262 D	£40,585	4/1995	187/4000	295/1750	1540kg	123	6.9	-	-	145	+ Brilliant mix of performance and economy - Lacks a degree of dynamic finesse	****
BMW 330i M Sport (G20)	257 D	£40,385	4/1998	254/5000	295/1550	1470kg	176	5.8	-	-	155	+ Feels like a 3-series once more - Harsh and unsettled ride	***
BMW M340i xDrive	270 D	£49,845	6/2998	369/5500	369/1850	1670kg	225	4.4	-	-	155	+ Very fast and refined - Limited driver appeal	***
BMW M3 (F80)	266 F	£59,905	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1560kg	277	4.3	4.1	8.6	155	+ Looks, performance, practicality - Body control on rough roads; engine lacks character	****
BMW M3 Competition Package (F80)	237F	'16-'19	6/2979	444/7000	406/1850	1560kg	289	4.2	-	-	155	+ The car the F80 M3 should have been from the start - Less refined at low speeds	****
BMW M3 CS (F80)	250 D	18-19	6/2979	454/6250	442/4000	1585kg	291	3.9	-	-	174	+ Improved chassis and mid-range urge - Cost over £20k more than an M3 Comp Pack	****
BMW M3 (E90)	123 F	'08-'11	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1605kg	262	4.9	4.9	10.7	165	+ Every bit as good as the E92 M3 coupe - No carbon roof	****
BMW M3 CRT (E90)	179 F	711-712	8/4361	444/8300	324/3750	1580kg	285	4.4		-	180	+ Saloon chassis + weight savings + GTS engine = best E90 M3 - Just 67 were made	****
BMW M5 (F90)	244F	'17-'20	8/4395	592/5600	553/1800	1855kg	324	3.4			155	+ Fun in two- or four-wheel drive - Insufficient steering connection and engine character	****
BMW M5 Competition (F90)	258 F	£98,135	8/4395	616/6000	553/1800	1865kg	336	3.3			155	+ Incredible performance, sharper handling - It's still a big old bus	****
BMW M5 (F10)	208 F	71-76	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1870kg	300			-	155	+ Twin-turbocharging suits M5 well - Can feel heavy at times	****
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BMW M5 (E60)	129 F	'04-'10	10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1755kg	289	4.7	-	-	155	+ Close to being the ultimate supersaloon - SMG gearbox feels old-tech	****
BMW M5 (E39)	268 F	'98-'03	8/4941	394/6600	369/3800	1795kg	223	5.3	4.9	11.5	155	+ Magnificent V8-engined supersaloon - We'd be nitpicking	****
BMW M5 (E34)	110 F	'88-'95	6/3795	335/6900	295/4750	1725kg	197	5.8	4.9	13.6	155	+ The Godfather of supersaloons - The family can come too	****
BMW M5 (E28)	258 F	'84-'88	6/3453	282/6500	251/4500	1431kg	200		-	-	156	+ The original storming saloon - Understated looks	****
BMW M6 Gran Coupé	190 D	'13-'18	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1875kg	299		-	-	155	+ Enormous performance, stylish looks - Looks overpriced next to rivals, M5 included	****
BMW M760Li xDrive	233 D	£141,750	12/6592	602/5500	590/1550	2180kg	281	3.7	-	-	155	+ More capable than you'd think; strong engine - Too much of a limo to be genuinely exciting	***
BMW X5 M50d	191 D	£74,395	6/2993	376/4000	546/2000	2190kg	174	5.3	-	-	155	+ Straight-line pace - Driving experience identical to standard X5, despite the M badge	***
BMW X7 xDrive30d M Sport	262 D	£76,765	6/2993	261/4000	457/2000	2370kg	112	7.0	-	-	141	+ Spacious; quick enough - Its 'face' will make your kids cry	****
Ford Ranger Raptor	263 D	£49,449	4/1996	210/3750	369/1750	2510kg	85	10.5	-	-	106	+ A hoot off-road - More appropriate in Baja than Bristol	****
Honda Accord Type R	012 F	'98-'03	4/2157	209/7200	158/6700	1306kg	163	7.2	6.1	17.4	142	+ One of the finest front-drivers of all time - Convincing your friends of that	****
Jaguar XE D180 AWD	227 D	£36,755	4/1999	178/4000	317/1750	1685kg	107	8.4	-	-	132	+ Talented chassis gets more traction - Shame the engine isn't as polished	****
Jaguar XE P300 AWD	262 D	£41,005	4/1997	296/5500	295/1500	1690kg	178	5.7	-	-	155	+ Fluent handling; 4WD grip and security - Auto 'box saps sportiness	****
Jaguar XE SV Project 8	269 F	£149,995	8/5000	592/6500	516/3500	1745kg	345	3.7	3.5	7.8	200	+ Beautifully controlled and amazingly agile - They're only making 15 in Touring spec	****
Jaguar XF Sportbrake R-Sport 300PS AWD	260 D	£49,090	4/1997	296/5500	295/1500	1763kg	171	6.0	-	-	155	+ Precise, involving dynamics, unexpected performance - It's only got four cylinders	****
Jaguar XF S Diesel 300PS RWD	219 D	£53,485	6/2993	296/4000	516/2000	1796kg	167	6.4	-	_	155	+ Great chassis, good looks, and it's got six cylinders - It's a diesel	****
Jaguar XFR	181 D	'09-'15	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1800kg	284	4.7	4.8	10.2	155	+ Brilliant blend of pace and refinement - Doesn't sound as special as it is	****
Jaguar XFR-S	208 F	13-15	8/5000	542/6500	501/2500	1800kg	306	4.7	4.0		186	+ Brilliant Dieno of pace and reinfernent - Doesn't Sound as special as it is + XF turned up to 12 - Tyres aren't cheap	
	208 F 191 D	13-15 '14-'17					30b 294	4.b 4.6		-	186 174		****
Jaguar XJR			8/5000	542/6500	502/2500	1875kg			-	-		+ Hot-rod vibe, fine cabin - Opinion-dividing looks	****
Jaguar XJR575	251 T	'17-'18	8/5000	567/6250	516/3500	1875kg	307	4.4	-	-	186	+ Big performance, genuine sporting spirit - Unfashionable package; depreciation	****
Jaguar E-Pace P300	243 D	£45,575	4/1998	296/5500	295/1200	1894kg	159	6.4	-	-	155	+ Decent grip and balance - Dreary engine; heavier than a V6 F-Pace	***
Jaguar F-Pace S	222 D	£54,440	6/2995	375/6500	332/4500	1884kg	202	5.5	-	-	155	+ A match for Porsche's SUVs - Supercharged V6 needs to be worked hard	****
Jaguar F-Pace SVR	262 D	£75,375	8/5000	542/6000	501/2500	1995kg	276	4.3	-	-	176	+ A great candidate for SVO's attentions - It's still an SUV	****
Jaguar I-Pace HSE	251 D	£74,445	-	394	513	2208kg	181	4.8	-	-	124	+ Impressive chassis and point-to-point pace - Range anxiety and hefty kerb weight	****
Kia Stinger GT-Line 2.0	247 D	£31,995	4/1998	244/6200	260/1400	1642kg	151	5.8	_	_	149	+ Out-Jaguars Jaguar's XE and XF - Except in the looks department	****

		ISSUE NO.	PRICE (OR YEARS ON SALE)	NE /GC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	놂	BHP/TON	O-62MPH (CLAMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTED)	мах мрн		
MAI	CE & MODEL	nssi	98 8 8	ENGINE CYL/CC	盖	8	WEIGHT	₩	0-62 (CLAIM	0-9C	0-10 (TESTE	MAX	EVO RATING	
Kia	Stinger GT-Line 2.2 CRDi	251 T	£34,225	4/1999	197/3800	324/1750	1735kg	115	7.3	-	-	143	+ Smooth daily driver with a decent interior - Frustrating auto 'box, heavy kerb weight	***
	Stinger GT S	242 D	£40,495	6/3342	365/6000	376/1300	1780kg	168	4.7	-	-	168	+ Playful handling, deep-chested performance - Engine lacks soul, steering lacks feel	***
	nd Rover Defender 110 (P400) nborghini Urus	273 F 249 F	£79,655 £159,925	6/2996 8/3996	394/5500 641/6000	406/2000 627/2250	2388kg 2200kg	168 296	6.4 3.6	-	-	129 190	+ A great off-roader - If off-roading is your thing + A freakish manipulator of physics - But also rather one-dimensional	****
	rus ISF	151 F	'07-'12	8/4969	417/6600	372/5200	1714kg	247	5.2	4.7	10.9	173	+ Shockingly good Lexus - The M3's available as a four-door too	***
Lot	us Carlton	258 F	'90-'93	6/3615	377/5200	419/4200	1658kg	231	5.4	4.8	10.6	177	+ The Millennium Falcon of saloon cars - Every drive is a work-out	****
	serati Ghibli	186 D	£57,015	6/2979	345/5000	406/1750	1810kg	194	5.5	-	-	166	+ Bursting with character; good value compared to Quattroporte - It's still a big car	****
	serati Quattroporte S serati Quattroporte GTS	184 D 226 D	'13-'18 '16-'18	6/2979 8/3798	404/5500 523/6800	406/1750 479/2250	1860kg 1900kg	221 280	5.1 4.7	-	-	177 193	+ Tempting alternative to V8 - Feel-free steering, ride lacks decorum + Still pretty - Off the pace dynamically	***
	serati Quattroporte serati Ouattroporte	085 F	10-16 '04-'08	8/4244	394/7000	333/4500	1900kg 1930kg	207	5.6	- -	-	193 171	+ Redefined big-car dynamics - Don't use auto mode	***
	serati Quattroporte S	137F	'08-'12	8/4691	425/7000	361/4750	1990kg	216	5.4	5.1	12.1	174	+ A QP with the bhp it deserves - Grille is a bit Hannibal Lecter	***
	serati Quattroporte Sport GTS	141 F	'08-'12	8/4691	433/7000	361/4750	1990kg	221	5.1	-	-	177	+ The most stylish of supersaloons - Slightly wooden brakes, unforgiving ride	****
	serati Levante Diesel	221 D	£58,315	6/2897	271/4000	442/2000	2205kg	125	6.9	-	-	143	+ Impressive blend of ride and handling - Performance is mild for a Maserati	***
	rcedes-AMG A35 4Matic Saloon rcedes-AMG CLA45 S 4Matic+ Coupé	271 F 273 D	£38,615 £52,045	4/1991 4/1991	302/5800 415/6750	295/3000 369/5000	1495kg 1600kg	205 264	4.8 4.0	-	-	155 167	+ Fun when you want it to be, secure when the heavens open - Others are even more fun	****
	rcedes-AMG CLA45 S 4Matic+ Coupe rcedes-AMG CLA45 S 4Matic+ Shooting B.	278 D	£52,045 £53,495	4/1991	415/6750	369/5000	1630kg	259	4.0	-	-	155	+ Speed, ability and involvement - CLA35 offers a similar experience for less outlay + Same stellar performance and involvement as the A45 - Could do with a shorter name	***
	rcedes-AMG C43 4Matic Estate	228 D	£49,245	6/2996	362/5500	383/2000	1660kg	222	4.7	-	-	155	+ Incredibly fast and composed - Difficult to engage with	***
Me	rcedes-AMG C63 Saloon (W205)	209 D	£66,754	8/3982	469/5500	479/1750	1640kg	291	4.1	-	-	155	+ Fast and feelsome - Lacks the ultimate finesse and response of the C63 S	****
	rcedes-AMG C63 Estate (S205)	216 F	£65,479	8/3982	469/5500	479/1750	1710kg	279	4.2	-	-	155	+ Much more fun than it looks - Gearbox dim-witted at low speeds	***
	rcedes-AMG C63 S Saloon (W205) rcedes-AMG C63 S Estate (S205)	258 T 252 D	£75,733 £74,458	8/3982 8/3982	503/5500 503/5500	516/1750 516/2000	1655kg 1750kg	309 292	4.0 4.1	-	-	155 174	+ Tremendous twin-turbo V8 power - Not quite as focused as an M division car + One of the finest all-round compact performance cars - Baffling array of driver settings	****
	rcedes-Benz C63 AMG (W204)	252 U 151 F	'08-'14	8/6208	451/6800	442/5000	1655kg	277	4.1	4.4	9.7	155	+ Monstrous pace and extremely engaging - Same-era M3 is just a little better	***
	rcedes-Benz C55 AMG (W203)	088 F	'04-'08	8/5439	367/5250	376/4000	1635kg	228	5.2	-	-	155	+ Furiously fast, commendably discreet - Overshadowed by M3 and RS4	****
Ме	rcedes-Benz 190E 2.5-16	185 F	'89-'92	4/2498	204/6750	177/5500	1300kg	159	7.5	-	-	146	+ M-B's M3 alternative - Not as nimble as the Beemer	***
	rcedes-Benz E400d 4Matic Estate (S213)	260 D	£55,140	6/2925	335/3600	516/1200	1920kg	177	5.1	-	-	155	+ A properly quick diesel estate - Steady image, size	****
	rcedes-AMG E63 4Matic+ (W213)	242 D	£78,675	8/3982	563/5750	553/2250	1875kg	305	3.5	-	-	155	+ More rounded than the E63 S - Could be a little too discreet for some tastes	****
	rcedes-AMG E63 S 4Matic+ (W213) rcedes-AMG E63 S 4Matic+ Estate (S213)	258 F 272 F	£95,440 £97,440	8/3982 8/3982	604/5750 604/5750	627/2500 627/2500	1880kg 1995kg	326 308	3.4 3.5	3.4	7.4	155 155	+ Fast, refined, effective and fun - At nearly two tons, it's not 911 nimble + As above - It's even heavier than the saloon, and five metres long	****
	rcedes-AMG GT63 4Matic+ 4-Door Coupé	274 F	19-120	8/3982	577/5500	590/2500	1995kg 2025kg	290	3.5 3.4	-	-	193	+ As above - it's even heavier than the saloon, and live metresiong + Does the same as the S for less - Takes up plenty of road	***
	rcedes-AMG GT63 S 4Matic+ 4-Door Coupé	269 F	£135,500	8/3982	630/5500	664/2500	2045kg	313	3.2	-	-	196	+ Agile and immensely quick - Lacks the coupe GT's drama	***
Ме	rcedes-Benz E63 AMG (W212)	187D	'13-'16	8/5461	549/5500	531/1750	1770kg	315	4.2	-	-	155	+ Power, response and accuracy in spades - A little lacking in originality	****
	rcedes-Benz E63 AMG S (W212)	208 F	'13-'16	8/5461	577/5500	590/1750	1795kg	327	4.1	-	-	155	+ Effortless power; intuitive and approachable - Sluggish auto 'box	****
	rcedes-Benz E63 AMG (W212)	165 F 134 D	'11-'13 '09-'11	8/5461 8/6208	518/5250 518/6800	516/1750 465/5200	1765kg	298 298	4.4 4.5	-	-	155 155	+ Turbo engine didn't dilute the E63 experience - Sometimes struggles for traction + Indulgent chassis, brilliant engine - Steering still vague	***
	rcedes-Benz E63 AMG (W212) rcedes-Benz E63 AMG (W211)	096 D	'06-'09	8/6208	507/6800	465/5200	1765kg 1765kg	298 292	4.5		- -	155 155	+ Induigent Chassis, brilliant engine - Steering Still Vague + Brilliant engine, indulgent chassis - Vague steering, speed limits	****
	rcedes-Benz E55 AMG	052 F	'03-'06	8/5439	469/6100	516/2650	1760kg	271	4.7	4.8	10.2	155	+ M5-humbling grunt, cosseting ride - Speed limits	****
	rcedes-Benz S63 AMG L	246 D	£125,690	8/3982	604/5500	664/2750	1940kg	316	4.3	-	-	155	+ Performance doesn't come at the expense of luxury - But pure driving thrills do	***
Me	rcedes-AMG CLS53 4Matic+	247 D	£72,095	6/2999	451/6100	567/1800	1905kg	302	4.5	-	-	155	+ Impressive chassis and hybrid powertrain - 4Matic only, and heavy, too	***
	rcedes-Benz CLS63 AMG S	199 D	'14-'17	8/5461	577/5500	590/1750	1795kg	327	4.1	-	-	155	+ Quick and characterful - Dated gearbox, no four-wheel-drive option in the UK	***
	rcedes-Benz GLC63 AMG S Coupé	253 D 218 D	£76,860	8/3982 8/5461	503/5500	516/1750	1945kg	263 258	3.8	-	-	174 155	+ Unquestionable performance - Lacks adjust ability and engagement	***
	rcedes-Benz GLE63 AMG S rcedes-Benz GLE63 AMG S Coupé	213 D	£96,950 £96,575	8/5461	577/5500 577/5500	560/1750 560/1750	2270kg 2275kg	258	4.2 4.2	-	-	155	+ Stonking pace, extreme refinement - Feels remote + Subtler than an X6 M - More force than finesse	***
	rcedes-AMG G63	250 D	£143,305	8/3982	577/6000	627/2500	2485kg	236	4.5	-	-	137	+ Vastly improved chassis, fabulous engine - Dynamic ability still limited	***
	rcedes-Benz G63 AMG	172 D	'12-'18	8/5461	537/5500	560/2000	2475kg	220	5.4	-	-	130	+ Epic soundtrack - Ancient chassis	***
	subishi Evo X FQ-300 SST	118 F	'08-'14	4/1998	290/6500	300/3500	1590kg	185	4.5	5.2	13.9	155	+ First Evo with a twin-clutch transmission - Not as exciting as its predecessors	***
	subishi Evo X FQ-330 SST	134 F	'08-'14	4/1998	324/6500	322/3500	1590kg	207	4.4	-	-	155	+ Great engine and gearbox combo - It still lives in the shadow of the Evo IX	***
	subishi Evo X FQ-360 subishi Evo X FQ-400	122 D 181 F	'08-'14 '09-'10	4/1998 4/1998	354/6500 403/6500	363/3500 387/3500	1560kg 1560kg	231 262	4.0 3.8		-	155 155	+ Ridiculously rapid Evo - A five-speed gearbox?! + Most powerful factory Evo everabout X grand too much when new	****
	subishi Evo IX FQ-340	088 F	'05-'08	4/1997	345/6800	321/4600	1400kg	250	4.2	4.3	10.9	157	+ Gives Porsche drivers nightmares - Points. Lots of	***
	subishi Evo IX MR FQ-360	181 F	'05-'08	4/1997	366/6887	363/3200	1400kg	266	4.0	-	-	157	+ Well-executed engine upgrades - Prison food	***
	subishi Evo VIII	055 F	'03-'05	4/1997	276/6500	289/3500	1410kg	199	5.1	-	-	157	+ The Evo grows up - Brakes need beefing up	****
	subishi Evo VIII MR FQ-300	057F	'03-'05	4/1997	305/6800	289/3500	1400kg	221 206	4.9	-	- 12.0	157	+ Extra pace, extra attitude - Extra money	***
	subishi Evo VII subishi Evo VI Tommi Mäkinen Edition	031 F 271 F	'02-'03 '00-'01	4/1997 4/1997	276/6500 276/6500	282/3500 275/2750	1360kg 1365kg	205	5.1 4.6	5.0 -	13.0	140 150	+ Terrific all-rounder- You tell us + Our favourite Evo- Subtle it is not	****
	sche Taycan Turbo S	267 D	£138,826	-	750	774	2295kg	332	2.8	-	-	161	+ Straight-line oomph will leave you in awe - Inadequate EV infrastructure	***
	sche Panamera 4S Diesel	232 D	£91,788	8/3956	416/3500	627/1000	2050kg	206	4.3	-	-	177	+ Sharp chassis, impressive tech - Performance doesn't meet expectations	***
	sche Panamera GTS	279 D	£107,180	8/3996	473/6500	457/1800	2040kg	236	3.9	-	-	181	+ The most engaging Panamera - Still a heavy old thing	****
	sche Panamera Turbo	237 F	£115,100	8/3996	542/5750	568/1960	1995kg		3.6	3.4	8.3	190	+ Searing pace, with body control that's a real step up - Still very heavy	***
	sche Panamera Turbo Sport Turismo sche Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid Sport T.	239 D 272 D	£118,828 £142,279	8/3996 8/3996	542/5750 671	568/1960 627	2035kg	271 293	3.8 3.4	-	-	188 192	+ Looks great; drives better than its weight would suggest - Not exactly a load-lugger + Shows some Stuttgart magic in the corners - It weighs 2.3 tons!	****
	sche Panamera GTS	208 F	71-76	8/4806	434/6700	383/3500	2325kg <i>1925kg</i>	229	4.4	-	-	178	+ Vivacious V8, entertaining balance - Can feel light on performance next to turbocharged rivals	
	sche Panamera Turbo	137F	70-76	8/4806	493/6000	516/2250	1970kg	254		3.6	8.9	188	+ Fast, refined and dynamically sound - It still leaves us cold	***
	sche Panamera Turbo S	159 D	'11-'13	8/4806	542/6000	590/2250	1995kg	276	3.8	-	-	190	+ Pace, excellent ergonomics - Steering feel, ride	***
	sche Macan	259 D	£46,344	4/1984	242/5000	273/1600	1795kg	137	6.7	-	-	139	+ Lighter engine makes for sharper handling - The Golf REstate	****
	sche Macan S	257 T	£48,750	6/2997	349/5400 355/6000	354/1360	1865kg	190 <i>190</i>	5.3 <i>5.2</i>	-	-	157 <i>159</i>	+ Great for an SUV - Every positive still needs to be suffixed with 'for an SUV' + Handles like an SUV shouldn't - Still looks like an SUV	****
	sche Macan GTS sche Cayenne S (Mk3)	244 F 253 T	76-78 £68,330	6/2997 6/2894	355/6000 434/5700	<i>369/1650</i> 406/1800	<i>1895kg</i> 2020kg	190 218	5.2	-	-	159 164	+ Handles like an SUV shouldn't - Still looks like an SUV + Impressive surface-coated brake tech - We'd rather have it on a sports car	****
	sche Cayenne Turbo (Mk3)	243 D	£99,291	8/3996	542/5750	568/1960	2175kg	254	4.1	-	-	177	+ Huge performance, surprising agility - It's still a two-ton-plus SUV	***
	sche Cayenne Turbo Coupé	263 D	£104,729	8/3996	542/5750	568/2000	2200kg	250	3.9	-	-	177	+ As good to drive as the non-coupe Cayenne - Swoopier roof adds thousands to the price	
	sche Cayenne GTS (Mk2, V6)	211 D	'15-'17	6/3604	434/6000	442/1600	2110kg	209	5.2	-	-	163	+ The driver's Cayennebut why would a driver want an SUV?	****
	sche Cayenne GTS (Mk2, V8)	173 D	'12-'15	8/4806	414/6500	380/3500	2085kg	202	5.7	-	-	162	+ Dynamically the best SUV of its era - At two tons, it's still no sports car	****
	sche Cayenne Turbo (Mk2) sche Cayenne Turbo S (Mk2)	212 D 184 D	'10-'17 '10-'17	8/4806 8/4806	513/6000 562/6000	533/2250 590/2500	2185kg 2235kg	239 255	4.5 4.1	-	-	173 176	+ Remarkable performance, handling, completeness - Vague steering, dated engine + More power and torque than a Zonda S 7.3 - In an SUV	****
	nge Rover Evoque	261 D	£37,175	6/2995	246/5500	269/1300	1818kg	137	7.0	-	-	143	+ As good on road as it is off - Engines still a long way short of being competitive	****
	ige Rover Velar P380	239 D	£70,210	6/2995	375/6500	332/3500	1884kg	202	5.7	-	-	155	+ A more advanced, opulent alternative to an F-Pace - Its weight ultimately limits its agility	
	nge Rover Velar SVAutobiography Dynamic		£86,685	8/4999	542/6000	501/2500	2085kg	264	4.5	-	-	170	+ Quick, luxurious - An F-Pace SVR is ten grand cheaper	***
	nge Rover Sport V8 Supercharged	186 D	£87,680	8/5000	503/6000	460/2500	2335kg	219	5.0	-	-	155	+ Deceptively quick and capable sports SUV - It's still got a weight problem	***
	nge Rover Sport SVR	260 D	£101,145	8/5000	567/6000	516/3500	2302kg	250 227	4.5 5.4	-	-	176 155	+ Loud and proud - More blunderbuss than Exocet	****
	nge Rover SVAutobiography Dynamic Is-Royce Ghost	250 T 186 D	£142,285 £223,368	8/4367 12/6592	557/5000 563/5250	516/3500 575/1500	2497kg 2360kg	242	5.4 4.7		-	155	+ Monsters big journeys - Is a monster on the weighing scales + It's quicker than you think - It's more enjoyable driven slowly	****
	ls-Royce Phantom	054 F	£318,120	12/6749	453/5350	531/3500	2560kg	180	5.7	-	-	149	+ Rolls reinvented for the 21st century - The roads are barely big enough	****
	AT Leon Cupra R ST Abt	271 F	£37,975	4/1984	345/5300	324/2000	c1482kg	c237	4.7	-	-	163	+ Raw nature and rocketship pace - No longer at the cutting edge of its class	****
Sko	ida Kodiaq vRS	258 T	£42,870	4/1968	236/4000	369/1750	1838kg	130	7.0	-	-	137	+ Looks good, performs well, practical - Doesn't quite justify the vRS badge	***
	oaru WRX STI S209	272 F	\$63,995	4/2457	341/6400	330/3600	1580kg	219	4.9	-	-	162	+ That old Impreza magic is alive and well - Only 209 were built, and only for America	****
	paru WRX STI	253 F	'14-'18	4/2457	296/6000	300/4000	1534kg	196	5.2	-	-	158	+ Still has its moments - Something of an anachronism	****
	paru Impreza STI ('Hawkeye') paru Impreza WRX STI PPP ('Blobeye')	090 F 073 F	'05-'07 '03-'05	4/2457 4/1994	276/6000 300/6000	289/4000 299/4000	1495kg 1470kg	188 207	5.3 5.4	- 5.2	- 12.9	158 148	+ Stunning to drive - Not so stunning to look at + A Subaru with real edge - Bit too edgy in the wet	****
	paru Impreza WKX STTPPP (Biobeye)	0/3F 011F	'93-'00	4/1994	215/5600	214/4000	1470kg 1235kg	177	5.4 5.8	5.4	14.6	148	+ A Subaru with real edge - Bit too edgy in the wet + Destined for classic status - Thirsty	****
	paru Impreza RB5	187F	'99	4/1994	237/6000	258/3500	1235kg	195	6.1	5.0	14.1	144	+ Perfect blend of poise and power - Limited numbers	****
	paru Impreza P1	259 F	'00-'01	4/1994	276/6500	260/4000	1283kg	219	4.7	4.9	13.3	150	+ One of our favourite Imprezas - Doesn't come cheap	****
	oaru Impreza 22B STI	188 F	'98-'99	4/2212	276/6000	268/3200	1270kg	220	5.3	5.0	13.1	150	+ The ultimate Impreza - Prices reflect this	***







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MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (OR YEARS ON SALE)	ENGINE CYL/GC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLAIMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTEI)	мах мрн	EVO RATING	
Tesla Model 3 Performance	263 F	£49,440	-	444	471	1847kg	244	3.5	-	-	145	+ Quicker round a track than an M3 - Lap times aren't everything	****
Tesla Model S P100D	235 F	£129,400	-	595	713	2108kg	287	2.4	2.9	7.7	155	+ Killer RWYB performance - Elon Musk	****
Vauxhall Insignia Grand Sport GSi BiTurbo D	246 D	£36,965	4/1956	207/4000	354/1500	1772kg	145	7.3	-	-	145	+ Fine ride, strong real-world pace - Doesn't feel different enough from non-GSi Insignias	****
Vauxhall Insignia VXR SuperSport	189 D	'13-'17	6/2792	321/5250	321/5250	1825kg	179	5.6	-	-	170	+ A 170mph Vauxhall - Should be a more engaging steer	***
Vauxhall VXR8 GTS	215 D	'15-'17	8/6162	576/6150	546/3850	1834kg	319	4.2	-	-	155	+ Monster engine; engaging driving experience - Woeful interior	****
Vauxhall VXR8 GTS-R	272 F	'17	8/6162	587/6150	546/3850	1880kg	317	4.2	-	-	155	+ Blistering performance; bursting with character - The end of an era	****
Volvo V60 Polestar	222 D	£49,665	4/1969	362/6000	347/3100	1721kg	214	4.8	-	-	155	+ Subtle, well-executed performance car - Plays a little too safe	****

ROADSTERS / CONVERTIBLES



OUR CHOICE

Lotus Elise Sport 220. Delivering just the right amount of power from its supercharged 1.8-litre engine to make the most of its low kerb weight, the Sport 220 is gutsy, grippy, accurate and enthusiastic. And, of course, it rides beautifully. It's the sweetest spot amongst many already-very-sweet Elises.



BEST OF THE REST

The Porsche 718 Spyder (left) is essentially a drop-top Cayman GT4, while the 718 Boxster GTS 4.0 is essentially a cut-price 718 Spyder. The Aston Martin Vantage Roadster bests the 911 Cabriolet for character, while the Caterham Seven remains an exemplar of sports car purity whatever the model.

	Abarth 124 Spider	256 F	76-79	4/1368	168/5500	184/2500	1060kg	161	6.8			143	+ A little car with a big soul - Vague and lifeless front end	****
	Alfa Romeo 4C Spider	223 F	15-19	4/1742	237/6000	258/2200	940kg*	256	4.5		-	160	+ Stunningly beautiful; better steering than coupe version - Still has the coupe's other foibles	
	Alfa Romeo 8C Spider	161 F	'09-'11	8/4691	450/7000	354/4750	1675kg	273	4.4		-	181	+ Beauty meets beast. They hit it off - Boot is useless for touring	****
	Ariel Atom 4	273 F	£39.975	4/1996	320/6500	310/3000	595kg	546	2.8	-	-	162	+ Sensory overload - Turbo engine lacks the old supercharged unit's frantic soundtrack	****
	Ariel Atom 3 245	248 F	18-12	4/1998	245/8600	177/7200	520kg	479	3.1		-	145	+ Even better than its predecessors - Can still be a bit draughty	****
	Ariel Atom 3.5 Supercharged	180 D	13-18	4/1998	310/8400	169/7200	550kg	573	2.7		-	155	+ As mad as ever - Rain	****
	Ariel Atom 3.5R	255 F	74-78	4/1998	350/8400	243/6100	550kg	647	2.6			155	+ Remarkable balance, poise and pace - Pricey	****
	Ariel Nomad	248 F	£33,000	4/2354	235/7200	221/4300	670kg*	365	3.4		-	134	+ Off-road capabilities make for a super plaything - No Bluetooth	****
	Ariel Nomad R	278 F	£77,400	4/1998	335/7200	243/4300	c700kg	c486				134	+ Intriguing and effective mash-up of track car and off-roader - They're only making five	
										-	-			****
	Aston Martin Vantage Roadster	279 D	£126,950	8/3982	503/6000	505/2000	1628kg*	314	3.8	-	-	190	+ Builds on the already excellent coupe's attributes - Interior design lags behind exterior	****
	Aston Martin V8 Vantage Roadster (4.7)	130 F	'09-'16	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1710kg	250	4.8	-	-	180	+ Sportiest, coolest drop-top Aston in years - Feels dated compared to contemporaries	****
	Aston Martin V8 Vantage S Roadster	161 F	'11-'17	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1690kg	258	4.8	-	-	189	+ Sounds amazing, looks even better - Still not the best drop-top in its class	****
	Aston Martin V12 Vantage Roadster	175 F	'12-'14	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1760kg	294	4.5	-	-	190	+ As good as the coupe, with amplified V12 rumble - Just a smidgen shakier	****
,	Aston Martin V12 Vantage S Roadster	212 F	74-77	12/5935	565/6750	457/5750	1745kg	329	4.1	-	-	201	+ A brilliant two-seat roadsterlet down by a frustrating automated manual gearbox	****
1	Aston Martin DB11 Volante	258 T	£159,900	8/3982	503/6000	498/2000	1795kg	285	4.1	-	-	187	+ Impressively wide range of dynamic personalities - Cabin could be better at this price	****
1	Audi TT Roadster 45 TFSI quattro (Mk3)	259 D	£37,005	4/1984	242/5000	273/1600	1455kg	169	5.5	-	- - - -	155	+ Competent and stylish - Chunky weight dulls the performance	***
1	Audi TTS Roadster (Mk3)	207 D	£46,360	4/1984	302/5400	295/2000	1495kg	205	4.8	-	-	155	+ Highly capable - Most will want more than 'capable'	****
,	Audi TT RS Roadster (Mk3)	250 T	£55,655	5/2480	394/5850	354/1700	1530kg	262	3.9	-	-	155	+ Terrific engineis the best thing about it	***
	Audi R8 V8 Spyder	186 D	'11-'15	8/4163	424/7900	317/6000	1660kg	259	4.8	-	-	187	+ More delicate and subtle than the V10 - The V10 sounds even better	****
	BAC Mono	189 F	£165.125	4/2261	305/7700	206/6000	580kg*	534	2.8	-	-	170	+ The most single-minded track car available - That means no passengers	****
	BMW Z4 sDrive20i	261 D	£36,990	4/1988	194/4500	236/1450	1405kg	140	6.6	-	-	149		****
	BMW Z4 M40i	256 D	£49.050	6/2998	335/5000	369/1600	1535kg	222	4.6		-	155	+ Keen engine, communicative chassis - Could handle more power + Inherent agility and ability - Undemanding and unengaging	****
	BMW Z4 sDrive 35i M Sport (Mk2)	186 D	13-17	6/2979	302/5800	295/1300	1505kg	204	5.2		-	155 155	+ Looks, hard-top versatility, drivetrain - Clumsy chassis is upset by ragged surfaces	****
	BMW Z4 SDrive 351 M Sport (MKZ)	091 F	'06-'09	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900					-	155 155		
							1410kg	244	5.0		-		+ Exhilarating and characterful; that engine - Stiff suspension	****
	BMW M Roadster	002 F	'98-'02	6/3246	325/7400	258/4900	1375kg	240	5.1	_	-	155	+ M3 motor; hunky looks - M Coupé drives better	****
	BMW i8 Roadster	258 F	£124,735	3/1499	369/5800	420/3700	1595kg	235	4.6	-		155	+ Unique and engaging - Still more GT than sports car	****
	BMW Z8	026 F	'00-'03	8/4941	400/6600	369/3800	1585kg	256	4.7	4.8	11.1	155	+ M5-powered super-sportster - M5's more fun to drive	***
	Caterham Seven 270	219 F	£29,885	4/1596	135/6800	122/4100	540kg*	254	5.0	-	-	122	+ Feisty engine, sweetly balanced, manic and exciting - The temptation of more power	****
(Caterham Super Seven 1600	273 D	£33,495	4/1596	135/6800	122/4100	565kg*	243	5.0	-	-	122	+ As enjoyable as other Sevens, but more accessible - Vintage looks come at a price	****
(Caterham Seven 310	273 F	£31,385	4/1596	152/7000	124/5600	540kg*	286	4.8	-	-	127	+ Intense and exciting - Sticky tyres limit the amount of throttle adjustability	****
(Caterham Seven 360	209 F	£33,385	4/1999	180/7300	143/6100	560kg*	327	4.8	-	-	130	+ Extra power is welcome - You'll need the six-speed gearbox to make the most of it	****
(Caterham Seven 420	223 F	£36,385	4/1999	210/7600	150/6300	560kg*	381	3.8	4.0	10.3	136	+ It's the one we built for ourselves - Trickier on the limit than lesser-powered Sevens	****
	Caterham Seven 620S	220 D	£48,890	4/1999	310/7700	219/7350	610kg*	516	3.4	-	-	155	+ Ludicrous, near-620R pace, with added habitability - Well, 'habitable' for a Seven	****
	Caterham Seven 620R	255 F	£53,885	4/1999	310/7700	219/7350	572kg*	551	2.8	-	-	155	+ Banzai on track, yet still relevant on the road - £50k for a Seven?	****
	Caterham Seven 160	239 F	'13-'17	3/660	80/7000	79/3400	490kg*	166	6.9	_		100	+ The fabulous Seven formula at its most basic - Gets pricey with options	****
	Caterham Seven SuperSprint	247 D	17-18	3/660	95/7000	82/5600	490kg*	197	6.9		-	100	+ Accessible limits with proper pace - You need to enjoy being exposed to the elements	****
	Caterham Seven Supersprint	105 F	'07-'14	4/1596	125/6100	120/5350	539kg*	235	5.9			112	+ Great debut for Ford-engined model - Bigger drivers need SV model	****
	Caterham Seven Koausport 123	165 F	71-74	4/1596	140/6900	120/5330	520kg*	273	4.9			120	+ One of the best Caterhams is also one of the cheapest of its era - It's quite minimalist	
			11-14							-	-	130		****
	Caterham Seven Supersport R	180 D		4/1999	180/7300	143/6100	535kg*	342	4.8	<u>-</u>	-		+ One of the best road-and-track Sevens - Impractical, noisy, uncomfortable	****
	Caterham Seven Superlight R300	150 F	'09-'12	4/1999	175/7000	139/6000	515kg*	345	4.5			140	+ Possibly all the Caterham you need - They're not cheap	****
	Caterham Seven CSR 260	094 F	'06-'17	4/2261	256/7500	200/6200	565kg*	460	3.1	3.8	-	155	+ Brilliant for high days, holidays and trackdays - Wet Wednesdays	****
	Caterham Seven Superlight R500	123 F	'08-'14	4/1999	263/8500	177/7200	506kg*	528	2.9	-	-	150	+ Better power-to-weight ratio than a Veyron - Until you add the driver	****
	Caterham Seven R500	200 F	'99-'06	4/1796	230/8600	155/7200	460kg*	510	3.4	3.6	8.8	146	+ The K-series Seven at its very best - No cup holders	****
[Dallara Stradale	267 F	c£162,000	4/2300	394/6200	369/3000	855kg*	468	3.3	-	-	174	+ Startling on-road performance - Can leave you feeling detached on track	****
i	lemental Rp1 (2.3)	255 F	£139,800	4/2261	320	354	620kg*	557	2.6	-	-	165	+ Sensational, explosive, captivating, exploitable - Price will test your level of commitmen	t ***
İ	errari Portofino	247 F	£166,180	8/3855	592/7500	560/3000	1664kg	366	3.5	-	-	199+	+ Better than the California - Not better than a DB11 Volante	****
	Honda S2000	243 F	'99-'09	4/1997	237/8300	153/7500	1260kg	191	6.2	-	- - - - -	150	+ An alternative and rev-happy roadster - A Boxster's better	****
	laguar F-type Convertible P450	271 D	£75,470	8/5000	444/6000	428/2500	1660kg	272	4.6	-	-	177	+ Strong and flexible supercharged V8 - Steering and chassis feel mismatched	****
	laguar F-type Project 7	212 F	15	8/5000	567/6500	501/2500	1585kg	363	3.9	-	-	186	+ Noise, performance, adjustability - Expensive, and not the GT3 rival we would have liked	
	(TM X-Bow GT	183 D	£95,880	4/1984	281/6400	310/3200	875kg	326	4.1	-	-	144	+ Extraordinary ability, now in a more road-friendly package - Price	****
	(TM X-Bow R	165 F	£87.480	4/1984	296/6300	295/3300	816kg	369	3.9	-	-	144	+ Sharper handling, more power - Pity it's not even lighter, and cheaper	****
	Lotus Elise Club Racer (S3)	183 F	711-715	4/1598	134/6800	118/4400	852kg	160	6.5			127	+ Even lighter, even more focused than a standard 1.6 Elise - Are you prepared to go this basic?	
								244						
	otus Elise Sport 220 (S3)	244F	£41,695	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	904kg		4.6		-	145	+ Perfect power-to-weight ratio - Abit short on creature comforts	****
	otus Elise Sprint 220 (S3)	254 F	'18-'19	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	878kg	251	4.5		- - -	145	+ Makes the most of its lightness - Heavyweight price	****
	otus Elise S Club Racer (S3)	189 D	'13-'15	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	905kg	244	4.6	-	-	145	+ Purist approach intensifies ability - Lightest, option-free spec requires commitment	****
	otus Elise Cup 250 (S3)	279 F	£49,595	4/1798	245/7200	184/3500	931kg	267	3.9	-		154	+ As effective, enjoyable and essential as ever - Prioritises grip over adjustability	****
	otus Elise Cup 260 (S3)	243 F	'18-'19	4/1798	250/7200	195/5500	902kg	282	4.2	-	-	151	+ Quickest Elise yet - Just 30 were built	****
1	otus Elise Sport 135 (S2)	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	****
i	Lotus Elise S (S2)	104 F	'06-'10	4/1794	134/6200	127/4200	860kg	158	6.1	6.3	18.7	127	+ Brilliant entry-level Elise - Precious little	****
	Lotus Elise 111S (S2)	049F	'02-'04	4/1796	156/7000	129/4650	860kg	197	5.1	-	-	131	+ A genuinely useable Elise - Air-con? In an Elise?	****
	Lotus Elise SC (S2)	131 F	'08-'11	4/1794	218/8000	156/5000	870kg	254	4.6	4.5	11.4	145	+ All the usual Elise magic - Supercharged engine lacks sparkle	****
	otus Elise (S1)	235 F	'96-'01	4/1796	118/5500	122/3000	731kg	164	5.9	6.1	18.5	126	+ A modern classic - A tad impractical?	****
	Lotus 3-Eleven	220 F	16-17	6/3456	410/7000	302/3000	925kg*	450	3.4	-		174	+ A fantastically exciting Lotus - If not exactly a groundbreaking one	****
	Lotus 3-Eleven 430	248 F	10-17	6/3456	430/7000	325/4500	923kg* 920kg*	475	3.2		-	180	+ A fatting send-off for a brilliant Lotus - Just 20 were made	****
	otus 3-Eleven Lotus 2-Eleven	240 F	'07-'11	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	720kg	267	4.5		-	140	+ Not far off the supercharged 2-Eleven's pace - You want the supercharged one, don't you?	
			'07-11								-			****
	otus 2-Eleven Supercharged	123 F		4/1796	252/8000	179/7000	745kg	344	4.0	-		150	+ Impressive on road and track - Not hardcore enough for some	****
	otus 340R	126 F	'00	4/1796	190/7800	146/5000	701kg	275	4.5	4.5	12.5	126	+ Hardcore road-racerthat looks like a dune buggy from Mars	****
	Maserati GranCabrio MC	185 D	£112,400	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1973kg	234	4.9	-	-	179	+ Most powerful GranCabrio yet - The GranCabrio is starting to show its age	****
- 1	Лаzda MX-5 1.5 (Mk4)	230 F	£23,795	4/1496	129/7000	111/4800	975kg	134	8.3	-	-	127	+ Lightest MX-5 since the Mk1 - Lacks intensity	****

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Mazda MX-5 2.0 (Mk4, 184PS)	268 F	£28,395	4/1998	181/7000	151/4000	1030kg	178	6.5	-	-	136	+ At last, a more powerful factory MX-5 - It's still no fireball	****
Mazda MX-5 RF 2.0 (Mk4, 184PS)	256 F	£30,295	4/1998	181/7000	151/4000	1073kg	171	6.8	-	-	137	+ As above, but with a retracting hard-top - Which adds weight	****
Mazda MX-5 2.0 (Mk4)	228 F	'15-'18	4/1998	158/6000	147/4600	1000kg	161	7.3	-	-	133	+ Brilliant basic recipe - The desire for stiffer suspension and more power	****
Mazda MX-5 2.0i Sport Tech (Mk3.5)	212 F	'09-'15	4/1999	158/7000	139/5000	1098kg	146	7.6	-	-	138	+ Handles brilliantly again; folding hard-top also available - Less-than-macho image	****
Mazda MX-5 1.8i (Mk3)	091 F	'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)	017F	'98-'05	4/1839	146/7000	124/5000	1065kg	140	8.5	-	-	123	+ Affordable ragtops don't get much better - Cheap cabin	****
Mazda MX-5 1.6 (Mk1)	268 F	'89-'97	4/1597	115/6500	100/5500	971kg	120	8.8	-	-	114	+ The original and still (pretty much) the best - Less than rigid	****
Mercedes-AMG SLC43	222 D	£47,600	6/2996	362/5500	383/2000	1520kg	242	4.7	-	-	155	+ Twin-turbo V6 well-suited to baby roadster - But also highlights the chassis' age	****
Mercedes-AMG SL63	228 D	£116,430	8/5461	577/5500	664/2250	1770kg	331	4.1	-	-	155	+ Effortless performance - Needs more involvement to go with the pace	****
Mercedes-AMG GT Roadster	239 F	£111,360	8/3982	469/6000	465/1700	1595kg	299	4.0	-	-	188	+ An AMG GT with added fresh air - Ride and handling go slightly to pieces on UK roads	***
Mercedes-AMG GT C Roadster	235 D	£140,660	8/3982	549/5750	501/1900	1660kg	336	3.7	_	-	196	+ As above but with more shove - Road noise can get wearing on long journeys	***
Mercedes-AMG GT R Roadster	271 D	£178.675	8/3982	577/6250	516/2100	1635kg	359	3.6		-	197	+ Spectacular engine, engaging dynamics - Structural compromise of Roadster body	****
Morgan 3 Wheeler	198 F	£31.140	2/1976	82/5250	103/3250	525kg*	159	6.0		-	115	+ Quirky, characterful, brilliant - Can become a two-wheeler if you push too hard	****
Morgan Plus Four	279 F	£62,995	4/1998	255/5500	258/1000	1013kg*	256	5.2			149	+ Compelling blend of old and new - Busy, almost old-fashioned ride on bumpier roads	****
Morgan Plus Six	269 F	£77.995	6/2998	335/6500	369	1075kg*	317	4.2	-	-	166	+ Rapid, exciting, and a bit of a hooligan - Interior could feel more special	****
Morgan Plus 8 50th Anniversary Edition	253 D	18-19	8/4799	367/6300	370/3600	1100kg*	339	4.5	-	-	155	+ V8 performance and sound, driver involvement - Getting flies in your teeth	****
Morgan Aero 8	105 F	10-19 '01-'10	8/4799	362/6300	361/3400		312	4.5		-	170	+ Glorious sound, view over bonnet, dynamics - Awkward-looking rear	****
Morgan Aero GT	255 F	78	8/4799	367/6300	370/3400	1180kg* 1180kg*	316	4.5		-	170	+ The ultimate Aero - The last with the naturally aspirated BMW V8	****
Nissan 3707 Roadster	233 F 143 F	18 '10-'14		326/7000				5.5			155		
			6/3696		269/5200	1554kg	213			-		+ The Zed's old-school character remains intact - Its purposeful looks don't	****
Porsche 718 Boxster	224 D	£45,935	4/1988	296/6500	280/1950	1335kg	225	5.1		-	170	+ Chassis as good as ever - Four-cylinder's tuneless din would be hard to live with	****
Porsche 718 Boxster S	222 F	£54,891	4/2497	345/6500	310/1900	1355kg	259	4.6	4.4	9.8	177	+ Still sensationally capable - Turbo four-cylinder engine lacks appeal of the old flat-six	****
Porsche 718 Boxster GTS	249 T	'18-'19	4/2497	360/6500	310/1900	1375kg	266	4.6	-	-	180	+ The best four-pot Boxster spec - Doesn't come cheap	****
Porsche 718 Boxster GTS 4.0	271 D	£65,949	6/3995	394/7000	310/5000	1405kg	285	4.5	-	-	182	+ It's got the Cayman GT4 six-cylinder, minus 200rpm - Gearshift not as crisp as the GT4's	
Porsche 718 Spyder	272 F	£73,405	6/3995	414/7600	310/5000	1420kg	296	4.4	-	-	187	+ Essentially a drop-top Cayman GT4 - Including its long gearing	****
Porsche Boxster (981)	238 F	72-76	6/2706	261/6700	206/4500	1310kg	202	5.8	-	-	164	+ Goes and looks better than the 987 Boxster - Shame about the electric steering	****
Porsche Boxster S (981)	186 F	72-76	6/3436	311/6700	265/4500	1320kg	239	5.1	-	-	173	+ Boxster steps out of 911's shadow - But gets 911's less appealing electric steering	****
Porsche Boxster GTS (981)	203 D	74-76	6/3436	325/6700	273/4500	1345kg	246	5.0	-	-	174	+ Superb dynamics, fantastic engine, great looks - Sport suspension is very firm	****
Porsche Boxster Spyder (981)	223 F	'15-'16	6/3800	370/6700	310/4750	1315kg	286	4.5	-	-	180	+ An even faster, even more rewarding Boxster - Feedback trails the Cayman GT4's	****
Porsche Boxster S (987)	161 F	'05-'12	6/3436	306/6400	266/5500	1355kg	229	5.3	-	-	170	+ Second-gen Boxster's as brilliant as ever - It's a typically Porsche redesign	****
Porsche Boxster Spyder (987)	277 F	'10-'12	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1275kg	252	4.9	-	-	166	+ Lighter, more driver-centric Boxster - Collapsed-brolly roof not the most practical	****
Porsche Boxster S (986)	070 F	'99-'04	6/3179	256/6200	229/4600	1320kg	200	5.7	-	-	164	+ Added power over the non-S Boxster is seductive - Very little	****
Porsche 911 Carrera 4S Cabriolet (992)	262 D	£109,725	6/2981	444/6500	391/2300	1600kg	282	4.4	-	-	188	+ Performance, handling, useability - It's no lightweight; body not as stiff as the coupe's	****
Porsche 911 Targa 4S (992)	277 D	£109,725	6/2981	444/6500	391/2300	1640kg	275	4.4	-	-	189	+ Distinctive; driving experience is barely touched - You can't get a rear-drive Targa	****
Radical Rapture	274 F	£108,000	4/2261	360/6000	360/3500	765kg*	478	3.0	-	-	165	+ Unfiltered and utterly addictive - It's more at home on the track than the road	****
Renault Sport Spider	231F	'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	£264,000	12/6592	563/5250	575/1500	2560kg	223	4.9	-	-	155	+ Effortless driving experience - Driver involvement not a priority	****
Toyota MR2 (Mk3)	258 F	'00-'06	4/1794	138/6400	125/4400	975kg	141	8.0	7.2	21.2	131	+ Tight lines, taut dynamics - Minimal luggage space	****
TVR Tamora	070 F	'01-'07	6/3605	350/7200	290/5500	1060kg	335	4.2	-	-	175	+ Well-sorted soft-top TVR - Awkward styling	****
TVR Chimaera 5.0	258 F	'93-'03	8/4997	320/5500	320/3750	1060kg	307	4.4	-	-	167	+ Gorgeous noise, tarmac-rippling grunt - Details	****
TVR Griffith 4.3	068 F	'92-'93	8/4280	280/5500	305/4000	1040kg	274	4.4	4.8	11.2	155	+ The car that made TVR. Cult status - Mere details	****
TVR Griffith 500	009F	'93-'01	8/4997	320/5500	320/4000	1060kg	307	4.1	-	-	167	+ Gruff diamond - A few rough edges	****
Vauxhall VX220	023 F	'00-'04	4/2198	145/5800	150/4000	875kg	168	5.9	-	-	136	+ Absurdly good Vauxhall - The badge?	****
Vauxhall VX220 Turbo	066 F	'03-'05	4/1998	197/5500	184/1950	930kg	215	4.9	-	-	151	+ Nothing comes close for the money - Marginal everyday usability	****
Vuhl 05	220 F	£59.995	4/2000	285/5600	310/3000	725kg	405	3.7	-	-	152	+ Impressive pace and quality - You can get a more thrills from a Caterham at half the price	****
	2207	200,000	7,2000	2007 3000	510/3000	. 23118	703	J		J	132	m.p.cos.repass and quality Tou cange control chimis norma caternal fall the price	

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Porsche 718 Cayman GT4. With a new, naturally aspirated flat-six, a manual gearbox, extraordinary damping and sublime feedback, the second GT4 is even better than the original, and laughs in the face of turbocharged engines, automatic transmissions and monster power outputs.



BEST OF THE REST

The **Alpine A110** (left) and A110S give the **Porsche 718 Cayman** a pair of true rivals to worry about. The **Aston Martin Vantage** can now call itself a 911 beater (see **evo** 262), the **BMW M4 Competition Package** is the car the M4 should have been from the start, and the **Lotus Exige** continues to go from strength to strength, whatever the version.

Alfa Romeo 4C	209 F	'13-'19	4/1742	237/6000	258/2200	895kg*	269	4.5			160	+ Carbonfibre tub, mini-supercar looks - Hot hatch engine, clunky gearbox	****
Alfa Romeo 8C Competizione	120 F	'07-'09	8/4691	450/7000	354/4750	1585kg	288	4.2	-	-	181	+ Looks, exclusivity, noise, balance - Cost more now than they did new	****
Alpine A110	270 F	£46,905	4/1798	249/6000	236/2000	1103kg	229	4.5	4.6	10.8	155	+ Fast, fun and genuinely different - If only it had a manual gearbox	****
Alpine A110S	268 D	£56,810	4/1798	288/6400	236/2000	1114kg	263	4.4	-	-	161	+ 'S' spec makes a brilliant coupe even better - Still no manual gearbox	****
Alpine A610 Turbo	273 F	'91-'95	6/2975	247/5750	258/2900	1420kg	177	5.7	-	-	166	+ Better than the comtemporary 911 Carrera - Rare then, rarer now	****
Alpina B4 S Biturbo	245 D	£63,000	6/2979	434/5500	487/3000	1615kg	273	4.2	-	-	190	+ Stonking engine, stealthy speed - Steering is slow and lacks feel	****
Aston Martin Vantage	273 F	£118.350	8/3982	503/6000	505/2000	1530kg*	334	3.6	4.5	9.1	195	+ Performance that's a huge leap forward - Chassis struggles when really pushed	****
Aston Martin Vantage AMR	268 F	£149,995	8/3982	503/6000	461/2000	1499kg*	341	4.0	-	-	195	+ Manual gearbox, more-focused chassis - For a hefty premium	****
Aston Martin V8 Vantage (4.3)	251 F	'05-'07	8/4280	380/7000	302/5000	1630kg	237	5.0	5.2	12.0	175	+ Gorgeous; awesome soundtrack - Can't quite match a 911 dynamically	****
Aston Martin V8 Vantage (4.7)	169 D	'08-'16	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1630kg	262	4.8	-	-	180	+ Still feels special - But also a little dated	****
Aston Martin V8 Vantage S	168 F	'11-'17	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1610kg	271	4.8	-	-	190	+ Keener engine, V12 Vantage looks - Slightly sluggish auto only	****
Aston Martin V8 Vantage N430	218 F	74-76	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1610kg	271	4.8	-	-	189	+ Malleable, involving - Never feels rampantly quick	****
Aston Martin Vantage GT8	274 F	'16-'17	8/4735	440/7300	361/5000	1530kg	292	4.4	-	-	190	+ Enough drama to fill a Netflix mini-series - Just 150 made	****
Aston Martin V12 Vantage	264 F	'09-'13	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1680kg	308	4.2	4.4	9.7	190	+ The car we hoped the V8 Vantage would be - Erm, a tad thirsty?	****
Aston Martin V12 Vantage S	238 F	'13-'17	12/5935	563/6650	457/5500	1665kg	344	3.9	-	-	205	+ Amongst the best Astons ever made - Old-school automated 'box (so get the manual)	****
Aston Martin Vantage GT12	214 F	'15-'16	12/5935	592/7000	461/5500	1565kg	384	3.5	-	-	185	+ The GT3-style Vantage we waited so long for - Only 100 made	****
Aston Martin DB11 V8	253 T	£144,900	8/3982	503/6000	498/2000	1685kg	303	4.0	-	-	187	+ Potent and characterful engine; sharper chassis than V12 - Do we still need the V12?	****
Aston Martin DB11	235 F	'17-'18	12/5204	600/6500	516/1500	1800kg	339	3.9	4.0	8.1	200	+ A great GT - Suffers in outright handling terms as a result	****
Aston Martin DB11 AMR	269 F	£174,995	12/5204	630/6500	516/1500	1795kg	357	3.7	-	-	208	+ A more potent, better controlled V12 DB11 - Still at its best when it isn't trying too hard	****
Aston Martin DB9 GT	214 D	'15-'17	12/5935	540/6750	457/5500	1785kg	307	4.5	-	-	183	+ More power; still has bags of character - Needs an eight-speed auto 'box	****
Aston Martin DB9	178 F	'04-'16	12/5935	510/6500	457/5500	1785kg	290	4.6	-	-	183	+ A great start to Gaydon-era Astons - Automatic gearbox could be quicker	****
Aston Martin DBS	142 F	'07-'12	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1695kg	306	4.3	-	-	191	+ Stupendous engine, gearbox, brakes - Pricey; can bite the unwary	****
Audi TTS (Mk3)	261 D	£44,610	4/1984	302/5400	295/2000	1405kg	218	4.5	-	-	155	+ Exceptional grip and traction - Excitement fades after the first few corners	****
Audi TT RS (Mk3)	249 F	£53,905	5/2480	394/5850	354/1700	1450kg	276	3.7	3.5	8.7	155	+ Soundtrack; tremendous point-to-point pace - A bit one-dimensional in the long run	****
Audi TTS (Mk2)	193 F	'08-'14	4/1984	268/6000	258/2500	1395kg	195	5.4	-	-	155	+ A usefully quicker TT, with a great drivetrain - Still steers like a computer game	****
Audi TT RS (Mk2)	158 F	'09-'14	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1450kg	235	4.7	4.4	11.1	155	+ Sublime five-cylinder turbo engine - Rest of package can't quite match it	****
Audi TT RS Plus (Mk2)	185 D	12-14	5/2480	355/5500	343/1650	1450kg	249	4.3	-	-	174	+ Stonkingly fast cross-country - Shockingly expensive for a TT	****
Audi S5	252 F	'17-'19	6/2995	349/5400	369/1370	1615kg	220	4.7	-	-	155	+ Chassis rewards commitmentbut doesn't offer a challenge. Plain engine, too	****
Audi RS5	240 F	£68,985	6/2894	444/5700	442/1900	1655kg	273	3.9	3.6	9.0	155	+ Lighter, quicker; makes green paint look good - Lacks the character of the old V8	****
Audi RS5	206 F	'10-'16	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1715kg	263	4.5	4.3	-	155	+ Brilliant engine and improved chassis - Lack of suspension travel; inconsistent steering	
Audi R8 V8	201 F	'07-'15	8/4163	424/7900	317/4500	1560kg	276	4.6	4.1	9.9	188	+ A true 911 alternative - Exclusivity comes at a price	****



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MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (OR YEARS ON SALE)	ENGINE CYL/CC	внр/врм	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLAIMED)	O-GOMPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTE 0)	MAX MPH	evo rating	
Bentley Continental GT V8	 264 D	£151,800	8/3993	542/6000	568/2000	2165kg	254	4.0	-	-	198		****
Bentley Continental GT	255 F	£156,700	12/5950	626/5000	664/1350	2244kg	283	3.7	-	-	207	+ Astonishing agility for such a big, heavy car - Thirst	****
Bentley Continental GT V8	178 F	'12-'17	8/3993	500/6000	487/1700	2220kg	229	4.8	-	-	188		****
Bentley Continental GT V8 S Bentley Continental GT	204 F 152 D	'13-'17 '03-'17	8/3993 12/5998	521/6000 567/6000	502/1700 516/1700	2220kg 2245kg	238 257	4.5 4.5	-	-	192 198		****
Bentley Continental Supersports	234 D	77	12/5998	700/6000	750/2050	2245kg	323	3.5	-	-	209		****
Bentley Continental GT3-R	203 D	'14-'17	8/3993	572/6000	518/1700	2120kg	274	3.8	-	-	170		****
BMW 1-series M Coupé	277F	71-72	6/2979	335/5900	369/1500	1495kg	228	4.9	-	-	155		****
BMW M240i Coupé BMW M235i Coupé	229 D 225 F	£35,865 74-76	6/2998 6/2979	335/6800 321/5800	369/1520 332/1300	1470kg 1455kg	232 224	4.8 5.0	- 5.2	- 12.7	155 <i>155</i>		**** ****
BMW M2	243 F	14-10 16-18	6/2979	365/6500	369/1450	1495kg	248	4.5	4.9	10.8	155		****
BMW M2 Competition	265 F	£49,805	6/2979	404/5250	406/2350	1550kg	265	4.4	-	-	155		****
BMW M2 CS	279 F	£75,355	6/2979	444/6250	406/2350	1550kg	291	4.2	-	-	155		****
BMW M4	218 F	74-719	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1570kg	275	4.3	-	-	155		****
BMW M4 Competition BMW M4 CS	262 F 254 F	£67,410 '17-'19	6/2979 6/2979	444/7000 454/6250	406/1850 442/4000	1570kg <i>1580kg</i>	287 292	4.3 3.9	4.4	9.2	155 174		**** ***
BMW M4 GTS	237F	76	6/2979	493/6250	442/4000	1510kg	332	3.8	3.7	8.0	190		****
BMW M3 (E92)	266 F	'07-'13	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1580kg	266	4.8	4.3	10.3	155		****
BMW M3 GTS (E92)	262 F	'10-'11	8/4361	444/8300	324/3750	1530kg	295	4.4	-	-	190		****
BMW M3 (E46)	266 F 219 F	'00-'07	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1495kg	230 230	5.2 5.2	5.1 -	12.3 -	155 155	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	****
BMW M3 CS (E46) BMW M3 CSL (E46)	219 F 279 F	'05-'07 '03-'04	6/3246 6/3246	338/7900 355/7900	269/5000 273/4900	1495kg 1385kg	260	5.2 4.9	- 5.3	12.0	155 155		**** ****
BMW M3 Evolution (E36)	148 F	'96-'98	6/3201	317/7400	258/3250	1515kg	215	5.5	5.4	12.8	158		****
BMW M3 (E30)	279 F	'89-'90	4/2302	212/6750	170/4600	1165kg	185	6.7	6.7	17.8	147	+ The best M-car ever - Prices have got out of hand	****
BMW Z4 M Coupé	097F	'06-'09	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1420kg	242	5.0	-	-	155		****
BMW M Coupé BMW M840d xDrive	263 F 260 D	'98-'03 £76,270	6/3246 6/2993	<i>321/7400</i> 316/4400	<i>261/4900</i> 501/1750	<i>1375kg</i> 1830kg	<i>237</i> 175	5.3 4.9	-	-	<i>155</i> 155		****
BMW M850i xDrive	256 F	£/6,2/0 £99,525	8/4395	523/5500	553/1500	1830kg 1890kg	281	3.7	-	-	155		**** ****
BMW M8 Competition	272 D	£123,435	8/4395	616/6000	553/1800	1885kg	332	3.2	-	-	155		****
BMW M6 (F13)	218 F	72-78	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1850kg	303	4.2	-	-	155		****
BMW M6 (E63)	106 F	'05-'10	10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1635kg	311	4.2	4.8	10.0	155		****
BMW i8	210 F	£112,735	3/1499	369/5800	420/3700	1535kg	244	4.4	-	-	155		****
Chevrolet Camaro Z/28 Chevrolet Corvette Stingray (C7)	220 F 197 F	'14-'16 '13-'19	8/7008 8/6162	505/6100 460/6000	481/4800 465/4600	1732kg 1496kg	296 312	4.2 4.2	4.4	- 9.4	175 180		****
Chevrolet Corvette 3tingray (CT) Chevrolet Corvette Z06 (CT)	227F	15-19	8/6162	650/6000	650/3600	1598kg	413	3.7	-	-	196		****
Chevrolet Corvette Stingray Z51 (C8)	270 F	\$64,995	8/6162	495/6450	470/5150	1530kg*	329	3.2	-	-	194		****
Ford Mustang 2.3 EcoBoost	222 D	£33,645	4/2261	287/5600	332/3000	1655kg	176	6.4	-	-	145		****
Ford Mustang 5.0 V8 GT	266 F	£42,810	8/4951	444/7000	393/4600	1743kg	259	4.9	-	-	155		****
Ford Mustang Bullitt Ford Mustang Shelby GT500	255 D 271 D	£47,545 \$72,900	8/5038 8/5163	453/7000 760/7300	390/4600 625/5000	1776kg c1916kg	259 c403	4.9 3.3	-	-	163 180	+ Proper V8 sound and performance - Still feels big and heavy near the limit + A 760bhp Stang with a chassis to (almost) match its engine - Only on sale in the States	****
Honda Integra Type R (DC2)	259 F	'96-'00	4/1797	187/8000	131/7300	1101kg	173	6.7	6.2	17.9	145		****
Jaguar F-type P300	271 D	£54,060	4/1997	296/5500	295/1500	1520kg	198	5.7	-	-	155		****
Jaguar F-type P450	-	£69,990	8/5000	444/6000	428/2500	1660kg	272	4.6	-	-	177		****
Jaguar F-type R (RWD)	218 F	'14-'17	8/5000	542/6500	501/3500	1650kg	334	4.2	-	-	186		****
Jaguar F-type R (P575 AWD)	271 D 224 D	£97,280 76-79	8/5000 8/5000	567/6500 567/6500	516/3500	1743kg	331 <i>338</i>	3.5 <i>3.7</i>	-	-	186 200		****
Jaguar F-type SVR Jaguar XKR-S	168 F	71-74	8/5000	542/6000	516/3500 502/2500	1705kg 1753kg	314	4.4		-	186		**** ****
Jannarelly Design-1	279 F	£85,969	6/3498	321	274	950kg	343	3.9	-	-	135	+ Genuinely good sports car that stands out from the crowd - May be too quirky for some	
Lexus RC F	226 F	£61,310	8/4969	470/6400	391/4800	1765kg	271	4.3	-	-	168		****
Lexus LC 500h	241 D	£76,595	6/3456	354	-	1985kg	181	5.0	-	-	168		****
Lexus LC 500 Lister Thunder	231 D 247 D	£76,595 £139,950	8/4969 8/5000	470/7100 666/6000	398/4800 720/5940	1935kg 1650kg	247 410	4.7 3.2	-	-	168 208		**** ****
Lotus Exige S (V6)	209 F	12-15	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1176kg	298	3.8	-	-	170		****
Lotus Exige Sport 350	221 F	£62,375	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1125kg	312	3.9	-	-	170	+ Further honed Exige, with vastly improved gearshift - Still not easy to get into and out of	
Lotus Exige Sport 380	231 F	76-78	6/3456	375/6700	302/5000	1110kg	343	3.7	-	-	178		****
Lotus Exige Cup 380	240 D	77	6/3456	375/6700	302/5000	1105kg	345	3.6	-	-	175		****
Lotus Exige Sport 410	252 F 253 F	£82,675 £103,375	6/3456	410/7000 430/7000	310/3500 325/2600	1108kg	376 400	3.4	-	-	180 180		****
Lotus Exige Cup 430 Lotus Exige S (S2)	253 F	'06-'11	4/1796	218/7800	158/5500	1093kg <i>930kg</i>	238	4.3		-	148	+ The ultimate Exige - Isn't cheap + Lightweight with a hefty punch - Uninspiring soundtrack	****
Lotus Exige (S1)	200 F	'00-'01	4/1796	192/7800	146/5000	780kg	247	4.6	-	-	136		****
Lotus Evora	257 F	'09-'15	6/3456	276/6400	258/4700	1382kg	203	5.1	5.6	13.6	162		****
Lotus Evora S	168 F	70-75	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1430kg	245	4.8	-	-	172		****
Lotus Evora 400 Lotus Evora Sport 410	216 F 230 F	'15-'18 '17	6/3456 6/3456	400/7000 410/7000	302/3500 310/3500	1395kg 1325kg	291 314	4.2 4.2	-	-	186 190		**** ****
Lotus Evora GT410	278 F	£85,675	6/3456	410/7000	295/3500	1361kg	306	4.2	-	-	186		****
Lotus Evora GT410 Sport	261 F	£88,675	6/3456	410/7000	295/3500	1361kg	306	4.2	-	-	186		****
Lotus Evora GT430	246 F	78	6/3456	430/7000	325/4500	1299kg	336	3.8	-	-	190		****
Maserati GranTurismo Sport	188 F	£93,145	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1880kg	245	4.8	-	-	186		****
Maserati GranTurismo MC Maserati GranTurismo	239 D 114 F	£109,740 '07-'17	8/4691 8/4244	454/7000 <i>399/7100</i>	383/4750 339/4750	1873kg <i>1880kg</i>	246 <i>216</i>	4.7 5.2	- 5.5	- 12.7	187 <i>177</i>		**** ****
Maserati GranTurismo MC Stradale	193 F	71-77	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1800kg	256	4.5	-	-	188		****
Mazda RX-8	122 F	'03-'11	2R/1308		156/5500	1429kg	162	6.4	6.5	16.4	146		****
Mercedes-AMG C43 4Matic Coupé	251 T	£50,010	6/2996	385/6100	383/2500	1675kg	234	4.7	-	-	155		****
Mercedes-AMG C63 S Coupé (W205)	262 F	£78,078	8/3982	503/5500	516/2000	1745kg	293	3.9	-	-	180		****
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Coupé (W204)	162 F	'11-'14 '12-'13	8/6208	451/6800	442/5000	1655kg	277	4.5	4.4	10.3	155		****
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Black Series (W204) Mercedes-Benz CLK63 AMG Black Series	171 F 277 F	12-13 '07-'09	8/6208 8/6208	510/6800 500/6800	457/5200 464/5250	1635kg 1760kg	317 289	4.2 4.2	-	-	186 186		****
Mercedes-AMG S63 Coupé	251 D	£127,555	8/3982	604/5500	664/2750	1990kg	308	4.2	-	-	155		****
Mercedes-AMG S65 Coupé	209 D	£188,550	12/5980	621/4800	737/2300	2110kg	299	4.1	-	-	186	+ Almighty power, fabulous luxury - Nearly £60k more than the S63!	****
Mercedes-AMG GT	227 D	£99,960	8/3982	469/6000	465/1700	1540kg	309	4.0	-	-	189		****
Mercedes-AMG GT S	216 F	£113,260	8/3982	515/6250	494/1800	1570kg	333	3.8	-	-	193		****
Mercedes-AMG GT C Mitsubishi 3000GT	241 D	£129,260 '90-'99	8/3982 6/2972	549/5750 282/6000	501/1900 300/3000	1625kg 1719kg	343 167	3.7 5.8	-	-	196 159		**** ****
Nissan 370Z	204 F	£29,870	6/3696	323/7000	268/5200	1496kg	219	5.3	-	-	155		****
Nissan 370Z Nismo	209 F	£40,370	6/3696	339/7400	274/5200	1496kg	230	5.2	-	-	155		****
Nissan 350Z	107F	'03-'09	6/3498	309/6800	264/4800	1532kg	205	5.6	5.5	13.0	155	+ Huge fun, and great value too - Muscle-car vibe not for everyone	****
Nissan GT-R (2017MY)	242 F	£82,525	6/3799	562/6800	470/3600	1752kg	326	2.7	-	-	196		****
Nissan GT-R Track Edition (2017MY) Nissan GT-R Nismo (2019MY)	229 D 265 D	£94,525 £174,995	6/3799 6/3799	562/6800 592/6800	470/3600 481/3600	1745kg 1695kg	327 355	2.7 2.7	-	-	196 196		**** ****
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Nessar GFR (200MPY 23F 12-16 6-0799 52/7-600 466/200 170 kg 30 30 30 30 30 30 30 3	MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (OR YEARS ON SALE)	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	O-62MPH (SLAIMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTED)	мах мрн	EVO RATING	
Nessan GF-R (2008MY)	Nissan GT-R (2012MY-2016MY)	238 F	'12-'16	6/3799	542/6400	466/3200	1740kg	316	2.7	3.2	7.5	196	+ Quicker and better than before - Stopping your Porsche-owning friends calling it a Datsun	****
Nissan Sylprie GF-R (R33) 106 F 90-70 6/2568 276/7800 2984/40 556/kg 80 4.8	Nissan GT-R (2010MY)	252 F	'10-'12	6/3799	523/6400	451/3200	1740kg	305	3.0	-	-	194	+ More powerful version of the original - But they're not worlds apart to drive	****
Nesan Syline G-R (R33) 196	Nissan GT-R (2008MY)	257 F	'08-'10	6/3799	473/6400	434/3200	1740kg	276	3.8	-	-	193	+ evo Car of the Year 2008 - You won't see 20mpg often	****
Pelgest RCZR	Nissan Skyline GT-R (R34)	265 F	'99-'02	6/2568	276/7000	289/4400	1560kg	180	4.8	4.7	12.5	165	+ Big, brutal, and great fun - Needs more than the standard 276bhp	****
Polistar1	Nissan Skyline GT-R (R33)	196 F	'97-'99	6/2568	276/6800	271/4400	1540kg	182	4.9	5.4	14.3	155	+ Early proof that Japanese high-tech could work (superbly) - Limited supply	****
Porsche TR Cayman T 209	Peugeot RCZ R	209F	'14-'15	4/1598	266/6000	243/1900	1280kg	211	5.9	-	-	155	+ Rewarding and highly effective when fully lit - Dated cabin, steering lacks feel	****
Porsche 718 Cayman T 200	Polestar1	269 D	£139,000	4/1969	592/6000	737	2350kg	256	4.2	-	-	155	+ One of the most appealing hybrids yet - It's left-hand-drive only, and jolly expensive	****
Porsche 718 Cayman GTS 269 F 17-19 47-247 360/6500 310/2100 1375kg 259 46 5- 180 47-247 47-247 47-247 360/6500 310/2100 1375kg 256 46 - 180 47-247 47-247 47-247 47-247 360/6500 310/2100 1375kg 256 46 - 180 47-247 47-	Porsche 718 Cayman	229 D	£44,074	4/1988	296/6500	280/2150	1335kg	225	5.1	-	-	170	+ Chassis remains a dream - Sounds like a Toyota GT86	****
Porsche 718 Cayman GTS	Porsche 718 Cayman T	270 F	£51,145	4/1988	296/6500	280/2150	1350kg	223	5.1	-	-	170	+ A further-honed 2-litre Cayman - Flat-four soundtrack still disappoints	****
Porsche 718 Cayman GT4	Porsche 718 Cayman S	249 F	£53,030	4/2497	345/6500	310/2100	1355kg	259	4.6	3.9	9.3	177	+ Faster and better to drive than ever - Bring earplugs	****
Porsche Cayman GT4	Porsche 718 Cayman GTS	260 F	'17-'19	4/2497	360/6500	310/2100	1375kg	266	4.6	-	-	180	+ Cracking package of upgrades - Have we mentioned the engine?	****
Porsche Cayman (981) 202F 13-16 6/3436 321/7400 2334590 320kg 24 5.0 4.5 10.5 17 The Cayman cornes of age - Frm.	Porsche 718 Cayman GTS 4.0	273 D	£64,088	6/3995	394/7000	310/5000	1405kg	285	4.5	-	-	182	+ Ninety per cent of the GT4's magic - Has us questioning an eCoty winner	****
Porsche Cayman GTS (981) 219F	Porsche 718 Cayman GT4	277 F	£75,780	6/3995	414/7600	310/5000	1420kg	296	4.4	-	-	188	+ evo Car of the Year 2019 - Long gearing isn't ideal for road driving	****
Porsche Cayman GT4 (981) 235 F 15-76 6/3800 380/7400 310/4750 1340kg 288 4.4 183 + evo Car of the Year 2015 (even though the 991 GT3 RS was there!) - Second-hand prices ★★★★ Porsche Gayman R (987) 136 6/345 6/345 31570kg 273 5.2 - 172 + Still want that 917 - Yeah, us too ★★★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (992) 278 F 682.795 6/2981 380/6500 332/1950 1505kg 257 5.0 175 + Total handling excellence - Styling additions not to all tastes ★★★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (992) 278 F 682.795 6/2981 380/6500 332/1950 1505kg 257 4.2 182 + Fast, composed and comfortable - We're waiting for the manual version ★★★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (992) 269 F 693.110 6/2981 444/6500 391/1700 1480kg 305 4.2 191 + An immaculately polished machine - Lacks character unless wrung out ★★★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (991.2) 278 F 16-18 6/2981 365/6500 332/1700 1430kg 259 4.6 183 + Forced induction didn't ruin the Carrera - Purists won't be happy Porsche 911 Carrera (991.2) 278 F 16-18 6/2981 444/6500 369/1700 1420kg 200 4.5 - 182 + Light twelfthy himdows, no rear seats, an LSD Only 5kg lighter than a basic Carrera ★★★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (59(91.2) 278 F 16-18 6/2981 444/6500 369/1700 1420kg 201 4.3 - 191 + Billindingly fast + Voul'l want the sports exhaust + ★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (59(91.2) 278 F 16-18 6/2981 444/6500 369/1700 1420kg 201 4.3 - 191 + Billindingly fast + Voul'l want the sports exhaust + ★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (59(91.2) 279 F 16-18 6/2981 444/6500 369/1700 1420kg 201 4.3 - 191 + Billindingly fast + Voul'l want the sports exhaust + ★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (59(91.2) 278 F 16-18 6/2981 444/6500 369/1700 1420kg 201 4.3 - 191 + Billindingly fast + Voul'l want the sports exhaust + ★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (59(91.2)) 279 F 16-18 6/2981 444/6500 369/1700 1420kg 201 4.3 - 191 + Billindingly fast + Voul'l want the sports exhaust + ★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (59(91.2)) 279 F 16-18 6/2981 444/6500 369/1700 1420kg 201 4.3 - 191 + Billindingly fast + Voul'l want the sports exhaust + ★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (59(91.2)) 270 F 16-18 6/2	Porsche Cayman S (981)	202 F	'13-'16	6/3436	321/7400	273/4500	1320kg	247	5.0	4.5	10.5	175	+ The Cayman comes of age - Erm	****
Porsche Qayman R (987) 231 F 06-13 6/3436 316/7200 273/4750 1350 kg 237 5.2 - 172 + Still want that 911? - Yeah, us too ★★★★ Porsche Qayman R (987) 158 F 17-13 6/3436 325/7400 273/4750 1295 kg 255 5.0 - 175 + Total handling excellence - Styling additions not to all tastes ★★★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (992) 278 F 582,795 6/2981 380/6500 332/7950 1505 kg 257 4.2 - 182 + Fast, composed and comfortable - We're waiting for the manual version ★★★★ Porsche 911 Carrera 4S (992) 268 F 593,110 6/2981 444/6500 391/1700 1530 kg 295 4.2 - 190 + An immaculately polished machine - Lacks character unless wrung out ★★★★ Porsche 911 Carrera 4S (992) 281 F 16-18 6/2981 365/6500 332/1700 1430 kg 295 4.6 - 183 + Forced induction didn't ruin the Carrera - Purists won't be happy ★★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (991.2) 284 F 17-18 6/2981 365/6500 332/1700 1425 kg 260 4.5 - 182 + Lightweight windows, no rear seats, an LSD Only 5kg lighter than a basic Carrera ★★★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (5/991.2) 271 F 16-18 6/2981 444/6500 369/1700 1440 kg 292 4.3 - 191 + All interpretation of the composition of the	Porsche Cayman GTS (981)	219 F	'14-'16	6/3436	335/7400	280/4750	1345kg	253	4.9	-	-	177	+ Tweaks improve an already sublime package - Slightly 'aftermarket' looks	****
Porsche 911 Carrera (992) 278 F 62.795 6/2981 380/6500 332/1950 1505kg 257 4.2 - 182 +Fast, composed and comfortable - We're waiting for the manual version ★★★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (992) 269 F 693,110 6/2981 444/6500 391/1700 1480kg 305 4.2 - 191 +An immoculately polished machine - Lacks character unless wurregiout ★★★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (991.2) 218 F 76-78 6/2981 444/6500 391/1700 1530kg 295 4.2 - 190 +Terrifically exciting when driven hard - You'll reach some big numbers when doing so ★★★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (1991.2) 218 F 76-78 6/2981 365/6500 332/1700 1430kg 295 4.2 - 190 +Terrifically exciting when driven hard - You'll reach some big numbers when doing so ★★★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (1991.2) 218 F 76-78 6/2981 365/6500 332/1700 1425kg 260 4.5 - 183 *Forced induction didn't ruin the Carrera - Purists won't be happy ★★★★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (1991.2) 217 F 76-78 6/2981 365/6500 332/1700 1425kg 260 4.5 - 183 *Forced induction didn't ruin the Carrera - Purists won't be happy ★★★★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (1991.2) 236 F 77-78 6/2981 365/6500 332/1700 1440kg 292 4.3 - 191 *Blindingly fast - You'll want the sports exhaust ★★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (1992.2) 238 F 77-79 6/2981 444/6500 369/1700 1440kg 292 4.3 - 191 *Blindingly fast - You'll want the sports exhaust ★★★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (1992.2) 238 F 77-79 6/2981 444/6500 369/1700 145kg 38 4.5 - 193 *Everything a 911 Carrera should be - Costs nearly £20k more than a basic Carrera ★★★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (1992.2) 238 F 77-79 6/2981 350/6600 295/4600 145kg 271 4.7 - 188 *Poise, precision, blinding pace - Feels a bit clinical ★★★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (1994.2) 249 F 704-708 6/3827 350/6600 295/4600 1420kg 260 4.6 - 182 *Verything a 911 Carrera with supercar pace - Electrics steering robe a smidge dated ★★★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (1996.3.4) 249 F 704-708 6/3827 350/6600 1230kg 231 5.2 - 774 *The first eve Car of the Year 2004 - Do your homework on potential engine is sues ** 240 S 704 S 705 S 705 S 705 S 7096 3385/5000 369/1600 1420kg 161 7.6 6.9 16.5 140 **More fun than i	Porsche Cayman GT4 (981)	265 F	'15-'16	6/3800	380/7400	310/4750	1340kg	288	4.4	-	-	183	+ evo Car of the Year 2015 (even though the 991 GT3 RS was there!) - Second-hand price.	****
Porsche 9II Carrera (992)	Porsche Cayman S (987)	231 F	'06-'13	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1350kg	237	5.2	-	-	172	+ Still want that 911? - Yeah, us too	****
Porsche 9II Carrera S (992)	Porsche Cayman R (987)	158 F	'11-'13	6/3436	325/7400	273/4750	1295kg	255	5.0	-	-	175	+ Total handling excellence - Styling additions not to all tastes	****
Porsche 911 Carrera 4S (992) 261 598,418 6/2981 444/6500 391/1700 1530kg 295 4.2 - 190 + Terrifically exciting when driven hard - You'll reach some big numbers when doing so	Porsche 911 Carrera (992)	278 F	£82,795	6/2981	380/6500	332/1950	1505kg	257	4.2	-	-	182	+ Fast, composed and comfortable - We're waiting for the manual version	****
Porsche 9II Carrera (991.2)	Porsche 911 Carrera S (992)	269 F	£93,110	6/2981	444/6500	391/1700	1480kg	305	4.2	-	-	191	+ An immaculately polished machine - Lacks character unless wrung out	****
Porsche 9II Carrera T (991.2)	Porsche 911 Carrera 4S (992)	261 F	£98,418	6/2981	444/6500	391/1700	1530kg	295	4.2	-	-	190	+ Terrifically exciting when driven hard - You'll reach some big numbers when doing so	****
Porsche 911 Carrera S (991.2) 238 F 17-19 6/2981 444/6500 369/1700 1440kg 292 4.3 191 + Blindingly fast - You'll want the sports exhaust ★★★★ Porsche 91 Carrera (519(91.2) 238 F 17-19 6/2981 444/6500 406/2150 1450kg 311 4.1 193 + Everything a 911 Carrera should be - Costs nearly £20k more than a basic Carrera ★★★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (991.1) 201 F 12-15 6/3800 380/4500 1415kg 283 4.5 4.3 9.5 188 + A Carrera with supercar pace - Electric steering robs it of some tactility ★★★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (997.2) 121 F 08-11 6/3800 380/6500 310/4400 1425kg 271 4.7 188 + Poise, precision, blinding pace - Feels a bit clinical ★★★★ Porsche 911 Carrera (997.1) 249 F 04-08 6/3824 350/6600 295/4600 1320kg 215 5.2 - 174 + The first evo Car of the Year 2004 - Do your homework on potential engine issues ★★★★ Rolls-Royce Wraith 205 D £240,768 12/6592 624/5600 590/1500 2360kg 260 4.6 182 + evo Car of the Year 2004 - Do your homework on potential engine issues ★★★★ Rolls-Royce Wraith 205 D £240,768 12/6592 624/5600 590/1500 2360kg 260 4.6 155 + Refinement, chassis, drivetrain - Shared componentry lets cabin down ★★★★ Subaru BRZ 248 F 6.31995 4/1998 1917/700 151/6400 1230kg 163 7.6 140 + Fine chassis, great steering - Weak engine, not the slide - happy car they promised ★★★★ Toyota GTB6 266 E 27,830 4/1998 1917/700 151/6400 1240kg 161 7.6 6.9 16.5 140 + More fun than its Subaru BRZ cousin - Same lack of torque, poor interior quality ★★★★ Toyota MR2 (Mkl) 237 F 84-89 4/1587 122/6600 105/5000 97/kg 127 8.2 - 124 + Mid-engined fun comes no more affordable - Finding a good one will take time ★★★★★ TVR Tusans S (Mk2) 076 F 05-07 6/3996 4/00/7000 349/5000 1078kg 383 3.7 - 185 + Possibly TVR's best ever car - Aerodynamic enhancements' ★★★★★ TVR Tusans S (Mk2) 076 F 05-07 6/3996 4/00/7000 349/5000 1078kg 383 3.7 - 185 + Possibly TVR's best ever car - Aerodynamic enhancements' ★★★★★ TVR Tusans S (Mk2) 076 F 05-07 6/3996 4/00/7000 315/5250 100 kg 369 4.0 185 + Possibly TVR's best ever car - Aerodynamic enhancement	Porsche 911 Carrera (991.2)	218 F	'16-'18	6/2981	365/6500	332/1700	1430kg	259	4.6	-	-	183	+ Forced induction didn't ruin the Carrera - Purists won't be happy	****
Porsche 9II Carrera GTS (991.2) 238 F '17-'19 6/2981 444/6500 406/2150 1450kg 311 4.1 - 193 + Everything a 9II Carrera should be - Costs nearly £20k more than a basic Carrera ★★★★ Porsche 9II Carrera S (991.1) 201 F 12-15 6/3800 394/7400 324/5600 145kg 283 4.5 4.3 9.5 188 + A Carrera with supercar pace - Electric steering robs it of some tactility ★★★★ Porsche 9II Carrera (9971) 249 F 04-08 6/3824 350/6600 1425kg 271 4.7 - 188 + Poise, precision, blinding pace - Feels a bit clinical ★★★★ Porsche 9II Carrera (996,3.4) 249 F 04-08 6/3837 300/6800 258/4600 1320kg 231 5.2 - 174 + The first evo Car of the Year 2004 - Do your homework on potential engine issues ★★★★★ Porsche 9II Carrera (996,3.4) 249 F '98-01 6/3387 300/6800 258/4600 1320kg 231 5.2 - 174 + The first evo Car of the Year 2004 - Do your homework on potential engine issues ★★★★★ <	Porsche 911 Carrera T (991.2)	264 F	'17-'18	6/2981	365/6500	332/1700	1425kg	260	4.5	-	-	182	+ Lightweight windows, no rear seats, an LSD Only 5kg lighter than a basic Carrera	****
Porsche 9II Carrera S (99.II) 201F 12-15 6/3800 394/7400 324/5600 1415kg 283 4.5 4.3 9.5 188 + A Carrera with supercar pace - Electric steering robs it of some tactility ★★★★ Porsche 9II Carrera S (997.2) 121F 08-71 6/3800 380/6500 310/4400 1425kg 271 4.7 - 188 + Poise, precision, blinding pace - Feeks a bit clinical ★★★★ Porsche 9II Carrera (996,3.4) 249 F 19-01 6/3824 330/6800 258/4600 1320kg 231 5.2 - 174 + The first evo Car of the Year, and it still stacks up today - Might feel a smidge dated ★★★★ Rolls-Royce Wraith 205 D 6240/768 12/6590 690/1500 230kg 230 4.6 - 155 + Refinement, chassis, drivertain - Shared componentry lets cabin down ★★★★★ Subaru BRZ 248 F 52/895 4/1998 197/7000 115/6400 1230kg 163 7.6 - 155 + Refinement, chassis, drivertain - Shared componentry lets cabin down ★★★★★ Toyota GRS Supra <td>Porsche 911 Carrera S (991.2)</td> <td>217 F</td> <td>'16-'18</td> <td>6/2981</td> <td>414/6500</td> <td>369/1700</td> <td>1440kg</td> <td>292</td> <td>4.3</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>191</td> <td>+ Blindingly fast - You'll want the sports exhaust</td> <td>****</td>	Porsche 911 Carrera S (991.2)	217 F	'16-'18	6/2981	414/6500	369/1700	1440kg	292	4.3	-	-	191	+ Blindingly fast - You'll want the sports exhaust	****
Porsche 9II Carrera S (997.2) 121F 08-71 6/3800 380/6500 310/4400 1425kg 271 4.7 - 188 + Poise, precision, blinding pace - Feels a bit clinical ★★★★★ Porsche 9II Carrera S (997.1) 249 F 04-08 6/3887 350/6600 295/4600 1420kg 246 4.6 - 182 + evo Car of the Year 2004 - Do your homework on potential engine issues ★★★★★ Porsche 9II Carrera S (997.1) 249 F 98-01 6/3387 300/6800 288/400 1320kg 231 5.2 - -174 The first evo Car of the Year 2004 - Do your homework on potential engine issues ★★★★★ Rolls-Royce Wraith 205 D 5240,768 12/6592 624/5600 590/1500 2360kg 260 4.6 - 155 + Refinement, chassis, drivetrain - Shared componentry lets cabin down ★★★★★ Subaru BRZ 248 F 631995 4/1998 1917/7000 1516/400 1230kg 163 7.6 - 140 + Fine chassis, drivetrain - Shared componentry lets cabin down ★★★★★ Toyota GT86 26	Porsche 911 Carrera GTS (991.2)	238 F	'17-'19	6/2981	444/6500	406/2150	1450kg	311	4.1	-	-	193	+ Everything a 911 Carrera should be - Costs nearly £20k more than a basic Carrera	****
Porsche 9II Carrera S (997.1) 249 F '04-'08 6/3824 350/6600 295/4600 1420kg 246 4.6 - - 182 + evo Car of the Year 2004 - Do your homework on potential engine issues ★★★★★ Porsche 9II Carrera (996, 3.4) 249 F '98-'01 6/3387 300/6800 258/4600 1320kg 231 5.2 - 174 + The first evo Car of the Year, and it still stacks up today- Might feel a smidge dated ★★★★★ Rolls-Royce Wraith 205 D £240,768 12/6592 624/5600 590/1500 2360kg 260 4.6 - - 155 + Refinement, chassis, drivetrain - Shared componentry lets cabin down ★★★★★ Subaru BRZ 248 F 53.1995 4/1998 197/7000 151/6400 1240kg 161 7.6 - - 160 + Hine chassis, great steering Weak engine, not the side-happy car they promised ★★★★★ Toyota GT86 266 F £27,830 4/1998 197/7000 151/6400 1240kg 161 7.6 6.9 16.5 140 + More fun than its BMW Z4 cousin - Not better t	Porsche 911 Carrera S (991.1)	201 F	'12-'15	6/3800	394/7400	324/5600	1415kg		4.5	4.3	9.5	188	+ A Carrera with supercar pace - Electric steering robs it of some tactility	****
Porsche 911 Carrera (996, 3.4) 249 F '98-'01 6/3387 300/6800 258/4600 1320kg 231 5.2 - 1774 + The first evo Car of the Year, and it still stacks up today - Might feel a smidge dated ★★★★★ Rolls-Royce Wraith 205 D £240,768 12/5592 624/5500 590/1500 2360kg 260 4.6 - 155 + Refinement, chassis, drivetrain - Shared componentry lets cabin down ★★★★★ Subaru BRZ 248 F 53.1995 4/1998 197/7000 151/6400 1230kg 163 7.6 - 150 + Fine chassis, great steering - Weak engine, not the slide-happy car they promised ★★★★★ Toyota GRS Supra 266 F £27,830 4/1998 197/700 151/6400 1240kg 161 7.6 6.9 16.5 140 + More fun than its Subaru BRZ cousin - Sane lack of torrue, poor interior quality ★★★★★ Toyota GR Supra 269 F £52,695 6/298 335/5000 369/1600 1495kg 228 4.3 - 155 + Better than its BMW Z4 cousin - Not better than an M2 Competition ★★★★★ <td>Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.2)</td> <td>121 F</td> <td>'08-'11</td> <td>6/3800</td> <td>380/6500</td> <td>310/4400</td> <td>1425kg</td> <td></td> <td>4.7</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>188</td> <td>+ Poise, precision, blinding pace - Feels a bit clinical</td> <td>****</td>	Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.2)	121 F	'08-'11	6/3800	380/6500	310/4400	1425kg		4.7	-	-	188	+ Poise, precision, blinding pace - Feels a bit clinical	****
Rolls-Royce Wraith 205 D £240,768 12/6592 624/5600 590/1500 2360kg 260 4.6 - - 155 + Refinement, chassis, drivetrain - Shared componentry lets cabin down ★★★★ Subaru BRZ 248 F 631995 4/1998 197/7000 15/6400 1230kg 163 7.6 - 1/40 + Fine chassis, great steering- Weak engine, not the slide-happy car they promised ★★★★ Toyota GT86 266 F £27830 4/1998 197/700 15/6400 12/30kg 161 7.6 6.9 16.5 140 + More fur than its Subaru BRZ cousin - Swabaru Barz cousin - Not better than an M2 Competition ★★★★ Toyota MR2 (Mkl) 237 F 84-89 4/1587 122/6600 105/5000 97/8g 127 8.2 - 124 + Mid-engined fun comes no more affordable- Finding a good one will take time ★★★★★ TVR Tuscan S (Mk2) 076 F 05-07 6/3996 4/06/7000 349/5000 100kg 369 4.0 - 185 +	Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.1)	249 F	'04-'08	6/3824	350/6600	295/4600	1420kg	246	4.6	-	-	182	+ evo Car of the Year 2004 - Do your homework on potential engine issues	****
Subaru BRZ 248 F £31,995 4/198 197/7000 151/6400 1230kg 163 7.6 - - 140 + Fine chassis, great steering - Weak engine, not the slide-happy car they promised ★★★★ Toyota GR86 266 F 527,830 4/198 197/7000 151/6400 1240kg 161 7.6 6.9 16.5 140 + More fun than its Subaru BRZ cousin - Same lack of torque, poor interior quality ★★★★ Toyota GR Supra 269 F 525,695 6/2998 335/5000 369/1600 195/8g 228 4.3 - - 155 + Better than its BMW Z4 cousin - Not better than an M2 Competition ★★★★★ Toyota MR2 (Mk1) 237 F 84-89 4/1587 122/6600 105/5000 97/kg 127 8.2 - - 155 + Better than its BMW Z4 cousin - Not better than an M2 Competition ★★★★★ TVR Sagaris 265 F 50-707 6/3996 406/7000 349/5000 1078kg 383 3.7 - 185 + Looks outrageous - 406bhp feels a touch optimistic ★★★★★	Porsche 911 Carrera (996, 3.4)	249 F	'98-'01	6/3387	300/6800	258/4600	1320kg	231	5.2	-	-	174	+ The first evo Car of the Year, and it still stacks up today - Might feel a smidge dated	****
Toyota GT86	Rolls-Royce Wraith	205 D	£240,768	12/6592	624/5600	590/1500	2360kg	260	4.6	-	-	155	+ Refinement, chassis, drivetrain - Shared componentry lets cabin down	****
Toyota GR Supra 269 F £52,695 6/298 335/5000 369/1600 1495kg 228 4.3 155 + Better than its BMW Z4 cousin - Not better than an M2 Competition ★★★★☆ Toyota MR2 (Mkl) 237 F 84-89 4/1587 122/6600 105/5000 97fkg 127 8.2 124 + Mid-engined fun comes no more affordable - Finding a good one will take time ★★★★★ TVR Tuscan S (Mk2) 076 F 05-07 6/3996 4/06/700 349/5000 1078kg 383 3.7 - 185 + Looks outrageous - 4/06/bhp feels a touch optimistic ★★★★★ TVR Tuscan S (Mk2) 076 F 05-07 6/3996 4/00/7000 35/5050 1100kg 369 4.0 185 + Possibly TVR's best ever car - Aerodynamic enhancements' ★★★★★	Subaru BRZ	248 F	£31,995	4/1998	197/7000	151/6400	1230kg	163	7.6	-	-	140	+ Fine chassis, great steering - Weak engine, not the slide-happy car they promised	****
Toyota MR2 (Mkl) 237F '84-'89 4/1587 122/6600 105/5000 977kg 127 8.2 - - 124 + Mid-engined fun comes no more affordable - Finding a good one will take time ******* TVR Sagaris 265 F '05-'07 6/3996 406/7000 349/5000 1078kg 383 3.7 - - 185 + Looks outrageous - 406bhp feels a touch optimistic ************ TVR Tuscan S (Mk2) 076 F '05-'07 6/3996 400/7000 315/5250 1100kg 369 4.0 - - 185 + Possibly TVR's best ever car - Aerodynamic 'enhancements' ************************************	Toyota GT86	266 F	£27,830	4/1998	197/7000	151/6400	1240kg	161	7.6	6.9	16.5	140	+ More fun than its Subaru BRZ cousin - Same lack of torque, poor interior quality	****
TVR Sagaris 265 F '05-'07 6/3996 406/7000 349/5000 1078kg 383 3.7 - - 185 + Looks outrageous - 406bhp feels a touch optimistic ****** TVR Tuscan S (Mk2) 076 F '05-'07 6/3996 400/7000 315/5250 1100kg 369 4.0 - - 185 + Possibly TVR's best ever car - Aerodynamic 'enhancements' ************************************	Toyota GR Supra	269 F	£52,695	6/2998	335/5000	369/1600	1495kg	228	4.3	-	-	155	+ Better than its BMW Z4 cousin - Not better than an M2 Competition	****
TVR Tuscan S (Mk2) 076 F '05-'07 6/3996 400/7000 315/5250 1100 kg 369 4.0 185 + Possibly TVR's best ever car - Aerodynamic 'enhancements' *****	Toyota MR2 (Mk1)	237 F	'84-'89	4/1587	122/6600	105/5000	977kg		8.2	-	-	124	+ Mid-engined fun comes no more affordable- Finding a good one will take time	****
	TVR Sagaris	265 F	'05-'07	6/3996	406/7000	349/5000	1078kg	383	3.7	-	-	185	+ Looks outrageous - 406bhp feels a touch optimistic	****
TVR Cerbera Speed Six 004 F 98-'04 6/3996 350/6800 330/5000 1130 kg 315 4.4 5.0 11.4 160+ + Accomplished and desirable - When it's running *****	TVR Tuscan S (Mk2)	076 F	'05-'07	6/3996	400/7000	315/5250	1100kg	369	4.0	-	-	185	+ Possibly TVR's best ever car - Aerodynamic 'enhancements'	****
	TVR Cerbera Speed Six	004 F	'98-'04	6/3996	350/6800	330/5000	1130kg	315	4.4	5.0	11.4	160+	+ Accomplished and desirable - When it's running	****

SUPERCARS / HYPERCARS



OUR CHOICE

McLaren 600LT. Our Car of the Year in 2018 – finishing ahead of one of those Porsches that 'always win' – the 600LT demonstrates that McLaren can do soul as well as speed. It feels like a Sports Series model honed to the very best it can possibly be, and is an event however fast you're travelling.



BEST OF THE REST

The **Ferrari F8 Tributo** (left) takes the firm's V8 line to a new level by combining the 710bhp Pista engine with amazing chassis tech. The **McLaren 720S** matches the F8's power and delivers equally electrifying pace, the **Audi R8 V10** remains a corking entry-level supercar, and the **Porsche 911 GT3 RS** is simply a superb road and track machine.

Aston Martin DBS Superleggera	264 F	£225.000	12/5204	715/6500	664/1800	1770kg	410	3.4	_		211	+ Broad spread of talents - It's not really 'Superlight'	****
Aston Martin DBS Superleggera Volante	273 F	£247,500	12/5204	715/6500	664/1800	1863kg*	390	3.6	-	-	211	+ Dazzling looks, immense performance - Width and weight bring compromises	****
Aston Martin Vanguish S (Mk2)	260 F	17-18	12/5935	595/7000	465/5500	1739kg	348	3.5	3.9	8.3	201	+ Noise, poise, drama and charm - Not as rounded as the DB11	****
Aston Martin Vanquish S (Mk1)	110 F	'05-'07	12/5935	520/7000	425/5800	1875kg	282	4.8	4.9	10.1	200	+ Vanquish joins the supercar greats - A tad intimidating at the limit	****
Aston Martin One-77	179 F	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 RWD	273 F	£114.490	10/5204	533/7900	398/6400	1595kg	340	3.7	-	-	199	+ More affordable than a 4WD R8 - It's not any more entertaining	****
Audi R8 V10	261 F	£128,295	10/5204	562/8100	413/6300	1660kg	344	3.4	-	-	201	+ Beats the 992 Carrera - Could be the last of its kind	****
Audi R8 V10 Performance	256 D	£141,295	10/5204	611/8250	428/6500	1595kg	389	3.1	_	-	205	+ Stunning V10; approachable performance - Optional Dynamic steering feels unnatural	
Audi R8 V10 RWS(Mk2)	254 F	'17-'19	10/5204	533/7800	398/6500	1590kg	341	3.7	-	-	199	+ The first rear-wheel-drive Audi for 40 years - Drives largely like its 4WD counterpart	****
Audi R8 V10 (Mk2)	234 F	'15-'19	10/5204	533/7800	398/6500	1640kg	330	3.5	-		198	+ All the R8 you really need - You can't get a manual gearbox	****
Audi R8 V10 Plus (Mk2)	250 F	15-19	10/5204	602/8250	413/6500	1580kg	387	3.2	2.9	6.3	205	+ Timeless drivetrain, huge performance - Sometimes seems ordinary at steady speeds	
Audi R8 V10 (Mk1)	254 F	'09-'15	10/5204	518/8000	391/6500	1620kg	325	4.1	3.9	8.4	194	+ Real supercar feel - The V8 is cheaper, and still superb	****
Audi R8 V10 Plus (Mk1)	190 F	713-715	10/5204	542/8000	398/6500	1570kg	351	3.8	-	-	198	+ An R8 fit to take on the 458 and 12C - Firm ride may be too much for some	****
Bugatti Chiron	244 F	c£2.5m	16/7993	1479/6700	1180/2000	1995kg	753	2.5	_	_	261	+ Backs up the numbers with feel and emotion - Limited top speed(!)	****
Bugatti Veyron 16.4	134 F	'05-'11	16/7993	987/6000	922/2200	1888kg	531	2.5	2.8	5.8	253	+ Superbly engineered four-wheel-drive quad-turbo rocket - Er, lacks luggage space?	****
Bugatti Veyron 16.4 Super Sport	151 F	70-71	16/7993	1183/6400	1106/3000	1838kg	654	2.5	- 2.0	-	258	+ Was once the world's fastest supercar - Limited to 258mph for us mere mortals	****
Bugatti EB110	078 F	'91-'95	12/3500	552/8000	451/3750	1618kg	347	3.6	_	-	213	+ Superbly engineered four-wheel-drive quad-turbo rocket - It just fizzled out	****
Ferrari Roma	278 D			611/5750	560/3000	1570kg	395	3.4		-	199+	+ Not far off being a front-engined F8 - Choosing between a Roma and an F8	****
Ferrari F8 Tributo	266 F	£203,476	8/3902	710/8000	568/3250	1435kg	503	2.9			211	+ Ferrari's best series-production V8 ever - The next one could be a hybrid	****
Ferrari F8 Spider	276 D	£225,897	8/3902	710/8000	568/3250	1400kg*	515	2.9		_	211	+ As above, with a folding hard-top - Some may prefer McLaren's 720S Spider	****
Ferrari 488 GTB	228 F	75-79	8/3902	661/6500	561/3000	1475kg	455	3.0			205+	+ Staggeringly capable - Lacks a little of the 458's heart and excitement	****
Ferrari 488 Pista	262 F	£253.715	8/3902	710/8000	568/3000	1385kg	521	2.9			211+	+ Searingly fast and effortlessly capable - Takes a while to fully appreciate it	****
Ferrari 488 Pista Spider	263 F	£278.850	8/3902	710/8000	568/3000	1485kg	486	2.9			211	+ As above, but with wind in your hair - As above	****
Ferrari 458 Italia	2031 221F	'09-'15	8/4497	562/9000	398/6000	1485kg	384	3.4	3.2	6.8	202+	+ An astounding achievement - Paddleshift only	****
Ferrari 458 Speciale	274 F	7.3-7.5	8/4497	597/9000	398/6000	1465kg	435	3.0	3.2	-	202+	+ evo Car of the Year 2014 - If you don't own a regular 458, nothing	****
Ferrari F430	254 F	'04-'10	8/4308	483/8500	343/5250	1449kg	339	4.0	-	-	196+	+ Just brilliant - Didn't you read the plus point?	****
Ferrari 430 Scuderia	254 F	'07-'10	8/4308	503/8500	343/5250		378	3.6	3.5	7.7	190+	+ Just brilliant - Diun't you read the plus point? + Successful F1 technology transplant - Likes to shout about it	*****
						1350kg			3.3				
Ferrari 360 Modena	163 F	'99-'04	8/3586	394/8500	275/4750	1390kg	288	4.5	-	-	183+	+ Worthy successor to 355 - Not quite as involving as it should be	****
Ferrari 360 Challenge Stradale	274 F	'03-'04	8/3586	420/8500	275/4750	1280kg	333	4.1	-	-	186	+ Totally exhilarating road-racer - Automated single-clutch 'box dates it	****
Ferrari F355 Berlinetta	231 F	'94-'99	8/3496	374/8250	268/6000	1350kg*	281	4.7	-	-	183	+ Looks terrific, sounds even better - Are you kidding?	****
Ferrari 348 GT Competizione	274 F	'93	8/3404	316/7200	239/5000	1180kg*	276	5.0	-	-	175	+ Utterly absorbing, with exceptional dynamics - Steering a little woolly	****
Ferrari 812 Superfast	275 F	£262,963	12/6496	789/8500	529/7000	1630kg	492	2.9	3.1	6.2	211	+ Incredible engine - Finding opportunities to exploit it	****
Ferrari F12 Berlinetta	275 F	'12-'17	12/6262	730/8250	509/6000	1630kg	455	3.1	-	-	211+	+ 730bhp isn't too much power for the road - Super-quick steering is an acquired taste	****
Ferrari F12tdf	230 F	'17	12/6262	769/8500	520/6250	1520kg	514	2.9	-	-	211+	+ Alarmingly fast - Doesn't flow like a 458 Speciale	****
Ferrari 599 GTB Fiorano	275 F	'06-'12	12/5999	611/7600	448/5600	1690kg	368	3.7	3.5	7.4	205	+ evo Car of the Year 2006 - Banks are getting harder to rob	****
Ferrari 599 GTO	161 F	'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 F	'02-'06	12/5748	508/7250	434/5250	1688kg	298	3.7	4.2	9.6	205+	+ Fiorano pack makes 575 truly great - It should have been standard	****
Ferrari 550 Maranello	275 F	'96-'02	12/5474	478/7000	420/5000	1690kg	287	4.4	-	-	199	+ Everything - Nothing	****
Ferrari GTC4 Lusso T	246 D	'17-'20	8/3855	602/7500	560/3000	1865kg	328	3.5	-	-	199	+ Effortless, comfortable GT - Misses the richer soundtrack of the V12	****
Ferrari GTC4 Lusso	264 F	'16-'20	12/6262	680/8000	514/5750	1920kg	360	3.4	-	-	208	+ Rear-wheel steering increases agility - Not as engaging as other Ferraris	****

SEASON'S READINGS



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	MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (OR YEARS ON SALE)	ENGINE CYL/GC	внр/ярм	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLAIMED)	O-60MPH (TESTER)	0-100MPH (TESTED)	MAX MPH	EVO RATING	
	Ferrari FF	194 F	'11-'15	12/6262	651/8000	504/6000	1880kg	347	3.7			208	+ Four seats and 4WD, but a proper Ferrari - Looks divide opinion	****
	Ferrari 612 Scaglietti	090 F	'04-'11	12/5748	533/7250	434/5250	1875kg	289	4.0	4.3	9.8	199		*****
	Ferrari SF90 Stradale	277 F	£376,048	8/3990	986/7500	-	1570kg*	638	2.5	-	-	211		****
	Ferrari LaFerrari	203 F	'13-'15	12/6262	950/9000	664/6750	1574kg	613	3.0	-	-	217+		****
	Ferrari Enzo	275 F	'02-'04	12/5999	651/7800	485/5500	1365kg	485	3.7	3.5	6.7	217+	+ Intoxicating, exploitable - Cabin detailing falls short of a Zonda or F1's	****
	Ferrari F50	275 F	'95-'97	12/4699	513/8500	347/6500	1230kg*	424	3.9	-	-	202	+ A better driver's Ferrari than the 288, F40 or Enzo - Not better looking, though	****
	Ferrari F40	275 F	'87-'92	8/2936	471/7000	426/4000	1100kg*	437	4.1	-	-	201		****
	Ford GT	253 F		6/3497	647/6250	550/5900	1385kg*	475	2.8	-	-	216		****
	Ford GT	200 F	'04-'06	8/5409	550/6500	500/3750	1583kg	353	3.9	-	-	205		****
	Honda NSX	270 F	£144,765	6/3493	573	476/2000	1776kg	328	2.9	3.0	6.9	191		****
	Honda NSX (NA2) Honda NSX-R (NA2)	188 F 100 F	'97-'05 '02-'03	6/3179 6/3179	276/7300 276/7300	224/5300 224/5300	1410kg	196 221	5.7 4.4	-	-	168 168		*****
	Jaguar XJ220	157 F	'92-'94	6/3498	542/7200	475/4500	1270kg 1470kg	375	3.7			213		****
	Koenigsegg One:1	202 F	c£2.0m	8/5065	1341/7500	1011/6000	1360kg	1002	2.9	_	-	273		****
	Koenigsegg Agera R	180 F	71-74	8/5032	1124/7100	885/2700	1435kg	796	2.8	-	-	273		****
	Koenigsegg CCXR Edition	118 F	'08-'10	8/4800	1004/7000	796/5600	1280kg*	797	2.9	-	-	250+		****
	Lamborghini Huracán Evo RWD	276 D	£164,400	10/5204	602/8000	413/6500	1389kg*	440	3.3	-	-	202	+ Makes an argument for ignoring the 4WD Evo - Prescriptive driver modes still frustrate	****
	Lamborghini Huracán Evo	264 F	£198,307	10/5204	631/8000	442/6500	1422kg*	451	2.9	-	-	202+		★★★★☆
	Lamborghini Huracán Evo Spyder	269 F	£218,137	10/5204	631/8000	442/6500	1542kg*	416	3.1	-	-	202		★★★☆
	Lamborghini Huracán Performante	242 F	£215,000	10/5204	631/8000	442/6500	1382kg*	464	2.9	-		201+		****
	Lamborghini Huracán Performante Spyder	253 D		10/5204	631/8000	442/6500	1507kg*	425	3.1	-	-	201+		****
	Lamborghini Huracán RWD	229 F 209 D	'16-'19 '14-'19	10/5204	572/8000 602/8250	397/6500 413/6500	1389kg*	385 430	3.4 3.2	-	-	199 201+	+ More seductive than the 4WD Huracán - Feels like there's more to come + Defies the numbers; incredible point-to-point pace - Takes work to find its sweet-spot	****
	Lamborghini Huracán Lamborghini Gallardo LP550-2 Balboni	138 F	'09-'10	10/5204	542/8000	398/6500	1422kg* 1380kg*	399	3.9		-	199		****
	Lamborghini Gallardo LP550-2 balborii Lamborghini Gallardo LP560-4	180 D	'08-'13	10/5204	552/8000	398/6500	1410kg*	398	3.7		-	202		****
	Lamborghini Gallardo LP570-4 Lamborghini Gallardo LP570-4 Superleggera	152 F	'10-'13	10/5204	562/8000	398/6500	1340kg*	426	3.4	3.5		202		****
	Lamborghini Gallardo	094 F	'03-'08	10/4961	513/8000	376/4250	1430kg*	364	4.0	4.3	9.4	196		****
	Lamborghini Aventador	194 F	711-77	12/6498	690/8250	509/5500	1575kg*	445	2.9	-	-	217		****
	Lamborghini Aventador S	246 F	£271,146	12/6498	730/8400	509/5500	1575kg*	471	2.9	-	-	217	+ A more agile, more connected Aventador - Synthetic steering	****
	Lamborghini Aventador S Roadster	251 D	£301,754	12/6498	730/8400	509/5500	1625kg*	456	3.0	-	-	217	+ As dynamic as the coupe - Fiddly and (very) expensive roof	****
	Lamborghini Aventador SV	216 F	'15-'17	12/6498	740/8400	509/5500	1525kg*	493	2.8	-	-	217+	,	****
	Lamborghini Aventador SVJ	262 F		12/6498	759/8500	531/6750	1525kg*	506	2.8	-	-	218		****
	Lamborghini Aventador SVJ Roadster	268 D	£387,987	12/6498	759/8500	531/6750	1575kg*	490	2.9	-	-	218		****
	Lamborghini Murciélago LP640	275 F	'06-'11	12/6496	631/8000	487/6000	1665kg*	385	3.8	-	-	211		****
	Lamborghini Murciélago LP670-4 SV Lamborghini Murciélago	200 F 089 D	'09-'11 '01-'06	12/6496 12/6192	661/8000 572/7500	487/6500 479/5400	1565kg*	429 351	3.3 4.0	3.2	7.3 -	212 206		****
	Lamborghini Diablo VT 6.0	275 F	'00-'02	12/5192	543/7100	479/3400	1650kg* 1625kg*	343	3.9			208		***** ****
	Lexus LFA/LFA Nürburgring	200 F	10-12	10/4805	552/8700	354/6800	1480kg	379	3.7	_	-	202		****
	Lotus Esprit Sport 350	171 F	'99-'01	8/3506	349/6500	295/4250	1299kg	274	4.3	-	-	175		****
	McLaren 540C	250 F	£127,890	8/3799	533/7500	398/3500	1311kg*	413	3.5	3.2	6.4	199		****
	McLaren 570S	229 F	£149,000	8/3799	562/7500	443/5000	1440kg	397	3.2	-	-	204		****
	McLaren 570GT	261 F	£157,000	8/3799	562/7500	443/5000	1498kg	381	3.4	-	-	204	+ Blurs the line between grand tourer and supercar brilliantly - 570S is more involving	****
	McLaren 600LT	257 F		8/3799	592/7500	457/5500	1356kg	444	2.9	-	-	204		****
	McLaren 600LT Spider	273 F		8/3799	592/7500	457/5500	1404kg	428	2.9	-	-	201		****
	McLaren 620R	268 F		8/3799	611/7500	457/5500	1386kg	448	2.9	-	-	200		****
	McLaren GT	271 F		8/3994	612/7500	465/5500	1530kg	406	3.2	-	-	203		****
	McLaren 720S McLaren 720S Spider	262 F 261 F	£208,600 £237,000	8/3994	710/7250 710/7250	568/5500 568/5500	1419kg 1468kg	508 491	2.9 2.9	2.9	5.6 -	212 212		***** ****
0	McLaren 765LT	279 F	£280,000		754/7500	590/5500	1339kg	572	2.9		-	205		*****
U	McLaren 650S	196 F	'14-'17	8/3799	641/7250	500/6000	1428kg	456	3.0	-		207	+ Better brakes, balance and looks than 12C; more power too - Which all comes at a price	
	McLaren 675LT	248 F	'15-'17	8/3799	666/7100	516/5500	1328kg	510	2.9	-	-	205		****
	McLaren 12C	264 F	'11-'14	8/3799	616/7500	442/3000	1434kg	435	3.3	-	-	207		****
	McLaren Senna	252 F	£750,000	8/3999	789/7250	590/5500	1198kg*	669	2.8	-	-	211		****
	McLaren P1	276 F	'13-'15	8/3799	903/7500	664/4000	1490kg	616	2.8	-	-	217		****
	McLaren F1	228 F	'94-'98	12/6064	627/7500	479/4000	1138kg	560	3.2	-	-	240		****
	Mercedes-AMG GT R	2611	£148,595	8/3982	577/6250	516/2100	1575kg	372	3.6	3.3	7.1	198		****
	Mercedes-AMG GT R Pro	269 F	£188,345	8/3982	577/6250	516/2100	1561kg	376	3.6	-	-	198		****
	Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG	264 F	'10-'15	8/6208	563/6800	479/4750	1620kg	335	3.9	4.1	8.4	197	0 0 0 , , ,	****
	Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG Black Series	204 F	'13-'15	8/6208	622/7400	468/5500	1550kg	408 370	3.6 3.8	-	-	196	+ Stunning engine, superb body control - Be careful on less-than-smooth roads	****
	Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren Noble M600	<i>228 F</i> 186 F	'03-'07 c£200,000	8/5439 8/4439	617/6500 650/6800	<i>575/3250</i> 604/3800	<i>1693kg</i> 1198kg*	551	3.5	3.8	7.7	<i>208</i> 225		**** ****
	Pagani Huayra	185 F	c£1m	12/5980	720/5800	737/2250	1350kg*	542	3.3	-	-	224		****
	Pagani Zonda S 7.3	096 F	'02-'05	12/7291	555/5900	553/4050	1280kg*	441	3.7	-	-	220		****
	Pagani Zonda F	186 F	'05-'06	12/7291	602/6150	575/4000	1230kg*	497	3.6	-	-	214+		****
	Porsche 911 GT3 (991.2)	256 F	'17-'19	6/3996	493/8250	339/6000	1413kg	355	3.9	-	-	198	+ Almost impossible to criticise - Wasn't the easiest car to place an order for	****
	Porsche 911 Speedster (991.2)	263 F	'19	6/3996	503/8400	347/6250	1465kg	349	4.0	-	-	192		****
	Porsche 911 GT3 RS (991.2)	278 F	'18-'20	6/3996	513/8250	347/6000	1430kg	364	3.2	-	-	193		****
	Porsche 911 GT2 RS (991.2)	257 F	'18-'19	6/3800	690/7000	553/2500	1470kg	477	2.8	-	-	211		****
	Porsche 911 GT3 (991.1)	206 F	'13-'16	6/3799	468/8250	324/6250	1430kg	333	3.5	-	-	196		****
	Porsche 911 GT3 RS (991.1)	223 F	'15-'16	6/3996	493/8250	339/6250	1420kg	353	3.3	3.0	7.1	193		***** *****
	Porsche 911 R (991.1) Porsche 911 GT3 (997.2)	229 F 182 F	'16 '09-'11	6/3996 6/3797	493/8250 429/7600	339/6250 317/6250	1370kg	366 312	3.8 4.1	4.2	9.2	200 194		****
	Porsche 911 GT3 RS (3.8, 997.2)	102 F 248 F	10-11	6/3797	444/7900	317/6750	1395kg 1370kg	329	4.0	4.2	-	194		****
	Porsche 911 GT3 RS 4.0 (997.2)	274 F	11-12	6/3996	493/8250	339/5750	1360kg	368	3.8	-	-	193		****
	Porsche 911 GT2 RS (997.2)	204 F	'10-'13	6/3600	611/6500	516/2250	1370kg	453	3.5	-	-	205		****
	Porsche 911 GT3 (997.1)	182 F	'07-'09	6/3600	409/7600	298/5500	1395kg	298	4.3	4.3	9.4	192		****
	Porsche 911 GT3 RS (997.1)	112 F	'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 already brilliant GT3	****
	Porsche 911 GT3 (996.2)	221F	'03-'05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1380kg	272	4.5	4.3	9.2	190	+ evo Car of the Year 2003 - Chassis a bit too track-focused for some roads	****
	Porsche 911 GT3 RS (996.2)	068 F	'04-'05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1360kg	280	4.4	-	-	190		****
	Porsche 911 GT2 (996.2)	072F	'04-'06	6/3600	475/5700	472/3500	1420kg	338	4.0	-	-	198		****
	Porsche 911 GT3 (996.1)	266 F	'99-'01	6/3600	360/7200	273/5000	1350kg	271	4.8	4.5	10.3	187		****
	Porsche 911 Turbo S (992)	276 F	£155,970	6/3745	641/6750	590/2500	1640kg	397	2.7	-	-	205		****
	Porsche 911 Turbo (991.2)	234 F 223 F	'16-'19	6/3800	533/6400	524/1950	1595kg	340 363	3.0	- 2.6	- 60	198		*****
	Porsche 911 Turbo S (991.2) Porsche 911 Turbo S (991.1)	223 F 217 F	'16-'19 '13-'15	6/3800 6/3800	572/6750 552/6500	553/2250 553/2200	1600kg 1605kg	349	2.9 3.1	2.0	6.0	205 197		***** *****
	Porsche 911 Turbo (997.2)	217 F	'09-'13	6/3800	493/6000	479/1950	1570kg	319	3.7	3.2	7.3	194		****
	Porsche 911 Turbo (997.1)	094F	'06-'09	6/3600	472/6000	457/1950	1585kg	303	3.7	4.0	8.7	193		****
	Porsche 911 Turbo (996)	249F	'00-'06	6/3600	414/6000	413/2700	1540kg	273	4.2	4.1	10.0	190		****
	Porsche 911 Turbo (993)	066 F	'95-'98	6/3600	402/5750	398/4500	1500kg	272	4.3	-	-	180	+ Stupendous all-weather supercar - It doesn't rain enough	****
	Porsche 918 Spyder	233 F	'13-'15	8/4593	875/8500	944/6600	1674kg	531	2.6	-	-	211		****
	Porsche Carrera GT	200 F	'04-'06	10/5733	604/8000	435/5750	1380kg	445	3.9	-	-	205	+ Felt ahead of its time - Needs modern tyres to tame its spikiness	****



Express delivery

To Munich and back in a day for a photoshoot provided an unforgettable RB5 initiation for Stuart Gallagher

YOU KNOW STUART GALLAGHER AS THE current custodian of the editor's red pen at **evo**. But this is not Stuart's first stint on the mag. A younger, marginally more hirsute Gallagher was **evo**'s first staff writer (an HR-friendly way of describing the office's general dogsbody) back in the late '90s. This position, as I know full well, often involves doing the drives that nobody else is young/stupid enough to undertake.

One such drive for Stuart was for a twin test in issue 008 that pitched a new Audi against a new Subaru. Stuart takes up the story of how he and photographer Gus Gregory drove 1000 miles and bagged a 12-page feature in a single day...

'It started at Gus o'clock – 3am – leaving his home in Surrey and heading for Germany via the Eurotunnel. We were meeting evo's ace tab poacher, David Vivian, who would be landing in Munich to collect the new Audi S3. Gus and I were in the equally new Subaru Impreza RB5. So new that Prodrive had only completed its preparation the previous morning and the adhesive used as additional bonding for the rear spoiler to the bootlid was still a few hours from hardening when the car arrived at evo Towers.

'Europe was different in the late '90s and you could cover considerable ground in a considerably short period of time, which is why we were skirting around Frankfurt and

catching its morning rush hour only a few hours after emerging from the Eurotunnel. A couple of hours later we were in Munich, having received a text message from the office saying that Subaru had been in touch to ask if we could avoid any max speed runs because some of the RB5's new aero fixings hadn't been signed off yet.

'It's when we were waiting for Viv and enjoying some caffeine at Audi's customer centre at Munich airport that we decided to turn around and head to the Black Forest to do the shoot. Yes, the Black Forest on the French border, some 250 miles back in the direction we had just come from. It made sense to Gus and me because we'd be closer to home when we finished the shoot and, this being the last Friday in July, the roads were expected to be busy ahead of the August holidays. If only we'd had this idea several hours and a couple of hundred miles ago.

'By the time we arrived at the location we were already 620 miles into the day and it was only just lunchtime. Little wonder that by mid-afternoon Gus had launched his camera case – still with his kit in it – off the side of the road and into the forest. That shutter release cable never did work properly...

'His mood wasn't helped soon after when a group of bikers parked their midlife crisis Harleys in the exact spot Gus wanted to take a static shot. He did, however, deal with this situation with impressive diplomacy. He even ascertained that they were bankers. Well, I think that's what he said.

'Shoot done, Viv hotfooted it back to Munich just in time to miss his flight home, while Gus and I were stopped at the Eurotunnel by UK customs, who asked me for the paperwork for the RB5, which of course I didn't have. And Prodrive and Subaru had gone home by the time I called. Customs were also intrigued as to why gaffer tape was being used to hold the rear spoiler in place...

'Eventually we were allowed on a train, I dropped Gus home and then completed the last 70 miles in time to arrive for last orders. A longer than usual day, but it was worth every wave of exhaustion to spend time in that RB5, which remains one of my all-time favourite cars I've driven at **evo**. It was, and I suspect still is, an extraordinary machine. Where are you now, T47 JOP?'

'WE WERE 620
MILES INTO
THE DAY AND IT
WAS ONLY JUST
LUNCHTIME'





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RS6 C8 4.0 T V8 » 740+BHP (+DE-LIMIT) RS6 C7 4.0 T V8 » 700+BHP (DE-LIMIT) 2017 R8 V10 » 650BHP (DE-LIMIT) RS3 / TTRS (8V MK2) » 500+ BHP (DE-LIMIT) S3 / GOLF R » 378+ BHP (DE-LIMIT) 3.0 BI-TDI (ALL MODELS) » 400+ BHP RS4 B9 / RS5 2.9T » 525+ BHP

F90 M5 / M8 » 770+BHP (+DELIMIT)

X3M / X4M » 630+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)

M850I » 700+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)

M2 COMPETITION » 530BHP (+DE-LIMIT)

M3 / M4 » 540+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)

M5 F10/M6 » 730+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)

X5M/X6M F85 » 730+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)

X5M/X6M F85 » 730+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)

X5M/X6M F85 » 730+BHP (+DE-LIMIT) M140i / 240i / 340i/440i » 450+BHP M135i / M235i » 410+BHP 120D / 220D/320D/420D » 240+BHP 320i / 330i » 320+BHP M340i » 470+BHP 330D / 430D / 530D / 730D » 360BHP 840D / 335D / 435D / 535D » 400+BHP

MERCEDES-BENZ

A45S AMG » 480+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
A35 AMG » 350+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
E63S W213 » 700+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
E63S W213 » 700+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
A45 / CLA45 AMG » 430+BHP
AMG GT/GTS » 624+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
AMG GTR » 650+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
C43 / E43 / GLC43 AMG » 480+BHP
C63 / 63S 4.0T AMG » 624+BHP
C63 6.3 AMG » 530+BHP
C643 AMG 5.5 BI-TURBO
(ALL MODELS) » 700+BHP C63 AMG 5.5 BI-TURBO
(ALL MODELS) » 700+BHP
55 AMG KOMPRESSOR » 600+BHP
S65 » 780BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
SL65 / BLACK SERIES » 720BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
220 CDI (ALL MODELS) » 230BHP
250 CDI (ALL MODELS) » 260BHP C300E » 350BHP CLS400D / E400D » 400BHP 350 CDI (ALL MODELS) » 315BHP

ALL 2019 RANGE ROVERS AVAILABLE

RR 50SC / SVO / SVR STAGE1 » 600+BHP RR 50SC / SVO / SVR STAGE2 » 650+BHP 2.2 D (ALL MODELS) » 220+BHP 2.0 TD4 / SD4 (ALL MODELS) » 225 / 265BHP 2.0 T04 / SD4 (ALL MODELS) ** 223 / 2 VELAR 30S16 ** 420BHP RR 4.4 TDV8 ** 395 BHP RR TDV6 / SDV6 3.0D ** 305 / 350 BHP DEFENDER 2.2 ** 180BHP

PORSCHE

992 TURBO S » IN DEVELOPMENT 992 CARRERA / S » 570+ BHP 991.2 GT2 RS » 780+BHP 991 TURBO / S (ALL MODELS) » 750+BHP 991 TURBO / S (ALL MODELS) 991 GT3 RS 4.0 » 525/540 BHP 997 CARRERA GTS » 435 BHP 991.2 CARRERA / S -(ALL MODELS) » 500+BHP 991.2 CARRERA GTS -(ALL MODELS) » 540+BHP 997 TURBO 3.6 » 625+ BHP 997 TURBO 3.6 » 625+ BHP
997 GT2 RS » 670+ BHP
997 TURBO / S 3.8 INC PDK » 611 BHP
997.2 GT3 RS » 480 BHP
996 TURBO/GT2 » 600+ BHP
BOXSTER / CAYMAN 718S / GTS » 420+BHP
BOXSTER / CAYMAN 718 » 380+BHP
BOXSTER / CAYMAN 981 GT4 » 430+BHP
BOXSTER / CAYMAN 981 GT5 » 375+BHP
CAYENNE TURBO 4.8 (ALL MODELS) » 650+ BHP
CAYENNE 4.2 DIESEL » 450+ BHP
CAYENNE / MACAN 3.0 DIESEL » 320+ BHP
MACAN 3.0T S » 445+BHP MACAN 3.0T S » 445+BHP MACAN TURBO 2.9T » 525+BHP PANAMERA 971 4.0 TURBO » 700+ BHP PANAMERA 971 4.0T SE HYBRID » 800+ BHP PANAMERA 971 2.9T HYBRID » 650+ BHP

EXOTIC / MISC

WRAITH / DAWN » 720+BHP FERRARI 488 PISTA » 780+BHP FERRARI 488 » 750+BHP FERRARI PORTOFINO » 680+BHP FERRARI LUSSO T » 710+BHP FERRARI CALI T » 680BHP FERRARI F12 » 780+BHP FERRARI 430 » 525 BHP FERRARI 430 » 525 BHP

MCLAREN MP4 /650S » 720 BHP

MCLAREN 675LT » 750BHP

MCLAREN 570/S » 680+BHP

MCLAREN 600LT » 680+BHP

MCLAREN 500LT » 840+BHP

MCLAREN 5ENNA » 875+BHP

AVENTADOR » 750+BHP

HURACAN LP610 » 650BHP

BENTI EV 4 0 T V/8 » 700+BHP BENTLEY 4.0 T V8 » 700+BHP
BENTLEY GT W12 » 700+BHP
BENTLEY SUPERSPORT 2018 » 780+BHP
BENTAYGA V8 DIESEL » 510+BHP
BENTAYGA V8 40T » 700+BHP BENTLEY GT 2020 V8 40T » 700+BHP MASERATI 3.0S PETROL » 470 BHP MASERATI 3.0 DIESEL » 312 BHP

FURTHER OPTIONS

with additional features. Some of which are shown here. Contact us for further details.



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Official fuel consumption for the CUPRA Ateca mpg (litres/100km): 31.7 (8.9) – 32.5 (8.7). CO₂ emissions 197-202 (g/km).

Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO_2 figures with other vehicles tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load. Data correct at September 2020.

